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## *Inmigrantes de Zhangzhou entre China y España: conversaciones diplomáticas sobre el incidente de 1603 en Manila*

### **Zhangzhou Immigrants between China and the Spanish: Diplomatic Conversations Concerning the 1603 Incident in Manila**

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# Inmigrantes de Zhangzhou entre China y España: conversaciones diplomáticas sobre el incidente de 1603 en Manila

Zhangzhou Immigrants between China and Spain: Diplomatic  
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*Resumen:* A partir de 1573, con la fundación de Manila, la circulación de mercancías chinas por la ruta transpacífica puso en contacto a la dinastía Ming y al Imperio español. En consecuencia, muchas personas de la provincia de Fujian, especialmente de la ciudad de Zhangzhou, fueron a Manila y facilitaron el funcionamiento de la ciudad. Este trabajo examina las interacciones de los inmigrantes de Zhangzhou en Manila, centrándose en sus funciones y situaciones vitales en Parián, el barrio designado para los sangleys. En particular, se analiza la conversación diplomática relativa al Incidente de 1603 para dilucidar cómo percibían a los sangleys tanto la corte Ming como los gobernadores españoles. Los registros elaborados por las élites chinas, los nomenclátors locales y la correspondencia española revelan los conflictos y negociaciones entre el gobierno Ming y los funcionarios del Imperio español en torno a este asunto, así como las diferencias de puntos de vista locales y

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estatales. Aunque las contribuciones de los sangleys fueron reconocidas y utilizadas para promover la superioridad moral de ambos bandos, ni la corte china ni el gobierno español las tuvieron seriamente en cuenta. Los sangleyes ofrecen una perspectiva única del posicionamiento de estas dos potencias estatales: Cada uno deseaba mantener una relación pacífica, pero al mismo tiempo adoptaron una postura cautelosa. Este estudio ilumina algunas de las conexiones y conflictos que surgieron durante la globalización temprana.

*Palabras clave:* China Ming, España, Manila, Zhangzhou, Sangleys

*Abstract:* Starting in 1573 with the establishment of Manila, the circulation of Chinese goods along the trans-Pacific route brought the Ming Dynasty and the Spanish Empire into contact. Consequently, many people from Fujian Province, especially Zhangzhou city, went to Manila and facilitated the operation of the city. This paper examines the interactions of Zhangzhou immigrants in Manila, focusing their roles and living situations in Parián, the designated neighborhood for the Sangleys. In particular, the diplomatic conversation concerning the 1603 Incident is analyzed to elucidate how the Sangleys were perceived by both the Ming court and the Spanish governors. Records produced by Chinese elites, local gazetteers, and Spanish correspondence reveal the conflicts and negotiations between the Ming government and officials of the Spanish Empire concerning this matter, as well as local and state differences in views. While the contributions of the Sangleys were recognized and used to promote the moral superiority of both sides, they were not seriously considered by either the Chinese court or the Spanish government. The Sangleys offer a unique perspective on the positioning of these two state powers: Each desired to maintain a peaceful relationship yet simultaneously adopted a cautious stance. This study illuminates some of the connections and conflicts which emerged during early modern globalization.

*Keywords:* Ming China, Spain, Manila, Zhangzhou, Sangleys

Starting in 1573 with the establishment of Manila, the circulation of Chinese goods along the trans-Pacific route brought the Ming Dynasty and the Spanish Empire into contact. As trade between Fujian and Manila and then to colonial Mexico increased, more Chinese merchants moved to and sojourned in the Philippines. While trade between Ming China and the Spanish Empire was highly influential in the early modern global market, direct contact between the two states was mostly facilitated by Chinese immigrants, known as the Sangleys.

Historians have extensively studied the connections between Fujian province during the Ming dynasty and the Philippines. Quan Hansheng highlighted how trade between China and New Spain boosted revenue in Zhangzhou during the final decades of the Ming Dynasty.<sup>1</sup> William Schurz, along with recent Latin American history scholars, such as Arturo Giráldez, have underscored the scope and significant influence of the China-New Spain trade, particularly focusing on its impacts on Manila.<sup>2</sup> Scholars like Lucille Chia, Tatiana Seijas, and

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<sup>1</sup> Quan Han-sheng 全汉昇, “Mingji Zhongguo yu Feilvbin de maoyi 明季中國與菲律賓的貿易 [Trade between China and the Philippines during the Late Ming]”, *Zhongguo jindai jingjishi luncong* 中國近代經濟史論叢 (Taipei: Daohe Chubanshe, 1996), 417–434. Also see Quan Han-sheng, “Zi Mingji zhi Qing zhongye Xishu Meizhou de Zhongguo sihuo maoyi 自明季至清中葉西屬美洲的中國絲貨貿易 [Trade of Chinese silk to Spanish America from the Late Ming to Mid-Qing]”, *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiu suo xuebao*, 4, no. 2 (December 1971), 345–69.

<sup>2</sup> William Lytle Schurz, *The Manila Galleon* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1939). Arturo Giráldez, *The Age of Trade: The Manila Galleons and the Dawn of the Global Economy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

Edward R. Slack have specifically examined the contributions of Asian laborers to the Spanish empire.<sup>3</sup> Others have delved into specific commodities, such as porcelain and silk, exploring their production, transportation, and market presence in Zhangzhou.<sup>4</sup> However, scholars have yet to fully address how these immigrants factored into the diplomatic dialogue between China and Spain.

This paper investigates the roles and living situations of Zhangzhou immigrants in Manila. In particular, I examine a case study of diplomatic communications following the 1603 Incident to elucidate how the Sangleyes were perceived by both the Ming court and the Spanish governors. Diplomatic negotiations and domestic discussion surrounding the massacre (or uprising, depending on

<sup>3</sup> Edward Slack, “New Perspectives on Manila’s Chinese Community at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century: The Forgotten Case of Pedro Barredo Alcalde Mayor of the Parián 1701–1704”, *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, 17 (2021): 117-146. Edward Slack, “Orientalizing New Spain: Perspectives on Asian Influence in Colonial Mexico”, *México y la Cuenca del Pacífico* (2012): 97-127. Lucille Chia, “The Butcher, the Baker, and the Carpenter: Chinese Sojourners in the Spanish Philippines and Their Impact on Southern Fujian (Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries)”, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 49, no. 4 (2006): 509–34. Tatiana Seijas, *Asian Slaves in Colonial Mexico: From Chinos to Indians* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> For examples, see Meha Priyadarshini, *Chinese Porcelain in Colonial Mexico: The Material Worlds of an Early Modern Trade* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018). José Luis Gasch-Tomás, “Asian Silk, Porcelain and Material Culture in the Definition of Mexican and Andalusian Elites, c. 1565–1630”, in *Global Goods and the Spanish Empire, 1492–1824: Circulation, Resistance and Diversity*, edited by Bethany Aram and Bartolomé Yun Casalilla (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 153–173. Xiaolin Duan, *An Object of Seduction: Chinese Silk in Trans-Pacific Trade, 1500–1700* (Lexington Books, 2022).

which account we look at) of the Sangleys in 1603 reveals that, while the contributions of the Sangleys were recognized and used to promote the moral superiority of both sides, they were not seriously considered by either the Chinese court or the Spanish government. Examining these immigrants' experiences in the context of the conversations between these two states/empires, this study reveals conflicts between local and state officials on both sides.

The following discussion starts with a historical review of the involvement of Zhangzhou people in overseas trade as a response to changing Ming policy on foreign trade; it then moves to the construction and regulation of the Parián neighborhood of Manila to showcase the Spanish policy towards foreigners. Finally, I examine Chinese court letters and Spanish correspondence circa 1605 which comment on the 1603 Sangley rebellion and massacre. Most of the sources examined in this article are from local Fujian gazetteers and Spanish correspondence, which I have used cautiously due to potential biases.<sup>5</sup>

### **Developments among the Haicheng and Zhangzhou immigrants**

The Chinese had long known of and established contacts with the Philippines, but official contact with the Ming court was

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<sup>5</sup> All the Spanish correspondence came from the 55 volumes of *The Philippine Islands*; many of these came from the AGI archive in Seville. These documents were from the Spanish perspective, and the selection and translation of these documents was conducted in the USA.

limited and restricted within the tributary system. Aside from tribute transactions, the early Ming government forbade all privately-operated foreign trade. Nevertheless, smugglers were always active, despite repeatedly issued bans. The local scholar Cao Lütai 曹履泰 (?–1648) recorded that people in the area of Tongshan 銅山, near Zhangzhou, witnessed small ships coming and going every day. These ships carried wine, pigs, and silk textiles for pirates.<sup>6</sup> The local military even assisted merchant smugglers to avoid conflicts and obtain profits. Feng Zhang 馮璋 (ca. 1538), in his *Tongfan boyi* 通番舶議 (Discussion on ships that connect with foreigners), recorded that people in Quanzhou and Zhangzhou were always in pursuit of profits by smuggling with foreigners. Even if some suffered banishment by the army or were sentenced to death, others continued to build ships and sail overseas. They continually smuggled and were fearless.<sup>7</sup>

In 1567, in response to constant petitions from Fujian local officials, the government finally begin to license a limited number of junks to trade legally in Southeast Asia.<sup>8</sup> Zhangzhou was placed on a very short list of cities for which foreign trade was allowed. Among the different Fujian port cities, the people of Zhangzhou

<sup>6</sup> Zeng lütai 曹履泰, *Jinghai jilue* 靖海紀略 [Record on Pacifying the Sea] (CTEXT edition), 2.16a.

<sup>7</sup> Feng Zhang 馮璋, “Tongfan boyi 通番舶議 [On Allowing Visits by Foreign Trading Ships]”, in *Huang Ming jingshi wenbian*, juan 280, 1.18b–19a.

<sup>8</sup> Xu Fuyuan 許孚遠, “Shutong haijin shu 疏通海禁疏 [Memorial in Requesting to Open and Ocean Trade Ban]”, in Chen Zilong 陳子龍, *Huang Ming jingshi wenbian* 皇明經世文編 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju), 400.640–643.



were especially outstanding for their overseas trade connections. Lacking other resources, Fujian locals had a stronger motivation to rely on foreign trade. Lucille Chia's examination of Quanzhou and Zhangzhou genealogies revealed stronger connections to Manila than other ports of China.<sup>9</sup>

Zhangzhou's involvement with overseas trade led to the establishment of a new county next to the delta of the Jiulong River. The new county was named Haicheng, meaning "Ocean Clear" in 1566. The harbor of Haicheng (Yuegang) soon developed rapidly due to foreign trade, and consequently, the local people's vision expanded and became more outward-looking. The magistrate of Haicheng appointed the Zhangzhou local literatus Zhang Xie 張燮 (1574–1640) to write a book detailing the situation between Guiyu Island and the outer sea. Zhang Xie went beyond his commission and wrote *Dong Xi yang kao* 東西洋考 (Investigations on the East and West Oceans), providing a complete account of foreign countries and the tax system for foreign trade, as well as a textual sailing map from Haicheng to Southeast Asia. In the preface of the book, he addressed Haicheng as a water country, saying that in Haicheng, going abroad was as common as going to the market. The food and goods people enjoyed came from abroad and the ocean. Translators and people who knew foreign languages were everywhere.<sup>10</sup>

Several characteristics made Zhangzhou people suitable for overseas trading. Firstly, as mentioned above, Zhangzhou did

<sup>9</sup> Chia, "The Butcher, the Baker, and the Carpenter".

<sup>10</sup> Zhang Xie 張燮, *Dong Xi yang kao* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1981), 15.

not have much farmable land, so the locals had to find another means of living. Trading in foreign markets was their best hope for productivity. As Xu Fuyuan 許孚遠 (1535–1604) wrote:

Fujian always relied on overseas trade. Fuzhou, Quanzhou, and Zhangzhou are located next to mountains and seas; these regions do not have enough farming land, so people cannot obtain enough clothing and food without maritime trade. The local people enjoy sailing overseas and do not care much about their lives—this is their social custom, and at Zhangzhou this is especially the case.<sup>11</sup>

Overseas trade was important for revenue income in Haicheng.

Secondly, Zhangzhou people were known for their superb sailing skills. In 1534, when Chen Kan 陈侃 went to Liuqiu 琉球 (today's Taiwan) to appoint local governors, the sailors employed on the boat were all from Zhangzhou. Chen thus commented, “Zhangzhou people make their living on the sea; they learn how to sail early and do not stop, even when they are old. They accept the turbulence of the ocean waves just like leisurely moments.”<sup>12</sup> The local gazetteer of Zhangzhou also described how local people observed and calculated tidal changes during the year.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Xu, “Shutong haijin shu”.

<sup>12</sup> Chen Kan 陈侃, “Shishi jilue 使事紀略 [A Brief Account of the Envoy Business]”, *Shi Liuqiu lu 使琉球錄* [Record of Visiting Taiwan] (CTEXT edition), 13a.

<sup>13</sup> Zhang, *Dong Xi yang kao*, 9.19a–21a (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 190-91.

Thirdly, Zhangzhou people were excellent craftsmen. The local elite He Qiaoyuan 何喬遠 (1558–1632) commented that they were clever and good at copying things.<sup>14</sup> Textiles from both the North and South were counterfeited in Zhangzhou. As these were the primary goods on the westbound Manila galleons, textiles were Zhangzhou’s most important manufactured products. Most of these products were made of silk, but cotton and other coarse cloth types were also used. In the sixteenth century, the people of Zhangzhou started to specialize in weaving velvet for the export market.<sup>15</sup> As early as the Song dynasty, the people of Zhangzhou were known for making a light cloth made from the fibers of the kapok tree or maybe an earlier version of cotton, called *jibeibu* 吉貝布.<sup>16</sup> A sub-county, Longxi 龍溪, contributed almost sixty percent of the weavers who moved to the Philippines and more than half of the rattan weavers.<sup>17</sup> Zhangzhou additionally produced lacquered boxes, fans, and porcelain that were transported overseas, and the area was also known for producing lower-quality ceramics,

<sup>14</sup> He Qiaoyuan 何喬遠, *Jingshan quanji* 鏡山全集, 674.

<sup>15</sup> Angela Sheng, “Why Velvet? Localized Textile Innovation in Ming China”, In Schäfer, Riello, and Molà, eds., *Threads of Global Desire: Silk in the Pre-modern World* (Boydell Press, 2019), 49–74.

<sup>16</sup> Hao Yulin 郝玉麟, Lu Zhao 盧焯, Xie Decheng 謝德承, and Liu Jingyu 劉敬與, eds., *Fujian tongzhi* 福建通志 [Gazetteer of Fujian], 59.49b. See Guillermo Ruiz Stovel, “Chinese Shipping and Merchant Networks at the Edge of the Spanish Pacific: The Minnan-Manila Trade, 1680–1840”, Ph.D. Dissertation, UCLA, 2019, 412. Fan Zhengmin 范正敏, *Dunzhai xianlan* 遜齋閒覽 [Leisurely Reading at a Hermit’s Hut] (CTEXT edition), “Zhengwu 證誤”.

<sup>17</sup> Ruiz-Stovel, “Chinese Shipping and Merchant Networks at the Edge of the Spanish Pacific”, 141.

a more affordable option for overseas customers who longed for Chinese ceramics.<sup>18</sup>

The seaward orientation of Zhangzhou was recognized and cherished as their tradition by local elites. These scholars listed the benefits brought by its expansion. Zhou Qiyuan 周啟元 once said, “The money made from the foreign trade could easily reach several hundreds of thousands and replenish the private treasury of the emperor.” A benefit of opening Yuegang, according to Zhou, would be to “display the same power as the Han Dynasty without sending troops and spending money, and to enjoy a commercial network like that which the Tang and Song Dynasties developed without the danger of information security leaks.”<sup>19</sup> The economic benefits and expanding their influence over Asia were two reasons to support overseas trade. Zhou also mentioned the benefit of keeping mainly a commercial connection, so that border security could be maintained.

As a result, Haicheng became prosperous due to overseas trade, and it became fashionable for people there to engage in this line of business. Local people either invested money in the business of sailing ships or adopted sons from low-income families to send overseas when they grew up.<sup>20</sup> The sailing business was so appealing that all families wanted to find a way to participate.

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<sup>18</sup> Chia, “Ceramics for Everybody”, Presentation at the Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference, 2023.

<sup>19</sup> Zhou Qiyuan 周啟元, preface for *Dong Xi yang kao* 東西洋考.

<sup>20</sup> He Qiaoyuan 何喬遠, *Min shu* 閩書 [Book of Fujian], fengsu zhi juan 38 (Fujian Renmin Chubanshe, 1994).

Many Zhangzhou families regularly sailed to Southeast Asia, and some ended up sojourning in these port cities. According to William Schultz, the number of ships that departed from Zhangzhou each year was much higher than from any other seaport in China.<sup>21</sup> One of the most popular destinations for Zhangzhou merchants was Manila.

### **Parián and the Sangleys in Manila: The Spanish Policy Concerning Foreigners**

Chinese immigration to Manila trickled in the late sixteenth century and later increased to several tens of thousands in the seventeenth century. In 1573, the second Spanish governor of the Philippines, Guido de Lavezaris (1512–1582), reported to Philip II, “The Chinese have come here [to Manila] on trading expeditions since our arrival...in greater numbers each year, and with more ships.”<sup>22</sup> In 1600, the Sangleys—Chinese immigrants in the Philippines who lived permanently in Manila—reached 20,000. An even more substantial number sailed to Manila during the trade season.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Schultz, *The Manila Galleon*, 27, 71.

<sup>22</sup> Edward Gaylord Bourne, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898, Volume 36, 1649-1666 Explorations by Early Navigators, Descriptions of the Islands and Their Peoples, Their History and Records of the Catholic Missions, As Related in Contemporaneous Books and Manuscripts, Showing the Political, Economic, Commercial and Religious Conditions of Those Islands from Their Earliest Relations with European Nations to the Close of the Nineteenth Century*. Edited by Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson. of *Project Gutenberg, 30350* (Project Gutenberg, 2009), 3.160.

<sup>23</sup> Gitlin, Berglund, and Arenson, eds., *Frontier Cities*, 19–20. For more discussion on Chinese migrants in Manila, see Gebhardt, “Microhistory and Millares, vol. 4, núm. 7, 2024, 53-95

These Sangley immigrants have been much discussed by scholars, many of whom focused on Parián—the designated living neighborhood for Chinese immigrants.<sup>24</sup> Most of the documents we have about buildings in Parián are from a report by Bishop Domingo de Salazar to Phillip II and a published work of 1640 by Fr. Diego Aduarte, *Historia de la provincia del santo rosario de la Orden de Predicadores en Filipinas Japon y China*.<sup>25</sup>

The Sangleys and traveling Chinese played an essential role in the operation of Manila. Those who stayed in the city included highly specialized artisans as well as storekeepers, farmers, fishermen, and domestic servants. These people worked for the foreign marketers to provide everyday necessities.<sup>26</sup> According to the government notary Hernando Requel (b. 1498), the Chinese “brought specimens of many kinds of goods peculiar to their country, to arrange prices at which they can be sold—such as quicksilver, [gun] powder, pepper, fine cinnamon, cloves, sugar, iron, copper, tin, brass, silks [and] textiles

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crocasm”.

<sup>24</sup> For example, see Shultz, *The Manila Galleon*. JE Borao, “The Massacre of 1603 Chinese Perception of the Spanish in the Philippines”, *Itinerario* 22(1) (1998): 22–40. Lee Yu-chung 李毓中, Ji Tiesheng 季鐵生, “Tuxiang yu lishi: Xibanya guditu yu guhua chengxian Feilvbin huaren shenghuo (1571–1800) 圖像與歷史: 西班牙古地圖與古畫呈現菲律賓華人生活(1571-1800) [Image and History: Chinese Life in the Philippines seen in Spanish Old Maps and Paintings, 1571–1800]”, In *Dijiu jie Zhongguo Haiyang fazhanshi lunwenji* 第九屆中國海洋發展史論文集 [Collected articles from the ninth conference on the History of Chinese Ocean Development], 437–477 (Taipei: Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Zhongshan Renwen Shehui Kexue Yanjiusuo, 2005).

<sup>25</sup> See *The Philippine Islands*, volume 7 and volume 32.

<sup>26</sup> *The Philippine Islands*, 27.130–1.

of many kinds...[and] various kinds of crockery...”<sup>27</sup> Similarly, Santiago de Vera (in office, 1584–1590), the Governor-General of the Philippines, conveyed to the king in 1587 his observations on the Chinese merchants’ meticulous nature, noting their precision in matching their goods with the capacity of the ships arriving at the port, underscoring their strategic approach to trade.<sup>28</sup>

While appreciating the skills of Chinese immigrants, the Spaniards exhibited a complex mixture of curiosity and insistence on segregation, mandating that the Chinese reside within a specific quarter for straightforward governance: “Officials of the Spanish government in Manila had their preoccupied biases, as well as lingering doubts concerning the Chinese merchants with whom they conducted the daily business of commerce.”<sup>29</sup> Historical events, such as the 1574 attack by Limahong, exacerbated these suspicions, prompting the establishment of a segregated Chinese section. Such racial segregation despite economic collaboration with Chinese intermediaries was not unique to European-managed port cities; these were common practices, as seen also in Bantam and Ayutthaya.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *The Philippine Islands*, 3.219.

<sup>28</sup> “Letter to Felipe II. Santiago de Vera; Manila, June 26, 1587”, *The Philippine Islands*, 6.297. “The Chinese are such careful merchants that they bring goods in proportion to the vessels that come to the port”.

<sup>29</sup> Shirley Fish, *The Manila-Acapulco Galleons: The Treasure Ships of the Pacific: With an Annotated List of the Transpacific Galleons 156–1815* (Central Milton Keynes, UK: AuthorHouse, 2012), 94.

<sup>30</sup> Anthony Reid, *Imperial Alchemy: Nationalism and Political Identity in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 56.

In 1581, the colonial governors requested that all the Chinese immigrants move to a specific quarter, a swampy and unwelcoming area just outside the northeastern bounds of the walled city. This neighborhood was designed to be within the range of artillery and placed such that the Spaniards could closely monitor the Chinese. Despite the challenging environment, the Parián neighborhood was constructed relatively swiftly. The Sangleys managed to drain the swampy land, elevate the soil for the foundation, and lay out streets and blocks. Initially, most structures were made of bamboo and nipa thatch, which were later upgraded to more fire-resistant materials. To cope with local flooding, buildings were constructed on raised platforms. The Sangleys also built a pond, fed by the nearby Pasig River, featuring a central island that added a scenic touch to the area. A canal linking the pond and river facilitated the arrival and unloading of small boats carrying goods.

Bishop Salazar described the physical appearance of Parián in 1581, in great detail and with much admiration:

There are long passages, and the buildings are quadrangular in shape. This Parián was also destroyed by fire on account of the houses being built of reeds; but through the diligence of the president and governor, Doctor Vera, much better houses were built, and covered with tiles for protection against fire. This Parián has so adorned the city that I do not hesitate to affirm to your Majesty that no other known city in España or in these regions possesses anything so well worth seeing as this; for in it can be found the whole trade of China, with



all kinds of goods and curious things which come from that country...<sup>31</sup>

In the letter, the bishop further delved into the daily lives of the Sangleys residing in the city and highlighted the benefits extended to them by the Church. More crucially, he pointed out how the Church's involvement had fostered a positive perception of the Spaniards among the foreign communities. The bishop underscored the Church's moral superiority and employed foreign recognition as a way to affirm the eminence of the Spanish crown and empire.

Restrictions requiring the Sangleys to live only within Parián were frequently repeated in the seventeenth century. One document decreed that no Chinese could “live or own a house outside these settlements of the Parián and of Minondoc...No Sangleys can go among the islands, or as much as two leagues from the city, without special permission. Much less can he remain in the city at night, after the gates are shut, under penalty of death.”<sup>32</sup> While the Spanish wished all Chinese to be good Christians, they preferred them not to become too Hispanicized, but rather, to remain easily distinguishable. The Chinese did send numerous requests and petitions to live outside Parián, and the

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<sup>31</sup> “The Chinese, and the Parián at Manila”, *The Philippine Islands*, 7. 213–224.

<sup>32</sup> Antonio de Morga, “Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas”, *The Phillippine Islands*, 16.198. For more discussion, see Robert Ronald Reed, *Colonial Manila: The Context of Hispanic Urbanism and Process of Morphogenesis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 59.

privilege was sometimes granted, if an increasingly-raised license fee was paid.

In reality, however, the separation gradually became easily circumvented. By 1605, Intramuros was no longer exclusively a city for Spaniards. Many Chinese settlers found a way to keep their shops within the city walls or live there:

...there live, exist, and reside infidel Sangleys in the houses of the citizens of Manila, or in some of them. It should be known that they are...in a number of others, belonging to the most prominent citizens—that is, those of the highest life and rank in the city. ... the said Sangleys in the said houses, selling their merchandise and being present therein as if in their own homes.<sup>33</sup>

Starting in 1628, Chinese who married Christian Filipinos could move to the areas known today as Binondo and Tondo.

As the above-mentioned decree stated, Parián also implemented a curfew regulation, ordering that the Sangleys must return to their designated quarter during the night—except for gardeners and domestic staff serving in Spanish households. Another exception might be bakers. There were bakeries throughout the Manila area, both inside and outside the city. As Salazar recorded:

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<sup>33</sup> Edward Ayers, ed., *Cedulas reales despachadas a Manila* (Newberry Library: Manuscript Collection, 1700–1746), no. 91, 1597. Quoted from Birgit Tremml-Werner, *Spain, China and Japan in Manila, 1571–1644: Local Comparisons and Global Connections* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015), 281.

Many bakers make bread with the wheat and fine flour which they bring from China, and sell it in the market-place and along the streets. This has much benefited the city, for they make good bread and sell it at low cost; and although this land possesses much rice, many now use bread who did not do so before. They are so accommodating that when one has no money to pay for the bread, they give him credit and mark it on a tally. It happens that many soldiers get food this way all through the year, and the bakers never fail to provide them with all the bread they need.<sup>34</sup>

Because of their bread-making schedule, it was tempting for the bakers to stay overnight where they worked, something that the Manila government repeatedly discouraged.<sup>35</sup> But the restriction was likely not carried out strictly, due to the courtesy that these bakers offered to the Spanish soldiers. This helped them to circumvent the curfew regulation.

The discrepancy between planned separation and the increasing mobility of the Sangleys led to suspicion and distrust among the Spaniards. During the seventeenth century, several conflicts erupted between the two groups that ended with the killing of Chinese and many Sangleys leaving Manila. As Lucille Chia has discussed, occasional forced relocations and added taxes for the Sangleys led to periodic “uprisings” by the Chinese, which were often followed by massacres.<sup>36</sup> Out of concern that newly arrived Chinese would threaten local security, it became

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<sup>34</sup> *The Philippine Islands*, 7.215–216.

<sup>35</sup> Chia, “The Butcher, the Baker, and the Carpenter”, 520.

<sup>36</sup> Chia, “The Butcher, the Baker, and the Carpenter”, 516–7.

policy after 1603 to issue residence permits—not only to limit immigrant numbers but also to raise revenues. In 1639, the governor increased the license fee, adding a head tax of 25 pesos, and forced many Sangleys to work in rice fields with no pay. This policy led to an uprising in 1639, which resulted in 23,000 deaths. Events like this further enhanced the suspicions of the colonial governors regarding the Chinese immigrants. Later “uprisings” occurred in 1662, 1686, and 1762. The following section focuses on the first major conflict surrounding the Sangleys, and how the Chinese and Spanish governments responded to it.

### **The 1603 Incident**

To the Spaniards, Manila was always threatened by pirates, and the mighty Ming China could pose a threat as well. The Ming government, however, was less concerned about Manila and Chinese immigrants than many Spaniards described. The Ming view of Chinese immigrants going to Manila was usually romanticized and simplified. According to Fujian local official Xu Xueju’s 徐學聚 (1556–?) “Memorial of the report for the first time about the Red-Hair Barbarian (*Chubao hongmaofan shu*),” the court believed that Luzon had long been trading with the Fujianese and a peaceful relationship prevailed.<sup>37</sup> When the Dutch encroached over Taiwan, the Ming court was concerned, as that might have terminated the trade with Luzon, which Ming people

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<sup>37</sup> Xu Xueju 徐學聚, “Chubao hongmaofan shu”, Huang Ming jingshi wenbian, 433.

wanted to maintain via direct commercial connections. It seems that for most of the sixteenth century, Ming China had a loose yet peaceful relationship with Luzon, though Ming officials might not have been entirely sure who actually ran the Philippines.

But things started to change in 1593, when the Spanish governor Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas (1519–1593) organized a fleet of ships to attack surrounding islands, hoping to capture the fort at Terrenate in the Moluccas. He forcibly conscripted 250 local Chinese to serve as oarsmen on the flagship. The local Chinese resisted but gave up under the threat of force. At dawn on October 25th, the Chinese crew led by Pan Hewu 潘和五 and others rebelled, and only 14 out of the 80 Spaniards escaped, while the Viceroy Dasmariñas was speared to death by the angry Chinese.<sup>38</sup>

Immediately after the death of Viceroy Dasmariñas, his son, who was temporarily governor of the area, sent an intervention mission to Ming China, demanding that the “murderers” be turned over to the Spanish by the Ming court. At the same time, a large-scale persecution of the Chinese in the Philippines was launched, forcing many Chinese to leave the country. In early December 1593, a Spanish colonial mission arrived in China and was received by Xu Fuyuan, the governor of Fujian Province,

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<sup>38</sup> In the nineteenth century, Liang Qichao told this story in relation to nationalism. See Liang Qichao, “Feilvbin yuxia Pan Hewu 菲律賓寓俠潘和五”, In Liang Qichao 梁啟超, *Zhongguo zhimin bada weiren zhuan* 中國殖民八大偉人傳 [Biographies of the Eight Great People in Colonized China] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2015).

who reported the matter to Emperor Wanli. The emperor finally ordered that the involved Chinese be punished, though most of them could not be caught, and he rewarded the Spanish mission with a huge sum of money.

On January 6, 1594, a group of armed Chinese sailing ships arrived in Manila, led by seven Chinese officials who claimed to be from Zhangzhou. The arrival of the Chinese fleet frightened the Spaniards for a while, and local rumors began to circulate that the Chinese fleet was preparing to strike. Under such circumstances, the Spanish governor was still counting on the cooperation of the Ming government to help him catch his father's murderers in China, so he quickly agreed to the evacuation request of this Chinese force and gave the Chinese some food supplies.<sup>39</sup>

In 1602, following the advice of a Fujian merchant Zhang Yi 張嶷, the Ming court sent several officials, including the Minister of Haicheng County, to Luzon to locate a gold mine at Kiyiyi Mountain. At the time, the Ming court seemed to consider Luzon a tribute country, and so, the resources from there should be at the disposal of the court. However, the court was not clear about the difference between the native people of Luzon, the Spaniards who actually ruled over the whole island of Luzon in the sixteenth century, and the previous kings of Luzon. This Ming mission to Luzon was warmly welcomed by the local Chinese

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<sup>39</sup> For more discussion, see Historical Conservation Society, and International Association for Cultural Freedom, *The Chinese in the Philippines*, edited by Alfonso Felix (Manila: Solidaridad Pub. House, 1966).

with great fanfare, and thus made the Spaniards nervous. The mission failed as no gold mine was located. After they realized that the gold mine story was a lie, Zhang Yi was beheaded.<sup>40</sup>

The Spanish colonial government then suspected that the Ming government might attack their country and that the Chinese in Luzon might act as insiders. So, in the next year, Spain commandeered these Chinese to attack neighboring countries and purchased ironware at a high price. The Governor ordered a recording of the names of the Chinese in Luzon and divided them into units of 300 people, then started a massacre. The Chinese had no weapons to resist, and so they had to flee to Mount Dalun. The total number of deaths was around 25,000 people. Afterward, Spain reported to the Ming court that these Chinese would have conspired against the city, and thus the Spanish had no choice but to kill them.

Hearing about the massacre of immigrants who had mainly migrated from Zhangzhou, Fujian local officials reported the news to the Ming court and requested that the court send troops to Luzon. Xu Xueju cited the emperor's edict, and from that we can get a sense of the court's attitude. The court's response was addressed to the governor in the Philippines as a diplomatic letter, starting with a comment on how the Sangleys were essential to the development of Luzon:

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<sup>40</sup> “Yu Luzon xi 諭呂宋檄” (Edict to Luzon), cited in part in Xu Xueju's “Bao quhui Lüsòng shàng shū”.

Luzon was once a desolate island, a realm of mythical demons, dragons, and serpents. Yet, our seafaring folk braved these legends, trading goods across the seas, forging connections across the wide oceans, and conducting commerce with a myriad of foreigners. Over a decade, their endeavors transformed Luzon into a bustling metropolis. It was they who imparted agricultural knowledge and erected cities and dwellings, elevating Luzon to a jewel among the maritime nations. What then, could these people possibly owe Luzon? What profound grievances could justify the slaughter and maiming of ten thousand souls?

After this strong accusation, the edict continued to explain how the emperor tried to understand the tragedy and why he decided not to send troops immediately:

The barbarians' lack of civility is deplorable, and one wonders how they could evade divine retribution. Yet, despite persistent entreaties from local officials, the emperor has remained lenient. He has recognized Luzon as a longstanding hub of commerce, akin to our own nation, and has refrained from imposing harsh measures. The root of the overseas conflict remains unclear, making it difficult to assign blame. Moreover, merchants are considered the lowest social stratum; starting a war over such men seems unjustifiable. Those who forsook their homeland for the sea, already shunned by their kin and bereft of honor, are not worth the exhaustion of our troops. In the end, the emperor chooses not to heed the advice of his officials and instead dispatches edicts and envoys to communicate directly with the local chieftains. Let it be known that repentance and reverence for the divine are expected, to uphold righteousness. The overseas violence will, for now, not be prosecuted. Reflect upon the Emperor's vast generosity and the profound humanity of China. Zhang Yi's deceit was met with death, a warning to all. You are sentient beings, not insensate as wood or stone;



how can you not feel compelled to express gratitude and contemplate how to repay China's magnanimity? Should the reports of unrest prove false, and no insurrection exists, then adhere to the imperial directive, and commerce shall proceed uninterrupted. But if vengeance might incite mutual slaughter, then return those involved, and their possessions, to their native soil, so that trade may continue without hindrance.

After requesting Spanish gratitude for the Ming emperor's generosity and benevolence, the letter offered non-military solutions to the massacre: Return the Chinese merchants along with their properties. The edict ended with a threat to send one thousand battle ships from Fujian:

Should you [the Spaniards] heed the seditious words that counsel miserliness and avarice, choosing to stand aloof and reject the restitution of funds, then be warned: All commerce shall cease, and your vessels shall not venture westward. [In that case], if there are officials and soldiers in Fujian desire vengeance, I would let them harness the wind and sail forth in a thousand ships—even though their accents may be indistinguishable and both jade and stone risk incineration. Moreover, to those vassal states that have remained loyal for over three centuries, they are also hereby granted the right to dispatch troops to subdue Luzon.<sup>41</sup>

This edict reveals intriguing insights into how the Ming court viewed its relationship with Luzon. Firstly, the Ming court maintained their belief in a historically peaceful relationship, suspecting that any conflict had arisen from misunderstandings.

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<sup>41</sup> “Bao quhui Lüsong shang shu” 宋商疏 (Report to bring back the Luzon Merchants), *Huang Ming jingshi wenbian*, juan 433.

They notably omitted any mention of the Spaniards in Manila, suggesting a perception of Luzon as being governed by indigenous “chiefs” and tribes. The contribution of the Sangleys, including their craftsmanship and house building, was also highlighted, underlining their significance. Secondly, the Ming court’s condemnation was rooted in moral and reciprocal principles, emphasizing “Heaven’s way” and the notable mention of Zhang Yi’s execution for spreading rumors about Luzon. Thirdly, the hesitation of the Ming emperor to deploy troops was attributed to the Sangleys in Luzon being viewed as merchants who had left their homeland without intention of return, thus not warranting protection in Confucian terms.

Due to the complicated attitude towards the Sangleys, the letter embodies a paradoxical stance of the court: While expressing a desire to intervene, they showed restraint, suggesting that the reported unrest might be rumor and the return of the Chinese immigrants also should be considered. Therefore, the court opted not to deploy central governmental troops but rather permitted local officials to act or encouraged other tributary states to intervene. This nuanced approach reflects a complex interplay of diplomacy, a sense of moral superiority, and strategic caution.

The Ming court exhibited a modest concern for the Chinese migrants without taking much action when those Chinese were mistreated overseas. As Birgit Tremml-Werner argued, “while Ming China was more concerned with the tributary states,

offending overseas Chinese was not considered a direct insult against the country or a potential threat.”<sup>42</sup> While the Sangleys’ contribution to the local area was praised as a merit for China, these people were not entirely viewed as faithfully Chinese. Luzon was deemed by the Ming court as insufficiently significant to warrant engagement through formal diplomatic routes.

The Chinese letter was later translated into Spanish and presented to the governor Don Pedro de Acuña (in office, 1602–1606) in 1605, which was already two years after the incident. This translated letter was titled “Letter from a Chinese Official to Acuna.” At the beginning of the letter, it explains that this is the “translation of a letter from the inspector-general of Chincheo in the kingdom of China... The address is to the great captain-general of Luzon.” The translator also mentioned that the letter was signed by and sent multiple times by the Fujian magistrates Xu Xueju and Tang Zhaojing 湯兆京 (1565–?) and the eunuch inspector Gao Cai 高案. The letter was from the local provincial officials, and they seemed to try to reconcile between the Ming emperor and the Philippines. While the cited part of the edict by Xu Xueju only mentioned the death penalty of Zhang Yi, the translated letter was quite detailed concerning what Zhang did (Zhang was referenced with his Spanish name, given to him in the Philippines):

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<sup>42</sup> Birgit Tremml-Werner, *Spain, China and Japan in Manila, 1571–1644: Local Comparisons and Global Connections* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015), 309.

Some years before I came here as inspector, a Sangley, by name Tionez, [*sic*; *sc.* Tiognen] went by permission of the king of China with three mandarins to Luzon, searching at Cavite for gold and silver. The whole thing was a lie, for they found neither gold nor silver; accordingly, the king directed this deceiver Tionez to be punished so that the strict justice done in China might be known.

During the time of the preceding viceroy and eunuch, Tiognen and his companion, named Yanlion, told this lie; and I, after I came hither, begged the king to have a copy made of all the documents in the case of Tiognen, and to command the said Tiognen to be brought before him with the record of the case. I myself saw the aforesaid papers and caused him to see that the whole thing had been a deceit uttered by the said Tiognen. I wrote to the king, declaring that on account of the deceits of the said Tiognen, the Castilians had suspected us of intending to make war upon them and that on this account, they had put to death more than thirty thousand Chinese in Luzon! The king did as I asked him and therefore punished the said Yanglion by ordering him to be killed, and the said Tiognen, by commanding his head to be cut off and suspended in a cage.<sup>43</sup>

This letter attributes Toigen's demise to dishonesty, so the killing of Zhang Yi was interpreted as a conciliatory act toward the Philippines. This letter presents numerous variances from its original Chinese letter. The Chinese narrative adopted a rhetorical tone, striving to cast the Ming court in a virtuous light, a stance not as pronounced in the translated Spanish account. Additionally, in the letter, "Castilian" denotes the Spanish—this

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<sup>43</sup> *The Philippine Islands*, 13.287–281.

term was not used in the original Chinese correspondence, which used terms like *qiuzhang* (chiefs) and *Folangji* (a commonly used term for the Spaniards). The Chinese elaborated on the moral consequences awaiting the Philippines for ensnaring Chinese nationals, whereas the Spanish version was candid, enumerating reasons for the Chinese emperor not to contemplate war with the Castilians. Markedly gentler, the translated letter appeals to the Spaniards' benevolence.

Upon receiving the letter, Bishop Miguel de Benavides (1552–1605) urgently appealed to the high court, voicing his grievances concerning the Chinese. He echoed the sentiments from Ming China and advocated for the repatriation of the Chinese and their possessions, perceiving the Chinese threat of ceasing trade as genuine and the request as justifiable. Consequently, he proposed the return of their confiscated properties, even if it caused the government some debt. Moreover, he called for a reassessment of the colonial government's legal authority over the Sangleys. After consulting with Chinese advisors, he surmised that while war might be averted, a possible seizure of trade routes by the Chinese government posed a significant risk to the Philippines' economic stability.<sup>44</sup>

The Supreme Court of Manila met on June 13, 1606 to study the archbishop's petition with "lords president and auditors

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<sup>44</sup> Miguel de Benavides, et al., "Complaints against the Chinese", *The Philippine Islands*, vol. 13.

of the royal Audiencia and Chancillería of these Filipinas Islands being in session.” After consideration, the court ruled as follows: “the depositaries should be commanded to render an account as soon as possible, of the property which they have held on deposit, so that it may be surrendered; and that, when the ships shall have arrived from Castilla, what is owing shall be paid into the royal treasury.”<sup>45</sup>The court also suggested that, regarding the Chinese who were then in the galleys, their matter would be examined and suitable measures would be issued before the Chinese left.

However, the governor Acuna did not agree with Benavides and suggested something quite different to the king and the viceroy in New Spain. He wrote a letter to the king to complain about Benavides:

Ever since I began to have dealings with the archbishop Don Fray Miguel de Benavides and have recognized his temper, I have perceived the difficulties that he would cause me...I believe that he would be better in his cell than in the archbishopric or bishopric...<sup>46</sup>

He opined that there was no need to be afraid of China in his letter to the viceroy of Ucheo because Spain’s empire, with its vast colonies, was as large or even larger than China:

As for the statement that the letter is sent to let me know the greatness of the king of China and of his realms, and that they are so great that he governs all upon which the moon and the sun shed their light; and the other statement that he desires me to be

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<sup>45</sup> “Relations with the Chinese”, *The Philippine Islands*, 14.43–44.

<sup>46</sup> “Complains against the archbishop”, *The Philippine Islands*, 14.30.

acquainted with the great wisdom with which that kingdom is governed, vast as it is, and that no one should dare offend it, and referring to the war in Corea—to this I answer that the Spaniards have measured by palms, and that very exactly, all the countries belonging to all the kings and lordships in the world. Since the Chinese have no commerce with foreign nations, it seems to them that there is no other country but their own, and that there is no higher greatness than theirs; but if he knew the power of some of the kings with whom my sovereign, the king of the Hespañas, carries on continual war, the whole of China would seem to him very small. The king of China would do well to notice that from here to the court of Hespaña the distance is five thousand leguas; and that on the voyage thither are two kingdoms, Nueva Hespaña and Peru, whose territory is so great that it is almost equal to that of China, without mentioning very large islands in those seas. At the same time, I know that the kingdom of China is governed with much wisdom, and all the people here know, and I know, of the war in Corea.<sup>47</sup>

Acuña continued to defensively articulate several points mentioned in the Chinese letter. He started by challenging the assertion that 30,000 Sangleys were killed and suggested not even half that figure perished in the revolt. He then refuted Chinese claims of Spanish brutality, and acknowledged the significant contributions of the Chinese to the Philippines. He said:

Spaniards are not cruel at heart, and we never make war on anyone without just reasons. We regard ourselves as a just people and as having a standing in the world, and we would be greatly grieved if it could be said of us with truth that we have done wrongs or

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<sup>47</sup> “Letter from Acuña to the Viceroy of Ucheo”, *The Philippine Islands*, 14.47–8.

injuries to anyone—especially to our friends and to those who are sincere friends to us. Thus, in the case of the Sangleys who were here, we treated them as brothers and sons; and, without any precaution, we permitted them to enter our houses at all seasons and at all hours, as if they had been Spaniards.<sup>48</sup>

In this statement, Acuna emphasized the global image of the Spaniards that they wanted to maintain, as the reason they usually treated the Sangleys very well. This was not only a defense against the accusation in the Chinese letter but also a way to highlight the moral superiority of the Spaniards. Furthermore, he recognized the Chinese Emperor's hesitation to declare war on Luzon and downplayed the Spaniards' culpability, stating that had they acted otherwise it would have been a case of unwise governance.<sup>49</sup>

Regarding the Ming government's demand to return Chinese people and property, Acuna maintained that while the Chinese rebels merited death for their crimes, mercy had prevailed as many were permitted to serve on the galleons instead. Those guilty of lesser crimes were freed, and others were released from hard labor. Concerning the Chinese property that was being held, the Spaniards returned what could be rightfully claimed. Unclaimed goods would remain in the treasury, with assurances from the Spanish that they would seek the rightful owners. Acuna especially emphasized that the returns were acts based upon justice, not responses to threats of war.

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<sup>48</sup> *The Philippine Islands*, 14.47.

<sup>49</sup> *The Philippine Islands*, 14.49–50.



Towards the end of the letter, he stated, “I am sure that the king of China and his ministers, being prudent, politic, and discreet persons, will not wage war for causes so light.” He was confident that trade with China would persist, given its profitability for both sides, and he concluded, “Hence we may say that in this trade, the Chinese have as great an interest as the Castilians have, or even more.”<sup>50</sup> In this letter, Acuna both exhibited confidence that Spain was stronger and assumed that China would not invade. He held the high ground in this discussion, emphasizing the moral superiority of the Spaniards, their military might, and the vast commercial profits that would be at stake. This letter was more a defense of his governance than a diplomatic response to the Chinese. The audiences were the Spanish king and the governors in New Spain.

In this conversation between the Ming Chinese and Spanish, the prospect of warfare remained largely theoretical, with skepticism being displayed by the Spanish governor about China’s willingness to deploy troops. The conversation reflects how political discourse, trade, and religion intersected. References to projected state/imperial image were highlighted by both sides, while China and Spain were on two ends of the negotiation table concerning immigrants in foreign lands. Trade, the common thread linking the two nations and a motivator for Chinese migration abroad, became a diplomatic lever. This economic interdependence also likely softened the perceived threat from Ming China and dampened Spain’s impulse to expel

<sup>50</sup> *The Philippine Islands*, 14.50.

Chinese immigrants. Religious voices, notably the bishop's, were significant in this diplomatic narrative as well. The bishop was inclined to follow the Ming court's advice to defuse tensions, though this approach often led to disagreements with the governor.

As in many incidents like this, challenges always confronted the Spanish in Manila and the Fujian locals in Ming China. The difficulty of communication stemmed from the lack of formal and direct communication channels, translation barriers, and mutual perceived moral superiority. The Ming government wished to remain distant from overseas affairs and immigrants while also maintaining its central and dominant role among foreigners. The colonial governors seemed to have a stronger aptitude for diplomacy than their ecclesiastical counterparts. Notably, conflicts existed both between the Chinese and Spanish and within each national group. The Chinese court and Fujian local governors had different motivations and desires to offer protection to the Sangleys, and the Spanish bishop and governor also disagreed on how to respond to the Chinese letter. Domestic conversations—including the ones between Philippines governors and those in New Spain—seemed to be more important than answering the other country.

## **Conclusion**

The Zhangzhou migrants to Manila represent a snapshot of early modern globalization. Their mobility, networks, and skills enhanced maritime connections within Asia and between Asia and

the Americas. In many respects, they embodied the excitement of early modern globalization: flexibility, a global perspective, overseas travel, international commodities, and cultural appropriation. They were ultimately key operators in Manila as builders, merchants, craftsmen, servants, and manufacturers, and they were significant designers and suppliers for the trans-Pacific galleon trade. They also contributed revenue to both the Ming court and the Spanish king.

But, as a group of people who moved beyond the strict regulations of the Ming state and the Spanish Empire, they aroused doubts and suspicions of untrustworthiness on both sides. To the Chinese, they were seen as a group of restless individuals who were lazy, greedy, and risk-seeking. They attracted conflicting comments from local gentry and central officials. Regardless of the source, they were deemed outside the Confucian norm. For the Spanish, the Sangleyes were regarded as intelligent and careful yet also suspicious. They were closely monitored and regulated, and also excluded from the central life of the empire. This suspicious attitude translated into their mistreatment in Manila, the hesitation of the Ming emperor to send troops to protect them, and a lack of care about their situation on the part of the Spanish governor.

The Sangleyes offer a unique perspective on the tug-of-war between two state powers, which desired to maintain a peaceful relationship with each other yet simultaneously adopted a cautious stance characterized by defensive thinking. Ironically, while the Sangleyes contributed significant sums of money to both

the Chinese and Spanish, a majority of these funds were spent on defensive infrastructures targeting the other party. Caught between China and Spain, the Sangleys benefited and suffered due to their seemingly contradictory relationship.

Moreover, the case of the Sangleys mirrors the dynamics between the local and central governments. Local officials in Fujian showed more empathy towards these immigrants, whereas the central court maintained a distance. The local bishop advocated for better treatment of the Sangleys in Manila, yet the king and Spanish governor favored a stricter approach. As migration increased, even within each country attitudes towards this new entity—with its mixed and fluid identities—began to diverge.

The narrative presented in this article is merely the tip of the iceberg in the vast annals of migration history. In subsequent centuries, the world witnessed migrations on a larger scale, which were more systematic and over greater distances. The contributions of and challenges stemming from migrants have expanded with the ongoing development of globalization, and they persist to the present day.

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