

The Augustinians in Seventeenth Century Japan

(continuation) *)

CHAPTER IV

Augustinian Martyrdom

The year 1623 witnessed the proclamation and investiture of Hidetada's son Yemitsu as Shogun. In October 1623 the Governor of Manila sent Don Hernando de Ayala and Antonio de Arceo to Japan to convey to the new shogun the greetings of the new Spanish King, Philip IV, and to renew the former relations¹⁾. As they were unable to get a ship to Meaco, they went to Satsuma waiting to be admitted to the Court. When no answer came from the Shogun, they tried to go to Nagasaki. There they were denied admittance as they were under suspicion to have a priest aboard. Only with the help of a samurai of Satsuma could they finally enter the city. When still no word arrived from the Shogun's court they resolved to go to Meaco without letters of invitation. On the way they met Gonroku, who told them it would be of little use to go to see the Shogun about admittance of new missionaries. Already in preparation of this embassy a meeting had been held at Manila which took up the problem of sending missionaries in the boats of commerce. The Governor had forbidden all commercial vessels of the Philippines to carry missionaries. Even the Archbishop of Manila agreed to this stipulation. The reasons were that in the face

*) *Augustiniana*, XIV (1964), 315-377, 640-669.

¹⁾ SICARDO, *op. cit.* 77, 1; SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* II 207, 1 and 235, 2 f.

of severe persecution the missionaries would not accomplish much and, further, they were also sorely needed in the Islands ²⁾).

Even these offers did not prevent the suspicious Yemitsu from expelling the Spaniards from Japan. Those who were married to Japanese women had to leave their wives and children in Japan ³⁾. Likewise all Japanese natives were forbidden to leave the country without having denied the Christian faith ⁴⁾.

These developments meant for the religious corporations of the Philippines that they had to depend on their own private resources to get to Japan.

The religious Orders in a joint venture in 1623 purchased a boat and sent ten missionaries to Japan ⁵⁾. Among them were the two discalced Augustinians Francisco Terrero and Vicente Simoens. The former was born in Villamediana on June 2, 1590, and was baptized on the same day ⁶⁾. He was the son of Pedro Terrero de Ortega and Maria Perez. When he was two years old he lost his mother, and at eight his father. His two uncles, both priests, educated him after his parents death until the age of fourteen. At that time he returned home to live with his brothers and take care of the family farm. Later he studied Arts and Law in the college of the Jesuits at Palencia and in 1614 he entered the monastery of the Discalced Augustinians at Valladolid. A year later, November 11, 1615, he made his profession and in 1620 he came to the Philippines. During his stopover at Mexico he lived with the Augustinians of the Observance. After a short period of ministry among the Zambales he was appointed Subprior and Master of Novices at Manila.

His companion Vicente de San Antonio Simoens ⁷⁾ was born

²⁾ SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* II 236, 1.

³⁾ SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* II 206, 2.

⁴⁾ SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* II 204, 2, and 235, 2.

⁵⁾ OCHOA, *op. cit.* 207.

⁶⁾ OCHOA, *op. cit.* 13 ff.; SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* II 298, 2 says: « No consta el año de su nacimiento ».

⁷⁾ SICARDO, *op. cit.* 273 f.; SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* II 302, 2 f. and JIMENEZ, *op. cit.* 196 give him the family name Carvalho. They also attempt to prove that Vicente de San Antonio was an Augustinian of the Common Observance. They make reference to a Manuel Carballo who made profession at Lisbon in 1587 and speculate why he had changed his name to Vicente. It seems very improbable that Manuel is our Vicente. He is mentioned as the youngest in the group tormented on Mt. Unzen (cf. M. CLAVER, O. S. A., *El admirable y excelente*

April 5, 1590 at Albufeira in the Province of Algarbe in southern Portugal. As the son of Antonio Simoens, the town's physician, and Catalina de Pereyra he grew up in the serene peace of a family which could afford to give him a splendid education and all the other advantages which affluence can purchase. While he was still a student at the University of Lisbon his father died suddenly. He became a priest of his home diocese. After his mother's death the young priest sold his family's possessions in Albufeira and thought of consecrating himself to God in a missionary career. He did not go into the Portuguese missions because he was afraid the illustrious name of his family would give him preferences he did not desire. With his sight on the missions in the Spanish Patronato he met a former friend of his who was just leaving for Mexico in the service of the King of Spain. He joined him and sailed for Mexico on May 26, 1619.

By chance a group of Discalced Augustinians left for the Philippines on the same boat. He became acquainted with them and joined them in Mexico. He began his novitiate on September 22, 1621. On March 25, 1622 he continued his voyage to the Philippines and arrived at Manila at the end of June after having assisted a priest who died from a contagious disease. He made his profession September 22, 1622 at Manila. Four months later he went with Francisco de Jesus Terrero to Japan. On April 28, 1623, they left in the wooden craft which the four religious Orders of the Philippines had purchased. On June 20 they came to Japan, landing in the port of Coxi, which today is called Ichiki. After many vicissitudes, so common to the travelers of those days, they arrived on Saturday, October 14, at Nagasaki and met Father Bartolomé Gutiérrez that same night. Francisco Terrero remained with Father Bartolomé to study Japanese while Father Vicente began to work among the faithful from the homes of some Portuguese merchants

Martirio en el Reyno de Japon de los Benditos Padres fray Bartolome Gutiérrez, fray Francisco de Gracia, y fray Tomas de San Agustin... hasta el año 1637 (Manila 1638) 17; SICARDO, *op. cit.* 256, 2; SAN AGUSTÍN, *op. cit.* 284, 2). The profession date 1587 would make him at least ten years older than Father Gutiérrez, the senior of the group. Besides Vicente Simoens says of himself in a letter written in 1622 (!), published in AHHA (1917) 12: « el ser moderno en la religion ». To the details of his biography see OCHOA, *op. cit.* 127 ff. His formula of Profession, OCHOA, *op. cit.* 196 ff. has Simoens, *op. cit.* 127 ff.

whom he had met. Already on All Saints Day of the same year he had his first acquaintance with persecution. While saying Mass in the home of a Portuguese the warning cry arose : « The Police ! » Vicente removed quickly his vestments and changed into Portuguese garb while others removed the altar and the supplies. He left the house in disguise without being molested. He spent the day on the other side of the river and only at night did he go to the house of Bartolomé to see Father Francisco. Vicente continued his work at Nagasaki, while Francisco went to North Honshu in the company of Diego de San Francisco and two other Friars Minor⁸). He was entrusted with the southern district of Honshu, Yonezawa, and returned to Nagasaki in 1628. Their missionary career was to reach its climax in the company of Bartolomé Gutiérrez to whom we give now our full attention.

Missionary vocation

Bartolomé Gutiérrez was born in Mexico City⁹), at that time the capital of New Spain. Escobar, one of the early historiographers of the Augustinian Province of Michoacan, affirms that according to reliable reports he was born on the Feast of St. Augustine 1580¹⁰). He also describes minutely the situation of the home of the Gutiérrez family. Bartolomé was baptized in the Cathedral parish of Mexico on September 4, 1580¹¹). His parents were Alonso Gutiérrez and Anna Rodriguez de Espinosa. They reared their son in the faith and sent him to Jesuit schools¹²). The result of the good education

⁸) On this missionary expedition consult OCHOA, *op. cit.* 257 ff.; UYTENBROECK, *op. cit.* 86 ff.

⁹) HERRERA, *op. cit.* I 110 f. states that he was born at Puebla de los Angeles, continuing a mistake made by Barolomé's first biographer, CLAVER, *op. cit.* 27, which has been copied repeatedly. Sicardo dispelled it by looking up Bartolomé's Baptismal Record at Mexico City and locating the house where Bartolomé was born (*op. cit.* 239 f.). The Baptismal Record is published in GARCIA, *op. cit.* 320, note 1; M. DE ESCOBAR, O. S. A., *Americana Thebaida* (Mexico 1924) 591 reproduces it in facsimile.

¹⁰) ESCOBAR, *op. cit.* 590. SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* 273, 1 has August 24. He has in his favor that the child was named Bartolomé after the saint whose feast was celebrated on August 24.

¹¹) *Supra* note 9.

¹²) ESCOBAR, *op. cit.* 592.

was soon evident. The Chroniclers tell us that even in youth he was a model of the Christian life ¹³).

At sixteen he entered the Augustinian monastery of his native city. On June 1, 1597 he pronounced his vows before Father Diego de Contreras, the Prior ¹⁴). Shortly after his profession he was sent to Yuririapundaro for his studies ¹⁵). After his ordination to the priesthood his Superiors assigned him to Puebla de los Angeles ¹⁶). Garcia is of the opinion that he exercised the office of Master of Novices there ¹⁷). This seems very improbable, as he left for the missions when only 26 years of age. Francisco Terrero, his companion in martyrdom, affirms that Bartolomé was a graduate of the University of Bologna ¹⁸). In this he is most certainly mistaken, since none of the Mexican sources indicate this, nor would there have been time for extra studies.

The transfer of Father Bartolomé to Puebla was to have a profound influence on his future. In this monastery a group of Spanish Augustinians stopped over on their way from Spain to the Philippines and had to wait until their Superior, Father Pedro Solier ¹⁹), afterwards Bishop of Puerto Rico and Archbishop of Santo Domingo, had finished arrangements for their trip to the Far East. In conversation with these future missionaries and their chief, Bartolomé learned about their work in the Islands and above all in Japan ²⁰). We have an amusing little anecdote on the future martyr from those days of irresolution and anticipation. When he discussed with the students his desire to preach the Gospel in Japan, they remarked jestingly pointing at his huge frame : « You are too

¹³) SICARDO, *op. cit.* 240, 2.

¹⁴) CLAVER, *op. cit.* 28; SICARDO, *op. cit.* 241, 2; SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* 273, 1; ESCOBAR, *op. cit.* 593.

¹⁵) CLAVER, *ibid.*; SICARDO, *ibid.*; ESCOBAR, *op. cit.* 594. In 1683, when Sicardo gathered materials for the process of information on the Japanese martyrs, Bartolomé's cell was changed into a chapel, and the picture of the martyr was placed there.

¹⁶) SICARDO, *op. cit.* 241, 2; SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* 273, 2. This stay must have led Claver to the wrong conclusion on Bartolomé's birthplace.

¹⁷) *Op. cit.* 321; HERRERA, *op. cit.* I 236, 1.

¹⁸) OCHOA, *op. cit.* 253 (Letter of Francis of Jesus of October 18, 1631, from the prison in Omura.

¹⁹) On Bishop Solier see HERRERA, *op. cit.* II 270; SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* I 487; DE CASTRO, *op. cit.* 260 f.; PEREZ, *op. cit.* 57.

²⁰) SICARDO, *op. cit.* 241, 2; ESCOBAR, *op. cit.* 595.

big to suffer fatigues and deprivations ». In reply he said : « So much the better ; there will be more relics available of my body when I shall have died a martyr » ²¹⁾).

Bartolomé finally joined the missionaries more with a desire to work in Japan than in the Philippines. In a group of twenty he set out from Acapulco on February 22, 1606 in the ship « Espiritu Santo », and arrived on May 10 in the Philippines ²²⁾. For several years he was a member of the community of Manila. Always prompt and punctual in his religious obligations, he was made Master of Novices. The Discalced Augustinian Gregorio Ochoa del Carmen affirms that Bartolomé made an eleven month novitiate with the Discalced Augustinians at Manila. He insinuates that he returned to his former community only because of his desire to go to Japan ²⁴⁾. But Escobar had already established that Father Andres de Espiritu Santo, Ochoa's source, assumed this detail without proof ²⁵⁾. The reason for this supposition, he suggests, was that he wore the narrow habit of the Province of Michoacan which was very similar to that of the Discalced. We can also add that none of the Augustinian sources mention this. On the contrary, Gaspar San Agustin affirms that he had it from Brother Dominic Sanches, a novice of Father Bartolomé, that he was never with the Discalced ²⁶⁾.

Missioner in Japan

We have already seen Bartolomé's first experience in Japan. After the great exile of 1614 he reassumed his office of Master of Novices in Manila. Among his novices during these years were the first two natives of Japan who studied for the priesthood in the Augustinian Order, Thomas of St. Augustine and Michael of St. Joseph, who would follow their Novice Master to martyrdom in Japan. In 1618 Bartolomé returned to Japan accompanied by Pedro Zuñiga. The Christians lodged him in a house not too close to the main road. From a letter of Father Vicente Simoens we know that

²¹⁾ SICARDO, *op. cit.* 242, 1.

²²⁾ SICARDO, *op. cit.* 79, 2; SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* 273, 2.

²³⁾ SICARDO, *op. cit.* 242, 1; SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* 274, 1; ESCOBAR, *op. cit.* 596.

²⁴⁾ *Op. cit.* 458.

²⁵⁾ *Op. cit.* 596 f.; DE CASTRO, *op. cit.* 509.

²⁶⁾ *Op. cit.* 274, 1; Herrera had followed Espiritu Santo (*op. cit.* 236, 1).

the house where Father Bartolomé dwelled was situated on a hill ²⁷⁾. At the time of Bartolomé's second arrival in Japan Hidetada renewed the persecution ; for the fall of Osaka had made him undisputed master of the country.

During his second stay the missionary spent fifteen long years in Japan and underwent unbelievable hardships and fatigue, preaching the Gospel despite a bloody persecution. Thousands of people found their way into the Church through his labors, attracted above all by the holiness of his life. His usual routine was to spend the day hidden in a cave or a thicket in the woods. At night he went into the village where he spent his time in the home of one of the more trustworthy Christians, hearing confessions and baptizing. In the early morning hours he said Mass and gave Communion to those who had confessed during the night. Then he withdrew again into the woods. No fatigue nor danger could induce him to discontinue his ministry. While walking through the mountains he was at the disposal of every Christian who came for advice. At times he had to walk in disguise for days and nights to more distant places, for under Hidetada a price had been set on the head of each missionary, and it had become dangerous even to stay in the same place for two successive nights ²⁸⁾. Bartolomé's life in Japan was one continuous journey. Without stopping long in any place, he walked from one province of Japan to another. The threat and possibility of arrest were always imminent and his situation was aggravated by the cessation of supplies from Manila ²⁹⁾.

Yet the hardships of his missionary life were not enough for Bartolomé Gutiérrez ; he added to them his customary penances. He almost always wore a hairshirt and used the discipline. In spite of the hunger he suffered in the mountains, he fasted for long periods content with a little boiled rice or a boiled root ³⁰⁾. Thus he wished to assure divine blessings on his labors. This penitential life wore him down so that he seemed but a skeleton ; his face became so thin that it seemed but skin and bones.

²⁷⁾ OCHOA, *op. cit.* 231. Father Vicente visited him often in this house as Bartolomé taught him Japanese.

²⁸⁾ Letter of Vicente Simoens of January 18, 1624, published in OCHOA, *op. cit.* 231 f.

²⁹⁾ « The Japanese-Manila trade petered out in the third decade of the 17th century ». BOXER, *Chr. Cent.* 302.

³⁰⁾ SICARDO, *op. cit.* 245, 1.

During this period of hide-and-seek Father Bartolomé had some narrow escapes. Like St. Felix of Nola he remained undiscovered on one occasion because a spider had built its web between the closed door and the doorpost of the room where he was hiding. On another occasion he went into a house to say Mass and administer the Sacraments. When the searching party asked the landlady to point him out, she said with a smile : « Just go in, you will find him ». Believing that she was making fun of them and fearing to lose face, they walked away. Once he was helped by his own ingenuity. When the bugyo's spies approached a house in which he was just staying he grabbed a guitar and strumming the instrument he walked undisturbed through their midst singing ³¹⁾. A contemporary report has this to say about his ministry during those perilous years :

« The Father of the Order of St. Augustine has produced much fruit in Nagasaki while he found people who housed him : now, as he does not know where to hide in the city, he lives in the nearby mountains, from where he works for his neighbor » ³²⁾.

However, he could not forever remain undiscovered. At the beginning of August 1629 a new investigator came to Nagasaki in the person of the local ruler of Bungo, Takenaka Uneme-no-sho. He turned out to be one of the most cruel persecutors of the Church. Combined with his innate cruelty was his desire to win the favor of the Shogun Yemitsu (1623-1651). He engaged a large number of investigators with the intention of breaking the spirit of the Christians. Aware that the forbidden religion could not be extirpated by killing its adherents his policy was to make apostates not martyrs. To entice the populace to report the missionaries he increased the reward set on their capture.

Vicente Simoens describes his coming to Nagasaki in a letter of July 22, 1632, to a friend :

« In the year 1629 in the first days of August a tyrant, named Unemedono, assumed the rule of Nagasaki. He persecuted the Christian religion with such rigor that nothing re-

³¹⁾ *Ibid.*

³²⁾ SICARDO, *op. cit.* 246, 2.

mained untouched by his fury except the city's outskirts. With violent torments, with threats, or again with other schemes of hell he subdued all men and women of low and high condition. The persecution was such and so extraordinary at that time in this kingdom, that there remained no creature, sensate or insensate, dead or alive, or even still unborn, which was not reached by it. The living felt the horrible persecution against the Catholic faith and its adherents and the dead showed evidence of it.

The mountains full of persecutors trembled with fear because of their cries and roars. The rocks were broken in order not to give protection to the Christians. The woods and plains were burnt in order not to give shelter to the persecuted; even the trees suffered the rigor of the fire so that the accused could not hide in their leaves. The waters were not allowed to carry boats in order not to receive those who would seek refuge there, the rivers and the brooks, red with blood, felt the severity of the tyrant, the animals left their lairs and fleeing from the woods heralded the horrible persecution. The towns, villages and cities were abandoned by their inhabitants. Men, women and children were taken. After having been humiliated and mistreated some were imprisoned, others burned alive, others sawed asunder with bamboo saws, others killed with lances, others beheaded »³³⁾.

Although the tempo of the persecution was thus again increased, Father Bartolomé did not slacken his zeal. He went from place to place to confirm the Christians in their loyalty. Takenaka captured him by making use of apostates³⁴⁾. When these had heard that he was at Isahaya, they went there, and not finding

³³⁾ SICARDO, *op. cit.* 102, 1; OCHOA, *op. cit.* 323.

³⁴⁾ On the extensive use of apostates in the search for missionaries see: CLAVER, *op. cit.* 3 f.; letter of Francisco Terrero to his Provincial of Oct. 18, 1631 (OCHOA, *op. cit.* 408): « Siendo muchos los Judas que estaban sobornados con mucha plata para entregarnos en manos del tirano, tanto que no hallabamos seguridad en los montes mas umbrosos ni en cavernas de la tierra; por lo qual caimos los cinco, que hoy estamos presos ». To treachery could be added the use of torture, e.g. Paul Nagati of Chukinozu was severely tortured to reveal the whereabouts of Francis of Jesus, SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* II 229, 2. Paul Kita, a dojuku of the Dominicans, betrayed Br. Gabriel, O. F. M., letter of Francis of Jesus of May 26, 1630 to Diego of St. Francis, AIA I (1914) 72: « On March 20 our most dear Brother Gabriel of St. Magdalene joined us in prison; he had been arrested at the end of February in the mountains of Ikiriki. Paul Kita, formerly a Catechist of the Dominican Fathers, procured him this grace. Paul had no bad intention, but just wanted to escape torture ».

him in the village, they searched the surrounding woods for him. On November 10, 1629 they apprehended him at Kikizu in Arima ³⁵⁾ with his eighteen year old catechist, Brother John Shozuburo ³⁶⁾. Without quoting his sources Crasset indicates that Bartolomé's refuge had been found out and his host had betrayed him.

« ...The first (to be arrested) was Father Bartholomew Guttiers of St. Austin's Order. This good Father being retired to Conga, sent out his Servant to buy provisions in Town, but being surprised by the Guards, they carry'd him before the Governour, and put him to the Question. The Trusty Servant endure'd the Torment with invincible Patience, but his Patron had not the same Courage, for hearing the Judge threaten to Torture him, he confessed the whole Story, and betrayed the Father, upon which Soldiers were sent to seize him » ³⁷⁾.

The two Augustinians were at first held in the small local prison, and then transferred in chains to the jail annexed to the residence of the Bugyo of Nagasaki. On November 15 they were joined by Anthony Ishida, a Japanese Jesuit ³⁸⁾, on the 18th by Francisco Terrero ³⁹⁾; and on the 25th by Vicente Simoens ⁴⁰⁾. The large number of Christians who were held in the same jail were happy that they had the company of priests. All suffered greatly from filth in the overcrowded prison. The bodies of the dead were often left there for days in order to torment the living with the sickening odor ⁴¹⁾.

On December 10 Takenaka had the priest prisoners transferred

³⁵⁾ Letter of Francis of Jesus, *loc. cit.* 94.

³⁶⁾ John Shozuburo is the John Chocumbuco of the Augustinian Breviary. In the second nocturn he is described as a member of the Third Order. However, we have a letter of Bartolomé Gutiérrez to the Provincial at Manila in which he states that he received Brother John as a member of the First Order. This letter is published in SICARDO, *op. cit.* 250, 1; SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* II 229, 1; MARTINEZ, *op. cit.* 124, note 1. It is confirmed by a letter of Francis of Jesus of Nov. 1, 1630, OCHOA, *op. cit.* 397: « Entre ellos era el doshico del P. Fr. Bartholomé Gutiérrez, con el habito de novicio suyo ».

³⁷⁾ J. CRASSET, *History of the Church of Japan* (London 1707) II 472.

³⁸⁾ The Augustinian sources mention him under the Portuguese name Pinto.

³⁹⁾ OCHOA, *op. cit.* 326 f.; UYTENBROECK, *op. cit.* 121.

⁴⁰⁾ The very interesting report on the arrest of Vicente Simoens at Hiroshima with the help of an apostate catechist is contained in OCHOA, *op. cit.* 327 ff.

⁴¹⁾ BOXER, *Chr. Cent.* 348 ff.

to the prison of Omura for the sake of greater security ⁴²⁾. The next day he left for Yedo, the court of the Shogun, to report on his success. Vicente Simoens gives us a detailed account of the prison :

« The place in which we are imprisoned is at the foot of a very high mountain. It is cut out of the bedrock and is two lances high. We are underneath this rock. Many rivulets of water run down on both sides. It is so narrow — although the one in which we were last year was still much smaller — that the five of us are on four mats, with the common place inside » ⁴³⁾.

The martyrs spent two years in this place. For nourishment they received only a little rice boiled in water, to which at times a small fish was added ; to slake their thirst warm water was given according to Japanese custom. Some good Portuguese took pity on them and supplied them, at the risk of their lives, with the most necessary things ⁴⁴⁾. Nevertheless, they continued their priestly work by bribing the guards with some of the gifts received from the Portuguese and succeeded in making converts. They recited the Divine Office together, sang hymns, and could celebrate Mass daily with the connivance of the bribed guards. Father Bartolomé instructed and baptized in prison even a *tono*, or local ruler. The priests' greatest success, however, was the conversion of a bonze who was baptized by Father Vicente and later died for the faith by being burned alive ⁴⁵⁾. Their priestly collaboration in prison was marred only once by an argument on the right to admit people to the Third Order. Father Bartolomé believed that the right ought to be reserved to him as Vicar Provincial. When Francisco Terrero produced a letter of his Provincial in Manila, which was approved by the Vicar General of the new congregation of the Augustinian Order, there was no further disagreement. Both groups admitted applicants to their own Third Order ⁴⁶⁾.

⁴²⁾ OCHOA, *op. cit.* 333 f. and 391. See also SICARDO, *op. cit.* 125, 2.

⁴³⁾ JIMENEZ, *op. cit.* 162; OCHOA, *op. cit.* 333 f.; also described in PAGÉS, *op. cit.* II Annexes 327.

⁴⁴⁾ SICARDO, *op. cit.* 249, 1. Father Francis of Jesus mentions among their benefactors Jeronimo de Macedo (OCHOA, *op. cit.* 401 ff.).

⁴⁵⁾ OCHOA, *op. cit.* 338 f.

⁴⁶⁾ OCHOA, *op. cit.* 379: « He dado en este lugar el hábito de hermanos a los

Although Father Bartolomé was now separated from his beloved and loyal dojuku, Brother John Shozuburo, he did not forget him. He wrote from his prison in Omura to a friend of his at Nagasaki to furnish him with a habit. He made the same request for the Tertiary Brother Mancius Saizaemon and the Oblate Brother Michael Tayemon, who had also been arrested ⁴⁷). Takenaka knew the zeal with which these men had worked for the missionaries, serving them especially as interpreters for their sermons, as also the esteem in which they were held. Therefore, he made great efforts to bring about their apostasy. When these failed the Bugyo condemned them to death. On October 28, 1630 they were taken from prison to the hill of martyrs. Each wore his habit and on his shoulders a sign which stated : They die for Christ because they accepted the faith of Christ and failed to abandon it ⁴⁸). On October 29 Father Bartolomé fulfilled the sad duty of informing his Provincial at Manila of the death of John Shozuburo ⁴⁹).

With the influx of more and more prisoners the prison of Omura had become overcrowded. The jailors approached Takenaka

que digo arriba y a los Terciarios; no obstante que el P. Fr. Bartolomé lo estraño mucho y aun quiso contradecir, hasta que le satisfacimos » (Letter of Francis of Oct. 26, 1630 from prison of Omura). See also letter of the same from the prison of Omura, Oct. 18, 1631, OCHOA, *op. cit.* 253 f.; SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* II 303, 1 f.

⁴⁷) SICARDO, *op. cit.* 237, 1.

⁴⁸) SICARDO, *op. cit.* 238, 1. PEREZ, *op. cit.* 191 reports incorrectly that Shozuburo was burnt with Gutiérrez. Brother John's parents had been burnt a month before his death because they had allowed their son to serve Father Gutiérrez as Catechist (SICARDO, *op. cit.* 236, 2). Three uncles of his, the brothers of his mother, were burnt for the faith three years before his death and a grandmother of his was beheaded (*Ibid.*). Sicardo tells us also that Brother John died a professed Augustinian which is confirmed by the *Japanese Catholic Directory* (cf. *Tagastan* 17 (1954) No. 3, 29). While according to SICARDO, *ibid.*, Mancius Saizaemon was a professed Tertiary, the *Japanese Catholic Directory* lists him, too, as a professed Augustinian Brother (*Tagastan, ibid.*). With these Augustinians had died Brother Thomas Kahioye, the Oblate Brother Peter Kuhioye and the Tertiary Brother Lawrence Hachizo of the Discalced Augustinians. SICARDO, *op. cit.* 230, 1 reports also the martyrdom of many Tertiaries and members of the confraternity of the cincture. However, he makes the remark that it was very difficult to establish which of them were Augustinians, as they joined many Third Orders and the confraternities of every priest who came to work among them. This is the reason why so many are claimed by the various Orders. See also Sicardo's remark, *op. cit.* 425, 2.

⁴⁹) SICARDO, *op. cit.* 238, 2.

with the request to stop arresting Christians as they did not know where to put them. He made room by giving orders that all except the priests were to be killed. This very same day Macedo informed the priests of the Bugyo's resolve to put the victims to death on September 28 ⁵⁰). A little later a jailor came and announced the sentence. Among the condemned were many Tertiaries and Oblates. Father Francisco decided to have them make their profession. Among them were Yoieimon, 55 years old, who became Brother Peter of the Blessed Sacrament; he lived at Hiroshima and had been captured with Father Vicente. A Korean, Fakiro, 66 years old, was named Brother Louis of St. Michael. Kishiro, in the Order Brother Louis of St. Augustine, 34 years old, was of Ykiriki. The three had behind them ten months of continuous torture for having been firm in their faith. They made their profession as Brothers of the Discalced congregation of the Augustinian Order ⁵¹). With them 67 Tertiaries made their profession. They all were martyred on September 28, 1630. Their wives and children, who had been brought to Omura from the surrounding villages on September 26, died with them ⁵²).

Among the Tertiaries deserves to be singled out Simon Yohi-yoye. Two years earlier he had been seduced to apostasy by Governor Tobinoga. Then he returned to the faith, did penance for his sin and used all his possessions to aid the missionaries. When he was brought before the Governor and refused to be swayed by his blandishments, he was put into prison. When he had been taken out to the place of martyrdom, *Foconofaru*, the Governor had him stripped and clothed with a shirt made of straw which was set aflame. Though the straw had been consumed by the flames he was still alive. The Governor then ordered his head to be bashed in with a stick, and having survived also this ordeal he was tied shoulders to shoulder with his wife Gracia and both were burnt ⁵³).

⁵⁰) OCHOA, *op. cit.* 350.

⁵¹) They made their profession September 26, 1630. Concerning their profession and martyrdom see OCHOA, *op. cit.* 354 ff.

⁵²) Forty of them were burnt alive tied back to back, twenty-seven were beheaded. Letter of Francis of Jesus in L. PEREZ, O. F. M., 'Relaciones de Fr. Diego de San Francisco' AIA (1914) 243 f.

⁵³) SICARDO, *op. cit.* 232, 2. Fr. Vicente succeeded in obtaining the relics of some of these martyrs (OCHOA, *op. cit.* 285 ff.) and sent them on one of Macedo's boats to Manila. Francisco writes in a letter to his Provincial at Manila in 1632

In the prison of Omura the Augustinians also had the painful experience of seeing many fellow Christians suffer. Even before their arrival some children had been in prison who were given to pagans and renegades for adoption. This was done to estrange them from the faith they had learnt in their Christian homes. The persecutors had also taken to this prison some ten or twelve girls from Hiroshima and some newly wed women. When they refused to apostatize they were made slaves to be put in public houses. The missionaries made efforts to purchase as many as possible with the money the faithful gave them for their own personal needs⁵⁴). These priestly efforts were the only consolation they had in their prolonged imprisonment.

In the latter part of January 1631 they were finally transferred to the interior compartments of the prison, although they had been vacant since September 28. Two of them shared one cage made of stout sticks and open on all sides.

In the Sulphur Springs of Unzen

On November 25, 1631, after having celebrated Mass in honor of St. Catherine, the priests were removed from the prison of Omura and taken back to the prison of Nagasaki. They arrived there worn out from the march and, expecting to be burned alive, were surprised not to find wood ready for the purpose. In the prison of Nagasaki they met a new companion of their sufferings, Brother Gabriel of St. Magdalen, a Franciscan, who was a great help to them as he was an experienced medic. Also in prison was the widow Beatrice Acosta, a professed member of the Augustinian Third Order, and her daughter Maria, then eighteen years old⁵⁵). All these prisoners were condemned to be tortured in the Sulphur Springs of Mt. Unzen.

Takenaka had conceived this torment in order to make the new

(OCHOA, *op. cit.* 288 f.): « Por la via del Capitan Jeronimo de Macedo van doce cajoncillos de santos cuerpos de martires dentro de ellos ». The junk arrived at Manila in 1632.

⁵⁴) Letter of Francisco Terrero in SICARDO, *op. cit.* 252, 2. On the role of Macedo in this connection see OCHOA, *op. cit.* 374. On one occasion the priests redeemed slaves with silver which they had been given to purchase altar supplies OCHOA, *op. cit.* 382 and 419.

⁵⁵) SICARDO, *op. cit.* 253, 2 f.

Christians deny their faith. The results thus far had been very excellent as many had apostatized under it ⁵⁶). On December 4, 1631, our little group started out for the place of torment ⁵⁷). The Bugyo had already appointed a man, who would meet them when they left the prison, to tell them they had still time to turn about; otherwise, they would have to die in the hot waters of Unzen. When they left the city a fair number of Christians waited to take leave of them and to recommend themselves to their prayers. They were sure the victims would die in the torment. The priests walked on foot in shackles; the women were carried in litters.

They made their first stop at a place called Foki where a number of small junks were ready for them. Before being placed into these their shackles were tightened about their arms and throats, and new irons were put on their legs. They left Foki at noon, traveled by junk ten leagues, and went ashore near a place called Obama ⁵⁸), two leagues from the place of torment. They were lodged under guard in the homes of poor workingmen. The shackles about their arms and throats were tightened to such a degree that they could not rest the whole night. The next morning, Friday, December 5, they set out on horseback and began the ascent of the mountain. The road was so rough that they had to

⁵⁶) Cf. e.g. CLAVER, *op. cit.* 11: « Fueron levados (Gutiérrez and companions) al lugar del tormento que esta en el Reyno de Arima, donde los años antes fueron llevados muchos Christianos, de todos los Reynos, y sino fueron quatro, o, cinco todos los demas renegaron, y volvieron atras, con ser el numero de los atormentados muy grande,, tan terrible y espantoso es este lugar ». GYSBERTSZ, *op. cit.* 64 f., reports that all reneged except a youth of between 17 or 18 years who suffered again and again until he died. Gysbertsz left September 29, 1629, after having stated that Uneme had brought more Christians to apostasy without shedding of blood than all other persecutors before him. PAGÉS, *op. cit.* I 702 f., relates, that in August 1629, when a group of 64 (37 men and 27 women) were subjected to this torture, all but one or two apostatized. See also BOXER, *Chr. Cent.* 351 ff.; SICARDO, *op. cit.* 88, 1.

⁵⁷) HERRERA, *op. cit.* I 110 is, therefore, mistaken when he says that the torture in the springs of Unzen took place on December 4, 1631. On December 4 they were taken from the prison (CLAVER, *op. cit.* 11; SICARDO, *op. cit.* 254, 1). The anonymous MS published by G. de Santiago Vela, O. S. A., under the heading 'Nuestros Martires del Japon' AHHA VII (1917) has on page 17 that they were removed from prison on December 5, but adds « Dia de Sta. Barbara » which, of course, is December 4. The martyrs were taken to the pond only on December 6.

⁵⁸) MS *cit.* AHHA (1917) 17.

walk most of the way. A few Christians tried to follow them, but as soon as they began the climb, they were forbidden to continue.

Takenaka had appointed five deputies to carry out the sentence. He had promised them rich rewards if they would make the Christians apostatize. Eager to earn these the deputies had already, during the night and again in the morning, called upon their victims, trying to persuade them to deny the faith. When these attempts had failed, the martyrs were taken to the seething lake where they arrived shortly after noon. Here they were given food and were asked once more in the face of the torments to deny their faith and free themselves from the horror which was awaiting them. All refused and Father Bartolomé added that this hell was only a shadow of the real one.

When the henchmen saw that they were getting nowhere they began the torture. They moved their victims to the edge of the pond and made them take off their clothes. They tied their hands and feet securely and made them sit down on some rocks right at the edge of the pool. Then they exhorted them again to deny their faith, and when this was refused the torment began. For this purpose five ropes were securely tied to hands and feet and about the neck. Each rope was held by one of the five men appointed for the torture. By pulling the ropes tight the victim could be suspended in mid-air. An interpreter asked each one in turn to apostatize.

We have the report of an eyewitness contained in a letter of Vicente Simoens of July 22, 1632 :

« In case we were not willing (to renege) we would have to suffer the torture of this liquid sulphur which was boiling in the pond, raising bubbles more than two palms high, seething with such agitation and gurgling so noisily that only with the help of God could men endure it. The tormentors advised us also that if we moved away from the place of suffering it would be taken as a sign that we apostatized. We all answered in one voice, although we were not together, 'The body, being mortal, may get weak, but the heart, and its messenger the tongue, will say what the soul feels'. At once they began to torment us, pouring this liquid over us with a scoop, which held more than a pail, once, twice, three times⁵⁹). Then they ordered us

⁵⁹) Vicente's report contradicts that of another who shared the sufferings on Unzen, Brother Gabriel, O. F. M., who writes (L. TASSO DE FABRIANO, *Storia di quarantacinque Martiri Giapponesi del Ordine de S. Francesco, beatificati dal*

to put on our habits and returned us to our abode which was done quickly, as our resting place was a *tatame* ¹⁰⁾ on the bare soil with a little straw under it. There we remained thirty days and thirty nights with shackles on our hands and irons on our legs, isolated from one another. We received once a day a salted sardine and a little rice. The first torment was so painful that the ribs were laid bare so that there remained hardly a sound spot for the second application of the liquid.

The first one to suffer was my companion (Francisco Terrero), the second myself, the third Anthony Pinto, the fourth Brother Gabriel, then the two women. The daughter, Maria de Silva, still young and frail, fell to the ground when she had to suffer the torment of the water the second time. However, she never denied the faith. Yet, because of the caution they had given us, they considered her an apostate, even though she was not. At the time, when they returned her to Nagasaki and she understood why it had been done, she went to her home saying that she had not apostatized and, although it was late, she wanted to be taken to her mother and the Fathers. She made the same statement at Nagasaki, when efforts were made to force her to sign the document which the tyrant had ordered her to draw up. Father Bartolomé was not tortured immediately, nor on the second or third day. Only on the fourth and the fifth day they poured this liquid over him, however, it was so little that it did not cause him a wound, for the Father was so weakened by not eating that they did not molest him. The Brother was tormented on the first and second day. They treated him so severely that during the torment of the second day he fainted, and they did not torture him again. I, for appearing younger than the rest, although less strong and more delicate, suffered the torment five days successively. On the last day, after the torture, when I tried to go away to dress I fainted, remained unconscious and my arms and legs swelled so that I thought my end was approaching. The torturers got the same impression and revived me with a cordial, which brought me about to a certain extent. They took advantage of the situation and urged me with shouts to deny the

Sommo Pontefice Pio IX (Roma 1871) 463 f.): « They immersed us one by one in the boiling waters. I was thrown into the water only five times ». However, the report of Vicente is so explicit in describing ladle and method, as well as times of application in each individual case, the wounds caused by the water running down over the bodies that we prefer together with Sicardo, San Agustin and Ochoa to follow his description. Also HERRERA, *op. cit.* II, 499, I has « Immittebant ».

¹⁰⁾ *Tatame* was the soft mat which covered Japanese floors. It was two inches or more thick and 6 by 3 feet in size (OCHOA, *op. cit.* 336).

faith. However much I lacked strength, I answered God would help me. Then I was dragged by the arms to my shelter where I remained for the remainder of the time, always sick. I was helped by the doctors whom the tyrant had sent from Nagasaki to cure us.

My companion and Father Anthony Pinto were tormented once more, altogether six times. This marked the end of the heroic battle with these seething waters. The enemy was defeated and the law of the true God of mercy triumphed. Many thanks to Him for the many graces he showed towards His servants. The mother, Beatrice de Acosta, was tormented five times with the water » ⁶¹).

The refinement of cruelty practiced upon the martyrs had made them only stronger. Their fortitude enraged the tormentors so that they put them to a new test. During one of the last nights of December Father Francisco and Beatrice were exposed to the bitter cold on a round rock which had been covered with sharp stones. Beatrice was near death in the morning and had to be taken to the village of Obama where she convalesced until the group was taken back to Nagasaki ⁶²).

The rest were put to another test, the so-called *Efumi* or picture treading. Each was requested to step on a piece of sheet metal on which a crucifix had been engraved. In case of refusal they were threatened to be thrown into the scalding pond. Yet they all refused. Vicente Simoens was so weakened from the torture of the past month that he could not leave his hut. The henchmen, therefore, came to him and made the same request. The martyr answered, « I would rather cut off my feet than step on the crucifix ». When told that they would take his feet and put them on the picture of the crucifix, he replied, « In that case it will not be my doing and there is no consent of my will. I shall remain firm in the respect I have for my Lord and Master, Whose faith I proclaim » ⁶³).

The martyrs had spent a whole month on Mt. Unzen. Their bodies full of sores, they suffered greatly from the evil odor of infection and the vermin which developed in their wounds. Besides, they were exposed to severe cold. Three thousand seven hundred

⁶¹) MS cit. AHHA (1917) 18 ff.

⁶²) SICARDO, *op. cit.* 256, 2 f.; MS cit. AHHA (1917) 20; OCHOA, *op. cit.* 441.

⁶³) SICARDO, *op. cit.* 257, 1 f.

and three bundles of firewood were used to keep their torturers warm ⁶⁴). Heavy snow had fallen this winter. On the night of St. John the Evangelist two palms of snow had fallen. The cold was so extreme that even their tormentors suffered from it, although fully clothed and protected by better accommodations ⁶⁵).

Imprisonment at Nagasaki

When the time granted the deputies to break the will of their charges had elapsed, and the victims' sores were healed well enough for the return trip to Nagasaki, they were taken to the horrible *Cruzmachí* prison of that city ⁶⁶). On the road another attempt was made to break the resistance of the little group. On the slopes of Mt. Unzen there were many health resorts. The guards made them rest in a public bath and brought in a group of lewd women to tempt them with impure advances. The martyrs closed their eyes and held their hands against their ears in order not to give way to the temptation ⁶⁷).

On January 5, 1632 they arrived at Nagasaki. The guards reported to Takenaka. One of them told the Bugyo, « I am full of admiration at the constancy of the Fathers. I have not noticed a word or a movement which would insinuate that they would abandon the faith. I could not bend them even by one degree towards my view ». Takenaka fell into a rage since he had lost face. He had made a bet with the Portuguese ambassador, Simon Vaz de Paiva ⁶⁸). He had told him, « Ambassador, this time the Fathers

⁶⁴) SICARDO, *op. cit.* 257, 2; CLAVER, *op. cit.* 21; OCHOA, *op. cit.* 441.

⁶⁵) Through the devotion and generosity of Father Clary Villeneuve, S. F. M., in whose parish the Unzen is located, a marble cross and monument dedicated to the sufferers at Unzen, inscribed with the names of the martyrs, including Father Gutiérrez, was dedicated by Archbishop Yamaguchi of Nagasaki in November 1961. Thomas PURCELL, O. S. A., 'Father Thomas of Omura' Reprint of *The Japan Missionary Bulletin* (Tokyo June 1962) 3.

⁶⁶) This was the notorious *Cruzmachí* prison of Nagasaki as opposed to the *Mandokoro* in the Bugyo's house where they had been kept before their transfer to Omura. For a description of this jail in the days of Blessed Bartolomé see D. MARTINEZ, O. F. M., *Compendio Historico de la Apostolica Provincia de San Gregorio de Philipinas, de Religiosos Descalzos de N. P. San Francisco* (Madrid 1756) 169 ff.; also AIA XIV (1920) 46 f.

⁶⁷) SICARDO, *op. cit.* 258, 2.

⁶⁸) On the friendship of Vaz de Paiva with Takenaka and his embassy see BOXER, *Great Ship* 124 f.

will apostatize and deny their faith in Christ, for I shall torment them with the greatest punishments anyone has seen until now ». The Ambassador had replied, « If they apostatize the faith of Christ will weaken. But I bet my head that they will not »⁶⁹⁾. For this reason Takenaka had given orders to the torturers to use all means at their disposal to break the resistance of their victims by prolonging the torments, short, however, of taking their lives. Now he had lost his bet⁷⁰⁾.

The Augustinians, severely tried, remained in prison from the early part of January until September 3, the day of their immolation. They suffered indescribable pain. The inconvenience of the prison was augmented by their pitiful physical condition, the lack of proper clothing, the humidity, and lack of sanitation. Their spirit, however, remained free and they continued their life of prayer and praised God always.

During this rigorous imprisonment Father Bartolomé had the comfort of being visited by Father Thomas of St. Augustine Jihioye, a native of Japan. He had come to his home country to assist, or rather, to replace the imprisoned Augustinian missionaries. Although the priests were strictly forbidden to see visitors, in order to prevent them from making contact with the Christians, Father Thomas succeeded by a bold and clever stratagem to get into the presence of Father Bartolomé. He disguised himself as a stablegroom and found employment with Takenaka. In his disguise he could come and go without suspicion, and managed to see Father Gutiérrez not only once but very often and to discuss the affairs of the Augustinian missions in Japan with him. He was also able to ease the hard imprisonment, for he shared with his Vicar Provincial the food he earned by hauling green barley for the Governor's horses⁷¹⁾.

The Crown

After Takenaka had returned to Nagasaki from his obligatory visit to the Shogun's Court, he set out to conclude the case of our

⁶⁹⁾ OCHOA, *op. cit.* 428.

⁷⁰⁾ It may very well be that having boasted also at the Shogun's court that the torture in the hot springs would break his victims, Takenaka had lost face there as well. This, at least, is the opinion of OCHOA, *op. cit.* 450.

⁷¹⁾ SICARDO, *op. cit.* 262, 2 f.

missionaries. He sentenced Beatrice de Acosta and her daughter to exile. They left for Macao, where they became religious in the convent of St. Clare, while a Japanese priest, Jerome of the Cross Torres, a Franciscan of the Third Order Regular, joined the fathers.

On Wednesday, September 1, Takenaka had six columns⁷³⁾ taken to the place of martyrdom, and he ordered an area laid out in this way : The firewood was placed about in a circle in which the six colums were to be erected in one line, spaced ten spans apart. Upon the firewood were to placed bundles of green twigs. A bundle of the same was also to be arranged upon each column. This was done to torment the victims with their smoke.

On September 2 a messenger conveyed to the prisoners the sentence of death to be executed the following day. The Bugyo made a last attempt to influence the priests and the brother by telling them that the place was already prepared where they would be burned unless they changed their mind. « At the same time », they say in the letter signed by all after the death sentence, « we were told that if we would renounce the faith, we would be set free and receive a great reward. We answered unanimously that, whenever it would please God to take our life, we would offer Him this life gladly, and we added, that we desired with all our heart to sacrifice our life out of love for Him, for His law and for the Gospel »⁷⁴⁾. After having made this decision they prepared for death, spending their remaining hours in prayer and encouraging each other.

Friday, September 3, 1632, at 10 o'clock in the morning⁷⁵⁾ the martyrs were taken from the prison, and were made to sit in a closed litter so as not to be seen by the Christians. Behind them walked a policeman with a long stick on which a paper banner was fastened with the sentence of death and the reasons why it had been pronounced ; they had preached the Gospel of Christ in Japan against the emperor's edict, and had refused to deny their Christian faith. Through a small opening of the litter Father Vicente

⁷³⁾ For a short biographical sketch consult UYTENBROECK, *op. cit.* 123.

⁷⁴⁾ Six, namely for the three Augustinians, the Jesuit Ishida, the Franciscan Brother Gabriel, and the Franciscan Tertiary Father Jerome of the Cross Torres. MONSTERLEET, *op. cit.* 119 calls the latter Jean Jo. On the two Franciscans see UYTENBROECK, *op. cit.* 119 ff.

⁷⁴⁾ SICARDO, *op. cit.* 261, 2 f.

⁷⁵⁾ SICARDO, *op. cit.* 263, 1; SAN AGUSTIN, *op. cit.* 228, 2.

could see a few Portuguese. He raised his voice and cried with all his strength, « Long live the faith of Christ ! » When nobody answered he said, « Is there no one to answer me ? » Then the martyrs began to sing, *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes*, until they reached the place of execution.

They left their litters and entered the circle built with firewood. There they embraced each other and said, « *Hasta el cielo !* Till we meet in heaven ». They prayed for a moment and each took his place near the column assigned him. Then they turned towards the assembled people and exhorted them to remain strong in the faith. Next they kissed and embraced their columns. The executioners stepped forward and tied each one with a thin string so that it would be easy for the martyrs to free themselves, if they so wished. After all preliminaries were over, fire was applied to the wood. When it began to burn they broke out into repeated shouts, « Long live the faith of Christ ! » At these words Father Vicente lifted a small crucifix which he carried about his neck.

Father Bartolomé was the first to feel the effect of the fire. He walked twice about his column, and seeing that all were in their places, turned towards it and embraced it. A sudden wind fanned the flames, which rising quickly caught the bundles of green twigs. Smoke enveloped the scene, and in a very short time the fire had consumed its victims ⁷⁶). After it had died out the guards prevented the Christians from approaching the place of martyrdom to get relics. They had the bodies completely burned and the ashes thrown into the ocean.

At the time of his death Bartolomé Gutiérrez was fifty-two years old. The experience of three years' imprisonment had not been able to break his spirit ; the long persecution had not been able to discourage him. He died united in faith and martyrdom with his discalced brethren beyond the trifling arguments which at times had divided them. He had worked longer in Japan than any of his fellow Augustinians, and has the distinction of being the first American-born Augustinian raised to the honor of the altars.

Arnulf HARTMANN, O. S. A.

(To be continued)

⁷⁶) SICARDO, *op. cit.* 264, 1 reports that thus the special malice of Takenaka was thwarted.