

LUÍS DE ALMEIDA, S. J.
SURGEON, MERCHANT AND MISSIONARY
IN
JAPAN

by
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PART I
THE SURGEON AND THE MERCHANT

Luís de Almeida was born in Lisbon about 1525. ⁽¹⁾ He began his professional education by studying the humanities, but later he turned his attention to the study of medicine and qualified for a diploma in surgery which was awarded to him by King John on the 30th March, 1546. ⁽²⁾

In the year 1550, he sailed from his native land to the Orient on a business venture, and shortly after his arrival in Malacca he became associated with Capt. Duarte da Gama and, shortly afterwards, sailed with him in his ship, in June, 1552, to Japan. They arrived there in the following year, but by the end of 1554 they were back again in Canton, whence Gama sent him back to Malacca in one of his ships. In 1555, Almeida returned to Japan in Gama's ship, arriving at Hirado in July of that year. It was then that he decided to abandon the sea and become a merchant ashore.

(A) Talk given on the 28th International Congress of Orientalists, in Canberra, Australia, in January, 1971.

(1) Streit, *Bibliotheca Missionum*, IV, 384; Schurhammer, *Die Geschichte Japans, (1549-1578) von P. Luis Frois*, Leipzig 1926, p. 27, n.º 1; Léon Bourdon, *Luís de Almeida, chirurgien et marchand avant son entrée dans la compagnie de Jésus au Japon*, (Lisbonne, 1949), p. 72.

(2) Bourdon, p. 72.

IN JAPAN

What was the real reason of Almeida's decision to remain in Japan? The answer is that fundamentally he was a deeply religious man. It was this that led him, while still a youth, to change his course of studies from the humanities to that of medicine, and thus become more fitted to do something practical towards the alleviation of the physical sufferings of his fellow men. In Japan he was faced with the infinitely greater challenge of the spiritual as well as the physical needs of the Japanese people.

We see this characteristic clearly displayed early in his career in Japan when he travelled from Hirado to Oita to beg a Jesuit Father to go with him to hear the confessions of his sailors. Father Baltazar Gago agreed to go to Hirado and Almeida then went back later to Oita to make the spiritual exercises under the direction of a Jesuit.

That Almeida believed it was the will of God that he should remain in Japan to be of service to his fellow men there, is stated by himself in a letter written at Hirado on the 16th September, 1555, to Fr. Belchior Nunes Barreto, S. J.:

I want to say that as everything is ordained above by God, He has ordained that I should remain here; and this, I believe, would be for his holy service and also to a certain extent, for my salvation. And my main purpose in settling here was to render a little service to our Lord; and also because I am nearing 30 years of age, and the Church ordains that at this age each one should decide what life he has to lead so that, following or taking the state of life showed him by our Lord, he would not live in mortal sin.

Thus, feeling that to choose that state of life, I need to ask the help of Him who can help me — who is Christ our Lord — I decided to remain this year in this land in the company of Fr. Baltazar Gago in order to decide upon the life that our Lord shall show me, which will be for His holy service and my salvation. (1)

(1) León Bourdon, *Uma Carta inédita de Luís de Almeida ao Padre Belchior Nunes Baretto*, (Hirado, 16 de Setembro de 1555), reprint from «Brotéria, Vol. LI, Fasc. 2-3, Aug-Sept. 1950, p. 6.

Almeida's fortune was at that time estimated to be about four or five thousand *cruzados*. (1) He entrusted 2,000 *cruzados* to his friend Nuno Álvares, who was going to China, to buy goods for him. In the event of Fr. Belchior Barreto needing that money to buy a ship to take him to Japan, he could make use of it.

ALMEIDA BECOMES A JESUIT

It was in the year 1556 that Almeida was received as a lay brother into the Society of Jesus by Fr. Cosme de Torres, Superior of the Jesuits in Japan. Father Cosme referred to this later in a letter written at Funai (Oita) on the 7th November, 1557, when he wrote: «I received a brother here who has the gift of healing» (*donum curationis*). (2) On becoming a Jesuit he gave to the Jesuit missions in Japan his fortune which, as Boxer writes, quoting a contemporary document:

It was from four to five thousand cruzados worth of silver, which he had brought with him on his admission to the Society in 1556, that the capital was invested by the Jesuits in the Macao silk-trade, which at once became and for long remained the temporal mainstay of the Japan mission. (3)

THE ORPHANAGE AT FUNAI (4)

In a letter to King John III, written on the 29th September, 1555, Father Baltazar Gago described the origin of this orphanage and Almeida's great part in it by donating 1,000 *cruzados* towards its founding. He later said they were to ask the *daimyo* to make it illegal to abandon unwanted children, and instead to make it compulsory for those responsible for such babies to bring them to the orphanage which they hoped to found specially for the care of such children. The orphanage was to be provided with wet nurses and cows to supply the bodily needs of the infants, while the Church supplied its earliest spiritual needs in the form of baptism. When

(1) The value of a *cruzado* in English money is estimated at about 4/-; it was at that time equated with the silver *peso*.

(2) Cf. Bourdon, *Uma Carta inédita*, p. 14.

(3) C. R. Boxer, *The Great Ship from Amacon*, (Lisbon) 1959, p. 45.

(4) Funai, the present Oita, in the province of Bungo, in the island of Kiushu.

this was explained in detail to the *daimyo* he was genuinely interested in the scheme and approved of it wholeheartedly, saying that what the Jesuits wanted should be done. Soon, Father Gago continued in the letter, with the help of the Lord, this work will be started. (1)

While many historians believe that Almeida's plans, as described by Father Gago, were carried out and the orphanage established at Funai, Bourdon denies this, arguing that:

Although the daimyo of Bungo seems to have given it his support, this project, whose realization certainly raised for itself some formidable difficulties, never actually saw the light of the day. It is probable that the thousand cruzados were used some months later for building the famous Hospital at Funai, whose management was most efficaciously assumed by Luis de Almeida. (2)

THE FUNAI HOSPITAL

According to the words of Luis Fróis:

Luis de Almeida, . . . pitying the needy and abandoned poor as well as the sick Christians, has set up a hospital at his own expense where he admits them all, healing them with great love and charity. (3)

Father Gago had already realized the need for such an hospital and had planned one as early as 1555, but he was not able to achieve his ambitions until the beginning of 1557 when he was joined by Almeida with his similar ambitions and energy, his medical skill and his money. The *daimyo* of Bungo, Otomo Yoshishige (later called Otomo Sorin), had given to Father Gago, in 1552, a piece of land on which he could build a Church and a Presbytery. It was on this land that Almeida built his hospital in 1557 which included separate accommodation for those suffering from curable diseases and for those suffering from leprosy.

(1) Quoted by Bourdon, *Luis de Almeida*, p. 83, Note 1.

(2) Bourdon, *Luis de Almeida*, p. 83.

(3) Quoted by Bourdon, *ib.*, p. 82, note 3.

This version of the founding of this hospital is corroborated by Fr. Francisco de Sousa who wrote:

In Funai, there was built this year (1566) with the alms of the Portuguese and especially of Luis de Almeida a Hospital with two big departments, one of them for lepers, who in these islands are treated without any pity, like men cursed by Heaven; and we are told of wonderful cures of these patients; the other department was for the children of both sexes, abandoned by their parents in the fields and the beaches, either out of poverty or because they would not take the trouble to nurse them. Many of these abandoned children were too enfeebled by exposure to be saved, but whatever could be done for them — both physically and spiritually — was done, and they received Baptism before going up to Heaven. The daimyo of Bungo was so impressed by this work of mercy that he himself helped the project financially, at the same time attempting to eradicate the social evil by issuing an order to the effect that, henceforth, under penalty of death to themselves, nobody should kill or abandon a child, but that they should take their unwanted children to the priests in the hospital to be cared for and cured. (1)

Similar evidence concerning Almeida's hospital is forthcoming from Fr. Johannes Laures, who wrote:

It has been said above that in 1555, in the capital of Bungo, Almeida established a foundling home, and shortly afterwards, a hospital as well. At all events, in 1557 there was a hospital at Funai with two sections, one for lepers and the other for curable diseases. In this second section there was also accommodation set aside for surgical cases of which Almeida himself took personal care. As a result of the large number of successful cures, the reputation of this hospital spread far and wide, so that it reached not only Kyoto, but even the distant provinces of north-eastern Japan. From these remote regions there came so many bonzes, sumurai and other distinguished people to be cured of their diseases, that the

(1) P. Francisco de Sousa, *Oriente conquistado*, c. 4, d. 2, paragraph 14.

hospital could not possibly accommodate all those who applied for admission. Thus as early as 1559, a second and much larger hospital was built, and whereas the earlier institution had, in the main, treated people of the lower classes, the new hospital was meant to serve the needs of people of higher rank.
(¹)

This new hospital was an immediate success and Japanese patients of all classes flocked to it in large numbers. It was built opposite the earlier one in 1559 and had 16 separate rooms and a large verandah which was later used for surgical care for obvious reasons, this being long before the Listerian era of antiseptics. It seems that not only were the sketch plans the work of Almeida himself, but he was the architect and the constructor of the building as well. He was also one of the main contributors to the building fund, other notable donors being D. Sebastião, the King of Portugal, and the *daimyo* of Bungo.

The leprosarium portion of the earlier hospital founded by Almeida in 1557 was the first of its kind in the Far East, the second being that which was founded twelve years later in Macao by Bishop D. Melchior Carneiro. (²) Fr. Apolinar Pastrana, O. F. M., was therefore doubly wrong when he claimed that the first leprosarium in the Far East was founded in Manila by the Franciscans in 1580. He wrote as follows:

San Lázaro Hospital in Manila is one of the authentic glories of the Catholic Church and of the sons of the Umbrian Seraph . . . The friars founded San Lázaro Hospital as a leprosarium in 1580, the first one registered in the annals of the Far Eastern civilization. (³)

The two hospitals were also discussed in 1559 by Baltazar Gago when, on the 1st November of that year he wrote concerning them as follows:

We have in Bungo two hospitals; one is devoted to the wounded and to those with sores, while the second is devoted

(1) Fr. Johannes Laures, *The Catholic Church in Japan*, (Tokyo, 1954), p. 33.

(2) Fr. Manuel Teixeira, *D. Melchior Carneiro*, (Macau, 1968), p. 108.

(3) Fr. Apolinar Pastrana, O. F. M. *The Franciscans and the Evangelization of the Philippines* (1578-1900), in *Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas*, Vol. XXXIX, n.º 435, Jan-Feb 1965, pp. 105-106.

to other kinds of diseases. This latter one was built of timber just this year and is dedicated to the Visitation of Our Lady. There are sixteen large rooms with the dwelling for the doctor annexed, and he is assisted by men who are competent in the art of healing. From last summer up to now more than 200 patients have been healed and cured. Fr. Cosme de Torres did not turn away anyone, even those of the most desperate and hopeless nature. Advanced cases of cancer and those suffering from long-standing fistulas — some over 26 years — have been healed there and the success should be attributed to the divine mercy rather than to human care and medicine. Although in our Society of Jesus we have an excellent surgeon who earned for himself many disciples from among the personnel of the house, there is one of these who has the double merit of knowing how to apply medicines to the body and spiritual remedies to the soul. In addition to that, he knows the Japanese language perfectly, so that he is able to make many conversions among the sick.

In another letter, Fr. Gago completes his information about the hospital as follows:

This house has a dwelling annex for the doctor who is in charge of the patients. Around the hospital is a verandah where the patients go and are cured in the sight of everyone. This refers to those who have sores; for those who need drugs there is an old Japanese in charge of the application of these at the required times. The fame of the hospital spreads as far as Myako, the capital of the Japanese Empire, and from all these parts, so many people have flocked to the hospital, that from the summer until now, more than 200 were treated either medically or surgically. The priests opened the doors to all comers, whether foresaken or incurable, whether young or old, and invaded by cancers or fistulas, and our dearest Luis de Almeida, with his special gift from our Lord of competence in surgery, has trained some personnel of the house to become officers like Brother Duarte da Silva . . . There are two ways of healing, one by physic and the other by surgery, and as evidence of the use of the former is the experience of Guilherme Pereira. He came to Bungo with all the sailors

of his ship ill, and after treatment by drugs at the hospital, they were all cured and exhibited such faith in their treatment that they took supplies of many of the drugs back to China with them. The results of these drugs have been so beneficial that many of the sufferers sent asking the priests for more. On the surgical side, the methods used are those of the system introduced by Brother Luis de Almeida. Those treated in this way, both Christians and pagans alike, have all gone back from Funai consoled and enheartened, and they have all supported the hospital financially, each according to his means. The Japanese poor contributed their mites through an alms box under the control of the Brothers of the House of Mercy, while the Society of Jesus itself paid their contributions directly to the hospital. The Daimyo of Bungo has given some land whose rent in time of peace will amount to 300 cruzados a year. (1)

There is yet another writer who has left valuable records to posterity concerning this remarkable man and his remarkable hospital — Almeida of the Funai hospital. Again these comments are so completely corroborative of the others that we must not overlook the possibility that they might all stem from the same source originally. If they are derived from independent observers, they not only greatly substantiate the truth of the statements themselves, but indicate the immense stature of Almeida's abilities and attainments. These valuable records concerning this aspect of the subject, are those of Father Schilling, (2) and are worthy of consideration here because they emphasize the point that Almeida's services to the hospital and to the Japanese community were outstanding not only because of this skill as a surgeon, but also because of his skill and achievements as a physician. He treated and took care of those suffering from internal diseases with just as spectacular success as

(1) *Lettres des Missions du Japon*, por Mr A. F. — (Paris, 1830), quoted by P. J. Peregrino da Costa, in *Medicina Portuguesa no Extremo-Oriente*. (Bastora, 1948), pp. 18-19.

(2) Dr. Dorotheus Schilling, O. F. M., *Os Portugueses e a introdução da Medicina no Japão* (Coimbra, 1937), p. 23.

those whom he treated surgically. Of these latter, Fr. Schilling also refers to the amazing record of cancer and fistula cases treated by surgical intervention. With regard to medical cases, Almeida himself expressed surprise as well as delight at the efficacy of his drug treatment. Some patients with a long history of 15 or 20 years of chronic disease were healed in 30–40 days and included among these were some who would have been considered incurable in Portugal. In one summer alone, that of 1559, he healed more than 60 serious medical cases and more than 140 who suffered from milder internal or external diseases. In 1562 there were over 100 in-patients and many hundred attending the polyclinic as out-patients. Many Japanese, impressed and moved by this record of charitable work, asked for baptism and in two years more than 2,000 of them were baptized.

But this brilliant achievement however was unfortunately too short-lived. In 1587 the hospital was destroyed by fire by the troops of Shimazu Yoshihira (1533–1611), the *Daimyo* of Satsuma.

Almeida's pharmacy was stocked in the early days of the hospital with drugs and herbs imported from China via Macao, and they were used according to the rules of Chinese medicine; but later, many drugs used in Portuguese medicine were obtained from Goa. Evidence of this is contained in a letter written by Almeida in 1564 to Belchior Nunes Barreto in Goa enclosing a list of drugs and medicines to be procured in India. Drugs of vegetable origin however were readily obtainable in Japan itself. Surgical instruments, on the other hand, were apparently ordered in the first instance from Portugal and then later, Japanese artisans imitated and reproduced replacements locally. (1)

FUNAI MEDICO-SURGICAL SCHOOL

At the time when Almeida started treating surgical cases in his hospitals at Funai, surgery was unknown and even unheard of, in Japan; he therefore had to train his own assistants in operative procedures and in post-operative treatment. The same was necessary

(1) P. J. Peregrino da Costa, *Medicina Portuguesa no Extremo Oriente*, p. 36, quoting Fr. Pierre Charles, S. J., *Introductions de la Médecine Européenne au Japon par les Portugais au XVI^e siècle*.

in the medical field but in a different direction. But in any case, it was essential that his assistants should be given some medical training. He therefore drew up courses of lectures in medicine and surgery and trained his assistants along these lines. As this training progressed, it gradually assumed the name and status of a School of Medicine and Surgery and it became famous among the Japanese as such, and was known as the *Namban-ryu* School — the School of the Barbarians of the South.

Two years after the School was started however, the Superior Jesuit in Japan decided that priests should concentrate on their missionary work and take no practical part in healing. Almeida therefore had to relinquish his post as Chief Doctor of his hospitals, but fortunately by then his Japanese assistants were well enough trained and experienced to be able to carry on the work of the hospital by themselves and the Oita hospitals continued to flourish under their control until 1587 when they were destroyed by fire as previously mentioned; but the fact that in 1612 Fr. Francisco Pasio, the Visitor of Jesuits, had to renew the orders forbidding priests to practise medicine, shows that Almeida's good example was still being followed, even if only to a minor degree.

The case of Fr. Cristóvão Ferreira, S. J., another famous name in the history of western medicine in Japan — is a case in point. He came to Japan in 1609 and remained there until his death in 1652. He was appointed Vice-Provincial of the Jesuits in Japan in 1632, but later he apostatized under torture and became an interpreter of the Shogun, under the name of Sawano Chuan. Kishi Matsuda writes of him as follows:

It is not known where he studied medicine, which he practised actively, despite his position as official interpreter. He was the author of a medical treatise, — Namban-geka Hiden-sho — and acquired many followers, among whom were Handa Jumak, Sugimoto Chukai, Yochida Ansai and Vishi Kichibei. (1)

(1) Kichi Matsuda, *The Relations between Portugal and Japan*, (Lisbon, 1965), p. 67-68.

Ferreira's (Chuan's) book was published under the title of *Orandajeka-shinan*, since the word *Namban* was disliked by the Japanese authorities due to the isolationist policy existing at the time. Today (1718) the name of *Namban* is to be avoided for its use is strictly forbidden by *Kwanto* (the Shogun government). This *Namban-ryu* school shall for the present, be called *Komo* (Dutch). This shows that in the 17th and 18th centuries, Portuguese medicine was still prospering under the name of Dutch medicine which, in those days, was allowed. In any case, by that time, the name *Namban-ryu* implied surgery, and this was no longer practised, having been replaced almost entirely by the practice of Chinese medicine.

PART II

THE MISSIONARY

Yokoseura

In 1561, the Jesuit organization in Japan consisted of two priests, four Portuguese lay brothers and four Japanese lay brothers. The priests were Fr. Cosme de Torres, the Superior, in Bungo, and Fr. Gaspar Vilela, in Myako; the Portuguese lay brothers were João Fernandes, Luís de Almeida, Duarte da Silva and Aires Sanchez, while the Japanese were named Lourenço, Damião, Paulo and Belchior.

All the *daimyos* of Kyushu were eager to attract to their respective ports, the *Kurofune* ⁽¹⁾ (The *Black Ship*, i. e. The Great Ship from Macao). The most tempting of their offers was the one made by Sumitada, *daimyo* of Omura, to Fr. Torres.

... asking for a brother to be sent him, to manifest the laws of God in his realm, giving an assurance that he wanted to build churches, which he would willingly endow by bestowing the port of *Vocoxiura* (Yokoseura) with all the peasants for a distance of two leagues around it, adding that no heathen would be allowed to stay in this part without the permission of the Fathers; and that if the ships of the Portuguese

(1) *Cartas de Japão*, quoted by C. R. Boxer in *The Great Ship from Amacan*, pp. 27-28.

wished to go to the said port, he would remit all duties on all the merchants who might come in them to trade for the space of ten years, together with many other offers.

This offer of the port of Yokoseura was made not to Portugal, but to the Jesuits. Father Torres chose Almeida to deal with the *daimyo* about the cession of the port which was to be called *Porto de Nossa Senhora da Ajuda* (Port of Our Lady of Help).

On the 15th July, 1562, Almeida arrived at Yokoseura and on the 16th he went to Omura. By the end of July or the beginning of August Fr. Torres also arrived in Yokoseura whereupon Almeida went to Omura and returned five days later with the documents relating to the cession of Yokoseura duly signed. They immediately began to build a church there, and on the 14th March, 1563, a large cross was erected on the top of the hill opposite the church. A week later, Omura Sumitada arrived with his retinue and remained there for some days to be instructed in the Christian doctrine. In the first week of June, Sumitada was baptized together with 25 of his knights, and on the following day, he marched to the war.

About the end of June or the beginning of July, the ship of *D. Pedro da Guerra* arrived there with a party of Jesuits consisting of Fathers Luís Fróis and João Baptista del Monte, and 2 Brothers Jaime Gonçalves and Miguel Vaz, but towards the end of the following November, Yokoseura was sacked and burnt by rebels, and the Portuguese ships had to flee the port. Torres and Almeida sailed to Arima and Fróis to Hirado, and thus ended the short life of Almeida as a missionary at Yokoseura.

Satsuma

Almeida made, in all, three attempts to introduce Christianity into Satsuma. The first attempt arose in this wise.

Shimazu Takahira, the *daimyo* of Satsuma, tried for many years to attract the Macao trade to his ports, and when, in 1561, a Portuguese junk called at Kyodomari, he seized the opportunity of entrusting to the captain a letter for Fr. Torres. In this letter he requested Fr. Torres to send him some missionaries, and in reply, Almeida and a Japanese lay brother were sent to Satsuma.

Almeida first visited Ichihi, where he succeeded in baptizing some of the people, and then he moved on to the capital city of Ka-

goshima to thank Shimazu for his invitation. Thence he sailed in the ship of Capt. Manuel de Mendonça to Kyodomari but during the voyage the whole of the crew fell ill, due possibly to one or more of a number of factors such as, the extreme winter cold to which they were unaccustomed, the lack of provisions and bad water. Almeida was able to cure all the sufferers and the ship arrived in Kyodomari safely. After a short stay there of only a few days, during which Almeida was able to baptize nine adults, he returned to Kagoshima.

Seeing that the people there were, on the whole, reluctant to embrace the Catholic faith due to the influence of the bonzes, Almeida made visits to the pagodas of Kukushoji and Nanrinji, and made friends with the superiors of the monasteries there. These friendships with the bonzes broke the ice and he succeeded in baptizing 36 people there, two of them belonging to the Court of Shimazu. Shortly afterwards he was recalled to Bungo, but not before he had established a permanent house of prayer in Kagoshima.

In 1577, the then superior of Japan, Fr. Francisco Cabral, S. J., sent Almeida back again to Satsuma, and again at the *daimyo's* request; but the opposition of the bonzes was still strong enough in spite of the *daimyo's* influence, to make Almeida's continued presence there of little use, and so he again returned to Bungo.

His third and last attempt to evangelize Satsuma was made in 1582 when Fr. Gaspar Coelho, Vice-Provincial of Japan, sent Almeida there once more. But again he failed, due to the same reason — the opposition of the bonzes who forced the *daimyo* to expel Almeida, and he left for Takaku in Hizen.

ARIMA

The conversion of Sumitada, *daimyo* of Omura, led to a similar step being taken by his brother Yoshisada, the *daimyo* of Arima, for the latter, seeing the flow of trade that followed Sumitada's conversion, reasoned the same good fortune would follow his own baptism. He therefore, in 1563, invited the missionaries to go to Kuchinotsu.

Almeida was again chosen by the Jesuits to be the spear-head, and on arrival at Arima, met with such success, that the whole population (circa 3 000) was converted before 1570.

Concurrently, the lord of Shimabara, a subject and relative of Yoshisada, eager to attract Portuguese trade also, adopted the same plan and invited the missionaries to his city. Almeida went there in 1563 with the result that Christianity grew by leaps and bounds: in 1564 there were 400 Christians, in 1565, 1000, and in 1566, 1300.

The bonzes could not tolerate such success and they induced the lord of Shimabara to obstruct the missionary work and even to expel the missionaries. Many Christians had to emigrate in order to keep their faith.

These conversions made a great impression on Arima Yoshisada, but, as he was afraid of rebellion such as took place in Omura in 1563, he postponed his baptism until 1576 when he was baptised by Fr. Gaspar Coelho. His example led to mass conversions, and in a short time, 12,000 people were baptized.

In 1578, brother Luís de Almeida and Fr. António Lopes were expelled from Arima and they went to Amakusa.

GOTÔ

The archipelago of Gotô (*Five Islands*) lies near Kyushu.

In 1563, the lord of Gotô asked for missionaries. Three years later, Fr. Torres sent to him Almeida and a Japanese brother called Lourenço. They arrived in January, 1566. They were welcomed by Tadaaki, *daimyo* of the islands, and soon they began their work of preaching. In the meantime, Tadaaki fell sick and the bonzes attributed this to the punishment by their gods Kami and Hotoke. Then the *daimyo* boycotted the sermons. Although he was cured by Almeida, he remained indifferent. In these circumstances, Almeida asked Torres to recall him to Bungo.

As some *samurai* and other people had been cured by Almeida without any charge, the *daimyo* would not allow him to leave Gotô. Almeida consented to remain and resumed his sermons which were now attended by the *daimyo*, fifty *samurai* and some other people.

Almeida baptized 25 persons and established small congregations in two other places. He, however, fell sick, and for that reason, was obliged to leave Gotô.

It was only in 1566 that the first priest went to Gotô, Fr. João Baptista del Monte. Then from 1568 to 1570, Fr. Alessandro Villareggio worked there and baptised D. Louis, a bastard son of the *daimyo*, and others of his retinue. When Fr. Villareggio left, there were 4,000 Christians in Gotô.

ARCHIPELAGO OF AMAKUSA

This archipelago consists of the islands lying to the west of Kumamoto and was under the control of the lord of Shikki. He too was eager to attract Portuguese trade and he too resorted to the strategy of inviting Fr. Torres to send some missionaries to his capital, in the hope that this would lead to opening up trade with the west. In 1566 Almeida, who had recently returned from Gotô, was sent to found the new mission at Shikki. There he was well received, and soon was able to report that he had baptized not only the lord of Shikki but also about 500 of his people. But this interest in Christianity was very short lived, and not only did the lord of Shikki soon apostatize, but he compelled all who had embraced Christianity to build a heathen temple to Amida. In spite of these trials, however, many of them immigrated to Nagasaki and the conversion rate in Shikki increased to such an extent that by 1571 there were 2 300 Christians there.

The further history of the lord of Shikki was nothing but turmoil and sadness. He attempted to assassinate his son and successor, but paid the penalty of failure by being exiled to Higo by the *daimyo* of Satsuma, and there he died in his apostasy.

The early success of the mission in Shikki was such that the lord of Kawachinoura near Hondo, named A-makusa-Izer-no-Kami, decided to follow the example of the lord of Shikki. He too wanted a share of the Macao trade and he too planned to achieve his aim by befriending the missionaries. In response to his request for help from Fr. Torres, Almeida was again called upon in 1569 to open another mission.

Almeida, as we say in these days, was no fool. He was a wise man and the lessons of his experiences at Shikki were by no means

lost on him. After about twenty days with Amakuza, he feigned dissatisfaction with the situation and his progress there, and announced his decision to abandon the project. But Amakuza would have nothing of this and insisted that he should remain. After much discussion, Almeida agreed to stay, but only under certain very definite conditions. They were: complete freedom of speech and freedom to baptize any one; Amakusa should attend Almeida's sermons for eight days, at the end of which one of his little children should receive baptism if he had become convinced that the Catholic faith was the true faith; Amakusa was to give a piece of land for the building of a church and he was to allow the free exercise of religious belief to all.

Amakusa accepted these conditions and Almeida renewed his missionary work with such zest that on Resurrection Day 1569, he baptized the governor of the city — who took the name of Leo — together with about 50 of his citizens. In a very short time the numbers of baptisms in the city and its suburbs were respectively 700 and 400.

This mass acceptance of Christianity so alarmed the bonzes that they and Amakusa's brothers demanded the death of Leo. To this Amakusa would not agree, but instead he asked both Leo and Almeida to leave the country in order to avoid the rebellion of his subjects; but in spite of this, the rebellion broke out and he almost lost his fief. In the end however he crushed his enemies and eventually accepted baptism himself, remaining a fervent Christian for the rest of his life.

SACERDOTAL ORDINATION

On the 7th July, 1579, the Jesuit Visitor, Alessandro Valignano, sailed from Macao in the Great Ship of Captain-Major Leonel de Brito. The ship arrived at Kuchinotsu, Japan, on the 25th July and the Visitor arranged for five Jesuit brothers to proceed to Macao — probably on the return journey of the same ship — to be ordained there as priests. Among the five chosen was Luís de Almeida, the others being Francisco Laguna, Carrião, Miguel Vaz and Aires Sanches.

When these five lay brothers arrived in Macao however, it was found that there was no Holy Oil there which was essential for the

ceremony of ordination. The only alternative open to them was to proceed to Goa, but this would take about three years and in the meantime their services were badly needed in Japan. Providentially on the 15th November, 1579, two Franciscans — Fathers Pedro de Alfaro and João Baptista Lucarelli — arrived in Macao with Holy Oil, which they brought from Manila.

This enabled Bishop Dom Melchior Carneiro to ordain to the priesthood these five brothers. The ordination took place towards the end of 1579 or in the early days of 1580, and enabled the five new priests to return to Japan probably in the Great Ship of Captain-Major Dom Miguel da Gama which arrived in Nagasaki later in 1580. Fr. Luis de Almeida was forthwith appointed Rector of the Jesuit residence of Amakusa, where he re-established his former friendship with the lord of Amakuza, now known by his baptismal name of Michael.

Almeida was gratified to find that the rate of conversions had not diminished during his absence. In fact, after Michael's conversion the actual number increased greatly, in spite of his wife who had become one of the most stubborn antagonists of the Church. In 1579, however, she too was baptized with the name of Gracia, and subsequently became such a zealous apostle that she was, in the main, responsible for the fact that by the end of 1579, the whole of the population of Amakuza, numbering about 10,000 souls, had become Christians.

The year 1582 brought Almeida's work in this part of the Japanese mission field to a close, for in that year Dom Michael became seriously ill and called at once for Father Almeida to come and prepare him for death. On the 1st May he presented his arms to the Church, and his wife Gracia donated a rich vestment to the poor. Three months later, Dom Michael, the former lord of Amakuza passed piously away and was buried with great solemnity on the 5th August, 1582.

ALMEIDA'S DEATH

Father Almeida did not long survive his friend Dom Michael, and the great work he accomplished at Amakuza turned out also to

be Almeida's last great achievement. For the account of his last days we turn to Father Sousa:

On account of his hard work he contracted tuberculosis, and when the time arrived for the Lord to call him to receive the crown of justice in reward for the long and faithful work in His vineyard, the poor house in which Almeida lay dying was filled with more Christians than it could really accommodate. Some kissed his hands, some his feet, all calling him father and seeking his blessing. Growing gradually weaker and weaker, he finally rested in the Lord in the month of October 1583, filled with great merit and having rendered great services to God and his Church. Being fifty-nine years of age, he had spent twenty eight of them in missionary and religious work abroad. When he died he was the Superior of Amakuza Jesuit house. (1)

He died in October, 1583.



(1) Francisco de Sousa, *Oriente conquistado*, c. IV, d. II, par. 91.

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