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Catalogue of Philippine Typhoons

Miguel Selga

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Catalogue of Philippine Typhoons: 414-1703*

MIGUEL SELGA, S.J. (1879-1956)

TYPHOONS are a reality in Philippine life now and have been doubtless in the past too. Today satellites safely above the earth keep track of typhoons with vigilant camera eyes and varied sensors, and relay to memory banks comprehensive and essential data on each and every typhoon. Every typhoon is accurately recorded, its path plotted, its toll in life and property assessed, and even the typhoon is given a name. Before meteorology was born, not much information was recorded. Instead this information has to be inferred from scattered sources, many of them obscure, like diaries, letters, ship logs, and unrelated documents.

The nameless typhoons that are listed below were laboriously culled by Fr. Miguel Selga.¹ The earliest records of Philippine typhoons are found in Chinese chronicles. With the coming of the Spaniards, accounts of typhoons become more numerous and detailed.

Several synonymous terms appear which will be distinguished: typhoon, *baguio*, hurricane and cyclone (the Spanish equivalents being *tifón*, *baguio*, *huracán* and *ciclón* respectively).

* Edited by Victor L. Badillo, S.J., Acting Director, Manila Observatory. — THE EDITORS' NOTE.

¹ For the life and bibliography of Father Selga, see Hidalgo, Angel, "Miguel Selga, 1879-1956: Priest and Scientist," *Philippine Studies* 15:3 (April 1967), 307-47.

Cyclone is the name for tropical storms formed in the Bay of Bengal which strike the coasts of India and Bangladesh. Hurricane is the name for the storms in the Caribbean area. It comes from Hunrakan, the West Indian god of the big winds.² Tropical storms hitting the Philippines, China and Japan are called typhoons or baguios. Typhoon is derived from the Chinese *taifung*. *Fung* means any kind of wind while *tai* refers to a veering wind, one that changes direction.³ The Spaniards found the Filipinos using *bagyo* to designate storms or strong winds. This is probably derived from the Sanskrit *vayu* which merely means wind.⁴

A typhoon is a storm or vast system of violent winds rotating counterclockwise around a center of calm. Abundant rain accompanies the storm. The center itself has a relatively leisurely forward motion. This combination of motions has caused the stunned observer to speak with awe of a storm that turned around and came back. Typhoons are born in the Pacific, east of the Philippines. They then follow a curving almost parabolic path that in general cuts across the Philippines into the coastal regions of China and/or Japan. By the term Philippine typhoon is meant one whose influence was felt in the Philippines. Though a typhoon lasts many days, a single date is given most times, the day the historian felt the storm.⁵

1. The typhoon of 414

We learn of a typhoon in the China Sea in the year 414 of the Christian era from an account of an eyewitness, the Chinese buddhist Fa-hien. Fa-hien left China about the year 399 A.D. on a pilgrimage in quest of buddhist books of discipline. He traveled over Tibet and through India and finally settled in

² I. R. Tannehill, *The Hurricane Hunters* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1957), p. 7.

³ J. Algué, *The Cyclones of the Far East*, 2nd rev. ed. (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1904), p. 11.

⁴ J. R. Francisco, *Indian Influences in the Philippines* (Diliman, Q. C.: University of the Philippines, 1964), p. 40.

⁵ This catalog is obviously incomplete. It is offered as a starting point for a more complete one.

Ceylon for two years. From there he took ship in a vessel with two hundred persons on board, with a smaller boat in tow for use in case of shipwreck. With favorable winds they sailed eastwards on the Indian Ocean for three days and then encountered a storm which put them in great danger. They weathered the storm however and after ninety days, which must have been towards the end of the year 413, they landed in the region called Java-dvipa which is thought to have been in the southeastern part of Sumatra near Palembang.

After five months there, Fa-hien again took ship aboard another vessel which also had over two hundred persons on board. The ship carried water and provisions enough for fifty days. They began the voyage on "the 16th day of the 4th month," sailing northeast. After over a month at sea, they encountered "a black wind and torrential rains" which caused consternation among the sailors and merchants on board the ship. Fa-hien claims that his shipmates blamed the storm on the fact that the ship carried him, a buddhist, on board. They sought to put him ashore on some island but was saved by a friend who threatened to report the matter upon arrival to the king of the land of Han who was a believer in Buddha and respectful towards the buddhist "bhikshus." During the storm the sky remained very dark and dismal, the sailors looked at one another in fear, committing blunders. The storm apparently passed away but they were now over seventy days at sea and their provisions and their water had to be rationed very strictly, almost by drops. Sea water was used for cooking and fresh water had almost given out when they said: "We should have made Kwang-chow by now. Could it be that we have been on the wrong course?" They then changed course, sailing northwest. After twelve days and nights they found land and a safe haven to the south of the promontory of Shantung at the foot of the mount of Lao where they obtained good water and food. They had passed through many dangers.⁶

⁶ *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms* being an account by the Chinese monk Fa-hien of his travels in India and Ceylon (A.D. 399-414) in search of Buddhist books of discipline, translated and annotated with a Korean recension of the Chinese text by James Legge (Oxford 1886), pp. 111-114.

There are three things to be noted in this account. The first is the date. From the nature of the Chinese calendar it is possible to compute the date of this voyage in terms of christian usage. It must have been about the 1st of June of the year 414 that Fa-hien set sail from Java-dvipa, and since they had been sailing over a month when they encountered the storm in the China Sea, that storm must have occurred in the month of July.

The second is the term he uses to describe the storm. Both the storm in the Indian Ocean and that in the China Sea are indicated by Chinese characters identical with those which correspond to *taifung* in the dialect of Canton, *tafung* in Amoy, *tafung* in Mandarin and *daifu* in Japanese; in short the same characters now used to indicate the typhoons that occur in the China Sea.

The third to note is that the typhoon encountered by Fa-hien in the China Sea must have passed over the Philippines. Taking into account the time and the direction of their course and comparing it with those of later Chinese merchants, it would seem that Fa-hien and his shipmates must have begun to feel the effects of the typhoon when they were to the west of the island of Palawan. The hurricane must have driven them off course across the channel of Bashi and towards Formosa, whence by changing course to the northwest they found the coast of China.

2. Typhoons between 1111 and 1118

From another Chinese manuscript, the *Chu-fan-chi* written by Chau-Ju-Kua in 1225, we learn of typhoons that occurred between the years 1111 and 1118. He speaks of the typhoons as occurring in the Gulf of Tonking, from which it is reasonable to presume that these typhoons must have passed over or near the Philippines on their way thither. Of the prefecture of Kioungheou in the northeastern part of Hainan, Chau-Ju-Kua says that it was a place near the sea and not too mountainous, with a climate rainy in the autumn, dry in the spring, not too hot in summer nor too cold in winter. The typhoons were frequent in the fifth and sixth months (that is, from mid-June to mid-August). Whenever a typhoon appeared accompanied by

a rainbow, the rainbow was considered the mother of the typhoon.⁷

3. The Typhoon of 1171

Another typhoon in the twelfth century is mentioned in the Chinese work *Ling-wai-tai-ta* composed by Chou-Ku-Fei in 1178. This typhoon occurred in the year 1171 lashing the island of Hainan and driving towards Champa on the coast of Annam a ship in which an official of the military district of Kiyang was traveling.⁸

4. The Typhoon of 1348

The Mohammedan traveler Ibn Batuta crossed the China Sea twice about the middle of the fourteenth century, visiting Sumatra, the Philippines and China. On his way back to Sumatra, he embarked at Amoy about July or August of the year 1348 aboard a small vessel that belonged to the king of northern Sumatra. In the China Sea they encountered a storm of wind and rain and they went ten days without seeing the sun, to the great alarm of the sailors and of the passengers. From Ibn Batuta's account it seems possible to deduce that the storm caught them when they were somewhere to the west of Palawan.⁹

5. The Typhoon of 1440

In the 324th book of the *Ming-shih* or the history of the Ming dynasty, there is an account of the shipwreck of a delegation of Javanese who were returning to their country after a visit to China. The year was 1440. The Javanese envoys met a typhoon and suffered shipwreck with 56 drowned and 83 saved. Those who were saved managed to return to Canton and the Chinese emperor gave orders to the authorities to look after these men and to help them find passage back to their homeland.¹⁰

⁷ *Chu-fan-chi*, trans. Hirth and Rockhill (St. Petersburg, 1811).

⁸ *Ling-wai-tai-ta*, bk. 2 ch. 10.

⁹ No source given.

¹⁰ *Ming-shih*, bk. 324.

6. The Typhoon of 1459

Again in the *Ming-shih*, book 325, we find an account of a typhoon which appears to have occurred in the China Sea in the year 1459. The account goes as follows. In the year 1459 the sultan Manshur Shah who governed Malacca from 1459 to 1490 sent envoys to China to pay tribute to the emperor, and in turn the emperor ordered some officials to go down to Malacca to invest the sultan with the title of king. After two years, the officials of the commission of rites brought information to the effect that the imperial envoys on the second day of their voyage had encountered a typhoon which stripped their ship of its masts and drove the ship about for six days until they were rescued by coast guards from Fukien or Kwantung. The imperial letters were saved but the articles (intended as presents?) were damaged. The envoys begged that other articles be sent to replace these. The emperor acceded to this request, sending new presents and new envoys.¹¹

7. The Typhoon of 1499

Again in the year 1499 the envoys who had come from Java bringing tribute to the Chinese emperor suffered shipwreck in a typhoon. The *Ming-shih*, book 324, says that only the interpreter of the delegation arrived in Canton and that after this disaster envoys from Java came much less frequently.¹²

8. The Typhoon of 1518

In June 1517 Fernaô Perez de Andrade organized at Malacca an expedition of eight vessels, four Portuguese and four Malay, with the idea of establishing commercial relations between the Portuguese of India and Malacca on the one hand and the Chinese of Canton on the other. With the ships *Esphe-ra*, *Santa Cruz*, *San Andre* and *Santiago*, he sailed up the China Sea and entered the river of Canton and carried on negotiations with the Chinese magistrates of Lantao. He obtained various trade concessions in favor of the Portuguese. He did not stay

¹¹ *Ibid.*, bk. 325.

¹² *Ibid.*, bk. 324.

long however in China partly because of an epidemic of dysentery in Canton, partly because some Chinese pirates had attacked his vessels. On his return voyage to Malacca, where he arrived in September 1518, he lost the ship *San Andre* in a furious tempest, although we do not know the precise date of this storm.¹³

9. The Typhoon of October 1566

According to a detailed relation of the voyage from Acapulco to the Philippines made by the *San Jerónimo*, several tempests were met with on the ocean which forced the ship to change course several times, finally sending it toward the Palaos (Palau Islands?).¹⁴

10. The Storm of 15 August 1568

The *Capitana*, under the command of Felipe de Salcedo, was sent to New Spain, leaving Cebu the first of June 1568 with very favorable weather. It had on board 130 souls and a great quantity of cinammon. After much labor at sea the ship got as far as the Ladrones Islands. Arriving at the island of Guam, and entering the harbor which is quite open, the General Felipe de Salcedo disembarked as did many of the persons on board. Apparently they disembarked just in time for on the 15th of August, feast of the Assumption, there came a furious tempest which dashed the ship against the coast and broke it in pieces without any of its cargo being saved. From the geographical situation and the time of the year, the storm referred to was evidently a baguio.¹⁵

11. The Typhoon of 1588

Of the baguio that struck the province of Bulacan in 1588, the historian of the Apostolic Province of St. Gregory (Augustinians) gives the following account: "In the year 1588 the church and rectory of Meycauayan were completely destroyed by

¹³ Henri Cordier. *Histoire générale de la Chine*, III cap. 12, p. 119.

¹⁴ *La Oceania*, 13 October 1892.

¹⁵ Gaspar de S. Agustín, *Cnoquista de las ilas Filipinas*, lib. I, cap. 44, pp. 199-200.

the violent fury of the winds which are here known as baguios. How could buildings of slight material resist the fury of this untamable element in a place so open to its ferocity when even stronger buildings bow down in vassalage to a baguio?"¹⁶

12. The Typhoons of September and October 1596

The people of the city of Manila were very much grieved at the loss of the galleon *San Felipe* which, diverted from its course by a series of tempests, fell into enemy hands on the coast of Japan. So valuable was the cargo shipped on the boat that, as Governor Tello wrote to the King of Spain, its value would have been appraised in Mexico at more than 1,300,000 pesos.

On 12 July 1596 the *San Felipe*, 700 tons, left Cavite under the command of General D. Matías de Sandecho, taking on board 300 persons, among them seven priests: four Augustinians, two Franciscans and one Dominican, who was the chaplain of the ship. It anchored at Ticao and received the documents from Governor D. Francisco Tello. On 18 September, while in the latitude of Japan, a furious hurricane burst over the ship and drowned six men. The waves carried away the binnacle, steering gear and galley, tearing to pieces the helm, main mast and sails. It was necessary to lighten the vessel because the water entered by the hatchways. A second tempest struck them on the 25th lasting 36 hours and damaging the lower deck. Finally on the third day of October, at the hour of vespers on the eve of St. Francis, another typhoon of five days' duration came upon them which forced the galleon without masts and sails, towed by 210 funcas, to the dangerous shores of Chopongame where she was stranded and filled with water up to the first deck.

It was aboard this galleon *San Felipe* at the time she was making the open sea through the Strait of San Bernardino that the passengers observed the famous comet of 1596, the first of

¹⁶ Juan Francisco de S. Antonio, *Crónica de la Apostólica provincia de S. Gregorio*, par. II, lib. II, cap. 8, no. 156.

which there is any record as having been observed in the Philippines.¹⁷

Among the passengers of the lost galleon was the glorious martyr Fray Felipe de Jesús o de las Casas, of whom it is said that for lack of a bishop in the Philippines he was being sent by his superiors to his native country to be consecrated; he was instead put to death on the hillock of Nagasaki together with other companions of the same institution and faith.¹⁸

13. The Typhoon of 4 October 1598

D. Luís Pérez Dasmariñas, former governor of the Philippines, organized at his private expense an expedition to China to assist the king of Camboja. The hurricane encountered by the vessels of the expedition is thus described by one of the passengers, Fr. Diego Aduarte, O.P.:

We left Manila Bay on the 17th of September; we were about one hundred and fifty soldiers and sailors. The sixth day of the trip had not elapsed before our ships were dispersed by a furious hurricane. The *Galeota* came out the best, because, although destroyed, at least she landed on friendly shores. The *Capitana*, after many mishaps, finally ran aground on the coast of China on the eve of St. Francis. The flagship, on which I was a passenger, lost the mainmast. The helm was broken by the fury of the wind and of the sea. . . . The planks of the vessel played like the keys of an organ. . . . All the efforts done to repair the weak parts of the boats against the mountainous seas and the strong winds were like the attempt of a child to check the fury of a brave bull. We remained several days in such a distressed condition and with the fear that something worse was yet to come upon us, because the day of our father St. Francis [October 4] was drawing near and it is infallible that on that day, or two or three days before or after it, these seas are disturbed by storms. With these fears, we determined to take shelter in the Babuyanes Islands. We got our ship so near to shore, that the bow touched the land and we dropped two anchors by the stern. Suspicious of the weather, we landed the provisions and supplies that we had taken along with us. We began un-

¹⁷ M. Selga, "Cometas en Filipinas," *Rev. de la Soc. Astronómica de España y América*, año XI, no. 75, pp. 3-8.

¹⁸ F. Colín, S. J., *Labor evangélica . . . de la Compañía de Jesús . . . en las islas Filipinas* (Madrid 1660) ed. P. Pastells, S.J. (3 Vols. Barcelona, 1900) Vol. 1, p. 188, and note 1. Vol. II, p. 921-922. Henceforth referred to as Colín-Pastells.

loading our supplies as the eve of St. Francis was approaching. Before we could get them all, there was again a strong storm. The vessel was shattered to pieces, some of which reached the land but the keel and artillery were buried in the sand, the ship being unable to support their weight. For two days we weathered this fierce storm of high winds and heavy rains, under the shelter of a few huts made by us along the seashore with some trunks.¹⁹

It was a singular providence of God that the survivors escaped alive from a tempest so fierce and in a seashore so deserted and abandoned. When the storm abated, a small boat was made with the spare parts of the wrecked vessel. On it Fr. Diego made his way to northern Luzon to give an account of the accident and to beg assistance from Manila.

14. The Typhoons of October 1599

In October of 1599 the zealous missionary, Father Diego Garcia, S.J., was returning in company with eight other Jesuits from Manila to his missions in the Visayas. The voyage to the Visayas was such as was to be anticipated in the month of October, which was always stormy. "Up to the 21st of October," writes the historian Father Chirino,

the weather was good, but on this day the Fathers encountered a storm which, although not very strong, drove the vessels to a bank covered with corals and rocks, so dangerous that the ships were almost broken to pieces. On the 23rd of the same month, there came another storm stronger than the former. On account of the force of the wind the vessels were dispersed. The ship, on which Father Visitor was traveling with five other missionaries, was carried by the waves towards Marinduque. At last they entered a river and had some shelter from the boisterous weather. The next day, which was fair as happens ordinarily after a storm, the ships sailed around Bondoc Point and anchored near the shore. Four days afterwards a strong wind broke out again and obliged the missionaries to enter again a small river for protection against the storm or baguio, which lasted that day and the next, dedicated to Sts. Simon and Jude.²⁰

¹⁹ Diego Aduarte, O. P., *Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario de Filipinas, Japon y China* Lib. 1, cap. 89 (also Colín-Pastells, I: 210-211 and note 1. Ed).

²⁰ Colín-Pastells, II: 211, note 1.

15. 1 May 1601

The ship *Santo Tomás* set sail from Acapulco on 16 February 1601 and sighted the Philippines on 29 April. On account of the murkiness of the weather the pilots missed San Bernardino Strait and were swept along by the currents towards the north until they reached the waters of Catanduanes where they were in danger of perishing. Lying at anchor in the bay on the night of 1 May such a violent hurricane came on that it tore the ship away from its moorings. The vessel, dragging its anchors, was about to go on the reefs and rocks and, if it had not been for the mercy of God, no one would have escaped with his life from such a fury of winds and waves. The tempest raged all night. On the following morning the storm abated and all the people, numbering more than 500 persons, disembarked. The silver, artillery and merchandise were unloaded. Nothing but the hull of the ship was lost.

It is not altogether clear whether this storm was a baguio or not. On the one hand, the auditor general wrote in a letter to His Majesty on 6 June 1601 that "there was a hurricane so violent that it broke the ship away from its moorings" and D. Agustín Arceo, captain of the vessel, declared that at ten o'clock at night a heavy storm came on, the ship began to drag and there was a violent wind and water. On the other hand, the audiencia informed the king that the galleon *Santo Tomás* was lost on the coast of Catanduanes on account of the pilot's having missed the mouth of the channel. "The loss of this ship has been sorely felt," added Tello, "for it was the best that had been placed on this route so far; and the more so, since it was lost without a storm."

Concerning the climate of the island of Catanduanes, Captain Cristobal de Taran, judge of the island, wrote the following in the last quarter of the 16th century:

The island is entirely surrounded by shoals up to musket range from the shore: it is very rugged, and very stormy from October to April, when the northern and eastern winds prevail. It has no protection during this season in which there is excessive rain and extremely severe baguios and tempests which make navigation impossible. The spring

and harvest time falls around the feast of St. John. During the whole of July and August, they collect their rice crops.

The passengers of the galleon *Santo Tomás* experienced the favor and protection of St. Ignatius while crossing the Pacific and more especially so in the waters of Catanduanes, on the occasion of the hurricane of 1 May. They called upon him when in danger and afterwards they gave thanks for his help. All of the religious sang a Te Deum in his honor and all unanimously decided to call that port the port of San Ignacio. Two vows were made in particular to St. Ignatius on that occasion. One, made by the Jesuit fathers who came on that boat, was to enter the city of Manila barefoot; the other, made by some secular officials was to erect in the Society's church in Manila a tablet in honor of St. Ignatius. The Jesuit fathers who came on the ship disembarked at Mauban, crossed the Laguna de Bay and entered barefoot into Manila on the feast of St. Potentiana. The Fathers of the Society made a long report to the ecclesiastical authorities in Rome on their success and on the mercy which God showed on this journey through the intercession of Ignatius who was not yet canonized although already beatified.

Concerning the flagship which had been separated from the galleon *Santo Tomás*, the auditor says that it did not miss the strait but made a good entrance through the islands and arrived safely in port for it did not reach land at the time of conjunction of the moon, but when the weather was clear and favorable.²¹

16. 21-23 August 1602

Towards the end of July 1602, there headed out through the strait of Mariveles en route to New Spain, the ship *San Antonio*, the captain's ship *El Espíritu Santo*, and the admiral's ship called *Jesús María*. Only the *San Antonio* completed its journey, for the other two had to return to Cavite much damaged by storms. In particular the ship *El Espíritu Santo* met with a violent baguio on the Pacific to the south of Japan. In

²¹ P. Chirino, *Relación de las islas Filipinas* (Rome 1604), cap. 65. pp. 201-204. Colín-Pastells, II: 321 and notes 1 and 2.

a report of this journey and storm written on the coast of Ilocos by Pedro de Anciondo, 2 November 1602, he says:

When in the position of the 25th degree parallel, we met with a storm which obliged us to lighten the ship of everything on deck and of 300 boxes and bales from below deck. This storm lasted from the 21st of August to the 23rd on which day we were in the position of the parallel 28.5°. Our sails were destroyed, we cut down the main mast and we found about twenty palms of water above the step of the mast.

Another account of the same storm describing it in more technically marine terms can be read in the Spanish text.

After many troubles the ship reached Japan but she had to leave quickly on account of the poor reception given her by the natives. With difficulty she returned to Cavite on 18 November 1602, with 300 pieces missing.²²

17. 11 July 1603

The governor of the Philippines, D. Pedro de Acuña, in a letter dated 25 July 1603, gives an account to the king of Spain of how two ships loaded with produce from the neighborhood of Manila had to struggle against the fury of the elements and the violence of a storm in the strait of Mariveles at the entrance of Manila Bay.

The two ships left Cavite on 10 July 1603 with good weather. When they were near Mariveles they encountered such a violent hurricane that they were forced to cast anchor there. Although they were well anchored and cabled, such was the force of the wind that it carried them along backwards to Dapdap in spite of two iron anchors in each prow. Dapdap is a league and a half from land, five leagues from Manila and nine from where they cast anchor. In the morning both boats were aground near each other and it was extremely fortunate that they came to land there where the sea was calm, for, otherwise, considering the severity of the storm, it would have been impossible for anyone to escape or to save the produce which they carried.

There is no doubt that this was a *baguio*, for the same Acuña gives an account to His Majesty of the means which he

²² Colin-Pastells, II: 335-339, note 2.

took to dispatch the ships before "another baguio (as hurricanes are called here)" should finish them altogether."²³

18. 1604

Manuel de Solórzano S.J., in a letter addressed to the Duchess of Aveiro and signed at San Ignacio de Agaña, Guam, 20 May 1683, gives an account of the missionary activities in the island of Rota where a church had been erected and the natives had begun to live in community. "In the voyage around the island we also salvaged some bronze which had lain buried in the sea (with more which is now invisible) since the year 1604 when a passing ship named *San Antonio*—which had sailed from Manila that year—having suffered in a great storm, was finally dashed to pieces off the island of Rota, with all lives lost."²⁴

19. 20-24 August 1606

On 22 July 1606, a Spanish ship left Cavite en route to Japan. It was 20 August when they reached the 28th parallel. There they encountered a fierce storm in which it was necessary to unstep the topmasts and to lower and take in all the sails. Such was the fury of the wind and the violence of the waves that the tiller was broken and the ship was left in such great distress, that it was necessary to lighten it of everything it had on deck. The storm grew worse on St. Bartholomew's Day and the night came on very cloudy and dark with hurricane winds and terrific thunder. About ten o'clock at night, we are told, the wind increased in such a way that the ship keeled over until the sails touched the water and the side of the boat was submerged for a space of three credos.

In such distress, the Dominican Aduarte informs us, the officers and sailors began to pray and the captain promised a lamp of 150 pesos to our Lady of the Rosary in Manila and another to the Virgin of the Rosary in Quato, a town in Japan from which the ship was not far distant. God was pleased to

²³ *Ibid.*, II: 510, note 1.

²⁴ *Bibliotheca Americana el Philippina* (Maggs Bros.). Part III, p. 165.

hear the prayers of His servants and a little while afterwards the ship entered the port of Fucajari, but two leagues below Nagasaki.²⁵

20. 1608

From the *Cartas edificantes* of the Jesuits missionaries we learn that in October and November of 1608 there were several formidable hurricanes in the Philippine archipelago.²⁶

21. 1 November 1610

The annual letter of the Jesuit province of the Philippines signed by the Father Gregorio López mentions a storm that caused considerable destruction in the mountains of Cavite. Speaking of the town of Silang, Father López says:

The jubilee was published in this town on Sunday, the eve of All Saints. On that night when the enthusiasm of the people for the gaining of the jubilee was at its climax, the devil, jealous of the good to be expected from the jubilee, excited a terrible tempest of furious wind, a hurricane or baguio as it is called in these islands, so strong that it destroyed more than 200 houses and caused injury to the rest. The greatest risk lay in the fact that many planks of the church were carried away by the wind to a considerable distance, to the great danger of the fathers who were compelled to seek shelter in the sacristy which was more secluded and better protected. The night was spent in great anxiety and suffering because of the shaking of the church due to the pressure of the high winds.²⁷

22. 1611

It is recorded in the annual letter over the signature of Father López that the year 1611 was very prolific in hurricanes which caused great trouble to the missionaries and the faithful of the Visayan Islands. Referring to Loboc in Bohol island, Father López says:

The second thing that made the year a painful one, by reason of the famine caused by it throughout all these islands, was a hurricane

²⁵ Aduarte, *op. cit.*, Lib. I, cap. 64, pp. 303-304.

²⁶ *Annuae Litterae societatis Jesu* (1908), p. 195. Perry, *Sur les tremblements de terre*, p. 131.

²⁷ Colín-Pastells, III: 251, note.

which made the river of Loboc rise so extraordinarily that Ours were obliged to abandon their house and to seek shelter together with the seminarians and other people in a somewhat stronger dwelling situated in the highest part of the town. And most prudently indeed did they do this, for a short while after, the river driven by the fury of the winds rose to such a height as to reach the very rafters of our house.

They spent the night without sleep, occupied as they were in sounding the waters which kept rising until they came within two feet of reaching the house in which Ours had taken refuge. However in the morning it pleased Our Lord to quell the storm, and as the river began to subside, an opportunity presented itself to visit the house in a boat. It was surprising that the house had not been carried away by the rushing waters, since it was old and leaned somewhat toward the river. At any rate, the waters left it damaged to the point of ruin and the provisions in the pantry were entirely spoiled.

The church which is higher was also flooded; the water rose almost four yards and left nothing, neither altar nor pulpit, which it did not overturn; some things were carried off, others broken, and all soiled with mud. Not even the ornaments and other treasures of the sacristy were spared, nor were the images. Among the latter it was surprising to find a sculpted crucifix, to which the natives had a singular devotion, floating on top of the water amidst benches and stairs, tables and altars and a multitude of other wooden things. Not even a finger of it was broken and though everything else had been soiled with mud it was found unspotted upon some boards. It seemed that even the waters had respected the image of their Creator.

The church was at last put in order, and mass was celebrated in it on the following Friday, the eighth day after the flood. Yet this tranquillity proved not to be permanent, for Our Lord in order to try His own and to give them a further opportunity for the practice of patience, sent another storm and flood.

Whereupon the Sacred Hosts were consumed, and the house was abandoned by all of Ours, who got into a boat and betook themselves to a refuge more sheltered from the fury of the winds and the waves. They tied the boat to two sturdy trees and remained there the whole night awaiting the mercy of God. This they experienced the next morning when the hurricane ceased and they were able to return to the house. There they discovered, by the traces it had left, that the water had risen three feet less than the first time and had entered the Church and again thrown it into disorder.

Likewise this same Father López, writing about the residence at Dulac in Leyte, describes as follows the hardships which the Jesuit missionaries had to undergo:

A certain missionary, who had just gone through a hurricane in Tambuco, went to Dulac, thinking that he was now safe from storms in as much as these ordinarily come but once a year and that year there had already been three or four. However, at Dulac another and more severe one came upon him, forcing him to leave his house in the middle of the night and to take refuge in another ruined hut where he crawled in among the broken thatch and was safe from the severity of the weather. Remarkable to relate, the sea in a single night receded farther than a musket shot could reach. In the morning the Father went out with the other people to the shore to gather the fish which the sea had left on the sand. This was their only food for the four days during which the hurricane lasted. Not a single house in the town remained standing and the little farms of the poor natives were utterly destroyed.

In the town of Vincay there was another missionary father who suffered much in the disaster, for his house and church also were torn down. The river rose and, as it flooded the town, the people fled to the fields and the father took refuge in a house on higher ground. This he strengthened and supported with new props, but all in vain, because the winds, increasing in strength, shattered most of the props and tore the roof from the house. The destructive work of the wind was assisted by the fury of the sea, which leaping over two small islands and over the river, raged fiercely throughout the town and completely destroyed it. The father fled inland to the open fields, as the natives had done. They could not seek protection behind the trees because the winds were tearing many up by the roots and snapping off others so thick that three men could not have clasped hands around them. He was exposed to the teeth of the storm until some of the principal men summoned up courage to erect a tiny hut in which there was barely room for him to sit down but which protected him if not from the water, at least from the wind.

Some of the people who had remained in their houses, thinking them to be strong enough, were obliged when the sea came up to swim to a place of safety. It was pitiable to see the women and children, and all the poor natives weeping and lamenting as they saw their crops and homes lost.

Similar suffering was undergone by the natives on the opposite coast. Boats, farms, houses—all were lost as the sea overflowed for a mile inland, devastating everything in its course. To sum up the hardships suffered by Ours, it is enough to say that only the house at Dagami and the church at Tambuco remained standing, and both of them were damaged so badly that they needed rebuilding. All the other houses were knocked down.

During these hurricanes, Our Lord called to Himself Brother Juan Diaz, twenty four years of age, six of which he lived in the Society. After making his confession and receiving Holy Communion on the eve of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, he left Cotay in a small row-barge for Carigara whither he had been sent by obedience. Two leagues out of the harbor he ran into a storm which capsized the boat. The eighteen odd passengers clung to the mast which had been broken off, and later on, with the "cates" (outriders) they made a sort of raft, fitting them to the mast as to a keel. The waves tossed them hither and yon, now riding on the crest, again plunged to the depths, and just as they were drawing near to a small island, the current caught them out to the open sea.

Amid all these perils, the Brother cheered up the few survivors, exhorting them to make acts of contrition and to pray to God, which they did. Among those who perished was a pagan native. This man the Brother persuaded to receive the baptism of desire, forgetting the danger to his own life in procuring the eternal life of his brethren.

Thus they travelled for six days, battling with the waves of the sea; but the Brother, weak in constitution, did not see the end of the third day. For worn out by cold and hunger, he ended his pilgrimage on earth, coming to rest, by the goodness of God and his own holy life, safely in the harbor of heaven. Fourteen of the natives died, and on the sixth day, when a small boat chanced to catch sight of them, only three remained alive, their emaciated and exhausted frames giving token of the awful privations through which they had passed.

The nothern part of Panay suffered greatly from the hurricanes of 1611. The prior and parish priest of Ibahay in Capiz was at that time Fray Juan de Medina from whom we have the following:

"There were that year three violent hurricanes or baguios, as the natives call them, which devastated the land and demolished the church and the house, which was of very large size."

23. 10-15 October 1617

A very severe typhoon crossed the Visayas on these dates. Six ships were wrecked near Marinduque with the loss of over a thousand persons. It was considered the greatest calamity during the administration of Jerónimo de Silva.

24. 2 August 1620

A violent typhoon raged over Samar on 2 August 1620. The ship *San Nicolás* returning from Acapulco to Manila was wrecked near Borongan. The flagship of the expedition foundered near Palapag.

25. August 1629

The Governor of the Philippines reported to the home office that the ships dispatched on 1 August from Manila to Acapulco had encountered a severe typhoon in the Pacific and, having been lashed by eleven more hurricanes, the vessels were forced to put back and to return to the Philippines after seven months of unsuccessful efforts to cross the Pacific and reach Acapulco.

26. 1636

The document *Sucesos de las Filipinas* gives an account of the main events in the Philippines from 1637 to 1640, though reference is made to earlier events. Historians generally attribute it to Juan López, S.J. The following item could refer to a typhoon.

About two years ago [1636], six out of seven ships that left Olanda with reinforcements for India were sunk in the open sea, and only one arrived.

This item immediately followed an entry that spoke definitely of a typhoon but left the date undetermined.

In one of these recent years, during a great baguio or typhoon, eighteen Dutch ships were wrecked on the coast of Chincheo. The Chinese beheaded some of those who escaped alive, and having seasoned those heads with salt, took them with other men they left alive to the court of Paquin, where they were all beheaded. For the aversion of the Chinese to people with blue eyes is great: for it is said that there is an ancient prophecy that men with eyes of that color will conquer their kingdom.²⁸

27. 20 September 1638

The flagship *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción* was caught by a baguio in the Pacific on her way from Manila to Acapulco

²⁸ Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, Vol. 29, p. 47.

and wrecked with a total loss of cargo and the death of almost all passengers near the island of Rota in the Marianas. The *Sucesos de las Filipinas* describes the arrival of a few survivors at Manila ten months later and gives details of the horrors of the disaster.

In the afternoon of 24 July, six of the men who had sailed in the flagship of last year which was wrecked 20 September 1638 by the fury of a tempest in the Ladrones Islands—on an island thirty-five leguas away from the islands where our ships generally land on the voyage—arrived here. Besides those who were drowned, many were killed by lance thrusts from the natives. Those who escaped went from island to island, to those of Uan and Harpana, where they have been well treated. The reason alleged for that was, that the Spaniards are good men, and leave them iron when they pass there. From the island of Uan, the natives dispatched six Spaniards and two Indians in two boats, furnishing them with food from what they had. They commended themselves to God, crossed the open stretch of more than three hundred leguas, which they did in but one fortnight—a wonderful thing if one will but consider those small boats which are of much less burden and steadiness than pirogues and canoes, and even smaller than them. They arrived almost dead with hunger, thirst and lack of sleep. Our fathers of the Society of Jesus received them in Palapag, and cared for them for several days; after that they recovered, and immediately set out in a champan with a good supply of food. The Indians of Uan sent those Spaniards, so that they could give the news and send a boat for the other twenty-two Spaniards who are there alive, with some Indians and Negroes, and carry them iron, etc.

As soon as the tidings were told in this port of Cavite, the sobs and cries were so many that all were stunned, for there is no one who has not lost a son, a father, a brother, a brother-in-law, a father-in-law, or a husband. The loss has been one of the greatest that has ever visited these islands, because of the loss of men and the poverty of the islands.

Díaz states that this galleon *Ntra. Sra. de la Concepción* was the largest built up to that time and that it contained the greatest wealth of the islands. The few men who escaped to land were afterwards rescued by Spanish ships and taken back to Manila—save one, a Chinese blacksmith, who spent the rest of his life there and acquired great influence over the natives.²⁹

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 29: 168-171 and note.

28. 10 November 1638

The *Sucesos de las Filipinas* gives an account of a furious storm that raged over Manila Bay and out in the China Sea in November 1638 with great danger to navigation.

At midnight on 10 November, so fierce a gale of wind came from the south that it broke five of the moorings of the flagship *San Luís* which was about to sail to Terrenate, having been already laden with artillery aboard. The wind carried away its shrouds, and grounded it in the sand near Parañaque. But in such a manner that it could be floated off after five days. The wind also drove the second galley ashore, but without doing it any damage.

At dawn on the morning of the eleventh, the ship from India which was the last to go to Macan, anchored in the bay. It lost most of its mast by the fierceness of the storm, and others were disabled. The storm struck them after they had already anchored. Had it struck them outside, all think that no one would have escaped, to judge from the way in which the ship was disabled.

News arrived on the night of 20 November that the second patache, which was going to Oton to get a cargo of rice for Terrenate, was driven ashore some leguas from here by the gale of wind above mentioned, but that all the crew were saved.³⁰

29. 27 June 1639

The following description of the storm by an eye-witness shows how fierce was the force of the wind in the baguio that lashed Manila at the end of June 1639. The author of the *Sucesos de las Filipinas* writes as follows:

27 June, a destructive hurricane came down upon this port from the northwest, and shifted about to almost all points of the compass. It overturned some houses, and did great damage in all the others and in the churches. It blew the tiles through the air as if they were bits of paper. The galleons along the shore were a great cause of anxiety; and the commander, Don Jerónimo de Sumonte, and Captain Pedro Muños hastened to them quickly, with the prominent men of this port, all of whom worked valiantly. That was very necessary; for the galleon *San Juan Baptista*, although held by eleven cables, came dragging upon *La Concepción* which was being made ready to sail to Mexico. They would infallibly have been dashed to pieces, had they not been attended to so carefully and diligently. Of the other smaller craft, some have

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 29: 151.

been wrecked, and some were drowned. It was God's pleasure to allow the wind's fury to last only four hours. Had it blown with the same violence during all the twenty-four hours while it lasted, no ship would have escaped, and not a house or church would have been left standing. Two hundred houses were overthrown in the village of the Indians. But what caused most fear to those natives (and the old men say that they have never seen such a thing, or heard it told by their ancestors), is that the hurricane carried into the air small boats that they use, which are called *bancas* and resemble canoes. It is said that they were blown about like paper and that when they fell again they were broken to pieces. The hurricane blew with the same violence in all the surrounding villages, and caused the same damage; it blew down one hundred and seventy houses in Parañaque.

Since 7 July, there were several very severe storms of wind and rain. On the nineteenth, the passage boat was wrecked in the bay and it is said that eighteen persons were drowned. Many illnesses have occurred during the time, in which a great number of people of all nations have perished. Because of this, and because many have been persuaded that the two ships of the past year have been wrecked—not only because of the signs that the sea has thrown up, but because news of their arrival is so belated—there is universal gloom and sorrow over all the country, such as it has never had before. May God in his mercy console the land.³¹

30. 5 August 1639

A very strong typhoon raged over the China Sea and the western coast of Luzon. Out of five ships that had left Manila for Acapulco, two of them foundered near Cavite with the loss of 600 Chinese. Two ships coming from Acapulco to Manila were wrecked on the coast of Vigan with the loss of 150 persons. The material losses amounted to more than half a million pesos.

31. 5 October 1649

The ship *Nuestra Señora de la Encarnación* was overtaken by a typhoon in San Bernardino Strait and totally broken up on the shores of Bulan with the loss of over two hundred persons. Ten sampans were wrecked during the same typhoon.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 29: 166-168.

32. 29 May 1654

Juan Montiel, S.J., who later on suffered martyrdom for Christ in Mindanao, was shipwrecked in sight of the port of Manila when the *Galeón* was caught by a strong typhoon on 29 May 1654. The storm lasted for more than fifteen days and caused unbelievable suffering to the survivors.³²

33. 18 October 1658

A severe typhoon raged over the Visayas. The boat on which the Jesuit missionary, José Quesada, S.J., was traveling to Manila was caught by the typhoon and sunk near Burias. With the exception of three persons, all passengers were drowned.

34. 15 July 1659

On the fifteenth of July 1659, Father Francisco Ferrer, S.J., missionary of Marinduque, was drowned. He sailed for Manila on a sampan and having passed the coast of Lobo was lashed by a furious storm. The vessel, being weak and unsafe, was wrecked. All of the passengers and crew died with the exception of two or three Chinese who, upon the sinking of the vessel, boarded a banca and with great difficulty were at last able to reach land.³³

35. 25 November 1659

The following passage although not explicitly using the word *baguio* or typhoon, makes it clear however that a typhoon crossed the island of Marinduque on 25 November 1659, judging from the period of the year, the region, and the phrase, "furious tempest."

On the 25th of November 1659, Rev. Juan del Castillo, a native of Manila, was drowned in Tablazo de Marinduque during a furious tempest. His entrance in the Society of Jesus was of great edification to all because of the high qualifications he possessed and the positions

³² F. Combés, S. J., *Historia de Mindanao y Jolo* (Madrid 1667), ed. P. Pastells, S. J. and W. E. Retana (Madrid 1897), col. 566.

³³ P. Murillo Velarde, S.J., *Historia de la Provincia de Philipinas de la compañía de Jesús* (Manila 1749), p. 111.

of trust he had held, namely: Encomendero, Regidor, Captain, and Procurator of the City of Manila. On his way to the Visayas, the small vessel was wrecked and he lost his life while he was hearing the confessions of the fellow passengers and encouraging them all up to the last moment. Only three natives escaped with their lives to tell the doleful tale.³⁴

36. 1664

A baguio shattered to pieces the hospital of San Lázaro in Palestina, Nueva Cáceres, Camarines.³⁵

An evident allusion is made to this baguio in the following paragraph of the Franciscan chronicles. "About 1664 there was a very violent baguio which destroyed almost all the houses of the natives and ruined the ricefields and fruit trees. The destruction was so general and severe that it prompted our Provincial to abandon the Hospital of Naga, which had been entrusted to the care of our Order."³⁶

37. 1670

The chronicles of Guam report that while the natives were fighting against the Spaniards and the Christians, a furious hurricane broke upon them and destroyed most of the houses of the islanders. The hurricane was so vehement that it was considered a sure sign of divine intervention in behalf of the Christians. This destructive typhoon which lasted upward of twenty-four hours finally convinced the natives that "neither by force, nor craft could they hope to resist the Christians." Accordingly peace was made in October 1670.³⁷

38. 3 July 1686

The Englishman William Dampier who pirated the coast of the Philippines wrote as follows:

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

³⁵ Marin, *Ensayo de una síntesis de los trabajos realizados por las corporaciones religiosas españolas de Filipinas*. Vol. II, p. 316.

³⁶ *Historia franciscana del P. Fray Domingo Martínez* publicada por Fr. Alejandro Ferrer, p. 288.

³⁷ *Historia de las islas Marianas por el P. Luis de Morales S. J.*, (Guam 1917), Manuscrito conservado en Manila, p. 33.

The 4th day of July we got into a deep Bay, four leagues N.W. from the island of Sarangani and Balut. But the Night before, in a violent Tornado, our Bark being unable to beat any longer, bore away, which put us in some pain from fear she was overset, as We had like to have been ourselves. We anchored on the South West side of the Bay, in fifteen fathoms Water, about a Cables length from the shore. Here we were forced to shelter ourselves from the violence of the Weather, which was so boisterous with Rains, and Tornadoes, and strong Westerly wind, that we were very glad to find this place to Anchor in, being the only shelter on this side from the West Winds. . . .³⁸

39. 26 September 1687

While reconnoitering the Bashi channel, north of Luzon, Dampier write,

we were surprised on September 25th, with a most violent tempest which forced us out to sea and we were every moment in danger of being swallowed up by the waves till the 29th when the fury of the winds being allayed, we made the best of our way back to the island. This last storm so disheartened our men that they all resolved to lay aside their design of cruising before Manila.

Of the typhoon itself Dampier has the following to say:

About the 24th day of September, the Winds shifted about to the East, and from thence to the NE fine weather. The 25th it came at N and began to grow fresh, and the Sky began to be clouded; and the Wind freshened on us. At 12 o'clock at night it blew a very fierce Storm. We were then riding with our best Bower a Head and though our Yards and Top-mast were down, yet we drove. This obliged us to let go our Sheet-Anchor, veering out a good scope of Cable, which stopt us till 10 or 11 o'clock the next day. Then the Wind came on so fierce, that she drove again, with both Anchors ahead. The Wind was now at N by W and we kept driving till 3 to 4 o'clock in the afternoon: and it was well for us that there were no Islands, Rocks, or Sands in our way, for if there had, we must have been driven upon them. We used our utmost endeavors to stop here, being loath to go to Sea, because we had six of our men ashore, we could not get off now. At last we were driven off into deep Water, and then it was in vain to wait any longer. . . . We had very violent Weather the night ensuing, with very hard Rain, and we were forced to scud with our bare Poles till 3 o'clock in the morning. Then the Wind slacken'd, and We brought our Ship to, under a mizen, and lay with our Head to the Westward. The 27th day the Wind abated much, but it rained very hard all day, and the night en-

³⁸ Blair and Robertson, 39: 46.

suing. The 28th day the Wind came about to the NE and it cleared up, and blew a hard Gale, but it stood not there, for it shifted about to the Eastward, thence to the SE then to the S, and at last settled at SW and then we had a moderate Gale and fair Weather. . . . This last Storm put our men quite out of heart: for although it was not altogether so fierce as that which we were in on the Coast of China, which was still fresh in Memory, yet it wrought more powerfully, and frighted them from their design of cruising before Manila, fearing another Storm there.³⁹

40. 1693

Don Antonio Ayani, a native of the island of Guam, was extremely faithful and sincere in his friendship with the Spaniards and so loyal that the Governor of the Philippines, Juan de Vargas, honored him with the title of "Maestre de Campo" of the natives of the island. In the biography of D. Juan written by Fr. Diego Murillo, we read that "the hurricane of 1693 caused terrible suffering in the heart of Don Antonio" because it ruined the churches and houses of the island and brought misery to missionaries and soldiers.⁴⁰

41. 3 July 1694 .

The historians of the Philippines praise greatly the wise administration, loyalty and unselfishness of Governor Fausto Cruzat y Góngora in whose time the galleon *San José* was finished within nine months, the biggest ever made in these islands. The ship would have been better made had it been built with less haste and without working on it during Sundays and holidays. In proportion to the size of the ship was the wealth with which it was loaded. It was said that it was the first to sail with such valuable cargo.

About the fateful destiny of the ship, Father Murillo gives the following details:

It set sail on the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul of 1694, to the great rejoicing of those who placed all their hopes to get rich quickly on the vessel. But shortly afterwards, their joy was converted to sorrow for

³⁹ Blair and Robertson, 39: 111, *Terra Australis cognita*, Vol. II, p. 662. Wood, *The Discovery of Australia*, p. 311.

⁴⁰ Murillo Velarde, *op. cit.*, p. 375.

on the 3rd of July, the ship ran aground on the island of Lubanin due to a furious typhoon. It was shattered to pieces, resulting in the total loss of its cargo and the death of more than 400 persons.

Among those who died was Fr. Pedro de Casanova, S.J., an old missionary of Visayas, who was bound for Madrid and Rome as Procurator General of the Philippines.⁴¹

42. November 1697

With the aim of discovering the Palaos Islands, a schooner was built and equipped in Manila through the contributions of several persons. On it embarked Jaime Javier, a Dutch Jesuit well versed in nautical matters. About November, the schooner reached Balanquiguan and Javier disembarked. The landing was providential, for on that night a terrible storm arose which broke the cable of the vessel, took it away from its port, and lashed it down with such strength that it sank miserably with all hands on board.

Brother Jaime Javier had instructions to go to Guiuan to meet Father Francisco Prado in order from there to start together for the discovery of the Palaos Islands. This father had already prepared for this purpose a big vessel named *Sacayan* by the natives of the Visayas.⁴²

43. 1700

Of the storm of 1700 we do not know the month and day. We only know that it blew down the church in the town of Bula, Camarines which had been erected in wood and stones by Father Tomás Calda in 1688.⁴³

44. 1703

In the following passage we find an account of a storm otherwise unknown:

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 350. 369.

⁴² Juan de la Concepción, *Historia general de Filipinas*, Vol. IX, chapter 5, no. 5. Juan J. Delegado, S. J., *Historia general sacroprofana, política y natural de las islas del oriente llamadas Filipinas*, Part 1, chapter 34, p. 121.

⁴³ Marin, *op cit.*, II: 400.

Father Cristobal de Miralles, S.J. erected in Basey, island of Samar, a hermitage where he put up a framed picture of the Virgin Mary. The natives of the town experienced in 1703 an exceptional favor. In a terrible baguio, the priest and many natives sought shelter in the hermitage after their house and church were blown down. The sea rose to such a height that it reached the pedestal of the picture and yet in spite of the wind and waves the image was not damaged.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Murillo Velarde, *op. cit.*, Libe IV, cap 27, no. 901.