

Capítulo 1

DE LA LENGUA BISAYA; SI ES, ACASO, ALGUNA DE LAS 72 PRIMITIVAS Y DE LA PRIMERA CONFUSION; DE SU ELEGANCIA, ABUNDANCIA, PROPIEDAD Y CALIDADES PARTICULARES

Ya dijimos al principio, tratando del origen de estos indios bisayas, ser su lengua hija de la malaya¹, y que sus primeros abuelos y los que fundaron estas Islas o las poblaciones, por mejor decir, hablaban la lengua malay. Y en ésto no pondrá duda ninguna cualquiera que supiere la lengua malaya y oyere a los bisayas, o el bisaya, como yo, cuando he oído y hablado con los malayos, entendiéndoles yo todo cuanto me decían en malayo, aunque en la pronunciación escabrosean la lengua y no la hablan muchos de ellos con la afluencia y blandura que la bisaya. Y que ésta sea más copiosa, abundante, y aún elegante que la malaya, aunque su hija, lo muestra la experiencia. Y, cualquiera que supiese con alguna latitud ésta, conocerá bien presto su diferencia, como me ha sucedido a mí hablando con algunos malayos, que no me entendían tan bien hablando yo en lengua bisaya como yo a ellos la malaya; y de otras pruebas y experiencias, que, con las noticias que yo tengo de esta lengua, que me ha costado su poco de estudio, he hecho en otras lenguas, de las muchas y varias que hay en este Archipiélago, venían todas de la malaya, diré después algo, con que se conocerá la copia de esta lengua bisaya, abundancia de sinalectos [sina-

Chapter 1

CONCERNING THE BISAYAN LANGUAGE; WHETHER PERHAPS IT IS ONE OF THE SEVENTY-TWO ORIGINAL ONES AFTER THE CONFUSION OF TONGUES; ABOUT ITS ELEGANCE, RICHNESS, PROPRIETY AND SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS

We have already said at the beginning, when discussing the origin of these Bisayan people that their language was a daughter of the Malayan,¹ and that their first forefathers, and those people who settled in these islands, spoke the Malayan tongue. This fact cannot be called into doubt by anyone who knows the Malayan tongue and hears the Bisayans or the Bisayan tongue. I, whenever I have heard and have spoken with the Malaysans, I understood completely everything they said to me in Malayan. However, in pronunciation it is harsh-sounding and not many of them speak it with the fluency and softness so characteristic of the Bisayans. Experience shows that the Bisayan language is richer, more abundant and more elegant than the Malay, even though derived from it. Anyone who knows it to a large extent will readily learn this difference, as has happened to me in speaking with some Malaysans. They did not understand my Bisayan conversation as well as I understood their Malayan. From other attempts and experiences which added to the knowledge that I have of this language, which know-how has cost me no little study, and from the comparisons I have made among the many other and varied languages that there are in this Archipelago, came to conclude that all are derived from the Malayan. I shall say later something from which may be understood the wealth of this Bisayan language, the

lefas], latitud, de modos especiales y otras muchas buenas calidades que tiene.

Si la lengua malaya, de cuyo principio y progresos, días ha, vi un libro de un Padre nuestro de la Compañía de Jesús, compuesto en Malaca, u otra parte, donde dicha lengua, la más general quizás de la India Oriental, es nativa o vino, una de las 72 primitivas en que, según sentencia de muchos doctos, se dividió la hebrea en la confusion de Babel, no he hallado razón que lo pruebe, ni tampoco que lo niegue; que, si como quieren algunos, fueron los hijos de Arfaxad y nietos de Sem los primeros pobladores de la India *citra Gangem*², no sería mucho que fuesen ellos los que dieron principio a sus descendientes cuando se extendieron en las muchas, grandes y extendidísimas regiones que hoy hablan malayo.

A esta lengua, que no se puede negar tiene muestras que cifran con la hebrea, y las raíces primarias, que acá llamamos, de la lengua bisaya, que son el fundamento, como después veremos, de esta lengua, casi todas al uso y modo hebreo antiguo, son monosílabas, conservando algunas su primera significación, muy semejante, cuando no la misma, que la hebrea, asemejándose a ella en la pronunciación algo áspera, aunque se diferencia en la significación, etc.

Pero, dejando esta cuestión para los que quisieren apurar el principio de la lengua malay, que quizás es una de las lenguas más extendidas del mundo, hablando de ella como fundamento y raíz de las muchas que en este Archipiélago filipino, y en otras muchas extendidísimas islas, regiones y reinos en casi todo la India *extra Gangem*³, con sus pedísecuas, ya que no hijas, que son casi innumerables, ya confesamos ser su rama esta de los bisayas, de que aquí trato.⁴

Y, aunque rama, como transplantada a tierra fértil, podemos decir que ha sacado el tronco más extendido, más lozano y más hermoso que la madre que la dió el ser y el tronco donde se desgajó, pues es sin duda que, en abundancia de palabras, en expresiones de conceptos y lisura tersa del hablar le hacen no pocas ventajas, pues los que saben la lengua malay, pura y en su ser primitivo, como se habla hoy en Burnei, que es la isla mayor y

abundance of blended words, its breadth, its special modes and many other fine qualities which it has.

Whether the Malayan language (concerning whose origin and development some days ago I saw a book of one of our Fathers of the Society of Jesus written in Malacca or elsewhere from where the said language, perhaps the most widely used in Oriental India came) is one of the seventy-two original languages which, according to the opinion of many learned men, sprang from Hebrew in the confusion of Babel, I have found no argument to prove or to deny it. If, as some would have it, the sons of Arfaxad and the grandchildren of Sem were the first settlers of India *citra Gangem*,² it would not be unlikely that they were the ones who gave origin to their descendants when they spread out over the many, large and widely spread regions which today speak Malayan.

It cannot be denied that this language has many similarities with the Hebrew and root-words – as we call them here – which are the basis, as we shall see later, of this language; almost all, in the style and mode of ancient Hebrew, are monosyllabic, some of them preserving their original meaning very similar to, if not the same as, the Hebrew; or resembling it in the somewhat harsh pronunciation, although of a different meaning, etc.

Hence, leaving this question to those who might wish to delve deeply into the origin of the Malayan language, which perhaps may be one of the most widespread languages of the world, we shall speak of it as the basis and root of the many [spoken ones] in this Philippine Archipelago and in many other far-flung islands, regions and kingdoms in almost the whole of India *extra Gangem*³ together with its derivatives, if not its daughters, which are almost innumerable, acknowledging already that this Bisayan language,⁴ of which we speak here, is its branch.

Although a branch, as transplanted to a fertile soil, we can say that it has spread out more widely, more luxuriantly and more beautifully than the mother which gave it its being and outgrew the trunk from which it originated. There is no doubt that in abundance of words, in wealth of ideas and terse fluidity of speech it exceeds its mother language in its original state as spoken today in Borneo, which is the largest island and the one nearest these

más cerca a estas de Bisayas, y en otras muchas partes de los reinos circunvecinos a Malaca y vienen acá a estas Bisayas, he visto yo algunos y hecho experiencia de la latitud de aquella lengua. Y de ésta de los bisayas, confiesan ingenuamente que no tienen ni tantas palabras para explicarse, ni tantos modos con qué darse a entender como tiene esta lengua.

Y así, dejando comparaciones, que son odiosas comúnmente, de cuál lengua es mejor o más elegante y más pulida, si la bisaya o tagala, o si la pampanga las excede, y si las otras, que son muchas las de estas Islas, aunque hijas todas como dije de la malaya, son mejores; pendencia ordinaria entre ministros de diferentes lenguas que cada cual alaba a la suya, como cada dueño sus ollas, sólo añadido yo que fuera menester para censurar ajustadamente y dar la primacía a una u otra, que el juez las supiese muy bien todas, que con eso distinguiría sus calidades; pero, porque los jueces que por acá juzgan, sin saber las calidades de las partes, son apasionados cada cual en la suya, yo digo que, a lo que alcanzo, todas estas lenguas son casi unas en el fundamento y modo gramatical, llamémoslo *Arte*, y se diferencian en más o menos modo de explicarse, más dulce pronunciación y más aspera, y así de otras en que se *habet tanquam excedens et excessum*⁵. Y que todas son buenas lenguas, pues con ellas (¡ojalá se supieran bien!) podemos dar a entender a estos pobres indios los levantados misterios de la fe divina, que sobrepujan a toda ciencia humana y agotan toda facundia, pues, para hacerlo *pro dignitate*⁶, es poco toda la angélica. Y, en bajando a lo especial de esta lengua, digo que:

Lo primero, es abundantísima de palabras y modos de hablar, así en su significación nativa y propia como con la metafórica, que es muy ordinaria y la más elegante de esta lengua, y que apenas se hallará alguna otra lengua de las más universales que la lleven la palma, como la latina y griega, tan extendidas en lo más del mundo, que en ésto haga ventaja a esta lengua. Y yo, por

Bisayas, and in many other realms neighboring Malacca and come here to these Bisayas (I have seen some of these people and experimented on them the richness of that language); about the Bisayan they frankly acknowledge that they do not have so many words to explain themselves, nor so many modes with which to make themselves understood as this Bisayan language has.

So, we put aside comparisons, which ordinarily are not welcome, as to which is better, more elegant and more polished; whether the Bisayan or the Tagalog; whether that of the Pampanga excels them both or whether others, because those of these islands are numerous, yet all 'daughters' as we have said, of the Malayan, are even better – a common dispute among the ministers of different languages, and each one praises his own, like every potter his own jars. I only add that it would be necessary, in order to pass judgment fairly and give primacy to one or the other, that the judge know them all very well and, consequently, being able to thereby distinguish their advantages. But, because the judges who here pass judgment, do not know the qualities of both sides, each one passionately favors his own. I say as much as I can understand them that all these languages are basically the same and in their grammatical structure, let us call it *Arte*, and they differentiate themselves, one from the other, in a better or poor way of expression, in a sweeter or more harsh pronunciation, and so about their other qualities in which each *se habet tamquam excedens et excessum*.⁵ All are fine languages, since by means of them, would that they were better known, we are able to explain to these poor natives the sublime mysteries of the Divine Faith, which surpass all human knowledge and exhaust all eloquence, in as much as to do this *pro dignitate*,⁶ even the entire angelic language would be inadequate. So coming to particulars concerning this language, I say.

First, it is most abundant in words and modes of speaking both in their natural and proper as well as in metaphorical way of expression, which is very frequent and most elegant in this language; scarcely will there be found any other language among the most universal ones, which may have an advantage over it like Latin and Greek, so spread over most of the world, and in this regard no other surpasses this [Bisayan] language. Hence, due to

las noticias que de ella tengo, que en más de 36 años que ha que la uso, son algunas, me he ofrecido, y ofrezco, a hacer la experiencia con cualquiera otro que sepa mucho de las otras, a que no me dirán en lengua ninguna, aun de la latina y griega dichas, dialectos propios, modos arduos, significaciones difíciles, elegancias exquisitas a que no lo dé su equivalente en la lengua Bisaya, y tal vez con modos más expresivos.

Y, porque no quiero alargarme en la abundancia de sus palabras, sólo añadido en orden a ella, que en espacio de más de 24 años he juntado y apurado, aunque confieso que no he acabado de apuntar, en un *Tesoro*⁷ que tengo hecho de esta lengua casi veinte mil palabras, y se me habrán, sin duda, pasado muchas de ella, y todas significaciones propias y casi universales, dejando otras muchas que quizás serán poco menos propias y particulares de varias partes y pueblos; pues, aunque esta lengua es universal y común en todos, apenas hay alguno que no tenga sus palabras especiales, aunque poco difíciles de aprender al que sabe bien la más general.

Y, para que se haga algún concepto de la latitud y abundancia de esta lengua en particular, se debe advertir que tiene tres modos de palabras que acá dividimos, llamando a las primitivas raíces primarias, y éstas son las monosílabas o de dos sílabas no más, y son como el esqueleto o huesos de esta lengua, o sus nervios.

Después tiene otras que llamamos secundarias. Y éstas son de tres sílabas unas y muchas de dos, que se componen de las primarias, añadiendo o trocando alguna letra o letras. Y estas secundarias son como la carne que llena el cuerpo de esta lengua y le da la armonía y correspondencia fundamental para hablar.

El tercer orden es de palabras ya compuestas y de muchas sílabas, y éstas son más, y son todo el adorno y arreo de esta lengua; y de esta tercera especie es tanta la abundancia, que se puede llamar inagotable o infinita a su modo. Y estas palabras de esta tercera clase son las que solas admiten mayor alteración y diferencia en partes y puestos, dejando la que, como veremos

the knowledge that I have of it, which is very considerable because for more than thirty-six years I have been familiar with it, I have challenged and still challenge to try with any one who may be well versed in the other languages that he will not tell me in any language whatsoever, Latin and Greek included, so many idiomatic expressions, difficult constructions, deep meanings, to which I will not give him its equivalent in the Bisayan language; perhaps in more meaningful ways.

I do not wish to dwell on the abundance of its words. I only add regarding it that in a space of more than twenty-four years, I have collected and jotted down, although I acknowledge that I have not completed making entries, in a *Thesaurus*⁷ that I have made of this language, almost twenty thousand words; I may have by-passed, no doubt, many of them and all proper and almost universal expressions, omitting others which will be, perhaps, a little less peculiar and special to various places and towns. Even though this language is universal and common to all, the Bisayan towns, there is scarcely any town which does not have its special words, although not too difficult to learn for one who knows well the more general idiom.

So that the reader may have some idea of their extent and wealth of this language specifically, it should be noted that it has three kinds of words, as we classify them here, calling the original roots, primary, and these are monosyllabic, or of two syllables and no more, and are like the skeleton or bones of this language, or its nerves.

Then it has others, which we call secondary: some of these are of three syllables, and many of two which are composed of the primary by adding or changing one or more letters. These secondary are like the flesh which fills the body of this language and gives it the harmony and fundamental congruity for speaking.

The third kind is of words already compounded and of many syllables, and these are the most numerous, and are the adornment and trappings of this language. In this third species there is such a great abundance that it can be called inexhaustible and infinite in its variety. These words of this third variety are the ones which permit great alteration and difference in various parts

luego, se ocasiona de la diferente conmutación y pronunciación de las letras consonantes, en que hay no poca variedad; y, aunque al parecer, todo esto había de hacer muy difícil esta lengua, la experiencia nos muestra a los que tratamos de ella y usamos de sus palabras, que a pocos días que llegamos a un pueblo, si se sabe bien la general, se pegan los modos palabras particulares sin dificultad considerable, y aun a las veces los modillos y sonsonetes de las voces, que es lo más difícil y lo que ellos en nosotros más admiran, viéndonos y oyéndonos hablar su lengua con las mismas tonadillas y modos que ellos y con la misma facilidad y elegancia, y a las veces con más propiedad que ellos mismos; que todo esto lo alcanza el estudio y aplicación, que, siendo grande, lo vence todo.

Pondré uno u otro ejemplar para que se conozca la abundancia de esta lengua y cuantas más palabras tiene que la nuestra española, que, como dicen, se ha vestido y, como la corneja, adornado, de casi todas las demás lenguas de Europa. Y acá en Indias de las de todos. Con propiedad española se dice en una palabra: “lavar”, lo que en esta lengua bisaya se dice en muchísimas, y así tiene esta lengua una propiedad extraña, que para cada cosa que se lava tiene diferente palabra.⁸ “Lavar ropa,” dice el español, y el bisaya significa “lavar ropa”, con una palabra no más; “lavar los platos u ollas,” etc. decimos nosotros y ellos: *Hugas*⁹, y lo comprende todo. Llamamos “lavar pescado o carne” nosotros, y estos indios: *Lawsaw*¹⁰, significa todo lo dicho, y a este modo cada cosa que se lava tiene diferente palabra. “Lavarse o bañarse el cuerpo” es nuestro modo de decir; y el suyo: *Parigus*¹¹, y es de todo el cuerpo.

“Lavar los pies,” decimos, y ellos *pamusa*¹²; “lavar las manos,” y ellos *hunay*¹³; y así de todas las demás partes del cuerpo. Por no alargar, cada cual tiene su propia palabra, aun las más secretas y ocultas; y, errando en ellas, o trocando, los dirá tal vez cosas bien feas; porque tienen tanta expresión en cada cosa, y las palabras son tan propias, que se trueca totalmente entre estos el sentido,

and positions. I omit that which, as we shall see next, is occasioned by the different changes and pronunciation of the consonant letters in which there is no little variety. However, at first glance all this would seem to make this language very difficult, experience has shown those of us who handle it and use its words, that a few days after arriving in a town, if one knows the basic language well, one acquires the peculiar words and phrases without any considerable difficulty. At times the nuances and musical intonations of the voices, which is the most difficult, and what they most admire in us, seeing and hearing us talk their language with the same intonation and rhythm as they do, and with the same facility and elegance, even at times with more correctness than they themselves. So all this is accomplished by study and application which, being constant, accomplishes it all.

I shall set down one or two examples so that the richness of the language may be realized and how many more words it has than our Spanish, which, as they say, has clothed itself and, like a crow, adorned itself, by almost all the other languages of Europe, and here in the Indies from those of all. In good Spanish we use one word *lavar*, to wash, to express one idea while in the Bisayan language many are utilized: so this language has a curious property, namely: that there is a different word for each thing that is washed.⁸ The Spaniard says 'wash the clothes' while the Bisayan conveys the idea of 'washing clothes' with one word and no more. We say 'wash the plates or the pots', etc.; they say, *hugas*;⁹ this includes the entire idea. We speak of 'washing fish' or 'washing meat' while the natives say *lawsaw*,¹⁰ which signifies exactly the same. In this way, each thing that is washed has a different term. To wash or to clean the body is our way of expression; theirs *parigus*,¹¹ and means the entire body.

We say to wash the feet, and they *pamusa*;¹² to wash the hands, and they, *hunay*;¹³ and in a similar manner about all the parts of the body. In short, each idea is expressed with its special word, even when referring to the most secret and hidden parts of the body. By confusing them or mixing them up, one will perhaps utter very improper things, because there is so much variety of expression for each thing, and the words are so precise that using one word for another changes totally the meaning among them,

usando de una palabra por otra; lo cual entre nosotros se hace con menos peligro; pues aquella palabra “lavar” es general y que se extiende a todo lo que se lava, y por acá de ninguna manera. Y de este modo pudiera traer muchos ejemplos que excuso, así por la prolijidad como porque de ésto se entenderá bastantemente la abundancia de palabras y voces de que usan estos naturales; que, aunque a nosotros, cuando no se sabe la armonía de esta lengua, nos parecen disparatadas, en sabiéndola, admiramos, y con razón, su consonancia.

Lo segundo es cuanto abundante tanto más expresiva y significativa, apurando más esta lengua las significaciones de las cosas y causas que otras lenguas¹⁴, de que daré también algún ejemplo, aunque más difícil de entenderlo, al que no sabe la fuerza de estas voces, pero háyase algún concepto; y sea “desabrido,” llamamos nosotros con una palabra a lo que se come o bebe, a lo que se oye y entra por otros sentidos menos consono a su viveza de ellos; pues más hay de veinte palabras, y aun de treinta, entre estos indios, que significan, exprimen el sinsabor o disgusto, diferenciando lo potable de lo comestible; las frutas de las carnes; las palabras de las sentencias, lo tocante al tacto y de los demás sentidos! Todos con tanta expresión que la misma palabra, a los que sabemos ya su fuerza, aviva el sinsabor tanto más cuanto con más expresión declara lo menos conforme al sentido a quien pertenece.

No pongo las palabras porque, a quien no las entiende, le causará la admiración que acá nos causa a los que las entendemos; y es cierto que en muchas ocasiones de modos de hablar propios de estos indios, y con tanta viveza en su significación como suelen tener, he hecho yo a mis solas la prueba, buscando en las lenguas, quo todavía fueron algunas las que supe antes que la bisaya, cómo diría aquello con la viveza que en esta lengua se dice, y rara vez hallaba equivalencia. En la expresión y en palabras y obras feas es aún mayor su viveza, como gente más apegada a cosas soeces, pues los que sabemos esta lengua, cuando en la latina parece que se dice todo sin empacho, lo tenemos muy grande

which among us this is done with less risk; because this word 'lavar' [among us] has a general meaning and can be used to express everything that is washed, while here not at all. In this manner, I could bring forth many examples, but prefer not to, so as not to prolong the matter because from the ones given can be sufficiently concluded as regards the abundance of words and terms that these natives use, although to us, when we do not know the harmony of this language, they appear foolish. When we are well versed we admire its rhythm.

The second [point] is that in addition to its wealth, this language is also very expressive and meaningful, making clearer the meanings of the things and causes than other languages.¹⁴ About this I shall also give an example, although it will be very difficult to understand for anyone who does not know the force of these words, but it will help a little. With the term 'tasteless' – *desabrido* – we designate whatever we eat or drink or what is apprehended by other senses, less in harmony with their sharpness (power of appreciation). There are more than twenty words, even thirty, among these Bisayans which signify or express the [meaning] of tastelessness or displeasure. They distinguish between the drinkable from the edible, the fruits from the meat, the words from the sentences, that what pertains to the sense of touch and to the other senses, all so forceful that the very word in those of us who already know its force arouses the feeling of distaste. Even more so, the more forcefully it conveys the idea of something less in conformity to the sense by which it is apprehended.

I will not jot down the words because to those who do not understand them it will cause the admiration which here it causes to those of us who do understand them. It is true that on many occasions I have tried to find out by myself about the peculiar modes of speaking of these people and about the animation in their expression, which they usually have by searching among the languages which I knew before I learned the Bisayan, how could I say it with the vigor with which it is expressed in this tongue, and rarely I found an equivalent. In the expression is even greater, as befits a people much addicted to immoral things, because for those of us who know this language, when in Latin it seems that everything is said without a feeling of shame, we are ashamed to repeat

en repetirlo en ésta por la viveza de la significación, muy expresiva propiedad que debe tener la buena lengua, pues si las palabras se inventaron para declarar los conceptos del entendimiento, aquella lengua que mejor los declare, tendrá mejor calidad; y, en lo tocante de la porción animal menos noble en el hombre, dudo que haya lengua que exceda a ésta; no tanto en la segunda, que es la racional, que entre estos flaquea mucho.

En la pronunciación, y sea la tercera propiedad buena de esta lengua, no tiene la aspereza o dureza gutural que se halla en otras lenguas, y más tan extrañas como estas, de los indios, y como aun en la lengua hebrea halló el máximo de los doctores, San Jerónimo que se queja de lo insulso de las raíces hebreas. Y se ve en la lengua arábiga, de que tiene no pocas palabras la española, y otras que son más difíciles de pronunciar que de aprender a las veces, lo cual todo le falta a esta lengua que pronuncia con toda suavidad sus palabras, sin hallarse en ninguna de ellas junta de muchas consonantes, que es lo que suele causar la dificultad a la pronunciación; sólo se halla en esta lengua la junta de la *N* y *G* en esta partícula: *NGA*¹⁵, que es una ligatura muy frecuente en ella, y en algunos finales la *N* y *G* que termina. Y aun para uno y otro usa de sinalefas, que en esta lengua son muy ordinarias, con que suaviza las palabras y razones; y, sin duda, cuidaron mucho los primeros inventores de ella de su dulce y fácil pronunciación, pues son sínnumero las sinalefas que en ella se hallan, y se usan con mucha propiedad y dulzura; todas a fin de quitar la escabrosidad de la lengua, la dureza al oído y el sinsabor a la inteligencia; razones que pudiera comprobar con muchas cláusulas y períodos en esta lengua, en que, comiéndose muchas consonantes que de suyo piden las palabras en su propia significación cuando solas, juntas con otras se sinalefan sólo para suavizar y facilitar su pronunciación, que parece lo aprendió de la lengua latina y de los maestros de ella.

it in this language because of the force of the expressiveness of its meaning. This is a property of expressiveness which a good language must have for, if words were invented to convey the concepts of the understanding, that tongue which best expresses them will be of a better quality. Concerning the less noble portion of a person, I doubt whether there is a language which excels this one; not so much in the second [area] which is the rational, and which among these people is poorly expressed. Matters or concepts pertaining to the realm of reason have a very unusual way of expression in this Bisayan language.

In pronunciation – and let us consider this as the third fine quality of this language – it does not have the harshness or guttural asperity which is found in other languages; especially in the tongues as strange as are these of the natives, and even the greatest of the doctors, Saint Jerome, found and who complained about the insipidness of the Hebraic roots. It is also seen in the Arabic, from which Spanish borrowed not a few words, and others which often are more difficult to pronounce than to learn. All this is not found in this tongue whose words are pronounced with ease, and in none of its words are to be found many consonants together, which is what usually causes the difficulty in pronunciation. In this language only the consonants *N* and *G* go together to form the particle *Nga*.¹⁵ This union is a very common occurrence, and in some words the *N* and *G* also end the word. In both, this language uses the synalepha, which is very common in this tongue, by means of which the words and expressions are softened. Doubtlessly, the first formulators of this language were greatly concerned about its smooth and easy pronunciation, for the synalephas found therein are innumerable. [Then too] they are employed pleasantly and with great propriety in order to avoid the harshness in the language or discordance to the ear and unpleasantness to the intelligence. I could bolster this reasoning of mine with many clauses and examples of this language in which many consonants are suppressed and which are required by the words themselves in their proper meaning, when found alone; joined with others, however, they are made into a synalepha in order to soften and facilitate their pronunciation. It seems that this language borrowed it from Latin and from its masters.

La abundancia de metáforas que tiene esta lengua, aun en el hablar común, la añaden aún más especiosidad para quien la sabe y entiende, y que no todos lo alcanzan, pues, por la abundancia de ellas, se puede decir que no se admiran y se tienen por modos comunes los que son muy metafóricos; y, dejando a un lado la multitud de refranes que en español se llaman “evangelios pequeños¹⁶,” de que usa esta lengua, en que con tres o cuatro palabras dicen mucho y muy moral y setencioso, y de que yo tengo hecho un libro, recopilando más de 600 de estos refranes y declarando su viveza y fuerza sentenciosa, que de algunos que hemos alegado ya en lo dicho, e iremos refiriendo en lo que se sigue, se puede bien colegir; y cierto que son sínnumero las metáforas con que se habla en esta lengua. Y aun me atrevo a decir que de la tres partes o modos propios y elegantes que usan en su modo de pláticas, máxime los entendidos y de mejores discursos, las dos son metafóricas, de que usan ya connaturalmente, por estar embebidas on esta lengua, valiendo tal voz una palabra por muchas, y significando una razón no pocas, con notable expresión y viveza, puestas en nuestra lengua vulgar, allegar muchas y muy curiosas alusiones; pero, por no alargar, las dejo.

Sólo añado que en más de treinta años que he usado de esta lengua y procurado alcanzar su fondo y armonía, no solo no la he acabado de aprender, pero me parece que ni en otros muchos pudiera. ¡Tanta es su latitud, variedad y propiedad! Pero sólo una cosa he advertido con su uso (y aun varias, y cuesta no poco trabajo llegar a este punto), y es que el que sabe esta lengua bien y con propiedad, dice más en un cuarto que los que no la saben tanto, en una hora; y perciben mejor y entienden, y aun admiran, muchísimo en los ministros estos naturales a los que los hablan con dicha propiedad con cuatro palabras que a los que no con diez; y a mí, estos últimos años, que ya me he hecho más señor de esta lengua, me sucede predicarles más y mejor en media hora (que nunca paso de ella en mis sermones) que antes en dos, estando ellos atendísimos y sin menearse, como suspensos, cuando suelen

The abundance of metaphors, which this language has, even in ordinary conversation, adds to it even more beauty for him who knows and understands it; not everyone grasps it, due to the considerable number of these [metaphors] it can be said that they no longer produce admiration and the very metaphorical ones are just like ordinary expressions. Setting aside the many witty and popular sayings, which in Spanish are called '*evangelios pequeños*'¹⁶ and of which this tongue makes use of, where in three or four words which they put together, they say many witty and pithy ideas and about which I have made a book and gathered briefly more than 600 of these proverbs, showing their vigor and force of expression, as may be learned from some which we have quoted already and from those we will quote in what follows here. Certainly, the metaphors, by means of which they express themselves in this language, are countless. I even dare to say that out of the three parts and proper and elegant modes which they use in their conversations, most especially the witty ones and those who are endowed with fluency of speech, the two are metaphoric, which they use spontaneously because they are imbedded in this language. One word, perhaps, being worth many, and one reasoning signifying many, with remarkable expression and vigor which translated into our vernacular, they would imply many very curious allusions. But in order not to lengthen this subject too much, I omit them.

I only add that in more than thirty years that I have used this language and tried to understand its fundamental harmony, not only have I not finished learning it, but it seems to me that not even in many [years] more could I do so. Such is its extensiveness, variety and preciseness. But I have realized one thing with its practice and even several [things] (and it costs no little effort to attain this), and it is that he who knows this language well and with exactitude says more in fifteen minutes than those who do not know it so well, in an hour. These Bisayans perceive and understand better and even admire greatly the ministers who speak with this preciseness, expressing themselves in four words what others say in ten. As for myself, these last years, now that I have become more of a master of this tongue, I manage to preach more and better to them in half an hour (I never go beyond that in my sermons) than before in two. [In this way] they are very attentive, without feeling restless as if under a spell; whereas in other

en otros sermones echarse a dormir o bostezar, de manera que suelen a puros bostezos perturbar a los que les predicán. Y, a la verdad, para predicarles bien es necesario mucho estudio, aplicación y trabajo, para alcanzar la propiedad y elegancia de esta lengua, que es grande, y su armonía no de lengua bárbara, sino de muy erudita y entendida.

Notan por acá algunos, y en especial los que saben lengua tagala (que es demasiadamente cortés) de poco urbana a la bisaya, que usa de *tu* y *vos*, como la latina y la griega, no de vuestra merced y otros epítetos honrosos, que están ya introducidos en la nuestra española, que antiguamente tampoco los tenía, como se verá en los libros antiguos de ella; pero si esto es falta en esta lengua, más lo fue en la latina y griega que, siendo tan políticas y elegantes, en su misma elegancia admitían y admiten el dicho modo de hablar; antes, estoy por decir que las excedió en esto la lengua bisaya, que de suyo tuvo, y tiene, siempre lo que hoy está en la latina entablado, y es el hablar a las personas graves y de calidad por impersonal o por tercera persona, aun en su presencia; y así jamás a sus principales hablaban, de *tu* o *vos*, ni hoy los entendidos a los Padres, sino por tercera persona, diciendo (y ésto de suyo y propio de su lengua, no añadido ahora): “si el señor Padre, o si mi señor el Principal, gusta de que hagamos esto o lo otro, lo haremos, etc.”; usando siempre de este modo cortés de hablar, dejando las otras ceremonias y otras sumisiones con que hablaban a sus principales en la exterior postura del cuerpo, taparse la boca, etc., de que trataremos más abajo.

Aunque entre sí y en el hablar común no tenía ni tiene esta lengua las cortesías que tiene la nuestra y la tagala en estas Islas, que se pueden decir sobradas, pues a cada palabra repiten un *Po*, que quiere decir: “Señor.” Y así *Opo*, es lo mismo que “Sí, Señor.” Y en diez palabras suelen mezclar otros tantos *Po*, que es un montón de cortesías, aun los esclavos y gente baja entre sí, que parece que, de puro corteses, vienen a envilecer las cortesías, de modo que

sermons they are in the habit of sleeping or yawning in such a manner that they even interrupt, with their sheer yawning, those who preach well to them. Truly, in order to preach well to them, much study, application and effort is necessary in order to acquire the accuracy and elegance in this language which is very great and its rhythm is not that of a barbaric tongue but of one that is erudite and meaningful.

Some people here observe, and especially those who know the Tagalog language (which is much too polite), the lack of urbanity in the Bisayan and consider it less refined and which uses *tú* and *vos* as Latin and Greek do, and not *Vuestra Majestad* and other honorary epithets which are already introduced into our Spanish and which were not used in ancient times either, as will be seen in books of the past. But if this is a shortcoming in this language, it was more so in the Latin and Greek which, being so polished, proper and elegant, in their very elegance they permit, and actually do permit, this manner of speaking. Rather, I should say that the Bisayan tongue excelled these in this quality for it had and still has of its own what is today an accomplished fact, that is to speak to persons of dignity and of quality impersonally, or in the third person even in their presence. Thus, they never spoke to their chiefs with *tú* or *vos*, nor the intelligent people do so today when they address the fathers, except in the third person (and this is a characteristic of their tongue and not added in the present time). They say, "*Si el señor padre,*" or '*si mi señor el principal*', we are pleased to do this, or that we shall do it, etc." using always this polite way of speaking, omitting the other ceremonies and other reverential gestures which they used when speaking to their *datus*, in the external posture of the body, covering the mouth, etc., which we shall discuss later on.

However, among themselves and in the ordinary conversation this language never had nor has now the courtesy which ours, and the Tagalog, has in these Islands; this can be called superfluous, for to each word they repeat a *po*, which is the same as, '*señor*'. Thus, *opo* is the same as '*sí, señor*'. In ten words they are accustomed to insert as many *po*'s, which is a heap of courtesies, including the slaves and those of lower classes when speaking to one another.

son sino chavacanas, vulgares y aun groseras, como fuera entre nosotros repetir esta palabra, “Señor” a cada vocábulo, diciendo: “vine, Señor, a verte Señor y darte, Señor, de comer, Señor, etc.”, que en esto coincide la alabada cortesía de los tagalos, de que ahorran los bisayas en el modo de hablar, aunque no en la compostura, y menos del cuerpo, de que tienen sus cortesías, en que reparan mucho, como veremos en los capítulos siguientes cuando tratemos de su trato y modos urbanos, etc., que nunca les faltaron, ni faltan, con sus mayores; antes, los han tenido y tienen singulares y corteses a su modo, en demasía.

It seems that through sheer courtesies they come to cheapen courtesy itself in such a manner that they become nothing but coarse commonplaces and even vulgarisms, as it would be among us to repeat this word '*señor*' after each word, saying "I have come, sir, to see you, sir, and give you, sir, something to eat, sir, etc. This is the result of the highly praised courtesy of the Tagalogs which the Bisayans do not use in their mode of speaking, although not in the bodily gestures, about which they have their courtesies, to which they are much inclined, as we all see in the following chapters, when we discuss their behavior and polite manners, of which they were never lacking, nor are lacking, regarding their superiors; rather, they have had them before and have them even now quite singular and polite after their own manner even to excess. □

Chapter 1

ANNOTATIONS

[1] Pertaining to the Austronesian language of the Malays or today's Malaysia. Earlier in our annotations, in *Book One*, we underscored the fact that the Malaysians had their origin in a region of present Malaysia known as Melayu, cf. *Chapter 1 in the above-cited Book One*.

[2] *Citra Gangem*. A Latin phrase which has reference to 'this side of the Ganges'; that is within the so-called ancient Ganges Region, excluding what was considered ancient Asia.

[3] *Extra Gangem*. A Latin phrase which has reference to 'outside of the Ganges or beyond the Ganges' meaning what was considered outside of ancient India, of course. In contemporary terms, this is Southeast Asia. Both, what was considered India and all the other regions around it were referred to as *Ambas Indias*, in ancient times.

[4] See Annotation # 4 in *Part One, Book One, Chapter 7* for a summary survey of the Austronesian Languages.

[5] This "*se habet tamquam excedens et excessum*" is a Latin phrase which means this is or considered exaggerating and exaggerated.

[6] *Pro dignitate*. A Latin phrase *pro dignitate* means 'for dignity's sake' or what is appropriate. The next word that follows *angélica* is a reference to something angelic.

[7] *Thesaurus*. In the year 1660, Father Alcina as Vice-Provincial for the Jesuit Bisayan Region penned an interesting report to the authorities in Rome, noted by an archivist in Rome as: *P. Ignatius Alcina ad P. Joannem Marin Refert Statum Missionis de los Pintados, Junio 24, 1660*.

This "*State of the Bisayan Region in 1660*" was translated and published in the Santo Tomas University Publication, *Philippiniana Sacra*, Vol. XIII, No. 39, 1978 in Manila. However, due to lack of space in that particular issue some 8 folios were omitted. A small portion of Alcina's autobiographical data is cited here along with the reference to the *Thesaurus*.

"I have written in this language (Samar-Leyte Bisayan) several books: "A Manual for a Worthy Christian and Daily Exercises"; "The Rules for the Confraternity of Our Lady"; "The Manner of Prayer Orally"; "The Crown of the Blessed Virgin"; "The Wounds of Our Lord, Jesus Christ"; "A Guide to a Good Confession and Communion"; "A Book of Instructions on Mental Prayer with Daily Meditations"; "A Treatise on Plenary Indulgence". All the above formed a single volume with some 400pp.

Also in a separate volume: *Holy Week; Deeds, Sayings and Mysteries of Christi Crucified; Thesaurus of the Bisayan Language* (over 20,000 entries along with a grammatical structure of the language); *The Holy Passion* (in verse); *Life of Our Father Saint Ignatius of Loyola*. He also wrote a lot about the Virgin Mary and other saints along with two plays. In preparation were a draft of sermons on the Paschal season and major feasts of the year. Perhaps, only a few of the items cited above were ever published.

A microfilm copy of this report was acquired by Cantius J. Kobak, from ARSI [*Archivum romanum societatis Jesu*], Ms. 220, Philippine Section 12, fols. 1-12 through the generosity and kindness of Fr. Josephus Calas Teschitel, S. J. in October 1966.

[8] How right Father Alcina is! Out of curiosity, one of these editors [Kobak] did a brief survey to confirm Alcina's point and here are some of the results. In the Spanish-Bisayan Section of De la Rosa-Alcázar's *Diccionario Español-Bisaya para las provincias de Samar y Leyte*, under *lavar* we find this list of entries:

1. *hugas*: to wash the feet, To wash or to clean something. Sánchez, 1711, *op. cit.* De la Rosa-Alcázar give this entry – *Hugas*: clean, wash, rinse a plate or something else” *Op. cit.*, p. 159. Its current usage in Samar-Leyte is presented thus by a contemporary lexicologist: *Hugas*: v. to be devastated by disease, etc.; to carry all; to clean; to destroy everything; to lave; to rinse; to wash, to wash in water; ablution. Tramp, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

2. *hinsaw*: to wash the feet, or to wash one's feet. De la Rosa-Alcázar p. 152. Sánchez, 1711, has this entry under *hinis*: rinse, wash the plates, table, etc. *Nisnis*, *lugsus* have the same meaning. *Op. cit.* Tramp has no entry.

3. *hilamon*: or *hilamunon*, *hilamnon*: clean, remove the bad seeds. Also *guna*. *Kathilamon*: time to clean the vice. *Hilamunon*, grass; *Hilamunan*, the rice or *gihu*. Sánchez, 1711, *op. cit.* Tramp's entry – *Hilamon*: to clean seed beds. 1995, *op. cit.*, p. 183. De la Rosa-Alcázar – *Hilamon*: to clean seed beds. 1914, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

4. *Hiramos*: wash the face. *Ibid.*, p. 153. Tramps entry under *Hiram-os*: to lave, to wash; to wash the face.
Hiram-usan: lavatory; place to wash the face, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

5. *Hunaw*: To wash; to wash the hands; to clean the hands. *Ibid.*, p. 197. According to Sánchez – *Hunaw*: wash the hands. 1711, *op. cit.*

6. *Hunas*: “To wash; to stroke gently as washing clothes; to clean the floor with water. Tramp, 1995, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

Very interesting: Sánchez's 1711 *Vocabulario* has this entry for *Hunas*: low tide. *Hunasan*: shallow rocks, diving low tide.

Again, De la Rosa-Alcázar's 1914 *Diccionario* gives us this entry: *Hunas*: Rub, fricate, rinse the clothes. To diminish, low tide. Waning or low mark. *Op. cit.*, pp. 162-163.

7. *Bunak*: wash the clothes. Also, a fish so-called. *Ibid.*, p. 64. Tramp's entry reads: *Bunak*: to wash; to launder; to wash clothes; to lave. 1995, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

8. *Pamusa*: The word is derived from the root *Pusa*. *Pamusa* means: to wash the feet. Tramp, 1995, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

Pamusa: gift given by the Bisayans to enable them to wash the feet of the newly married ladies. De la Rosa-Alcázar, 1914, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

9. *Bulias*: wash the clothes; to get wet in the rain. *Ibid.*, p. 64. Sánchez has an entry under *Burias*: something white as when they whiten many things together, or when the sea is foaming or when one dresses in white. 1711, *op. cit.*

10. *Lasag*: wash the clothes, rubbing it with lemons or orange's husk. To wash or rub oneself with lemons or orange's husk. De la Rosa-Alcázar, 1914, *op. cit.*, p. 181. In Sánchez we find this entry for *Lasag*: to apply soap, *tapas man*.

11. *Lusgos*: Also *panhirug*, *ludgud*, *hinis*, *nisnis*. To clean, like utensils, cleaning, etc. Sánchez, 1711, *op. cit.*

In De la Rosa-Alcázar, the entry runs thus: *Lusgos*: to wash the fish, *kamuti gaway* or anything else like removing the dirt and placing them in a basket, putting it in and out of water. 1914, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

Tramp offers us this entry – *Lusgus*: to rub; to wash fish. 1995, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

12. *Nagnag*: To clean; to wash; to clean the hair [vulgar]. *Ibid.*, p. 287. De la Rosa-Alcázar's entry – *Nagnag*: to clean, to wash, 1914, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

The most ancient meaning is given us by Sánchez – *Nagnag*: *Lavar la llaga* or to wash a wound. 1711, *op. cit.*

13. *Usaw*: Its first meaning has reference to a tree which gives a red fruit, that has inside a kind of white flesh like *buabua* and outside very indented.

Its secondary meaning – *usaw*: wash and put in water. Sánchez, 1711, *op. cit.* Presently in Samar, in the Calbayog region, it has reference to washing one's privates. *Usaw*: wash, clean something with water. De la Rosa-Alcázar, 1914, *op. cit.*, p. 379. In Tramp – *Usaw*: to clean with water; to rinse; to wash. 1995, *op. cit.*, p. 469.

14. *Nawnaw*: To wash. Tramp, *Ibid.*, p. 301. *Naunau*: to wash, to clean something with water or any other liquid. Also to wash fish. De la Rosa-Alcázar, 1914, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

15. *Hingu*: to wash, to wash the mouth with water; to clean the lips with water after eating. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

16. *Sawsaw* or *Saosao*: to move, to remove with the hand what is being washed; to wash, to clean something with water, shaking it with hand to remove the dirt. *Ibid.*, p. 288.

Sawsaw: To rinse; to move the hand in water to clean (fig). Tramp, 1995, *op. cit.*, p. 392. Perhaps, the Bisayan term *lawsaw* used earlier in the text should fall under this one here.

17. *Tapas* or *bunak*: to clean the clothes the Bisayan way. Sánchez, 1711, *op. cit.* – To whiten the clothes, washing it well and using orange juice called *sua*. When the fruit falls, from the tree when over ripe. De la Rosa-Alcázar, 1914, *op. cit.*, p. 345.

18. *Tigas*: to wash well the clothes, removing the dirty spots. adj. Well washed clothes. *Ibid.*, p. 352. – Tramp's entry – *Tigas*: ebb; low tide; to wash a garment well. 1995, *op. cit.*, p. 436.

19. *Himgo*: to wash around the mouth. *Ibid.*, p. 184. Tramp offers the same meaning.

20. *Himgas*: derv. from *hugas*: to wash something well. *Ibid.*, p. 149. Sánchez' entry – *Himgas*: to clean the *bugas*. *Dugas*, *hashas*, also. 1711, *op. cit.* Tramp's entry – *Himgas*: to clean rice efficiently.

21. *Kimu* or *Quimo*; to wash or remove the dirty spots from the clothes, washing just the dirt, not touching the rest. Sánchez, 1711, *op. cit.* Tramp's entry simply states: "to wash; to rinse."

22. *Daggas*: To clean a wound with medicinal solution; to apply unguent or salve. Tramp, 1995, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

Danggas: to clean the wounds. Sánchez, 1711, *op. cit.*

23. *Parigus* or *digus*, *digu*: To bathe; to wash the entire body.

[9] *Hugas*. This *Hugas* was already cited; see the list above in annotation # 8.

[10] *Lawsaw*. *Sawsaw* or *lawsaw* (*lausau*) is cited above in annotation # 8 also.

[11] *Parigus*. This *parigus* or *parigo* is derived from *digus* or *digu* and both have the same meaning: to bathe or to wash the entire body, as cited above. Sánchez, 1711, *op. cit.* *Parigu*: to take a swim; to put the body or part of it in water or in any other liquid; to take a bath or put water over the body. De la Rosa-Alcázar, 1914, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

[12] *Pamusa*: is also and perhaps derived from the word *musun*: to clean the stomach. *Pamusunan*: to cleanse the privates. Sánchez, 1711, *op. cit.*

[13] *Hunay*. This *Hunas* was cited and described above under Number # 6.

[14] See the much quoted George Dewey Tramp's *Waray-English Dictionary*, most recent (1995) lexicon, for an excellent *Introduction* to the structure of the Samar-Leyte Bisayan language\dialect of Cebuano, pp. vi-xxii.

[15] *Nga*. This *nga* is a ligature or a copulative particle which joins two words: for example: *daku nga balay* or a large house. Sánchez, 1711, *op. cit.*

It also appears as an integral part in many and numerous Bisayan words. Its pronunciation for foreigners is most difficult and most challenging; hardly one out of ten can master the tongue and palate formation to utter it properly. The Bisayans are extremely sensitive to its proper pronunciation.

NGA: conj. used as a connective linker between a noun and qualifier and between clause and *kay anú, igú la, bago-la* and *maiha* as 'that' gen. according to used as emphasis (word) *nga* (word). Tramp, 1995, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

NG: Proper and peculiar word of the Bisayan dialect; the pronunciation is soft and guttural-nasal. When the word ends with this letter, no mark is placed over the g. *Ano an imo pinanga ngaro?* What did you ask?

NGA: A particle used to unite or link the names and other parts of a sentence one with the other. *Bato nga mahal* or a precious gem.

NGA: *Pronomb. relat.* What. *An tawu nga matuman san mga sugo sa Dios, mahagagawas san castigo.* One who keeps the commandments of God will be free from punishment.

NGA: *part.* it serves as adornment – *Ano nga?* What is it? De la Rosa-Alcázar, 1914, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

[16] '*Evangelios pequeños*'; the meaning is 'Little gospels'.