

Status of the Philippines during the Eighteenth Century

Introduction

The dictum that a historian's work is never finished always remains true. The historian's task is never complete. New documents or new interpretations of old documents compel him to change his views. In history, more than in any other science, the evidence is never final and definitive. Unknown documents can be discovered or known documents can be subjected to new critical interpretations which may bring different historical results. This is true for the history of all nations. This holds true also for the history of the Philippines.

The country is searching for national identity. There is a deeply-felt need to review our past history. Where are we to find our historical roots? In Asia? In the West? In past Philippine history? In pre-Hispanic Philippines? Are we in fact to look to the past in order to build a new nation?

According to some writers of Philippine history we have to erase from our midst all vestiges of colonialism and foreign reference. The very name of the nation, Philippines, is in question. A bill has been introduced in the *Interim Batasan Pambansa*, National Assembly, proposing to change the name of the nation and adopt a new name more in consonance with the history and the temper of the Filipino people. In the mind of the proponents of the bill we are living a period of evolution and revolution of

our economic, social, political, cultural and religious structures. Why keep a name that suggests colonialism, conquest and foreign domination? Can we not find in pre-Hispanic or pre-colonial history a fitting name that would define the idiosyncrasy, temper and history of the Filipino people? The nation finds itself at the crossroads. Where does the national road lead to? Which way to follow now?

We can ask ourselves still some more questions. Can the Filipino of the second half of the twentieth century, the Filipino of the Philippine Republic, renounce his past? In this search for national identity, are we to forget entirely the Spanish and the American periods? Are they a black shameful historical parenthesis in our national history? A nation which renounces its past, which feels ashamed of the deeds of its forefathers, is doomed as a historical nation. Disdain of the past means historical suicide. Are we going to become Filipinos now, after so many centuries of historical experience? There is no turning back in shame from a past that has made us what we are, has fashioned us into a unique people and nation.

We have to review and rewrite our past history. But how are we to review and rewrite it if we bypass the original sources? How are we to write intelligible history if the primordial documents and sources are left untouched in our archives and libraries?

Fortunately some Philippine institutions, both civil and religious, have set down to publish Spanish or translations of original Spanish works dealing with the cultural, political, religious, social and economic history of the Philippines during the Spanish time. They are making available for scholars and students of history the primary sources from which the history of the Philippines can be written.

One of these institutions, worthy of all praise, is the *Historical Conservation Society*. Sometimes it publishes bilingual works, giving the original Spanish together with the English translations of rare Spanish works both archival and printed, not easily accessible to historians and scholars.

I have presented this short introduction to set in the right historical perspective one of the most interesting books ever written on Philippine history. I am referring to the *Crónicas de*

la Provincia de San Gregorio Magno de Filipinas, China y Japón.* It was written in Spanish two and a half centuries ago. It was printed in three volumes which came off the press in 1738, 1741 and 1744 respectively. The whole monumental work was published in Manila under the direction of the Franciscan Friars. The writer and author of this work was the learned Franciscan Friar Juan Francisco de San Antonio (1686-1744).

The whole work is full of interest for the general reader. The second and third volumes of San Antonio's work deal mainly with the lives and extraordinary evangelical exploits of the Franciscan Friars who crossed the South Seas and came to the Philippines during the XVI and XVII centuries. They are the unsung heroes of the Christianization of the Philippines. They played a prominent role in the establishment of Christianity in the Philippine Archipelago and the Far East. It can safely be said that one fourth of the Philippines was evangelized by the Franciscans. Volumes two and three of San Antonio's *Crónicas de la Provincia de San Gregorio* are a first class testimony to this Christian achievement.

What I want to present to my readers is the English translation of San Antonio's *first* volume. The translation has been done by Don Pedro Picornell. Mr. Picornell devoted three long years to accomplish this difficult translation. He did not attempt to translate the whole work perhaps for lack of time. We have been offered the translation of the first volume of San Antonio's *Crónicas*. This is by far the most important for the scholar and historian interested in culture, anthropology and related sciences. It gives us a vivid description of the Philippine Islands, its products, its people, its religious and social customs. It also presents a short political and religious history of the Philippines from the time of its first discovery in 1565 to the time of the author's writing, the beginning of the XVIII century.

Juan Francisco de San Antonio was born in Madrid in 1686. He received a solid theological and classical education. He lived and worked in an age of optimism. San Antonio was a learned person and an ardent researcher. He was in contact with soldiers,

* *The Philippine Chronicles of Fray San Antonio*. A Translation from the Spanish by D. Pedro Picornell of Book I of *Crónicas de la Provincia de San Gregorio Magno* by Fray Juan Francisco de San Antonio, Historical Conservation Society — The Franciscan Fathers, XXIX, Manila, 1977.

cosmographers, mariners and geographers. To all these personal experiences he added a deep historical insight. He was a great traveller and went to many parts of the Philippines. And this during a time when travelling was dangerous and risky. Thoroughly acquainted with Philippine history and life, and with a perfect command of the native languages, he had in him the necessary qualities to become a good historian. He probably ranks among the best historians of the Philippines during Spanish times. San Antonio studied and presented for his readers the customs, usages and traditions of the Filipino people of his time. Furthermore he expanded a great deal upon the wealth of the country and the manifold products of the archipelago. Whoever has the patience to read this translation of San Antonio's *Crónicas* will be offered a delightful ride into a past which, in many ways, is very much alive still today. Many of San Antonio's descriptions could be included in any modern book of Philippine history and life.

The period in which San Antonio lived is one of the most important and yet unknown periods in Philippine history. The fruits of the conquest were there for all to see. The political and economic stresses of the first decades of the conquest were over. Politically speaking most of the Philippines had been brought under the sway of Spain. Only Mindanao, left to itself, and the regions which came to be known later on as the Mountain Province, were practically left untouched by Spanish power. The lowlanders had adjusted themselves to the demands of the new political and social situation. The external dangers coming from Chinese, Japanese, and European powers had been checked and overcome. Philippine society had already acquired the peculiar characteristics that still define her today, in spite of the transcendental changes that took place during later Spanish times and the period of the American occupation.

From the religious point of view the missionaries had brought the blessings of the Christian religion to practically all the inhabitants of the plains who were under the political control of the Spanish authorities. New towns had been created following the Spanish tradition inherited from Greco-Roman times. The typical Filipino town, with a large plaza, the church and the municipal building fronting it, took shape even before San Antonio's period. The Spanish policy of human settlements in towns where all people

could find security and religious instruction and the blessings of town living also bore positive results. The achievement on this aspect is outstanding. Resistance to settlement had been strong at the beginning, but by the time of San Antonio it had been overcome. The town had become the center of political, social, cultural and religious life. A sense of nationhood was being slowly awakened. People of different regions were brought more and more into mutual contact. A national identity was being created, precisely due to the Spanish policy of human settlements and Christian formation for all. A true sense of nationhood cannot yet be found, but people of different regions came to realize that they belonged to a wider and more universal world, both political and religious.

The task of evangelization ahead was still great, but the religious customs and practices so common and cherished by both rural and urban Filipinos had taken deep root among the masses. In fact, these religious practices and *fiestas*, created by the early missionaries and common already during the time of San Antonio, have shaped the Filipinos and have played a prominent role in nation building. Christianity had become, by the time of San Antonio, the religion of the majority of the Filipinos. It had given them a new and universal outlook, a new *Weltanschauung*, a Christian *Weltanschauung*.

The period of San Antonio saw tremendous economic and social changes in the Philippines. These were the results of similar changes brought about in Spain and in the rest of Europe.

Throughout the XVI and XVII centuries Spain had been fighting in all corners of the world. Her prosperity after the conquest of America had vanished. Her political and military supremacy had been contested by other European powers. At the end of the XVII century Spain and her Empire still remained standing but she had been tremendously weakened. Other European nations had taken over the political and military role Spain had played throughout the XVI and part of the XVII centuries.

The time of San Antonio saw the death of the Habsburg monarchy in Spain and the beginning of the Bourbon. This monarchy brought fresh blood to the throne and new ideas into the Spanish overseas possessions. The military, political, economic and cultural revival of Spain during the XVIII century is quite outstanding. This was due precisely to the Bourbons. The

effects upon the Spanish empire in America and the Philippines were quite positive. Able administrators and governors were sent overseas to improve the political and administrative machinery. The results of this effort were felt in the economic sphere also.

The loss of the Spanish Netherlands and the abandonment of Italy to Austrian interests freed Spain from a secular political entanglement that had meant a terrible drain of money and people. Relatively free from political problems in Europe, the Spanish Kings of the new Bourbon dynasty looked to their overseas dominions where they could achieve and carry out their new economic and political policies. This Spanish revival during the XVIII century was not an isolated event. It was contemporary to a general European revival. European monarchs seemed to take a real interest in the welfare of their subjects at home and in advancing the social and economic life of the subjects of their vast dominions overseas. This period of San Antonio was a period of exaggerated optimism, but optimism nevertheless. San Antonio, as we can judge from his *Crónicas*, was influenced by this general sense of optimism.

It is within this historical framework that the modern translation of San Antonio's first volume must be read by the modern scholar.

I want to offer my readers a commentary of some of the most important points dealt with by San Antonio. I will present at the end of my study a concrete criticism of the work and the translation. Since the book is in itself so relevant to modern readers I would like to bring this relevance to the notice of my readers.

As will be seen in the process of my study, San Antonio was a missionary who looked at the Philippines and the Filipinos through Spanish eyes, but he was also a man who lived close to the people, who studied their customs and usages, with a perfect command of Tagalog. He was a man who dedicated his whole life to the service of the people. Thus his history is very reliable. In fact it becomes an indispensable instrument to deepen the knowledge of such a critical period in Philippine history as was the beginning of the XVIII century. Although he was not a man of the first generation, as were Urdaneta, Rada, Chirino, Colin, Salazar, Benavides, Plasencia, Ribadeneyra, Loarca, Morga, still he was a witness to a process of transition to a new civiliza-

tion and way of life. Still more important perhaps, he was a direct witness of the effects and impact caused upon Filipino people and society by a century and a half of Spanish colonization and dominion. He allows us to see the great changes that had taken place during the Spanish time, and yet we can also see how faithfully and tenaciously the Filipinos of his time adhered to their own cherished customs and culture. San Antonio is a witness of the unique and peculiar response of the Filipinos to the twin challenge of Christianization and Hispanization.

Some of the chapters of San Antonio are truly interesting and manifest a keen critical analysis of the social, political and economic life of the Philippines. I hope to show this in the process of my study.

The Manila Acapulco Galleon Trade

During San Antonio's time huge profits were still made in the Acapulco galleon trade. To write about the Manila Acapulco galleon is to write about one of the navigational sagas of all times. There has never been in the whole history of navigation a line that lasted for so long as did the Manila Acapulco line. The hardships and harrowing experiences of all those who boarded the Manila Acapulco galleon and attempted the crossing of the Pacific defy human imagination. A reading of W. L. SCHURZ' book *The Manila Galleon*¹ leaves the reader dumbfounded.

The first galleon left the Philippines in 1565. The last one from Acapulco entered Manila Bay in 1815. In between those two dates there is a span of two hundred and fifty years. The crossing of the Pacific entails still today tremendous dangers to navigation. A retrospective look will allow the reader to imagine the difficulties of navigation in crowded galleons during the XVI, XVII and XVIII centuries. Regularly, for two hundred and fifty years, they made the five-to-eight month voyage across the Pacific between Manila and Acapulco. The largest and richest merchant ships of their age, the galleons carried to Mexico the fabulous luxuries of the Orient and returned to the Philippines laden with silver ingots. Their capture was the ultimate ambition of every

¹ W. L. SCHURZ, *The Manila Galleon*, A Dutton Paperback, New York, 1934.

pirate and privateer. Many were lost at sea; one drifted down the Mexican coast without a living soul on board; the mutiny on the *San Gerónimo* surpassed in drama that of the *Bounty*.

Three nations stand out as important points of contact in the galleon trade. The final point was Mexico, on the continent of America. The point where most of the goods came from was China, the Celestial Empire, the Grand Cathay of Marco Polo. The Philippines, Manila in concrete, was the way-station between these two extreme points.

Given the subsistence economy of the early Filipinos, the economic stresses created by the arrival of even a small contingent of Spanish soldiers and *conquistadores* were serious and grave. Legazpi, the conqueror of the Philippines, was forced to abandon Bohol for Cebu due to lack of food and supplies. After some years in Cebu once again he was forced to sail to Panay in search for food. Finally he settled in Manila, where he established the seat of government and made it the capital of the Philippines. The heavy influx of Chinese traders, right after the conquest, changed entirely the whole situation.

The Chinese relieved the economic stresses of the conquest and became, in a very short while, indispensable to the Spaniards. These enterprising traders soon became the suppliers of the Spanish colony. From China they brought what the Spaniards needed for their survival. In the process the strains placed on the Filipinos by the *conquistadores* were very much lightened.

The Chinese were not strangers to commerce in the Philippines. During the Sung, (960-1279) Yuan or Mongol (1279-1368) and Ming (1368-1644) dynasties they were wont to come to the Philippines and beyond on trading missions. From Canton and Fukkien, traders in their junks brought to the Philippines the products the natives of the Islands valued most. Spanish writers, beginning with Pigafetta, down to the time of the conquest during Legazpi, all testify to the commercial activities of Chinese and Bornean traders with the natives of the Philippine Islands. The Chinese were quick to realize the possibilities of trading with the newcomers, that is, the Spaniards whom they met for the first time. They had had some contacts with other Europeans, especially the Portuguese at Macao. But these strangers seemed to them quite different from the Portuguese. The Spaniards did not

come to barter. They came to conquer and to stay. They brought huge amounts of silver with which they bought Chinese products. The possibility of profit loomed large. The Chinese with their acute sense for trade realized this from the outset. They did not let the opportunity escape them. Ever since that time the Chinese had dominated the economic life of the Philippines, as they have dominated the economies of most nations of South East Asia.

At the time of the Spanish conquest of Manila there were only 40 Chinese residents in the city.² Historians and scholars need to emphasize this fact, for it explains, to a very large extent, why the Philippines escaped the Chinese sphere of influence. Things changed immediately with the coming of the Spaniards and their decision to settle in the Philippines. The volume of trade grew by leaps and bounds. The Chinese, as we have remarked already, came to trade. Since the possibilities of enrichment were so great they came in larger numbers every year. Many of them decided to settle in Manila. So large was their number that the Spaniards were terrified by their presence. The fear of a Chinese uprising was forever present in the mind of the *conquistadores*. A serious warning was given by the aborted invasion of the Chinese pirate Limahong. In 1574, almost unnoticed, he sent some elite Japanese troops who were at his service, to storm and conquer the city. The Spaniards and Filipinos resisted valiantly and triumphed. Their losses were heavy. From then on, although the Chinese became necessary for the economic survival of the colony, the Spaniards regarded them as a permanent danger.

In 1574 governor Guido de Lavezaris (1572-1575), successor of Legazpi, wrote to the Spanish king:

"The Chinese continue to increase their commerce each year, and supply us with many articles, as sugar, wheat and barley flour, nuts, raisins, pears and oranges, silks, choice porcelain and iron, and other small things which we lacked in the land before their arrival".³

² *Relation of the Voyage to Luzon*, June, 1570, in H. E. BLAIR and J. A. ROBERTSON, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, (55 vols.), Cleveland, 1903-1909, vol. III, p. 101. Hereinafter quoted as BR.

³ *Letter of Guido de Lavezaris to Philip II*, Manila, July 17, 1574, in BR., vol. III, p. 276; W. L. SCHURZ, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

Antonio de Morga, who wrote at the beginning of the XVII century, presented a long list of goods brought in by the Chinese:

"Raw silk in bundles, of the fineness of two strands, and other silk of coarser quality; fine untwisted silk, white and of all colors, wound in small skeins; quantities of velvets, some plain and some embroidered in all sorts of figures, colors and fashions, others with body of old and embroidered with gold; woven stuffs and brocades, of gold and silver upon silks of various colors and patterns; quantities of gold and silver thread in skeins; damasks, satins, taffetas, and other cloths of all colors; linen made from grass, called *lençesuelo*; and white cotton cloth of different kinds and qualities. They also bring musk, bensoin any ivory; many bed ornaments, hangings, coverlets and tapestries of different shades; tablecloths, cushions and carpets; horse-trapping of the same stuffs, and embroidered with glass beads and seed pearls; also pearls and rubies, sapphires and crystal; metal basins, copper kettles and other copper and cast-iron posts; quantities of all sorts of nails, sheet-iron, tin and lead; and saltpetre and gunpowder. They supply the Spaniards with wheat flour; preserves made of orange, peach, pear, nutmeg and ginger, and other fruits of China; salt pork and other salt meats; live fowls of good breed and many fine capons; quantities of fresh fruits and oranges of all kinds; excellent chestnuts, walnuts, and *chicueyes* (both green and dried, a delicious fruit); quantities of fine thread of all kinds, needles and knick-knacks; little boxes and writing cases; beds, tables, chairs, and gilded domestic benches, painted in many figures and patterns. They bring domestic buffaloes; geese that resembles swans; horses, some mules and asses; even caged birds, some of which talk while others sing, and they make them play innumerable tricks. The Chinese furnish numberless other gewgaws ornaments of little value and worth, which are esteemed among the Spaniards; fine croskery of all kinds; *canganes*, or cloth of Kaga and black and blue robes; *tacleys*, which are beads of all kinds; strings of cornelians and other beads, and precious stones of all colors; pepper and other spices, and rarities, which, if I refer to them all, I would never finish, nor have sufficient paper for it".⁴

Some of the products, like foodstuffs, iron, sulphur, saltpetre were necessary for the Spanish settlers. Other products, how-

⁴ ANTONIO DE MORGÁ, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, trans. in BR., vol. XVI, pp. 178-180, as quoted by W. L. SCHURZ, *op. cit.*, 76-77.

ever, were shipped in the galleons for Mexico, and even Spain. It was the beginning of the galleon trade.

After the first decades of the conquest of the Philippines new products were brought from other Asian countries. From the Moslem Moguls of India, from Cambodia, from Siam, from Vietnam, from Japan, exotic Oriental goods came to Manila to be sold to the Spaniards. These products the Spaniards, in turn, sent them across the Pacific for the markets of Mexico and Spain. Practically every region of the Orient sent its own rare products to Manila. Everybody wanted to have a share in this fabulous and feverish trade. The fever of the galleon trade continued practically unabated throughout the whole XVII century.

In the second half of the seventeenth century the Jesuit Colin, one of the best missionaries to come to the Philippine Islands, gives us a veritable list of products from the Orient sent to Mexico via the Manila Acapulco galleon. According to this Jesuit historian:

“Manila is the equal of any other emporium of our monarchy, for it is the center to which flow the riches of the Orient and the Occident, the silver of Peru and New Spain, the pearls and precious stones of India, the diamonds of Narsinga and Goa, the rubies, sapphires and topazes, and the cinnamon of Ceylon, the pepper of Sumatra and the Javas, the cloves, nutmegs and other spices of the Moluccas and Banda, the fine Persian silks and wool and carpets from Ormuz and Malabar, rich hangings and bed coverings of Bengal, fine camphor of Borneo, balsam and ivory of Abada and Cambodia, the civet of Lequios, and from Great China silks of all kinds, raw and woven in velvets and figured damasks, taffetas and other cloths of every texture, design and colors, linens, and cotton mantles, gilt-decorated articles, embroideries and porcelain, and other riches and curiosities of great value and esteem, from Japan, amber, varicolored silks, escritiores, boxes and desks of precious woods, lacquered and with curious decorations, and very fine silverware”.⁵

Colin was writing almost a century after the beginning of the galleon trade. The trade had grown to great proportions.

⁵ FRANCISCO COLIN, *Labor Evangélica, Ministerios Apostólicos de los Obreros de la Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas*, Madrid, 1663, as quoted by W. L. SCHURZ, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

Many nations and products were involved in the galleon trade. One cannot but notice, in Colin's list, the absence of any product from the Philippines. Products brought to Manila and shipped to Mexico came from practically all the Asian regions. Only the Philippines, the Spanish colony in the East, was lacking, so it seems, in products which could find a ready market in Mexico and Spain.

We know from reliable historical sources that Philippine products were always shipped in the galleon from Manila to Acapulco. It is very difficult to know the extent of Philippine goods shipped to Mexico. During the different Chinese uprisings and the years that followed, when the number of Chinese coming to the Philippines declined very considerably, Philippine products formed a large and essential part of the galleon cargoes. From the time of governor Dasmariñas (1590-1593) some serious efforts were made to encourage the development of Philippine textiles. These were highly appreciated in Mexico and Spain. In the words of W. L. Schurz:

"There was a good market for such materials in Mexico and the demand could have been largely supplied by Philippine manufactures. The *lampotes* or gauze of Cebu was especially esteemed, both by the islanders and the Mexicans. The cotton *mantas* or sail-cloth, made in the province of Ilocos on Luzon were also in wide demand among shipping in the East Indies. A larger trade in these insular products would also have served to keep in the islands some of the silver from Mexico. Among other textile goods of domestic manufacture which found a regular demand in Mexico were linen sheets and tablecloths and bed canopies, bed coverlets from Luban and Ilocos, cotton stockings from Manila, and petticoats and hammocks from Ilocos".⁶

As late as 1765 we find this report from Francisco Leandro de Viana:

"In the Provinces of Ilocos and Cagayan there might be factories to work up the great amount of fine cotton which they produce, and by bringing skilled workmen from India the figured cottons which are brought thence could be made here. In all the Visayas, in Camarines

⁶ Cfr. W. L. SCHURZ, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

and Albay are made the choicest and finest weaves, which they call *nipis*, and others of commercial quality, which they call *gainaras*, and use for shirts. In Cagayan and Ilocos are woven very fine handkerchiefs, towels, coverlets, and tablecloths of as good quality as those made in Flanders".⁷

Cotton goods, then, were always shipped to Mexico. In 1792, however, a large shipment of 998 white cotton shirts found no sale in Acapulco "on account of their shortness, being made for natives of the islands".⁸ It sounds strange that as early as the XVIII century merchants found the same problem that merchants and traders find today in the Philippines: inability to sell their manufactured shirts due to their shortness even by Philippine standards.

During Colin's time Manila had become an entrepot of commerce and trade, comparable to the centers of ancient times. Some Spanish writers compare the wealth of Manila to Venice and Alexandria. Indeed Manila was in a unique position to become the permanent center of international trade and commerce. Economic geography made of Manila the ideal place and port of the East. Spaniards and visitors to Manila were quick to recognize this fact. And for a time, for almost a century, Manila did indeed become the center of a flourishing international trade. No other city could compete with her.

Grau y Monfalcon, representative of the city in the Spanish court at Madrid at the beginning of the XVII century described

"the notable and special greatness of the city of Manila, the mistress of so many seas and capital of so many archipelagoes, the key to the ancient and ever rich commerce of the Orient".⁹

As a result of the profits made in the galleon trade the residents of Manila lived in opulence and luxury. At the beginning of the XVII century Manila, which had been razed to the ground by several fires, had been built in stone, with roofs of red tiles. According to Antonio de Morga, who wrote so sympathetically

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 56.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 32.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 28.

about the Philippines, it was one of the prime cities of the world. He obviously was a very rich man, an official of the Spanish government, and was writing at the peak of Manila's prosperity.

Even during the time of San Antonio, Manila was one of the most beautiful cities of the East. All the wealth of the city depended upon the rich returns of the Acapulco galleon. A successful return trip from Acapulco to Manila meant another year of extravagant living. Failure to make the return trip, a capture of a galleon or a shipwreck meant sorrow, poverty and misery for those who yesterday were supposed to be millionaires. No other city or colony depended so much upon the successful return of a ship. The galleon was practically the only source of income. The profits made were immense. Those engaged in the galleon trade lived glamorous lives. However the Spaniards of Manila had little social, economic and political security.

The evil effects of the galleon trade were denounced as early as the end of the XVI century. These evil effects were felt not only by the natives of the Philippines but also by the Spaniards of the Philippines. In the long run the galleon trade also stifled any other possibility of commerce and trade. It was prejudicial even to the state.

"This trade", wrote Antonio de Morga, "is so great and profitable and easy to control that the Spaniards do not apply themselves to, or engage in, any other industry. Consequently there is no husbandry or field labor worthy of consideration. They do not engage in the many other industries to which they could turn with great profit, if the Chinese trade should fail them. That trade has been very hurtful and prejudicial in this respect".¹⁰

The Spaniards of the Philippines have been castigated for not engaging in any other type of commercial and industrial activity except the galleon trade. Historians and writers of the colonial period agree to this. Yet, the Spaniards who came with Legazpi and those of subsequent expeditions did not come to the Philippines as colonizers and settlers. They were soldiers, discoverers, followers of those heroic *conquistadores* who won for Spain the huge territories of America. They did not cross the

¹⁰ A. DE MORGA, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, as quoted by W. L. SCHURZ, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

vast expanses of the Atlantic and the South Seas to settle peacefully as farmers in the Philippines. For that they could have remained in Spain or at most stopped and settled in Mexico, Peru or any of the colonies of the Spanish Empire in America. The early *conquistadores* and discoverers faced the harrowing experience of crossing dangerous seas, fought with strange and powerful enemies with the hope of getting rich quickly and return home to a life of rest and leisure. The first two hundred years of Spanish occupation in the Philippines were not conducive to the development of agriculture or of any other industry. At the first suggestion to till the land or settle as peaceful farmers the early *conquistadores* would have abandoned the Philippines. The country would have fallen most probably into the hands of China. The Philippines might have become an appendix of China as Taiwan did. The natives of the Philippines might be living in the mountains as the aborigines of Formosa live even today.

The reasons why the Spaniards did not engage in farming, or any other type of trade except the galleon trade, are many and difficult to understand. Spanish migration to the Philippines was minimal, the distances to be covered huge and immense, the enemies surrounding them many and powerful. Had the few Spaniards who came here gone to the provinces to open lands for agriculture they would never have been able to defend the colony in time of crisis.

The Philippines did not offer, at the time of the conquest, any advantage for agriculture and farming. Furthermore, one must not lose sight of the fact that the Philippines were sparsely populated. There were forested areas even in the plains of Central Luzon. The economy of the Philippines at the time of the conquest was definitely a subsistence economy.

Towards the end of the XVII century, however, farsighted Spaniards clamoured for a change. The political and historical circumstances of the Philippines and the world at large had changed radically since the time of the conquest. There was an outcry to change things. Denunciations were sent to Spain. The galleon trade was cursed by most people except those heavily involved in it. All to no avail. Spain in the Philippines had lost its conquering impetus. It withdrew to Manila and lived and vegetated with the tremendous returns of the Acapulco galleon.

The decadence of the later Habsburg dynasty coinvolved not only continental Spain, but also all the colonies of her vast empire. It was with the Bourbons that Spain and her dependencies of America and the East witnessed a revival in the XVIII century.

This sense of defeatism is well described by W. L. SCHURZ:

"During the later seventeenth century a momentous change came over the Spanish colony. Exhausted by the efforts of the heroic age, it gradually drew within itself and vegetated in inglorious obscurity. The days when Spain swaggered about the East were over. Under the threat of a Chinese pirate state on Formosa, the Moluccas and the Moro Islands were abandoned in 1662 and their garrisons withdrawn to Manila. The armed forces and defenses of the colony were neglected. The replacements in the troops were now largely inferior recruits from Mexico, instead of the veteran infantry of former times who had seen service in Flanders and in other continental campaigns. The result was that towards the end of this sorry period even the Moros raided at will among the islands in defiance of a government too supine to hold them in check. Only Luzon and the Visayas remained and the once brilliant luster of Spanish prestige in the Orient was dimmed, never again to awe its people with the old daring and splendour of its imperial enterprises".¹¹

This sense of defeatism is to be noticed also in San Antonio. He recognized that the galleon trade was risky, fragile and, during his time, it had passed its zenith. He was a keen analyst and advised the rulers of the Philippines to take action to develop trade and commerce and create the necessary political and social conditions for this trade to grow and subsist on sounder economic basis. To use his own words:

"The truth is that all this industrial wealth of the Philippines is today in a sad state of neglect. It depends on the many uncertainties of the seas and unpredictable conditions of other kingdoms and republics. Manila is always exposed to these circumstances, and, unfortunately, at present, it has greater share of failures because of the causes mentioned above. The ministers who govern these islands should investigate any other causes of the decline of commerce in these islands before these bring us complete ruin" (p. 23).

¹¹ W. L. SCHURZ, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

A definitive and complete study on the effects of the galleon trade on Philippine commerce has not yet been done. The economic repercussions and dislocations were felt not only in the Philippines but also in Mexico, Peru and Spain.

The main reason for the decadence of Philippine trade during the first two centuries of Spanish rule is to be found in the abundance of silver shipped from Mexico and Peru to Manila and from here to China. It is not that Chinese silk and stuffs were cheap but rather that silver, brought from Mexico and Peru to Manila and from there to China in unlimited quantities, obtained huge prices in China. Mexican silver entering China tripled its value immediately. It could buy three times more goods than it could do in Mexico or in Europe. The Chinese cloths became cheaper than local manufactured textiles in the Philippines. The natives of the Philippines lost all incentives to continue such a manufacture and even to engage in agriculture and related industries. Enough silver filtered down into the hands of the natives to be able to buy the necessary things for life. The competition was onesided. The Chinese took over and started to control trade and commerce, to the disadvantage of Philippine, Mexican and Spanish trade.

"This competition" — writes the Mexican historian Bernal — "which was fatal to native products also gravely damaged the Mexican textile industry and delayed the establishment of cotton looms in Mexico. This competition was also felt in Spain where the silk growers and weavers of Andalucia petitioned the King to restrict the galleon trade to the smallest possible amount".¹²

Silk growers and weavers of Andalucia, Valencia and Murcia tried to limit and even to suppress the galleon trade for it threatened the Spanish national industry:

"The opposition of the powerful commercial interests of the Andalucian cities was a more formidable support of the movement than were these considerations of fixed policy. The galleon trade in Chinese silks competed with their trade with the American vice-royalties and threat-

¹² RAFAEL BERNAL, *The Chinese Colony in Manila, 1570-1770*, in *The Chinese in the Philippines, 1570-1770*, ed. by Alfonso Félix, Historical Conservation Society, IX, Manila, 1966, p. 45.

ened the existence of the national silk industry. Therefore they intrigued and labored at court to have the troublesome colony turned adrift".¹³

All attempts to abandon the colony of the Philippines or to suppress the galleon trade failed. The Manila Acapulco galleon trade continued uninterrupted for two hundred and fifty years. It died down only when social, political and economic changes in the world made the galleon trade obsolete and unprofitable. This happened at the beginning of the XIX century when Spain had lost her colonies in the American continent and in the Philippines the successful efforts of enlightened governors like Simon de Anda y Salazar (1762-1766; 1770-1776), Jose Basco y Vargas, (1778-1787), Rafael Maria de Aguilar (1793-1806), under the enlightened "despot" Charles III (1757-1788), bore positive fruits for the economic development of the Philippines. A great revival took place during the last quarter of the XVIII and all through the XIX centuries.

"That they did not accomplish more" — wrote W. L. Schurz — "was only due to the shortness of the time at their disposal and to the opposition of those who profitted by the perpetuation of old abuses. They had everywhere to contend with the selfishness and suspicion of long-established interests, and with an inertia that had its roots in custom, the tropical environment, and the conservatism of the Orient".¹⁴

Cotton cultivation in early Philippines

At the time of the Spanish arrival cotton cultivation was quite widespread in the Philippines. Early Spanish chroniclers, witnesses of the first contacts between the Spaniards and the inhabitants of the Philippines, testify that cotton was extensively cultivated. Since cotton was abundant, a relatively flourishing trade existed between the Philippines and some neighboring Asian countries, especially China. In exchange for

¹³ W. L. SCHURZ, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 53.

cotton, wax, tortoise shells, pearls and slaves¹⁵ the early inhabitants of the Philippines, especially of Manila, Cebu and Sulu, imported earthenware, porcelain, silks, colored glass, iron and some other objects highly appreciated by the early Filipinos.

I would like to give some quotations from early Spanish writers regarding cotton cultivation and manufacture of textile products. One of the most famous is Pedro Chirino, a Jesuit of the first generation, having arrived to the Philippines in the last decade of the XVI century. A man of wide experience, he came to know the Philippines and the Filipinos quite well, especially the inhabitants of the Visayan Islands. His *Relación*, written in 1604, describes the products, customs, habits and beliefs of the early Filipinos. It is one of the most interesting and important books regarding early Philippine history and culture. From the anthropological point of view it is a mine of wealth. One of the points he deals with, although accidental to his main purpose, is the cultivation of cotton in the island of Cebu and some adjacent islands. According to Chirino, fabrics of excellent quality were manufactured. They were exported to Mexico where they obtained high prices. Thus we read:

"They were and are a most shrewed and skillful people in matters of trade and bargaining, as in the buying and selling of any product, and no less so in the breeding and cultivation of the produce itself. They used to harvest large crops not only of rice, which is the staple food, but also of cotton, with which they clothe themselves and also make an excellent fabric such as are highly valued in New Spain even today. On this account, it was reasoned that they were an ideal people out of whom to derive great profits, and not mistakenly since from the cotton fabrics called *lompotes* alone one encomendero

¹⁵ Historians tend to deny the traffic of slaves in early Philippines. Writers of the contact period are clear on this point. Filipino slaves were sold to Chinese and Bornean traders. Traffic on slavery was common and widespread not only in the Philippines but throughout South and East Asia and the whole world. This statement may sound strange to our ears, but we must not forget that kingdoms and tribes thrived on slave trade, slave raiding and head-hunting. They were respectable jobs, adding wealth and power to the rulers, to the chiefs and to the tribal community. Cfr. A. PIGAFETTA, *Voyage Around the World*, Manila, FBG, 1969, p. 33; *Letter of Francisco de Sande to the King of Borneo*, April, 1978, in BR., vol. IV, p. 154; A. DE MORGA, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, ed. W. E. RETANA, Madrid, 1909, p. 378.

within a few years amassed a fortune of more than 150,000 pesos".¹⁶

We can gather from Chirino's testimony that in some regions of the Philippines, in our concrete case in Cebu, there was an extensive and flourishing cotton industry and a thriving trade in the native textiles manufactured there. Chirino is not an isolated witness. Practically every Spaniard who wrote about early Philippines mentions cotton as a product of the country.

Another testimony, this time for Luzon, is found in one of the best officials sent to govern the Philippines, Antonio de Morga. Morga published his candid and interesting book in Mexico, in 1609 although it was in common use in manuscript form at the end of the XVI century. He writes:

"Cotton is much cultivated all over the islands: it is spun and sold in skeins to the Chinese and other nations who come to trade for it; it is also woven in cloth of diverse kinds, which is also bartered".¹⁷

I have chosen the two most representative and perhaps best known writers in Philippine historical circles. They are not the only ones. Some earlier writers are as specific as Chirino and Morga. These chroniclers wrote when Chinese trade with the Spaniards was still in its initial stage. It had not grown much from the usual trade carried on between the Philippines and China before the Spanish contact.

Legazpi, (1565-1572), conqueror of the Philippines, speaks of cotton as one of the many products of the Philippines.¹⁸ but the *Adelantado* and founder of Manila, like many of the early *conquistadores*, spoke more from hearsay than from practical knowledge. They had not lived enough time in the Philippines to know the products and natural resources of the country. Furthermore, the conquest was in its initial stage. Many regions of the Philippines were left untouched by the early *conquistadores*. Once

¹⁶ PEDRO CHIRINO, S.J., *Relación de las Islas Filipinas. The Philippines in 1600*. Historical Conservation Society, XV, Manila, 1969, pp. 8/240.

¹⁷ A. DE MORGA, *Sucesos de Las Islas Filipinas*, ed. Jose Rizal, Comisión del Centenario de Jose Rizal, Manila, 1961, p. 281.

¹⁸ *Relation of the Conquest of Luzon*, Manila, April 20, 1572, in BR., vol. III, p. 169.

Manila was conquered and the Philippines divided into *encomiendas* the early Spanish settlers and *conquistadores* came to know the country better and from personal experience. Their *Relations* or Reports to the Spanish Crown and the Council of Indies in Spain become very reliable. The second governor of the Philippines, Guido de Lavezaris, (1572-1575), in a long letter to Philip II written in 1574, states the following:

“There is a great deal of cotton, which they work and spin, and make into fine clothes, these are very valuable to the Indians in their trade. The Chinese bring them many silks, porcelain, and perfumes; with irons and other articles, from which they make great profits”.¹⁹

An easy and clear conclusion a historian can gather from the texts quoted above is that the inhabitants of early Philippines, of the so-called contact period, were cultivating cotton and exporting it to China. Cotton cultivation and weaving of textile fabrics were a source of commerce and trade. How extensive and permanent this cotton cultivation was is another different question. It would be an interesting subject for study, especially given the tremendous economic possibilities cotton cultivation could have for today's Philippines. I will not study this aspect for it falls outside the scope of my study.²⁰

Judging from early Spanish writers, cotton industry started to decline alarmingly soon after the Spanish arrival. One is inclined to ask why this was so. This is important not only as a historical curiosity, but more so for the economic effects the decadence of cotton planting had upon a segment of Filipinos. It also changed, to a certain degree, the Filipino pattern of trade and commerce.

It is not difficult to find the reasons for the decline of cotton cultivation and export. The arrival of the Chinese to the Philippines in large numbers changed the economic and trade pattern of the early Filipinos.

As I have written in previous pages the Chinese had trade relations with the early inhabitants of the Philippines before the

¹⁹ *Reply to Rada's Opinion*, in BR., vol. III, p. 270.

²⁰ Cfr. RAMON ECHEVARRIA, *Rediscovery in Southern Cebu*, Historical Conservation Society, XXVI, Cebu City, 1974.

Spanish arrival. But the Chinese who came before the Spanish contact were few and their trade was always open to dangers from pirates and the dangers of the fragmented state of early Philippine society. The arrival of the Spaniards to the East, with their seemingly inexhaustible supply of silver, so highly appreciated and valued by the Chinese, enticed them to come in larger and larger numbers every year and induced them to *stay* in the Philippines as permanent settlers.

The Spanish appetite for oriental products especially silk, porcelain and other wares was insatiable. It obtained high prices in Mexico and Spain and brought in huge profits in the galleon trade that started almost immediately after the Spanish conquest of the Philippines. Chinese silk and stuffs were brought to Manila from China. When the Filipinos saw the clothes brought from China, they made less efforts to weave their own clothes. The Chinese provided what the Spaniards and the Filipinos needed. The Filipinos turned to wear Chinese silk and stuffs, to the detriment of their own textile industry.

At the time of the Spanish arrival, one or two Chinese trading ships used to come to Manila. As the years went by, and the Spaniards conquered the Philippines, the number of ships grew enormously. At times as many as forty or fifty Chinese ships came to Manila every year. The fruits of this thriving commerce and trade, however, were reaped by a few residents of Manila and by the Chinese.

The decline of cotton growing accelerated as the decades past. The Spanish authorities took a stand against the catastrophic effects this Chinese trade had upon the economy of the Filipinos. Governor Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas, (1590-1593) one of the early governors of the Philippines, and a man of vision, complained bitterly against the negative effects of Chinese trade with the Philippines. He took a stand in defense of Philippine cotton textiles, which, in the honest opinion of the capable governor, were better and cheaper than the Chinese textiles. In a long letter to the Spanish King, Philip II, he wrote:

“With your Majesty’s permission, I must state that I regret the trade of these Chinese, for it seems to me injurious. It might be forbidden on the ground of the great sums of money which they take from these islands

to foreign countries. The most of the trade is in cotton stuffs — the material for which they take from this country in the first place, and bring it back woven. The natives here could just as well make these, if they chose, of their own cotton, and even better than those which come from China. They could export them to Mexico, and could have a trade worth four thousand pesos. This would lead to greater care in producing and cultivating the cotton, because they would not have the Sangleys acting as middlemen. . . .”²¹

The reason, then, for the decline of cotton growing and weaving in the Philippines towards the end of the XVI century was the arrival of thousands of Chinese traders to Manila. They brought to Manila cheap silk and stuff materials. The Filipinos, having enough money to buy them, started to discard their own garments, which they formerly used, and started to dress with Chinese silk and stuffs. The native Filipino textile industry entered a period of decadence. The saturation of the market by cheap Chinese silk and other textile materials meant a sharp decline of native cotton and weaving industry. In view of this Governor Dasmariñas passed an Ordinance prohibiting the natives from wearing Chinese silk and stuffs. Dasmariñas was opposed strongly by Domingo de Salazar (1511-1594), the first bishop of the Philippines (1579-1594) who, as protector of the Filipinos and Chinese, had at heart the defense and total welfare of both Filipinos and Chinese. Governor Dasmariñas, perhaps to justify his conduct in front of the Council of Indias in Spain, and to add some more moral support to the Ordinance, opened an Interrogation or Declaration.

A set of questions was presented to some witnesses, both Spaniards and Filipinos. Some of these questions are of great interest. From the answers we gather that before the Spanish arrival the early Filipinos wore no other garments than their own, planting cotton and weaving cloth for their own use. This continued for some years after the Spaniards settled in the Islands. The arrival of the Chinese, the witnesses continue, changed the whole pattern of trade and commerce. Before it was not like this. Worth noting is the clear statement that Filipino fabrics were

²¹ *Letter of G. P. Dasmariñas to Philip II, Manila, June 20, 1591, in BR., vol. VIII, p. 273.* BR. gives the year 1592 as the date of the letter, but a critical reading of it shows it has to be dated 1591.

better woven and cheaper than the Chinese. What was also paradoxical was the fact that Chinese fabrics imported to the Philippines were manufactured from cotton exported from the Philippines to China. The Chinese, as early as 1591, were becoming middlemen and reaped huge profits in the Manila Acapulco galleon trade. According to the Declaration the natives did not show the same enterprise and zest as the Chinese. The country was well fitted for cotton cultivation. If the natives were to set themselves to the task of cultivating cotton, enough would be produced to supply the islands with provisions and clothing. Good cloth would be made. The surplus could be shipped to Mexico.

We have the sworn statement of Don Nicolas Ramos, a chief of Lubao, Pampanga.

"[He] stated that he knew that before the Spaniards came to the islands for their discovery, pacification, and settlement, and that of all the peoples who then were, or have since been, discovered here, all the natives of the islands, so far as this witness is informed - chiefs, timaguas, and slaves, without distinction of rank - wove cotton fabrics with which they clothed themselves, all from cotton of their own planting. It is true that, as far back as this witness can remember, he thinks that he has never known cotton to have been planted in this province [Pampanga], or along the coast of Manila, from the village of Cavite to this province; but in all the other tribes, except these cotton was planted, large quantities being gathered and sold to the inhabitants of this Pampanga, and those of the river and coast of Manila, who gave in exchange the rice which they cultivated, and sometimes gold; and they procured the cotton for the purpose of spinning it and weaving cloth for their own garments. This continued to be the custom for many years after the coming of the Spaniards...

"... This witness stated that since the Spaniards have become established in these islands, he has noticed how the Chinese have come hither, in larger numbers every year, eight ships at least coming annually from China; and in some years this witness has seen as many as twenty and thirty, all laden with cloths and bolts of silk. And when the natives of these islands of this province saw all these clothes brought by the Chinese, they made less exertion to weave their own; but to avoid even that little work, all the natives began to clothe themselves with the said stuffs from China, discarding entirely their own

which they formerly wore. And so far has this gone at the present day, that all alike - without distinction of chief from timagua, or of timagua from slave- dress in these stuffs, making it impossible to judge of their rank from their dress. In this way a very large quantity of cloth is used...".²²

A very clear conclusion from the testimony of the early writers can be drawn. And is this. The arrival of Chinese traders in larger and larger numbers every year, with manifold types of articles, especially silk, so highly valued by the Spaniards and the Filipinos themselves, stifled the textile industry of the Philippines. Cotton planting had of necessity to suffer since everybody seemed to prefer to dress in Chinese silk and stuffs rather than with native Filipino fabrics. It was a question of time before the textile industry would suffer irreparable losses.

The textile industry of the Philippines, however, was not entirely ruined. The abandonment of cotton cultivation was a long process. It did not take place overnight. In fact, early Spanish chroniclers tell that Philippine textiles were exported to Mexico where they obtained high prices. All through the entire Spanish period, while the galleon trade between Manila and Acapulco continued, Philippine native fabrics, especially of the type called "lompotes", were shipped to Mexico. During the time of San Antonio cotton growing was extensive and the Filipinos had a self sufficient production to manufacture their own clothes. San Antonio is very clear on this point:

"The cotton is of good quality and good textiles are woven from it. These are in good demand here and abroad where they are made into spreads, towels, and various types of piece goods worked in the German style which Europeans want for use as tablecloths, napkins and underclothes" (p. 29).

San Antonio castigates the Spanish authorities for not giving more incentives to the Filipinos to continue cultivating cotton. During his time the industry, though not dead yet, was in shambles. The cotton industry became stagnated and in the long run it almost disappeared, except in some regions of the Philippines.

²² *Ordinance Forbidding the Indios to wear Chinese Stuffs*, in BR., vol. III, pp. 84-85.

Spanish writers of later generations than San Antonio still testify to the existence of cotton cultivation in the Philippines. In the province of Batangas cotton was widely planted towards the end of the XVIII century. Joaquín Martínez de Zúñiga, one of the most outstanding Friars to come to the Philippines, and an eager traveller and observer, wrote in 1803-1805 of his travels to different provinces of the Philippines. Referring to cotton cultivation in Batangas he has this to say:

"There are two kinds of cotton. One comes from a tree of sufficient height whose branches come out of its trunk horizontally. From these branches hang long and thick capsules, which, when still green, are eaten by the natives. When mature, the contents form into a soft, hairy, white, and feathery substance. This hairy substances are short and delicately thin and cannot thus be made into thread. Called by the natives "algodon de Castilla" they serve only as material to stuff pillows.

"The second kind of cotton, called "bulac" by the natives, is a small tree that brings forth white flowers embellished with red. Its fruit yield small bundles of cotton, each containing three small seeds similar to capsicum grains that are easily separated from the cotton by a spinning wheel.

"These seeds are planted and in one year grow, bear fruit, and are pulled out to give place to new plants. The cotton tree becomes knotty or rugged and rough when allowed to stay for more than a year. For this reason the plant is replaced after harvesting the fruits".²³

Paul P. de la Gironiere, in his book *Adventures of a Frenchman in the Philippines*, published in French in Paris in 1853 writes:

"The cultivation of cotton, which is *carried on to a great extent*, (underscoring mine), and especially in the province of Ilocos, is, of all the products of the Philippines, that which requires the least labour and expense, it generally follows a crop of mountain rice. As soon as the rice crop is carried off, the ground receives a light ploughing, and in the tracks made afterwards by the plough, at a distance of a yard from each other, some cotton seeds are laid, and covered in the earth. In about

²³ J. M. DE ZUNIGA, *Status of the Philippines in 1800*, Manila, Filipiniana Book Guild, 1973, p. 99.

two months afterwards the cotton plants begin to flower, and to produce fruits, which are gathered in every day during the hottest hours.

“The gathering of this crop lasts until the first rains, which destroy the shrubs, and stain all the cotton that they then produce”.²⁴

Cotton cultivation received a heavy blow during the XIX century. Many Filipino farmers stopped entirely planting cotton and shifted to other products. This happened mainly when Philippine economy was changed from a food producing economy to an export oriented economy. Whole regions of the Philippines, among them the rich and fertile province of Batangas, were converted into sugar, coffee and other products to satisfy local and international trade, especially at the end of the XIX century. Thus Philippine economy became subject to the economic whims of international competition and prices.

The government is doing now herculean efforts to induce farmers to plant cotton in order to satisfy the local textile industry and thus save precious foreign exchange. History shows that cotton can be grown *commercially* in the Philippines, as it was done before the Spanish contact and all through the Spanish period.

Filipino-Chinese Cultural Assimilation during Spanish times

From San Antonio's *Crónicas* one gets a picture of the economic and social importance of the Chinese in the Philippines. I touched on the Chinese when I was dealing with the Manila Acapulco galleon trade. I stressed the fact that the Chinese became essential for the economic survival of the Spanish colony in the Philippines. I also mentioned them in connection with the decadence of cotton growing and weaving in the Philippines after the Spanish arrival to the Philippines. I will deal with them now, but this time in conjunction with the problem of acculturation and assimilation. I find the basis for this in San Antonio's *Crónicas*. There one sees the Chinese community living in ghettos. I deem this topic important for even today the nation is faced with the Chinese problem and the seeming impossibility

²⁴ A Burke-Mialhe Publication, Manila, 1972, p. 220.

of total cultural assimilation. This creates tension and problems that are still affecting the nation at the present juncture. I need to give the historical background in order to set this topic in its right historical perspective.

It has been said²⁵ that during the Sung dynasty (950-1279) Chinese emigrated to the Philippines. Colonies were to be found in some parts of the Philippines, especially Manila, Cebu and Sulu. The migration of Chinese to the Philippines continued during the Mongol (1279-1368) and early Ming dynasties (1368-1642).

We are faced here with a very thorny problem. It is quite difficult to say whether before the coming of the Spaniards there were Chinese *colonies* in the Philippines or even in any other country of South East Asia. Evidence seems to be against the permanent establishment of Chinese colonies in the Philippines. Commercial and trade relations between China and the Philippines can be dated as far back as the VIII and IX centuries. Archeological discoveries of Chinese pottery in different parts of the Philippines attest to this trade relationship. We have also some historical records, like Chao-Ju-Kua²⁶ that prove that Chinese came to the Philippines before the arrival of the Westerner. The early Spanish chroniclers mention that Chinese traders had been coming to the Philippines since time immemorial.

The contacts between South China and the Philippines were purely *commercial*. Being purely commercial they were tangential, peripheral, and superficial. They did not influence significantly and profoundly the lives of the early Filipinos. We cannot speak of a large cultural influence of China in the Philippines before the arrival of the Spaniards. Once Spain came and esta-

²⁵ Cfr. MILAGROS C. GUERRERO, *The Chinese in the Philippines, 1570-1770*, ed. Alfonso Felix, Historical Conservation Society, Manila, 1966, p. 15.

²⁶ Chao-Ju-Kua's *Description of the Philippines*, in BR., vol. 34, pp. 185-191

Scholars tend to quote Chao-Ju-Kua's *Relation* to prove the close contact between China and the Philippines. Chao-Ju-Kua's reference to regions of East Asia are clear and definite. His references to the Philippines are hazy and nebulous. We do not even know if he refers to the Philippines at all. Historians of Philippine history have to use Chao-Ju-Kua's *Relation cum mica salis*. Chinese Annals carefully record their dealings with Borneo, Sumatra and Java and other regions of South East Asia. Their references to the Philippines are too vague and obscure to give them much credit.

blished herself here, the Chinese started to come in large numbers. Many of them returned to China once their goods were sold, still many others remained and settled in the islands. It was the galleon trade, the East-West commercial relationship, the Mexican silver that attracted Chinese traders to come and stay in the Philippines. The *cultural* influence of the Chinese in the Philippines was felt *after* the arrival of the Spaniards to the Philippines.

"The fact that large colonies or permanent establishments of Chinese were not then found in the Philippines is proven by the Spanish chroniclers who do not speak of them, as well as by the well known letter of the Visitor of Chincheo transcribed by Morga which says in part that: "We hold that the Island of Luzon is a miserable land which was formerly inhabited only by devils and serpents. However, during the last few years, a large number of Chinese have made the land prosperous". It would appear from the above that the Chinese began to settle in large numbers in the Philippines only after the coming of the Spaniards and not before".²⁷

There are a number of reasons which explain why Chinese traders and merchants from South China did not settle in foreign nations. These trade voyages were undertaken as purely private affairs. During the early Ming period foreign trade was strictly prohibited by the Celestial Court. If trade continued it was due to the possibility of huge profits by merchants. But they risked their lives in doing so. Throughout the Ming period (1368-1642) decrees were issued repeatedly forbidding foreign trade.²⁸ Merchants could not expect any protection from China in case they were confronted with problems while bartering their products with the people of South East Asia. They were open to attack, abuse and even death. For their own security some of these Chinese merchants brought armed men to defend them in case of emergency. Furthermore, they could not hope for protection from the Imperial Court against the numerous pirates that infested the South China Sea. China did not send military expeditions to any nation of South Asia, except during the beginning of the XV cen-

²⁷ RAFAEL BERNAL, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

²⁸ Cfr. TSAO-TUNG-HO, *Chinese Overseas Trade in the Late Ming Period*, in: *International Association of Historians of Asia, Second Biennial Conference Proceedings*, 1962, pp. 429-430; ALBERT CHANG, *Chinese Philippine Relations in the Late Sixteenth Century and to 1603*, in: *Philippine Studies*, vol. 26, 1978, p. 61.

ture, the reign of Emperor Yung Lo (1402-1424). This lack of military protection deterred Chinese merchants from frequent trade missions and from establishing permanent colonies in countries of South East Asia.

Generally speaking, the Chinese traders did not establish factories or warehouses in foreign nations. Trade was carried out from their junks. As soon as the products were bartered they sailed back to China, taking advantage of the favorable winds, before the South West monsoon set in at the end of May or beginning of June. Only in case they found a stable government would they stay a little longer to barter all their products. It was, then, when the Spaniards settled in the Philippines, and established a stable political government, with a huge capacity to bring silver from Mexico, that the Chinese started to come in large numbers. It was only after Legazpi established Manila as capital city of the Philippine archipelago that a large Chinese colony was established there. This Chinese colony became, as we have remarked already, essential for the very survival of the Spanish government and was, furthermore, the basis for the thrifty Manila Acapulco galleon trade.

Another reason which might explain why the Chinese did not establish colonies in foreign nations was due to the Chinese feeling of superiority. Ingrained in their minds was the confident assumption that they were superior to any other people of the world. The nations close to China, due to their inferior culture and due to a forbidding geography, did not produce a civilization comparable to that of China. Oftentimes those nations conquered China militarily. In the end, however, they were culturally conquered by China. They paid the Chinese the supreme compliment of accepting their culture. It is not strange, therefore, that Chinese thought of themselves as a superior race. China was the center of mankind. The emperor was the Son of Heaven with the command to rule the world. All other states were considered barbarians. With this cultural sense of supremacy, who among the Chinese would dare to emigrate to foreign nations? Who would then opt to live among savages and barbarians when at home he could live among the civilized Chinese?

Chinese scholars, the real rulers of the empire, following the Confucian system, despised those who left China and settled among

barbarians. For them emigrants were unfilial and unfaithful people, traitors to national culture and values. They deserved death. No protection was due to them as traitors to national customs.

This was palpably proven in the first revolt of Chinese in the Philippines at the beginning of the XVII century. In 1603 the Chinese revolted against the Spanish authorities of Manila. There were 30,000 Chinese in Manila and suburbs. The Spaniards numbered around 1,000. It was a most grave situation for the Spanish colony in the Philippines. The Spaniards, faithfully supported by the Japanese, perpetual enemies of the Chinese, and by thousands of Pampango soldiers, routed the Chinese rebels. More than 23,000 Chinese perished in the revolt. When some mandarins came to know the tragedy that befell the Chinese in the Philippines they wrote three times to the emperor to take revenge and punish the Spaniards.

"He [emperor] answered that it is best not to take revenge nor to make war on Luzon. First, because the Spaniards had been our friends for long; second, it was not certain whether the Spaniards or Chinese would win, and third, because *the Chinese who had been killed by the Spaniards were scum, ungrateful to China, their land, their parents and ancestors for they had failed to return to China for many years so that such people were to be deemed of little worth...*"²⁹ (underscoring mine).

From the above quotation we can clearly see that those Chinese who settled abroad could not rely on the imperial government for protection as they were considered scum, ungrateful to China, to their land, to their parents and ancestors. Settlers in foreign nations lacked filial piety, a tremendous crime in a China ruled by scholars of the Confucian school.

What followed the first Chinese uprising is quite accidental to my article. What I want to emphasize here is that Chinese emigration to foreign nations run counter to imperial legislation, to national culture and, in the concrete case of the Philippines, to the very physical survival of the Chinese, as the social and political situation of Philippine society, fragmented as it was into

²⁹ A. DE MORGÁ, as quoted by RAFAEL BERNAL, *The Chinese Colony in Manila, 1570-1770*, in: *The Chinese in the Philippines, 1570-1770*, Manila, 1966, p. 54.

thousands of small social units called *barangays*, could not offer great security to the Chinese who came to barter their own products with the natives of the Philippines.

*The Relación Anónima de la Conquista de Luzón*³⁰ offers three instances which illustrate that Chinese trade in the Philippines before the Spanish arrival must have been small and uncertain and Chinese traders few due precisely to the risks involved to their very own physical security. Trade could not be carried out in peace.

In 1570 some Chinese traders were in Mindoro, at Baco, at the time when Spanish sailors and soldiers, under the command of Goiti, and accompanied by several thousands Bisayan auxiliaries, embarked on an exploratory mission to Mindoro and the town of Manila. As the Spanish expedition approached the harbour of Baco, even without provocation from them, the Chinese adopted a belligerent attitude by beating of drums, playing of fifes, firing rockets and culverins, brandishing their arquebusiers and cutlasses. A battle ensued where the Chinese were totally defeated, losing twenty dead. The rest, numbering more than sixty surrendered to the Spaniards.

This event casts light on the nature of their trade and its precarious stability as regards the fact that it could not be carried out in peace and security. As the document tells us, the Chinese started the fight, firing rockets and culverins at the combined Spanish-Bisayan force. It was not probably the first time that they had done this. Piracy was rampant at that time. In this particular case the Chinese thought themselves faced with a situation similar to that which they had found themselves before. How could they know that these strangers were not pirates? How could they know that the white bearded men came offering peace and trade and not with the thought of plunder, so that they could take away as booty the rich Chinese cargo of porcelain, gilded jars, musk, silks and other products? The Chinese preemptive

³⁰ *Relación Anónima de la conquista de la isla de Luzón*, Manila, 20 de Abril, 1572, in: WENCESLAO RETANA, *Archivo del bibliófilo filipino*, (5 vols.), Madrid, 1895-1905, vol. IV, pp. 141-172; *Relation of the Conquest of the Island of Luzon*, in: *The Colonization and Conquest of the Philippines by Spain*, FBG, Manila, 1965, 190-210; *Relation of the Voyage to Luzon*, No date: in: *The Colonization and Conquest of the Philippines by Spain*, FBG, Manila, 1965, pp. 161-162; cfr. BR., vol. III, pp. 73-104.

strike reveals their fear of being destroyed by what they thought were enemy boats.

History tells us of another tragic event that occurred to some Chinese merchants in Batangas. We are told by a Spanish chronicler³¹ that as the Spaniards entered a town in Batangas (probably modern Taal), the Chinese had just been defeated in an open battle with the people of the town. A number of Chinese were already killed, their skins peeled off, their corpses exposed to the sun. Blood was still fresh on their flayed faces. Two Chinamen, hands and feet bound, were waiting to be meted out with the same kind of treatment when opportunely the Spanish and Bisayan forces arrived and rescued them from certain death.

It seems there had been a disagreement between the Chinese and the people of the town. As tempers rose high, the people ran for their guns and the Chinese, with a culverin killed a *principal* man of the town. As fast as they could they rushed to their junks in the hope of fleeing the impending doom. But their junks being too large ran aground in the shallow Bongbon (Pansipit) river. Defeated in battle they were cruelly and barbarously executed.

Still a third case. As the Spaniards moved towards Manila, the most important trade center of Luzon, they were accosted by some Chinese merchants. They came to the Spanish commander to complain against the people of Rajah Sulaiman the chieftain of Manila who had taken the sail and rudder of their boats. Still, worse, their merchandise had been stolen.³²

It is not accidental that the three events hereto recounted befell the Chinese *at that particular time and in those specific places*. We would not be distorting history were we to say that such events happened relatively often. These three cases that took place within a very short span of time in quite distant places of the Philippine archipelago were not isolated events. If the Chinese kept coming, they did so in the hope of profit. For protection they relied on their culverines, muskets and other weapons.

What we have said up to now boils down to this: Chinese trade in the Philippines was fragmented and never amounted to

³¹ *Relation of the Voyage to Luzon*, in: *The Colonization and Conquest of the Philippines by Spain*, Manila, 1965, pp. 167-168.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 176.

the scale of a grand business enterprise. The real immigration of Chinese to the Philippines happened *during* Spanish times. The cultural, social, political and economic influence of the Chinese in the Philippines cannot antedate the conquest of Manila by Legazpi and Goiti in 1571.

When the Spaniards conquered the city there were 40 Chinese and 20 Japanese who appeared to have lived peacefully with the natives.³³ Before the Spanish arrival the Chinese did not exert any influence on the natives of the Philippines whether anthropologically, or politically or linguistically.³⁴ Chinese-Philippine relations before the contact period were of the most casual kind. The few Chinese who came and settled in the Philippines before the Spanish arrival had little direct impact on early Philippine culture.

"This can be observed in a department of our domestic life where Chinese influence should have been aboriginal — the kitchen — and where they should have been our first tutors in cuisine. But somebody else, not they, performed this rite. As a result, so utterly non-Chinese is the terminology of Philippine cooking (guiso, frito, sancucha, asado, tusta, timpla, recado, mantika, aceite, grasa, kusina, almusal, merienda, vianda, adobo, tinola, caldereta, estofado, lechon, escabeche, relleno, ensalada, sopa, salsa, caldo, caldereta, sarten, fugon, horno, parrilla, etc.). We can only conclude that, through the ages of our pre-Western association we never became intimate enough with the Chinese to let them into our kitchen. That we did so only after 1565 is indicated by the fact that what of Chinese cookery has entered the Philippine table did so under Creole names: pancit guisado, camaron rebozado, puerco en agridulce, lumpiang frito, torta de cangrejo, jamon de funda, morisqueta tostada, etc. These have now become so much part of our culture that we may think they have been there since time immemorial when, actually, this development of the Asian in us was part of our colonial or Creole culture, since, before that, the Chinese opened up for us no new culinary frontiers. Had they done so, then we, like the peoples formed by the Chinese kitchen would be to this day West or no West, a chopstick culture",³⁵

³³ Cfr. *Relation of the Voyage to Luzon*, in: BR., vol. III, p. 101.

³⁴ Cfr. ALBERT CHAN, *Chinese-Philippine Relations in the Late Sixteenth Century and to 1603*, in: *Philippines Studies*, vol. 26, 1978, p. 53.

³⁵ NICK JOAQUIN, *Culture as History*, in: *The Manila Review*, vol. 1, n. 3, April, 1975, pp. 21-22.

So far I have tried to present the historical background for Chinese-Philippine relations before the Spanish contact. And history shows very little. The information we have is scanty and sketchy. History proves that Chinese-Philippine relations were of the most casual nature, thus peripheral and tangential. What about Chinese-Philippine relations during the Spanish period?

The problem we are now confronted with is also a very difficult one. I refer to the problem of Chinese-Filipino relations and assimilation during the Spanish period. Was there any cultural assimilation between the Chinese and the early Filipinos during the Spanish period? Did the Chinese influence Filipino culture and life? Were the Chinese influenced by Filipino culture? Did the Chinese exert any effort to adjust themselves to Filipino culture and customs?

The early Filipinos easily and without great resistance embraced Christianity, the religion of their conquerors. Slowly but steadily they accepted many of the ways and customs of the Spaniards, although they remained tenaciously faithful to their own cherished customs and usages. Very few of the Chinese however embraced Christianity and this in spite of the sincere efforts exerted by the Dominicans who, from the very beginning of their arrival in 1587, took very seriously the apostolate among the Chinese settlers in the Philippines. The Chinese tended to live in their own China town. The Spanish authorities allowed them to live in the *Parian*.³⁶ The *Parian* grew enormously as the Chinese population increased rapidly during the first decades of the Spanish conquest. The *Parian* was a real China town. The people there had their own government, although the supreme powers rested with the Spanish authorities of Manila. They held their own festivals and celebrations. A visit to the *Parian* of Manila was a visit to any town of continental China, especially Fukkien and Canton, where most of the Chinese traders and settlers came from.

The relations between the Chinese and the rest of the population, both Spaniards and Filipinos, were peripheral and mainly commercial. The Chinese felt self-sufficient in everything. They looked at the Spaniards as masters. The Filipinos were considered inferior by them. They felt proud of the achievements of

³⁶ Cfr. ALBERTO SANTAMARIA, *The Chinese Parian*, in: *The Chinese in the Philippines 1570-1770*, pp. 67-72; Cfr. ALBERT CHAN, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

their own nation. For religious and cultural support and inspiration they looked to China. They felt their nation and civilization to be indestructible. European civilization, as they saw it in the Spaniards of the Philippines, had no appeal for them. The process of assimilation was difficult or almost impossible. Wherever they went they established their own *Parian*. There was one in Naga. Another one in Cebu. There was not a town of any size where Chinese could not be found.

The early immigrants from China tended to remain apart and identify themselves with their forefathers in China. But it would be an exaggeration to say that no mutual influence was exerted during Spanish times. Many of the Chinese immigrants soon married Filipino women. In the course of time a *mestizaje*, Chinese-Filipino, was born.

During San Antonio's time, one hundred and fifty years after the Spanish conquest, the Chinese and the Chinese *mestizos* were numerous and were to be found not only in Manila, seat of political and economic power, but all over the Philippines. These *mestizos*, influential and powerful during San Antonio's time, did not exist at the time of the discovery. They were the result of fusion between Chinese and Filipino that happened *during* the Spanish period. Yet, both the pure Chinese and the *mestizos* tended to remain apart from the social and cultural life of the Philippines. They lived in their own quarter and remained a very distinct group of their own. In the words of San Antonio:

"Today, this entire archipelago, particularly the island of the Tagalogs, is filled with another type of mestizos which did not exist at the time of the discovery; these are called Sangley Mestizos procreated by an Indian woman and a Chinese man. This is due to the fact that their trade has been widespread, and because so many of them have remained in these islands and are identified by this name. It is they who supply these islands with clothes, food and many other goods, and there are many who have interbred with the Indian woman in marriage. They make themselves Christians for this purpose and are all Christians, well inclined, very hard working and civilized; they make it a point to imitate all that is European, but they tend to remain apart. They live in the same town of the Tagalogs, but they form a distinct group. The females tend to look like the Sangleys or

Chinese. This is not as marked with the males, but what they inherit from them is the ambition in continued work" (pp. 130-131).

The Chinese and the Chinese mestizos worked where the rest of the people worked. And yet they tended to live apart from the rest of the population, remaining a distinct group of their own. They lived in the *Parian*, in China town, where they kept and cherished their own customs and traditions brought from China. Culturally speaking they were not absorbed into the main cultural stream of national life.

This applies mainly to the new immigrants and to some of the *mestizos* who lived closer to, and hence were more influenced by their forefathers. This is not true of most of the *mestizos*. If they wanted to succeed, and they did, the only alternative open for them was to abandon China town and start a new life for them. Some started by themselves in the city of Manila. Most of them went to the provinces and there, as merchants and traders, soon gained control of the retail trade. Closer to the Filipinos and to the Spaniards they were more influenced by them.

They embraced Christianity and were more open to Filipino and Spanish ways of life. In the course of the XVII and XVIII centuries strong Chinese *mestizo* communities sprang up in many provinces throughout the Philippines. These *mestizos* were hard working and ambitious. They contributed enormously to the economic development of the country during the XVIII and XIX centuries. According to San Antonio initially they tended to identify themselves with their forefathers. The closer they were to the Chinese communities the more they kept their Chineseness. The more distant they were from the Chinese communities the easier they found to reject their Sinitic culture and so adopt with greater facility native and Spanish cultures.

A dramatic showcase could be found in Pampanga where a large and numerous Chinese community came into existence at the beginning of the XVII century, right after the first Chinese uprising of 1603. In the course of the XVIII century many of these Chinese *mestizos* displaced some of the ruling native families and became part of the upper classes of Pampanga. Thus they separated themselves from the culture of their forebears. One of the signs that *mestizos* were rejecting their Sinitic culture was

the fact that they were changing their names.³⁷ E. Wickeberg, a specialist in Chinese studies in the Philippines, indicates the significance and nature of the name-changing process:

"Mestizo culture was a blend of Chinese, Spanish, and Indio culture. One of the most interesting ways to observe mestizo usages is to look at the way surnames were formed. Sometimes mestizos retained the name of the Chinese father, making such Chinese surnames as Tan and Lim Filipino surnames by their association with persons who identified themselves as Filipinos and were accepted as such. Another common practice was to create a new Filipino surname by combining parts of the full name of the Chinese parent. Thus, where the name of the Chinese was Yap Tin-Chay, the mestizo descendants might choose to create a new surname, Yaptinchay, for themselves. Or, if Yap Tin-Chay had been popularly known as Yap Tinco, using the Hokkien polite suffix *koo* with his personal name, the new surname might be Yaptinco. There are today a great many Filipino surnames that end in "co". Almost all of them have this derivation. Finally since Catholic Chinese also acquired a Spanish name upon baptism, the mestizo descendants might simply drop the Chinese part of the name and use only the Spanish part. Thus, the descendants of Jose Castro Ongchengco might simply be known by the name Castro".³⁸

Thus these Chinese *mestizos*, very numerous and influential throughout the XVIII, XIX and XX centuries, have created what we can call a *mestizo* culture, a blend of Chinese, Filipino and Spanish culture. During the XIX century, when Spanish immigration to the Philippines became strong, a second type of Chinese *mestizaje* came to be: the union between Spanish men and Chinese women resident in the Philippines. This second type of Chinese *mestizaje* has been less influential than Chinese Filipino *mestizaje*.

All this proves that assimilation and cultural absorption is possible in the Philippines. Today it might be impossible for millions of Filipinos to deny their Chinese racial strains, although basically the Filipino people are of Malay racial stock. Great names in Philippine history are Chinese or Chinese *mestizos*. The history of the Filipino nation has been shaped to a great extent by

³⁷ Cf. JOHN A. LARKIN, *The Pampangans. Colonial Society in a Philippine Province*, University of California Press, 1972, p. 48-51.

³⁸ EDGAR WICKEBERG, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898*, Yale Univ. Press, 1965, pp. 31-33.

mestizos of Chinese and Spanish descent. Rizal might be the supreme example of acculturation and assimilation.

Fundamentally, however, the Chinese community in the Philippines during Spanish time did not accept assimilation. The Americans inherited this problem from the Spaniards. The Philippine Republic, in turn, inherited the same problem from the Americans. Today, it has to be accepted, the Chinese problem remains still a very serious one. If history is to be a witness, the future does not look very bright and promising. There is till today a very large number of Chinese who faithfully keep their own customs and culture, maintain their language, have their own Chinese schools, magazines and books. Given their economic aggressiveness the Philippine government is fearful that they would come to dominate entirely Philippine economy and life. Hence, the many legislative and political curtailments of the Chinese population of the Philippines.

The Hispanization and Christianization of Pampanga

The conquest of the Philippines and the Christianization of the Filipinos were achieved in a relatively short span of time. The regions closer to Manila, seat of Spanish power in the Philippines, came under the sphere of Spanish influence in a greater degree than did the more outlying regions. The process and the effects of Hispanization were more strongly felt in the neighbouring provinces of Manila. Of all the regions of the Philippines Pampanga was perhaps the most hispanized, with the only exception of Manila itself.

Pampanga became the granary of Manila and the country. It attained, during Spanish time, a high development in agriculture and enjoyed greater privileges and exemptions than any other province. Precisely this can be gathered from San Antonio's *Crónicas*:

"The people in the towns are well adapted and skilled and of tested loyalty. This is why there is always a "Tercio" de la Pampanga in the City of Manila and its infantry can be found in many of the garrisons in these islands. This province... is fertile land for rice, sugar, and wood and the city of Manila gets its supplies of these from it" (p. 75).

To avoid confusion and not to mislead readers we have to say that the present province of Pampanga is much smaller than the province of Pampanga in 1738, the time of the publication of San Antonio's *Crónicas*. At that time Pampanga included part of Bataan, the whole province of Tarlac, part of Pangasinan, part of Bulacan and practically the whole province of Nueva Ecija.

If we cast a look at the natural resources of these modern provinces of Central Luzon we can gather that they are among the richest of the whole of the Philippines. For an agricultural pre-industrial society "Pampanga", in its full historical and political extension, as we have explained before, had the necessary conditions for a greater and faster development than any other region in the whole of the Philippines. Furthermore Pampangueños were greatly exposed to the process of Hispanization and Christianization. They adapted themselves better than did other people of the Philippines to the new social, political and religious situation.

One of the reasons why Pampangueños, few as they are still today, have excelled in the social, political, religious and economic fields and have had and still have such a tremendous impact on modern Filipino society is due to their Hispanization. When we study the activities of Pampangueños in the field of law, politics and religion, to take only some fields, we can easily see that they are highly represented and have produced great people whose impact has been felt on the national life. Their impact is highly disproportional to the population. Even today, as a general rule, Pampangueños are to be found in the higher echelons of society.

We deem it necessary to give the historical background to this outstanding fact. Their contact with the Spanish authorities, their faithful collaboration with the central government of Manila all through the Spanish period brought them into national relevance. The Pampangueños in general, and their datus and rulers in particular, proved resilient, creative and capable of adjustment to the demands of the conquerors. They soon realized that in a confrontation with the newcomers they would be defeated. They opted for faithful collaboration. The Spaniards, in turn, realized that they could not antagonize the Pampangueños on whom they had to rely for food supplies and for manpower. This inter-action between the Spaniards and the Pampangueños during the Spanish period enabled the latter not only to survive the shock

of the conquest but to be active shapers of the national life. Since they were closer to the source of power and administration they acquired a tremendous political, juridical, religious and administrative experience.

This refers mainly to the *Principalia* class. The Pampango elite played a pivotal role in the national life during Spanish time. The inward parochial outlook of the *datus* before the Spanish arrival was substituted by a more universal one. They looked beyond their narrow world into a wider and more universal one. When independence came Pampanga and the Pampangueños were better prepared than most other Filipino ethnic groups to play a prominent role in providing leadership and direction in the fields of politics, economics and religion.

I will now descend to the study of the historical background for what I have written up to now regarding this point.

The Spaniards who came to the Philippines had an enormous experience behind them when dealing with conquered peoples. Wherever they went they kept the native ruling classes. This was also true of the Philippines. The political and social organization of the Philippines, after the Spanish conquest, was based on the Mexican experience. The Spaniards established a central system of government. At a local level, however, the native rulers, in the concrete case of the Philippines the *datus*, were maintained as rulers of the people. These native rulers, known later on in the Philippines as the *principalia* class, exercised a substantial amount of self-government. Local magistrates were recruited from the ranks of the native nobility. Thus Phelan writes:

"One of the most remarkable features of the whole Hispanization program was the degree to which the Filipinos acculturated to Spanish political usages. Their response was on the whole enthusiastic, rapid, and in many cases penetrating".³⁹

Before the arrival of the Spaniards in the Philippines the *barangay* was the highest political unit. The *datus* ruled the *barangay*, which was usually composed of some 50 to 100 families. The Spaniards maintained this. Only the name was changed.

³⁹ J. L. PHELAN, *The Hispanization of the Philippines. Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses, 1570-1770*, the University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1959, p. 121.

The *datus* soon came to be known as *cabezas de barangay*. The rulers of the new towns established by the Spanish government were called *gobernadorcillos*. They played the political role that the *caciques* had played in Mexico and Peru. From the very beginning these native rulers, the *gobernadorcillos* in the towns, and the *cabezas de barangay* in the barrios, were granted special rights and privileges not granted to the rest of the population. They were exempted from paying the annual tribute and from the *polo* and *vandala*. They were also granted the honorific title of "don", enjoyed by the *caciques* of America and the *hidalgos* of Spain. In the eyes of the natives these *principales* belonged to the privileged class, as they had belonged before. Externally nothing seemed to change. The pre-Hispanic system of government seemed to continue unchanged.

Up to the end of the XVII century all married males of the town or barrio participated in the process of selection and election of rulers. Due to the perpetual political disputations the Spanish government, towards the end of the XVII century, restricted the freedom of election. The process of selection and election became more oligarchic. In both processes, however, there was substantial Filipino involvement in the selection and election of political rulers in their respective towns and barangays. We cannot minimize the real political authority exercised, at a local level, by these elected officials. No doubt it was limited and subject to the supervision of the superior government of Manila, but on the whole the local elected officials exercised a tremendous power over the masses. What is more important, many of them acquired a profound political experience. In spite of the limitations imposed by the central government

"The Filipino magistrates exercised considerable power and prestige over their fellow countrymen, and a whole class of Filipinos acquired substantial political experience on the local level...

"The growth of the principalia class in the early Spanish period has left a deep imprint on the subsequent political development of the islands. Although the Philippines did not achieve self-government on the national scale until very recently, the Filipinos had extensive political experience on the level of local government since the late sixteenth century".⁴⁰

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 126.

The *principalia* class became selective intermediaries between the two cultures, that is, the native Filipino culture and Spanish culture. The *gobernadorcillos* had to be in continuous contact with Spanish authorities and with their native subjects. They exercised a strong political and judicial power over them. This enabled them to acquire a wide experience in local government and administration.

Many of these magistrates, belonging to the *principalia* class, put themselves at the service of the Church. The fact that they were in daily contact with the parish priests and with the faithful put them in a superior level than the rest of the population. The *fiscales*, sacristans, choristers and other clerks at the service of the Church, with command of Spanish and a greater knowledge of Spanish laws and customs, set themselves above the rest of the population. In the fulfillment of their tasks they acquired a wide experience in administration.

What has been written up to now refers to the *principales* of all the regions of the Philippines. When we cast our look at the Tagalog and Pampango regions we see that the local rulers, the *gobernadorcillos* and *cabezas de barangay*, were in greater contact with Spanish authorities.

From the very beginning of the conquest, the Spanish authorities of Manila came to rely heavily on Pampanga for supplies. Early Spanish chroniclers testify to the fertility and wealth of Pampanga. The city of Manila, the central government, the army and the religious orders depended on Pampanga for supplies.⁴¹

Spanish galleons were constructed from lumber felled from the rich and vast forests of Pampanga. Woodcutters, galleon builders and workers were usually taken from Pampanga. These people were in daily contact with Spanish overseers. Pampangueños could not escape the cultural and religious influence of their conquerors and superiors. Not only the *datus*, or the *principales*, but the common people, made a real effort to adjust themselves to the demands of the new social, political and religious set up. Of all the regions of the Philippines Pampanga was the one to have

⁴¹ Cfr. Francisco Sande "Official Report", p. 80; *Ordinance of the Royal Audiencia*, December 7, 1598, BR., vol. X, 307-309.

greater and more continuous contact with Spanish authorities than any other region. And this at the grass-roots level.

Pampanga was conquered by the Spaniards in 1571. In 1572 Augustinian missionaries were found already in Betis and Guagua, two of the main centers of life of Pampanga even before the Spanish contact. In less than a quarter of a century the conversion of the Pampangueños to Christianity was practically complete. Pampanga was probably the region that was Christianized with greater rapidity and thoroughness. The effects of Christianization were strongly felt in the old settlements and in the new towns that were established by the Augustinian missionaries. Pampangueños made a real and serious effort to accept the religion of their conquerors. Early Spanish chroniclers praised the personal qualities of the Pampangueños.

"The people [of Pampanga] have accepted Christianity more readily than others in the Islands. They have more to do with the Spaniards than the others and try to imitate them as far as possible. But the more they try to do that the more they show their texture as Indians".⁴²

The Pampangueños were in daily contact with the Spanish authorities and colonizers and tried to adjust themselves to the new situation. The Spaniards, in spite of all their prejudices, accepted the Pampangueños as they never accepted any other people of the Philippines. Gaspar de San Agustin said of the people of Pampanga:

"They are very different [from the rest of the Filipinos] for they are truthful, and love their honor; are very brave, and inclined to work; and are more civil and of better customs. In regard to the vices here mentioned [drunkenness and laziness] (for they are, in the last analysis, Indians like the rest), they keep them more out of sight and covered. In all things the Pampangos have a nobleness of mind that makes them the Castilians of these same Indians".⁴³

⁴² Medina, *Historia de la Orden de San Agustin* p. 244, as quoted by J. A. LARKINS, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁴³ *Letter from Gaspar de San Agustin*, Manila, 1720, in BR., XL, p. 252; Cfr. JOHN A. LARKINS, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

The Pampango *principalia* and their children were given the opportunity for education. The *gobernadorcillos* and some *cabezas de barangay* from Pampanga sent their children to study in Manila already during the XVII century. Many prominent Pampango families sent their children to Manila to be educated by the Jesuits who had opened the doors of San Jose College to Filipinos. By the year 1665, just one century after the conquest, dozens of Pampangueño students were studying in Manila under the care of the Jesuits:

"... there are also being educated in the same residential college of San Jose, besides the scholars, a number of youths of the Pampango nation, who have the status of domestics but are not paid servants, for they devote their attention and energies to the study of reading, writing and Christian doctrine. For this reason one of our priests devotes himself to their spiritual formation, encouraging them by his teaching and exhortation to the frequent reception of the sacraments and the practice of every virtue, so that when they go back to their homeland they may serve as an example to the other Pampangueños. They usually number more than sixty, counting their slaves. Some of them are from the first families of the region, whose parents sent them here to receive a Christian education, paying generously for their sustenance".⁴⁴

The first Filipino Jesuit was a Pampangueño. As a little boy he went to Spain, where Philip II questioned him about the Christian religion. In Rome he became a Jesuit. His name was Martin Sancho.

"Young Martin was to have the rare privilege of being quizzed on his catechism by Philip II himself, and the even rarer privilege of being the first Filipino to be admitted to the Society of Jesus. This took place in 1593, at Rome, whither he had accompanied Sanchez. He was attached to the province of Toledo and spent some time in the college of Murcia, whence he returned to Mexico in 1599. He sailed for home in the group of Jesuit missionaries headed by Gregorio Lopez in 1601, but died that same year soon after setting foot once more on his native land. He was twenty-five years old at the time of his death and a Jesuit eight years".⁴⁵

⁴⁴ HORACIO DE LA COSTA, *The Jesuits in the Philippines, 1581-1768*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1961, 505.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 84.

Through most of the Spanish period the children of the *principales* of Pampanga had the chance to study in Manila and become priests. The creation of the Filipino clergy in the Philippines during the Spanish time was a bitterly discussed problem and one that divided the ecclesiastical segment in the nation. Though there were few native priests in the first one hundred years, yet most of them came from the Tagalog region and from Pampanga. In the case of Pampanga most of the candidates to the priesthood were the children of the elite ruling class. The reason why these children of the ruling class wanted to become priests and study in Manila was because their parents had been more Hispanized and had adjusted themselves better than other rulers of other regions to the demands of the conquerors and the demands of the Church. Pampanga could provide large number of priests given the level of Christian maturity and the development of the native population, especially the level of education of the ruling class. Some of these Pampango priests achieved prominence already during the seventeenth century.⁴⁶

This would prove that Pampanga answered more rapidly and thoroughly than any other region of the Philippines the parallel process of Christianization and Hispanization. History shows that the confrontation between the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the religious orders happened in Pampanga when Archbishop Basilio Sancho de Santa Justa y Rufina (1767-1787) wanted to impose episcopal visitation upon the religious parish priests. The Augustinians of Pampanga abandoned their parishes in 1773. Native Pampangueno priests took over. For almost one hundred years they administered the parishes and took care of the pastoral needs of the people. They seemed to have performed their duty with diligence and respectability. Most of the pastors belonged to the *principalia* class.

In order to understand the great influence of Spain over Pampanga, and the positive answer of the Pampanguenos to the process of Hispanization, we have to mention the creation of a native constabulary.

The early Spaniards were very few. In the process of their conquest of the Philippines they used Filipinos from one region

⁴⁶ Cfr. *Letter of Gaspar de San Agustin*, Manila, BR. XL, p. 278, Cfr. JUAN J. DELGADO, *Historia General* (Manila, 1892) p. 293. The manuscript of Delgado dates from 1754.

to conquer another. At the beginning of the Spanish conquest Bisayan auxiliaries were very instrumental in the conquest of Manila and Luzon. Once Pampanga was conquered in 1571 the Pampangueños were drawn into the Spanish army. Pampanga supplied the necessary manpower for the Spanish army. Already in 1574, when the Chinese pirate Limahong laid siege to the city of Manila, Pampango troops at the service of Spain came to the rescue of the city. In the different Chinese uprisings during the Spanish period Pampango troops collaborated with the Spanish authorities in suppressing the rebels. Many of the Pampangueños were given Captaincies in the Spanish army. In 1662, when the Philippines was threatened with invasion by the Chinese pirate Ch'eng-Kung, better known as Coxinga, Don Juan Macapagal, a valiant and faithful *gobernadorcillo* of Pampanga, was called by Spanish authorities to lead as Master-of-Camp a contingent of Pampango troops.⁴⁷

Pampangueños served also in the colonial army. All through the first half of the XVII century Spain was engaged in a mortal war with Holland for the supremacy of the Moluccas and the Far East. Pampango troops were taken to fight in the Moluccas, to garrison Ternate and Tidore and to fight with the Spaniards in the prolonged naval warfare between Spain and Holland. On many occasions they excelled in the battlefield. The Spanish authorities were very much aware of this:

“Acting on the suggestion of the procurator of the Philippine colony at the Spanish court, Philip IV in 1636 and 1642 instructed the *alcaldes mayores* to express his formal appreciation to the inhabitants of the Tagalog, Pampangan, and Bikol provinces for their fidelity”.⁴⁸

The fidelity and bravery of the Pampango troops were proverbial. During the British invasion of Manila in 1762 Pampango troops under Simon de Anda y Salazar harrassed the British continuously. Bacolor became the capital city of the Philippines during the two years of British occupation of Manila.

In these national and international wars the Pampangueños acquired military and tactical experience. The fact that the bulk

⁴⁷ Cfr. J. A. LARKIN, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁴⁸ J. A. PHELAN, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

of the Spanish army was composed of Pampangueños who had seen service even in foreign lands helped them to acquire military leadership. Many of the officers were Pampangueños. The birth and development of a native constabulary has to be seen in these contingents and regiments of Pampangueños, who put themselves at the service of Spain from the very beginning of the conquest. Thus PHELAN writes:

"The native constabulary was another reliable source of strength to the Spanish administration. A separate army modeled along the line of the Spanish military organization was set up. Its officers were Filipinos, some of whom bore the high-sounding military rank of captain and master of the camp. Taught in the methods of European military science, they fought with distinction in every campaign along with Spanish troops. They were equally reliable against the regime's domestic foes and against its foreign enemies. Ordinarily a military expedition would consist of a small Spanish detachment and a much larger Filipino force. Pampanga furnished the bulk of these levies. The Spaniards usually expressed high regard for the courage and stamina of the Pampangan troops. Occasionally some uneasiness was voiced about putting arms into the hands of any native group. These fears, however, proved groundless".⁴⁹

In the making of national unity and independence this Philippine native constabulary played a pivotal role. They provided the needed military leadership in periods of crisis, especially during the war of national independence.

The conclusion we can gather from this excursus on Pampanga is this: due to the parallel process of Hispanization and Christianization, Pampanga has played and is still playing a great role in national life, a role quite disproportional to the population of the province. The first cardinal of the Philippines came from Pampanga. A president of the Republic has also come from Pampanga. Generals of the army, justices of the supreme court, archbishops and bishops of the Church come from Pampanga. They are the heirs of an ecclesiastical and political elite which was very receptive and responsive to the twin challenge of Hispanization and Christianization.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 145.

Moro Piratical Raids during Spanish Times

San Antonio's book introduces us into problems that beset the Filipinos of his times and still beset us today, though these problems may affect us differently due to the changed historical and political circumstances of the nation. One of the most serious problems during the Spanish time, and still today a most grave one the Philippine Republic has to face, was the problem of Islamic Philippines.

If one wants to understand in depth the problems of Southern Philippines one has to go back into history to Spanish times and even before. The roots of the Moslem problem of Southern Philippines are to be found far back into history. They are complex and difficult to understand. No easy solution can be found for them. Given the nature of Islam in general, and the concrete situation of the Moslems in the Philippines in particular, the key to understand that problem is fundamentally religious and theological. We cannot delve deeply into this problem for it escapes the main purpose of our study. Suffice it to say that San Antonio brings us to the Moslems in the Philippines and their piratical raids upon the Visayan Islands and parts of Luzon. The Moslems of Mindanao, Borneo, Jolo and other regions used to set out yearly on plundering expeditions to the Bisayan Islands, Southern Luzon, Calamianes and on some occasions they entered Manila Bay. Thousands of Filipinos were forcefully uprooted from their homelands and sold into slavery to far away countries.

There is a tendency among some modern historians to minimize the destructive effects of these Moro piratical raids. Some historians see them as a response to Spanish encroaches in the East during the XVI century. The Moro raids, they aver, are to be seen as responses to European colonial expansion.

It cannot be denied that the Moslems of Mindanao and Jolo acquired their Islamic consciousness during their long struggle against Spain. But even before the arrival of the Spaniards to the East piracy was a way of life for them. The Moslems were the most developed of all the Malay people who had come to the Philippines. They had reached, at the time of the Spanish arrival, a relatively high cultural development. One of the manifestations of this culture was that it was *predatory* in nature. In the words of a Filipino historian:

"They were seamen who lived on trade and trade in that period was almost indistinguishable from piracy. Seafarers grabbed what they could; and trafficked when they had to go. Moreover, the plain of the Pulangui produced nothing of value in exchange. It produced rice and sago and thus assured the inhabitants of food, but for articles of trade they had to go elsewhere. Now the Visayan Islands had precisely what they needed, a commodity of great value which was both self-propagating and easily obtainable: human beings. The Magindanaos and the Sulus were just settling down to the profitable business of supplying the slave market of Southeast Asia with Visayan captives when the Spaniards arrived".⁵⁰

San Antonio is a first class historical witness to the destructive and disruptive effects of Moro piratical raids on peaceful towns and barrios all over the Philippines, especially the Visayan Islands and the underbelly of Luzon. The architectural fact that many of the churches of the Visayan Islands look more like castles than places of worship and adoration find its explanation on the sad historical reality of the Moro piratical raids. We can still find today numerous castles and towers along the coasts of Visayan Islands, mute stones of a dangerous and risky past. They served as warning posts to the Bisayans announcing the arrival of Moro piratical fleets. From the XVI century on to the middle of the XIX century, that is, up to the invention and adoption by Spain in the Philippines of the steamship, sea piracy was rampant and widespread. (cfr. pp. 108-109). The word Bisaya in Mindanao means and stands for slave. This is explained by the fact that all the slaves brought to Mindanao came from the Visayan Islands.

The *Crónicas* of San Antonio take us on a tour of the different forts and defenses put up during the early Spanish period to defend the colony against these pirates and marauders. Many of these forts have entirely disappeared. Others can still be seen in isolated mountain tops, at the end of capes along the shoreline, at the mouth of rivers or on strategic places all over the Philippines. They are historical relics of an age when men, peaceful farmers and fishermen of the Philippines, could be victims of armed incursions from pirates and wild tribes. We get the

⁵⁰ HORACIO DE LA COSTA, S.J., *Alarms and Incursions*, in "Asia and the Philippines. Collected Historical Papers", Manila, 1967, p. 50.

impression that some regions of the Philippines during San Antonio's time were still frontier regions, permanently beset by people who remained unconquered during his time (pp. 117-126).

The Negritos of Zambales

The earliest inhabitants of the Philippines, of whom we have historical records, are the *Aetas*. They called themselves *Aetas* or lords of the land. The Spaniards called them *Negrillos* or *Negritos* on account of their short height and kinky hair. One hundred and fifty years after the conquest, during the time of San Antonio, they had not been assimilated in any way into the national life. They remained strangers and enemies to the new civilization brought about by the Spaniards, a civilization accepted on the whole by the large majority of the Filipinos. In spite of the many repeated efforts to bring them into the main stream of Philippine life carried out by Spain, American and the Philippine Republic, they have preferred their native freedom to an organized social and political life. Today they are a vanishing race. As a people, in a few generations they will probably disappear. They have also remained strangers to Christianity. During the time of San Antonio the Negritos remained as wild as their ancestors. In his words:

"In the past, they have been so entrenched in their primitive domains that, even if they were not strong enough to resist the stranger in the open, they were very powerful in the forests, the mountains and the mouth of the rivers. They used to stage sudden raids in the towns, obliging the townsmen to pay them tribute as if they were the lords of the land where they lived. If they were refused they would kill right and left, collecting their tribute in the form of heads of those beheaded."
(p. 131)

The Negritos are to be found still today all over the Philippines. The Spaniards included among the Negritos the natives of Zambales or Zambals, although ethnologically speaking they are not pure Negritos. When San Antonio and other Spanish chroniclers speak of the raids of the Negritos on peaceful lowlanders,

especially Pampanga and Pangasinan, they refer to the Negritos of Zambales, probably the most ferocious of them all. They were a disorganized tribe of foraging hunters. They planted upland rice but they did not practice wet rice agriculture. They were famous for their ferocity and head-hunting habits.

The inimical relations between the Negritos and the rest of the early Filipinos antedate the Spanish period. The lowlanders of Pangasinan and Pampanga suffered, oftentimes, the raids of the Negritos of the Zambales ranges. The peaceful farmers of Guagua, Betis, Lubao and the basin of the Pampanga river, - rich agricultural areas before the arrival of the Spaniards - were subjected to continuous raids carried out by the Negritos of Zambales. In order to establish security for them, the Pampangueños used to set out on punishing expeditions to the mountains. Any Negrito caught by them was made a slave.

This inimical relationship did not end with the coming of the Spaniards. Rather, it probably intensified due to the raids of the Negritos and the encroaches of the lowlanders into their ancestral lands. The Spanish government, especially during the time of the able governor G. P. Damariñas (1590-1593), at the end of the XVI century, organized different military expeditions against the Negritos. The governor, with the help of the missionaries, tried to resettle them, to bring them to the lowlands and induce them to start tilling the land like the rest of the Filipinos. All attempts made by the authorities, even the heroic dedication of missionaries who dared to go into the forest fastnesses, were useless in the last analysis. The Negritos, after some years of peaceful settlement in the lowlands, used to return to the mountains. The agricultural civilization of the lowlanders was alien to them. They preferred to roam the fastnesses of the forests where they reigned supreme. All the efforts at Hispanization and Christianization failed almost entirely.

Some years after the conquest they were left to themselves. But they were not left alone for ever. Once the conquest of the lowlands was achieved, towards the end of the XVI century, the Spaniards tried to consolidate their rule over the mountain tribes of Luzon and Zambales. It was in Zambales where the use of force to bring them to submission was used by Dasmarinas. Before he applied the full force of the Spanish arms, Dasmarinas

consulted the religious superiors on the wisdom of his action. He was fully supported by all the religious orders. Politically and theologically a punishing expedition against the Negritos of Zambales was necessary and justified. The Pampangueños, victims of the Negritos' predatory raids, gave their full support.

"He"/Dasmarinas - writes De la Costa - "dispatched 120 Spanish and 600 Pampango troops in several columns on a deep penetration of the Zambales country with orders to destroy methodically everything in their path — villages, granaries, even the standing grain of the upland fields. All who resisted were to be killed, all who surrendered brought down to concentration camps in the lowlands, while their former homes were completely laid waste. Two thousand five hundred Zambales were either killed or captured. Those who survived were told where they could make their clearings and rebuild their villages. Four hundred of the male captives were sent to Cavite as galley slaves, thus relieving Dasmarinas of the bother of lascars".⁵¹

If Dasmarinas thought that this punishment would bring the Negritos of Zambales to civilization and settlement he was entirely wrong. All through the centuries they continued to raid peaceful settlements in the lowlands, especially the rich and fertile lands of Pangasinan and Pampanga. At the beginning of the XVIII century, during the time of San Antonio, they had not been touched by civilization and Christianity. This was also true at the end of the Spanish time. It is also true, to a large extent, even today.

The psychology of the Filipinos

San Antonio, like many Spaniards and foreigners before and after him, could not understand the psychology of the Filipinos. Hence some of his opinions cannot be accepted today. He found the conduct of the Filipinos contradictory. He was baffled by many of the characteristics of the Filipinos. Unfortunately he did not have at his disposal the behavioral sciences to lend him a hand in explaining these perplexities. But he had a great love and admiration for them and a high regard for the intelligence and skills of the Filipinos.

⁵¹ *The Jesuits in the Philippines: 1581-1768*, pp. 127-128.

"Speaking in common" - he writes - "all authors testify, and experience tells us, that the Filipinos are more skillful than the Indians of other places. They easily learn any skill and they imitate any work of beauty placed before them. This is why they make such accomplished scribes which supply the treasurers, secretaries, tribunals and other private offices. . . . There have been some who have filled more important jobs in acting capacity, and others serve as directors for the *alcaldes mayores* with a great knowledge of the paperwork. . . . There are others who have a great capacity to handle pleadings between litigants. Today they are accomplished printers. I have seen many capable Indians in this political and civil governments, and their natural logic is such that they talk convincingly. . . . They are more capable in manual skills in spite of the great apathy they have for everything. Because of this, they make beautiful use of all musical instruments to which they are greatly inclined and which they make themselves. They have good singers and all the churches from the cathedral to the poorest church ministry have professionals with adequate wages and they are thus developed, starting as choir boys. They are fond of poetry and acting, they are very good translators and will translate a Spanish comedy into beautiful verse in their own language. Although all men and women are fond of reading, they are untiring when it comes to matters of poetry which they act out as they read. This also happens with any trade which they work at, because they are capable in all, and they would be even more capable if they were less lazy or if their greed for temporal goods were greater. . . ." (p. 141)

A man who has such a high regard for the intellectual and moral qualities of a people can be forgiven if he also mentions some negative points of the peoples' character. San Antonio, and many of the missionaries who came ahead of him, had a great experience of Mexico and the Americas. In their opinion, warranted also by their long and personal stay in the Philippines, the Filipinos were more intelligent and capable than any of the people of the Americas.

The old and the new

When San Antonio wrote his *Crónicas* the Philippines had witnessed enormous changes in all fields of human endeavour. More than one hundred and fifty years had passed since Legazpi's

arrival. San Antonio is a late witness for the so-called contact period. But he is an excellent witness as to the effects the conquest had upon the Filipino people. The Filipinos of his time were different from those Legazpi found during the conquest. Many things had disappeared and gone down with the conquest. Many still remained intact, untouched by Christianity or by European civilization. The Filipinos - contemporaries of San Antonio - clung passionately to many practices inherited from their forefathers. In the rural areas and in the new towns created by the missionaries many people held pagan beliefs. The acceptance and practice of pagan rituals were not uncommon. But by the time of San Antonio things had changed. And things had changed thoroughly and radically. The impact of the new religion was deeply felt. A new civilization had been born. Christianity had purified and overcome many pagan practices. People had come to accept the fundamental tenets of the Christian religion. Things had gone for good. Many still persisted.

San Antonio was a witness of the blending together of the old and the new in the Philippines of his times. One has but to read chapters XI, XII, XIII, XLIII, XLIV, XLV (pp. 139-170) to see this.

For the beliefs of the early Filipinos, San Antonio relies on the *Relations* of previous missionaries and writers, especially Juan de Plasencia (1589), Morga (1598) Chirino (1604) and Colin (1663). But he himself was able to compare the Philippines of his time, with almost two hundred years of Christian living behind her, with the Philippines described by the men of the contact period. Much had been achieved. A lot remained to be done. San Antonio complains that superstitions and omens, many and varied, still reigned among the Filipinos during his own time. He seems to take a philosophical attitude regarding these religious practices of the people.

"It will take a long time - we read - to list them all and it is most proper to be concerned about them, although all of them are funny. We are continuously preaching against them and still we cannot do away with them. They show more obedience to their ancient uncivilized customs than to the Christian prudence taught them by the Ministers, and even if I do not consider these explicit errors 'ut in plurimum' at present, the

tenacity with which they follow the errors of their forefathers is an implicit danger". (p. 153)

Slavery in the Philippines at the time of the Spanish arrival

Based on the reports of chroniclers and writers of the contact period, especially Juan de Plasencia, San Antonio gives us the political, cultural and social status of the Philippines at the time of the contact period. We can gather from him that the main social and political unit throughout the archipelago was the *barangay*. It was made up of some one hundred persons. Society was fragmented into thousands of *barangays* having loose relations among them. Most often they were engaged in fierce tribal wars. The *barangay* was ruled by a *datu*. Below him were the *Maharlikas* in the Tagalog regions and the *Timawas* in the Visayan Islands. All of them were free and owners of slaves. Below them came the *aliping* class or slave class of the Tagalogs. The *aliping* class was divided into *aliping namamahay* (household servant) and the *aliping saguiguilir* (servants below the stairs or chattel slaves). The people belonging to this last class were slaves in the strict sense of the word (pp. 157-160).

It may strike us to learn that slavery was rampant in the Philippines at the time of the Spanish arrival. Slavery was common throughout the whole world at that time. The way slaves were treated depended greatly on the character of the slave owner or on the socio-economic demands of society. In the stage of development of early Philippines, with its subsistence economy, the slaves were not as exploited as Negro slaves of America in later centuries. Nor were they as deprived as the slaves of "civilized" nations like Greece and Rome. Slavery in the Philippines was milder than in the more developed nations of the rest of the world. In the *barangay* society of early Philippines the slaves were, to some extent, part of the household of the *datu*s and were relatively well treated. Documents, however, tell us that slavery was a fact and slaves were killed, sacrificed and sold as any other saleable goods. Chattel slavery unfortunately was common in the Philippines at the time of the Spanish arrival.

I cannot offer here an in-depth study of slavery during the contact period. It goes beyond the scope of the review of the

book I am presenting to my readers. What I want to point out, based on the *Crónicas* of San Antonio, is the fact that slavery had been entirely abolished in the Philippine Islands during his time. There had been a great progress in this respect.

The society of San Antonio, at the beginning of the XVIII century, bore the fruits of the struggle of the early missionaries against slavery. The society of San Antonio was by far a more open, just and humanized society than the one existing during the contact period. The positive fruits of almost two hundred years of Christianization and Hispanization were to be seen everywhere. The tensions and disruptions brought about by the conquest, the economic, cultural, social and religious difficulties were over. The Philippines of the XVIII century was a more just and happy society than the one found at the beginning of the Spanish conquest and the early years of the conquest. San Antonio and his generation testified to this fact.

"This tyranny of slavery" - he tells us - "was so extended throughout this archipelago that when it was conquered by the Spaniards there were chiefs with so many slaves of their own nation and their own color and who were not strangers that there are those who had a hundred, some two hundred and some three hundred slaves. Most of them were not so by birth but because of slight motives or even without them. As slaves were the best sign of wealth that they could have after gold (because of the importance they gave to the convenience of their services), there was nothing in which they took greater care than in increasing them, now at the cost of usury and other means in which they showed no respect to their own parents or brothers; now in the small wars and skirmishes that they had among them in which the prisoners became slaves; or now in punishment of small faults, such as not having observed the prohibition of talking in a wake, or by passing close to the place where the wife of the chief was bathing, or if some dust casually fell on a chief as he passed by the house of a "timaua" or because of other motives so tyrannical as they were frivolous, all showing the lack of light in the Holy Gospels" (pp. 160-161).

In the opinion of the missionaries of the first generation God sent them there to liberate the Filipinos from the yoke of the devil and from the oppression and exploitation of their own datus

and chiefs. A clear reference to this sense of mission, of fulfillment of God's plan for the humanization and liberation of the early Filipinos, is found in Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza.

"The natives" — he wrote — "were won't to make captives and slaves with great readiness in illegal warfare, and for very slight causes. This God remedied with the coming of the Spaniards. It was usual for a man, with fourty or fifty associates, or servants, to attack a village of poor people suddenly, when totally unprepared for such an assault, and, capturing them all, to make them slaves, without other cause or right; these they would keep as slaves for life, or sell them in other islands..."⁵²

San Antonio and the Filipinos of his generation reaped the fruits of the struggle for liberation and humanization carried out by the early missionaries. And he feels proud of this achievement. Belonging to an epoch of enlightenment and optimism, he could not but see in the Philippines the positive results of this struggle. Thus he writes:

"After the promulgation of the Plasencia report the roots of this abuse were removed in such a way there is no longer the least servitude in slavery among the Indians, not in accordance to the Apostolic Briefs which have been reinforced with various corroborating Royal Cédulas from our Catholic Monarchs. In this manner, were are all soldiers of the same Divine Lord, warriors beneath our Catholic standard of the Holy Cross, and citizens and participants of our Kingdom, the celestial Jerusalem. So it is that we live in these islands, Spaniards and Indians, all vassals in what is human, of a sole Catholic Monarch (p. 161).

The alligator in Philippine history

The book I am reviewing was written in 1738. The changes that have taken place in the Philippines since then are enormous, especially in the political, social, cultural and religious fields. But if we are to believe San Antonio's *Crónicas*, great changes have also taken place in the world of nature.

The balance of nature has changed. Ecology has suffered serious blows. Man has abused nature; and nature itself is now

⁵² JUAN GONZALEZ DE MENDOZA, *History of the Great Kingdom of China*, 1585, in BR., VI, pp. 145.

taking its own revenge. This is seen in the catastrophic floods that occur yearly in many parts of the Philippines, destroying millions of pesos worth of property and killing hundreds of people. They are the clear result of forest denudation and deforestation. But I will not deal now with forest denudation, but rather, based on San Antonio's *Crónicas*, I will direct my interest to the world of the animal species.

Many species of animals, once abundant in the Philippines, have become extinct, or are on the point of becoming extinct.

During San Antonio's time huge caymans or alligators, called "*bwayas*" in Tagalog, were found in rivers, lakes, creeks and swamps all over the Philippines, posing a perennial threat to man and beast alike. Alligators were found in fresh and salt waters. In the Philippines of San Antonio, they were a hindrance to progress and civilization. These animals brought fear to people and, since they were so abundant and blood-thirsty, they brought economic stagnation to the country. The Pasig river, which runs through the heart of Manila, was infested with large and voracious alligators during the time of San Antonio. Up to the beginning of the present century, they were still found in the Laguna de Bay, the inland fresh water lake that feeds the Pasig river. Even as late as the World War II, small caymans were seen, though rarely, in some of the rivers leading to Laguna de Bay. Now they are nowhere to be found in the Laguna or its surrounding areas. San Antonio speaks eloquently of these voracious animals. In his *Crónicas* he writes:

"Their fertility is such that they lay eggs frequently, hatching fifty or sixty small crocodiles at a time. At this rate, all rivers of these islands would become impassable, were it not for Divine Mercy which has acted to prevent this evident harm. The voracity of the mother is such that when the small ones can fend for themselves (this being on land where the egg hatch), the mother places herself on the path they have to take to get to the water, and, with an open mouth, swallows them one by one as they instinctively walk to the water. Only the ones who have casually deviated from this path are saved and thus, very few survive so that man can live without so many dangers" (p. 46).

During the time of San Antonio, almost two hundred years after the beginning of the conquest of the Philippines, the alli-

gators had not diminished in number. Rather, they had increased even more. One of the things that shocked the Spaniards who came to the Philippines was the abundance, voracity and blood-thirstiness of the cayman of the Philippines. Many Spaniards who had been in the Americas before coming to the Philippines had seen them, but they were astonished to notice that the alligators were extremely abundant in the Philippines. One gets the impression in reading the chronicles of early Spanish writers that the alligators could be found everywhere, even in the backyard. Any river, creek, estero or lake was infested with them. Man lived in perpetual fear of this terrible and ferocious animal.

The early Filipinos were greatly exposed to the dangers of the ugly animal. The people were very fond of swimming and bathing. Their eager desire to take a bath in the river meant sometimes their own death. Thus, before wading into the river, they used to set special enclosures, isolating them with bamboo or wooden planks, so as to feel themselves more secure from the monsters and thus avoid being devoured by them. Swimming in the Pasig river during the XVIII and even the XIX centuries was oftentimes done in a cage for fear of the caymans still abundant in the river.

The early chroniclers and historians who wrote about the Philippines could not but notice the abundance and ferocity of the "bwaya". In reporting home the curiosities and customs of the early inhabitants, they could not bypass the cayman. Some of the missionaries report how newly converted Christians were saved from the jaws of the alligator by invoking the help of the Blessed Mother and the saints. Pagans instead were easy prey to the voracity of the "bwaya". At times they mention incredible stories of how the alligators jumped into fragile bancas and suddenly seized some persons, swiftly plunging back into the swirling waters. Upon inquiry they would always find that the men seized by the alligators were pagans, or Christians who had abandoned the practice of their religion. Christians in the banca were never molested by the "bwaya".

One can easily reject these pious descriptions of the early missionaries, but one cannot forget the danger faced continuously and perpetually by man and beast alike. Horses, mules, cows - all types of animals whether wild or domesticated - were in

danger from the cayman when they went to the rivers to drink and cool themselves.

The cayman was a daily fact in the lives of the Filipinos. They had to reckon with and struggle against it. The animal was too powerful and dangerous for them. Out of fear, and perhaps due to the awesome and devastating power of the savage beast, the early Filipinos held the "bwaya" in high respect. In fact, fear begot respect, respect led to veneration and veneration meant, oftentimes, worship.

Spanish writers of the contact period, especially Plasencia, Morga, Chirino and Colin tell us that the people were in the habit of offering food to the cayman as they crossed the lakes and rivers in their fragile bancas. Thus they hoped to avoid being harmed by them.

Plasencia states:

"They paid reverence to water-lizards called by them buaya or crocodiles, from fear of being harmed by them. They were even in the habit of offering these animals a portion of what they carried in their boats, by throwing it into the water, or placing it upon the bank".⁵³

At a distance of so many centuries, it is difficult for people, even for scholars, to picture the customs of our ancestors and grasp the problems that beset them. The cayman was a fundamental fact, a terrible one, in the daily life of the early Filipinos. Since it was so big, so ferocious, so voracious and blood-thirsty and the early Filipino had no way to win over the animal, the only recourse left open to him was to divinize the animal — to pay veneration to it.

Morga, Chirino and Colin affirm that oaths were taken in the form of execrations and awful curses like: "So may the crocodile kill him". "Cagtin nang Bwaya" (may I be eaten by the crocodile).⁵⁴ They even addressed themselves to the crocodile in the familiar term "nono" which means "grandfather". Thus we read in Chirino:

⁵³ JUAN DE PLASENCIA, *Relation of the Worship of the Tagalogs, their Gods, and their Burials and Superstitions*, in BR. vol. VII, p. 189.

⁵⁴ *Of the false heathen religion, idolatries, superstitious, and other things of the Filipinos*, in BR., vol. 40, p. 78.

"They held the cayman in the utmost veneration; and, whenever they made any statement about it, when they described it in the water, they called it *Nono*, which means "grandfather". They softly and tenderly besought it not to harm them; and to this end offered it a part of what they carried in their boats, casting the offering into the water".⁵⁵

Morga, in different words, tells us almost the same:

"There are many very large scorpions in the rivers and creeks, and a great number of crocodiles, which are blood-thirsty and cruel. They quite commonly pull from their bancas the natives who go in those boats, and cause many injuries among the horned cattle and the horses of the stock-farms, when they go to drink. And although the people fish for them often and kill them, they are never diminished in number. For that reason, the natives set closely-grated divisions and enclosures in the rivers and creeks of their settlements, where they bathe. There they enter the water to bathe, secure from those monsters, which they fear so greatly that they venerate and adore them, as if they were beings superior to themselves. All their oaths and execrations, and those which are of any weight with them (even among the Christians) are, thus expressed: "So may they kill him". They call the crocodile *buhaya* in their language. It has happened when some has sworn falsely, or when he has broken his word, that then some accident has occurred to him with the crocodile, which God, whom he offends, has so permitted for the sake of the authority and purity of the truth, and the promise of it".⁵⁶

The abundance and ferocity of the crocodiles was noticed by San Antonio in the XVIII century. It was probably due to the fast development of agriculture — towards the end of the XVIII century and all through the XIX century — that the crocodile retreated more and more into isolated places. Furthermore, the growth of population and the need to acquire new land for cultivation proved fatal to the existence of the crocodile in the Philip-

⁵⁵ *Concerning the false heathen religion, idolatries, superstitious, of the Filipinos*, in BR., vol. XII, pp. 265-266; cfr. *Relación de las Islas Filipinas. The Philippines in 1600*, Historical Conservation Society, Manila, 1969, p. 298.

⁵⁶ *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, in BR., vol. 16, pp. 93-94. Original Spanish text can be found in Rizal's ed. of *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, Manila, 1961, p. 272.

pines. But still, towards the middle of the XIX century, in the Laguna de Bay, not far from the city of Manila, huge and voracious *bwayas* were yet to be seen by fishermen and cattlemen.

We have one of the most beautiful descriptions by a French settler in the Philippines about the capture and slaughter of an immense crocodile or cayman that had been the terror of the inhabitants of Jalajala and its surrounding area.

I cannot resist the temptation to quote at length Paul de la Gironière, who is the Frenchman concerned, in his interesting book, *Adventures of a Frenchman in the Philippines*, published in 1853, but reflecting the state of the Philippines towards the first quarter of the XIX century.

“At the period at which I first occupied my habitation and began to colonize the village of Jalajala, caymans abounded on that side of the lake. From my windows I daily saw them sporting in the water, and waylaying and snapping at the dogs that ventured too near the brink.

“One day, a female servant of my wife’s, having been so imprudent as to bathe at the edge of the lake, was surprised by one of them, a monster of enormous size. One of my guards came up the moment she was being carried off; he fired his musket at the brute, and hit it under the foreleg or armpit, which is the only vulnerable part. But the wound was insufficient to check the cayman’s progress, and it disappeared with its prey.

“Upon another occasion, a Chinese was riding onwards in advance of me. We reached a river, and I let him go on alone, in order to ascertain whether the river was very deep or not. Suddenly three or four caymans which lay in waiting under the water, threw themselves upon him; horse and rider disappeared, and for some minutes afterwards the water was tinged with blood.

In the course of a few years’ time, these monsters had disappeared from the environs of Jalajala; but one morning, when out with my shepherds, at some leagues distance from my house, we came to a river, which could only be crossed by swimming. One of my people said to me:

“Master, the water is deep here, and we are in the courses where the caymans abound; an accident soon happens, let us try further up the river, and pass over in a shallower spot.

"We were about to follow this advice, when another man, more rash than his comrades, said: "I am not afraid of caymans and spurred his horse into the stream. He had scarcely got half-way across, when we perceived a monstrous cayman rise and advance to meet him . . . We cried out; 'Run, run, or the cayman will have you'.

"The Indian however, would not stir, but calmly waited, cutlass in hand. The monster advanced towards him; the Indian struck him a blow on the head, which took no more effect than a flip of the fingers would have on the horns of a bull. The cayman made a spring, seized him by one of his thighs, and for more than a minute, we beheld my poor shepherd — his body erect above the surface of the water, his hands joined, his eyes turned to heaven, in the attitude of a man imploring divine mercy — dragged back again into the lake. The drama was over; the cayman's stomach was his tomb. . .

"An animal so formidable in size as the one we were in search of, could not hide himself very easily, and soon we beheld him on the surface of the river, lashing the water with his long tail, snapping and clattering with his jaws, and endeavouring to get at those who disturbed him in this retreat. A universal shout of joy greeted his appearance; the Indians in the pirogues hurled their lances at him, whilst we, upon either shore of the lake, fired a volley. The bullets rebounded from the monster's scales, which they were unable to penetrate; the keener lances made their way between the scales, and entered into the cayman's body some eight or ten inches. . .

"The jaws closed with a terrible noise, seizing only the fire and smoke that issued from my gun, and the balls flattened against his bones without injuring them. The animal, which had now become furious, made inconceivable efforts to seize one of his enemies; his strength seemed to increase, rather than to diminish, whilst our resources were nearly exhausted. Almost all our lances were sticking in his body, and our ammunition drew to an end. The fight had lasted more than six hours, without any results that could make us hope for its speedy termination, when an Indian struck the cayman, whilst at the bottom of the water, with a lance of unusual strength and size. Another Indian, at his comrades request, struck two vigorous blows with a mace upon the butt-end of the lance, the iron entered deep into the animal's body and immediately with a movement as swift as lightning he darted towards the nets and disappeared. The lance

pole, detached from the iron head, returned to the surface of the water...

".... Presently... we saw the cayman upon the surface of the water. He was expiring. We threw over him several lassos of strong cords, and when he was well secured, we drew him to land. It was not easy matter... Mr. Russel, a very competent person, was charged with his measurements. From the extremity of his nostrils to the tip of his tail, he was found to be twenty-seven feet long, and his circumference was eleven feet, measured under the armpits. His belly was much more voluminous, but we thought it unnecessary to measure him there, judging that the horse upon which he had breakfasted must considerably have increased his bulk.

".... My worthy priest demanded that the stomach should be opened, in order to ascertain how many Christians the monster had devoured. Every time, he said, that a cayman eats a Christian he swallows a large pebble; thus, the number of pebbles we should find in him would positively indicate the number of the faithful to whom his enormous stomach had afforded sepulture... Then we opened the stomach, and took out of it, by fragments, the horse which had been devoured by the monster that morning. The cayman does not masticate; he snaps off a huge lump with his teeth, and swallows it entire. Thus we found the whole of the horse, divided only into seven or eight pieces. Then we came to about a hundred and fifty pounds weight of pebbles, varying from the size of a fist to that of a walnut. When my priest saw this great quantity of stones:

"It is a mere tale," he could not help saying; "it is impossible that this animal could have devoured so great a number of Christians".

"I found all my bullets, which had become flattened against the bones of the jaws and palate as they would have done against a plate of iron. The lance thrust which had slain the cayman was a chance — a sort of a miracle. When the Indian struck with his mace upon the butt-end of the pole, the iron pierced through the nape, into the vertebral column, and penetrated the spinal marrow, the only vulnerable part.

"When this formidable head was well prepared, and the bones dried and whitened, I had the pleasure of pre-

senting it to my friend Russel, who has since deposited it in the museum of Boston, United States".⁵⁷

In the struggle for supremacy between man and beast, man has prevailed but has prevailed to such an extent that crocodiles are practically extinct in the Philippines.

San Antonio is not as specific and detailed as Paul de la Gironiere in describing fights between man and crocodiles. In his *Crónicas*, however, he tells us of some superhuman fights between brave Filipinos and the "bwaya".

"Some very brave Indians [Filipinos] have fought these animals hand to hand, killing them and rescuing their victims from their claws or teeth" (p. 46).

One can only sympathize with animal lovers, but progress and population growth oftentimes mean the destruction and extinction — and this as something irrevocable — of some animal species. In man's struggle for land, survival and for the betterment of his own life, animal species will have to disappear. It is the city dweller, free from dangers and with less economic stresses, who revolts at the sight of animal annihilation. The poor farmer of past centuries thought otherwise. Swamps needed to be drained and opened for agriculture. River traffic, the fastest and cheapest form of transportation — and practically the only one existing in early times — in small and fragile boats, had to be maintained. Crocodiles were a danger. They were man's enemies. Man had to struggle for survival and in this struggle he has prevailed in the Philippines. The very few crocodiles left in the Philippines today are found in remote rivers, deep in the forests and in swampy areas still unclaimed by man, like in Mindoro, in Surigao, in Davao, in the Bicol area, in some rivers of Quezon province, in Polillo islands and some other areas of the Philippines.

In my conversations during the summer of 1976 with the late Mr. Visaya, governor of Isabela and co-founder of the town of San Mateo in Western Isabela, he used to tell me that in the early 20's of this present century huge "bwayas" were seen happily basking in the sandy shores of the mighty Magat river. Nowa-

⁵⁷ PAUL P. DE LA GIRONIERE, *Adventures of a Frenchman in the Philippines*, a Burke-Mialhe Publication, 1972, pp. 141-147.

days they are nowhere to be found in the river. Even the water level of the Magat river has gone down due to forest denudation in the Provinces of Nueva Viscaya and Quirino.

Crocodiles, however, have not entirely disappeared from the Philippines. During the catastrophic floods that inundated large areas of the provinces of Surigao del Norte, Agusan del Norte, and some other provinces and towns of Northeastern Mindanao in January of 1981 many of the people who perished in the floods were eaten by crocodiles still found in the Agusan River and some other rivers flowing down from the thick forests of Northeastern Mindanao.

Nature conservationists will have a hard time in their romantic task to protect the "crocs", as they fondly call these dangerous animals. In the Philippines, animal lovers and nature conservationists seem to have lost the battle already.

The work I am reviewing has some serious defects. There are too many errors to be bypassed by a reviewer. In the first place, all the Spanish names given in the footnotes of the Introduction of Antolin and Ruano lack the orthographic accents so important in Spanish (pp. XXV-XXVII).

There are large numbers of misprints. By way of example I have been able to count at least 20 in p. XXV. Some of them are even funny, such as 'provincia de San Gregorio *mango*' for San Gregorio *Magno*. Another example '... Religiosos descalsos de N.P.S. *Franciscano*' instead of San *Francisco*.

Juan Francisco de San Antonio, as a man of his time, was well versed in classical languages, such as Greek and Latin. Thus in his *Crónicas* he quoted classical writers, especially Latin ones, in their original Latin. Since the translation is meant for the general public I do not see why the Latin quotations have not been translated into English also. The translator could have asked the help of a Latinist. Only on page 3 there are six quotations in Latin, some of them quite long. Ordinary readers and scholars will surely be unable to understand them. Furthermore, some of the Latin quotations abound in misprints.

The translation on the whole is clear and does not burden the reader. Before such a remarkable book as the *Crónicas* was pub-

lished in English the translator should have been given a team of consultants in the different fields of knowledge treated in the book. The translator could have come out with a much better translation had he been guided and advised all through his work. For example, he translates *vicario forense* as *vicar forense* (p. 115). It is common among Catholic circles to translate it as *vicar forane*.

Oftentimes we find words spelled differently in the English translation like Cimarrones (p. 109) and Zimarrones (p. 117). Calamianes (p. 106) and Calamyanes (p. 120; 121).

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