

Values in Philippine Folk Beliefs and Customs

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This study focuses on folk beliefs and customs as carriers of meaning and values. Though brief in statement, folk beliefs enshrine a people's insights into the structure of the universe as well as into human life. They reflect the patterns of people's feelings towards one another, and towards the community: the family, the clan, the tribe or the nation, as well as to the world of spirits, animals and plants. In general we can say that they are a significant expression of the cognitive and affective life of a people. Customs, on the other hand, are practices or ways of behaving shared by most of the people. Needless to say these behavioral patterns are based on folk beliefs also.

For instance, the custom of youngsters taking the hand of their parents or elders and pressing it to their forehead (among Tagalogs) or kissing it (among Bisayans of Mindanao). Behind this custom is the value of respect and reverence for elders. The same is true of not allowing children or young people to walk over their parents lying on the floor, whether they be asleep or not. For to step over someone older is somehow to belittle him. The young should not belittle their elders. This respect is necessary for the normal relationship between the young and the old to be maintained within the family. The knots and ties of mutual regard and intimacy are linked with this observance of respect for elders by the young.

However, once the elders' death has taken place, those ties are deliberately meant to be broken. The purpose is to prevent the dead

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from haunting and bothering the living. The act of making surviving youngsters pass over the coffin of their grandparents is intended, it seems to me, to make the spirits of the dead realize that the affective ties must be cut off. The elders who do the passing are as much as making the youngsters tell their grandparent: "Look we no longer hold you in respect. We are stepping over you. So no longer hold us with fond affection. And, what is more to the point, do not come back to bother us. Stay dead and departed."

A cruel attitude towards the dead relatives? Perhaps. But it is called for by the cultural experience of the spirits of the dead returning to visit their young living relatives who did not make a definitive break with them.

Classification of Folk Beliefs

In 1967 I started to collect folk beliefs and customs which eventually went into the four-volume *Dictionary of Philippine Folk Beliefs And Customs*, published in 1970 and which has been enlarged and revised.

To help me classify them, I engaged the help of three members of the folk in Cagayan: Mr. Castro Gaabucayan, a city-born gentleman, educated and religious; Mr. Apolonio Muego, a resident of Alicomohon, Sugbongcogon, a great story-teller, unschooled, but very human; and Ms. Loreta German, a resident of Carmen, educated, a schoolteacher. I passed on to them either verbally or in writing some 300 of the folk beliefs and customs I had collected, and I requested them to have them classified in their native categories.

The categories they came up with were the following:

1. *Tinuho-an* and *Tuo-tuo*
2. *Tilimad-on*
3. *Mangasa, pangasa* or *malisya*
4. *Panglihi* or *lihi*

1. *Tinuho-an* and *Tuo-tuo*

Thinuho-an is a folk belief that is serious and considered real and true. Like, for instance, the sacred chair that a Higaunon in Claveria used in his ritual for the summoning the spirits. The tribal priest was much put off because his son-in-law, who had studied at the University of the Philippines, one day while the old man was away, lowered the

sacred chair which had been attached by means of a rope to the ceiling. And after bringing it down, consigned it to their poultry where it became smeared with chicken dung. The old man in deep distress came to Mr. Crisogono Abejo, then teacher in Claveria and complained about the way his son-in-law treated his sacred chair. The sacred chair was an object of *tinuho-an*. The old priest and his followers believed that the spirits whom he called in his ritual did rest on that chair after he had summoned them for help.

Tuo-tuo is a folk belief that is considered to be trivial, unreal or false. The chair to the U.P. educated gentleman from Claveria had become a *tuo-tuo*.

2. *Tilimad-on*

Tilimad-on can be a variety of things: (a) an event, like the death of a child along with the death of an old man, the death of a neighbor and loss in the cockpit, the failure of light during an evening meal and an unsuccessful undertaking in the morrow; (b) an action or gesture, such as the dropping of a spoon, or singing beside the stove; or (c) an object, for instance, a mole under the eye, large ears [which are signs of long life], the smell of burning candle [sign of death of someone close]. The whole world of omens is thereby comprised in the concept of *tilimad-on*. The omen may be favorable or otherwise.

The following are some remarks on *Tilimad-on*:

a. When the death of an elderly person happens at the same time that the death of a child, people take this as a good sign. The salvation of the older person is assured because his soul is accompanied by the soul of an innocent child. This can be a source of hope especially if the old person has not been especially noted for being virtuous. *Consuelo de bobo?* Perhaps. But in the face of ultimate realities, people may be allowed to hope even against hope.

b. If someone who was a *sugarol* (gambler) and frequenter of cockpits dies, his neighbor should refrain from gambling. For the death of a neighbor can be a sign of loss in gambling.

c. If I have a business venture the next morning, should a brown-out occur while I'm taking supper, people consider this to be a bad luck omen. Generally people do not want to be on the losing end. And business speculations are quite sensitive to tell-tale signs of an unsuccessful venture.

d. A very common belief, too, is that if a spoon falls while the table is being set, a lady visitor is coming; or if a fork, a male visitor will come. The shape of the spoon and fork indicates likewise the gender of the arriving visitor.

e. People also believe that if a young girl sings besides a stove as she cooks, she will not get married. Marriage for a woman is generally desirable. To remain unmarried is some kind of a curse.

f. Another common sign is a mole under the eye. If a girl with such a mole marries, she will become a widow. Perhaps the explanation might be that a mole under the eye is along the path of tears.

g. The possession of large-sized ears is also a *tilimad-on*. It is taken as sign of long life. Long life is a blessing, perhaps a cultural trait borrowed from the Chinese.

So a *tilimad-on* may be an event, an action or gesture, or an object. The whole world of omens is comprised in the concept of *tilimad-on*.

3. *Mangasa, Pangasa, or Malisya*

a. A large fly entering a house and buzzing into a room is a death omen. In Cebuano the fly is called *lagong*. Perhaps the fact that such kind of flies are usually seen to hover over decaying organic matter, flesh especially, may be the basis for such a belief that it is a harbinger of death.

b. Another one, a spider suddenly falling in front of someone is also taken as an omen of death. Perhaps the element of being taken by surprise at the sudden drop of the spider may account for the *malisya*. Death, after all, is always something unbidden and unwanted.

c. Likewise, a dog digging in the yard is a sign that the owner of the yard will soon die. Given the closeness between the dog and its master, the action of the dog digging in the yard could indicate the digging of its master's grave.

d. The singing of an *amimispis* (insect) is commonly perceived by many Cebuano as a death omen. The sound of an *amimispis* is similar to the sound of two silver coins being juggled together inside the pocket. It is interesting to note that among the Sulod of Central Panay, the belief exists that the souls of the dead for whom no living relatives offer a sacrifice to redeem them from the giant Hulubaw in Harangyanan

are sent by him back to the earth as a *mirispis* (amimispis) or any other insect. And perhaps this connection of the insect with death among the Sulod may also be the basis for the Cebuano Visayan belief that by its singing the *amimispis* presages death. (Jocano, *The Sulods*, p. 216).

e. A loud knocking on the wall has been taken as a harbinger of death. Take, for instance, the case of a certain Eutiquio Daomilas announcing his death in Cagayan de Oro City to his brother in Ozamis City. Eutiquio's brother was at supper one evening in Ozamis City when he heard a loud knocking under his house. He went downstairs to see what caused the raucous noise. He found nothing. The next day, however, he received a telegram from Eutiquio's wife in Cagayan de Oro informing him of her husband's death at early evening the day before. Loud knocking on the other hand has been associated with poltergeists.

f. It is believed that when the light (or in places where electricity is still unknown a *petromax* lamp, for instance) goes off and on during a public dance, this could mean the death of someone close to the members of the family. A report reads: "The light during our dance turned off and on three times without anyone doing it. This was at nine o'clock in the evening, the time my auntie died in a hospital in Cebu. Therefore it was my auntie's spirit telling us about her death." This statement was of course made from hindsight, after the dancers had been told the next day about the death of their relative in Cebu.

"... One may perhaps deny outright the validity of linking the behavior of the light to the death of the auntie. But the facts were there: the light did go off and on for three consecutive times. It was plain to everyone on the dance hall. Likewise, the fact was that the auntie died, and that she died at about the same time, being this fact totally unknown to the dancers. Considering the close relation between the dancers and the auntie, the concern they would naturally have over her dying, the emotional bonds uniting them beyond mountains and seas, is it really reasonable to say that there was no possibility of bridging the distance between the two places: a Cebu hospital and Cagayan de Oro? What actually caused the light to go off and on might have been something merely mechanical. But is it irrational to maintain that perhaps that mechanical phenomenon may have been influenced by the auntie's psychic power: her thoughts and emotions reaching out toward her relatives living in a far away place at the momentous time of her departure from the land of the living? While keeping much reserve in easy generalizations in this regard, one might admit the possibility of contact on supersensory grounds, such as

mental telepathy between peoples emotionally close but separated by great distances.

Then, too, there is the traditionally so-called connatural knowledge. The minds and hearts of people who are very close to each other seem to naturally be affected by the slightest stimulus from one to another. At the particularly intensely emotional hour of death, when one is about to leave this world and his loved ones, it seems quite possible that certain unknown forces of the spirit may actually be activated to bring about communication between the dying person and those close to him of course, even this is also conditioned by culture. Where there is general belief in suprasensory phenomena communication it seems to occur more frequently. This is particularly true in archaic societies and among the un-sophisticated and unspoiled. (*Myths and Symbols*, 155-56).

g. Another frequently mentioned omen of death is the blowing of cold wind. During the Second World War, the late Dr. Jesus Tan of San Juan de Dios Hospital (Manila), was coopted by the Japanese military along with a good number of other medical doctors to work with them. The third floor of the Philippine Women's University (Manila) served as their sleeping quarters. On the night the SS Corregidor hit a mine in Manila Bay on its way to the south, Dr. Tan and companions were already in bed. It was close to midnight when the doctor noticed the door of their dormitory open and felt the blowing of cold wind towards him. He also heard the sound of someone walking as if with a cane towards the middle of the room where his bed was. The visitor then went to the window facing the bay and remained there for some time. Afterwards he left the window and walked back to the door with his cane, while a cold wind was blowing. Finally, Dr. Tan fell asleep. Early next morning he went to his home in Ermita. From his house he heard the newsboys shouting "Extra! Extra!" He went down to pick a paper and there he found the story of how the night before around midnight the *Corregidor* was blown up resulting in the death of many passengers. His sister-in-law came in to tell him that her husband, Dr. Tan's brother, was among those passengers who had died the night before. Incidentally, he was using his cane in the boat. Dr. Tan realized that the person who entered their dormitory and went to the window facing the bay was his brother. (*Personal Communication*, Manila, 1968).

h. People dreaming of sailing over a body of water which suddenly becomes murky also spell out the death of someone close in the dream. Perhaps the cultural belief common among many Filipinos that journey

to the land of the dead is over a body of water may be linked with this one. If the water remains clear and bright, no problem. But if it turns dark and murky it may become a sign of the grave, death being then presaged.

5. *Panglihi* or *Lih*

This category refers to beliefs and practices connected with some kind of beginning or of first things, connoting either a new life or a new condition in life. Thus in our listing of *Panglihi* we have classified them with this criterion in mind. (*Myths and Symbols*, 147-50).

a) *Beliefs concerning expectant mothers, birth or new life:*

The following folk beliefs have something to do either directly or indirectly with birth or new life:

1. If a pregnant woman takes a liking for a person, or an animal or anything, a mark of that person, animal or object will appear on the body of the future child, e.g. blond hair, monkey's fur on the face or arm, the figure of a crab shell or the leaf design of a Ming jar on the baby's forehead. (Malaybalay, Bukidnon, 1967; Cagayan de Oro, 1930, 1975).

Comment: There is here a presumed acceptance of the natural sympathy existing between the various levels of existence. On the human level, the emotional or affective attachment of the pregnant woman; on the non-human level, the mark produced on the body of the newly-born child by the object to which the mother had taken a fancy.

What is it that makes these things happen? Could it be the will of the pregnant woman who unconsciously wished the object of her attachment be impressed on the body of her child? Could it be a positive physical influence of the beloved person or object exercised on the child to be born? Or is the whole affair something purely subjective, the drama taking place in the mother's psyche? Whatever the explanation be, one cannot gainsay the fact that there seems to exist a secret sympathy among the various levels of existence: the pregnant woman, the still unborn infant and the object of the mother's fancy. This sympathy dramatically appears in some mark or sign that resembles the object of the mother's attachment.

2. Expectant mothers should avoid eating the pancreas (*mandungo* or *balabag*) of slaughtered animals so that they may have easy deliveries. (Romblon, 1946).

3. To ease the delivery of a woman in difficult labor, closed objects in the house should be opened, while knotted, tied artifacts should be loosened. (Romblon, 1946).

4. Walking over a rope is considered bad for expectant mothers. (Romblon, 1946). "This has something to do with *lumawig* or the umbilical cord. (Cagayan de Oro, 1968).

5. Expectant mothers are not allowed to wear any kind of scarf as it may cause the child's death before or after delivery. (Romblon, 1946).

Comment: These folk beliefs centered on birth clearly highlight the value of life: regard for the mother's successful delivery and the preservation of the life of the infant. Even the ban of the use of scarfs by the expectant mother highlights once again the concern for the preservation of the life of the unborn. How unlike the modern penchant for abortion!

6. Some rural people in Luzon would not cut the umbilical cord of the newly born by means of scissors or metal, but only by means of a bamboo knife from the species called *bagakay*. At the moment of birth only tools made of native materials should be used so that the child grow up with a healthy love and respect for his own environment and not be too much enamored of foreign things. (Manila, 1976).

Comment: The concern of not introducing for the care of the newly born any alien element, like the mentioned pair of iron scissors to cut the umbilical cord, is also linked with family ties. As the child grows there should be a corresponding appreciation of his native things, ways and culture for him to mature normally into his cultural milieu.

b) Beliefs concerning marriage:

1. After the wedding ceremony, it is a sign of bad luck for both the bride and the groom to look themselves in the mirror while they have not yet changed their wedding attire. (Romblon, 1946).

2. Bride and groom should not sleep together without some person between them for the first three nights after the wedding. (Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental, 1970).

Comment: In these two folk beliefs connected with marriage we see that this institution is highly valued. The injunction against the newly married couple looking at themselves in the mirror while still in their wedding garments has a salutary purpose. It will prevent them from

physically giving in to their mutual attraction for each other now that they are married. This will certainly save their parents from embarrassment before their guests. Self-control over their feelings and emotions seems to be behind this belief and practice. Likewise, the injunction to abstain from the sexual act during the first three days after the wedding seems also to connote the same concern for self-control. An elderly lady in Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental, whom I interviewed on this matter said that the practice served her and her husband well later on in life not only when for reasons of health, finances and other obligations they had to be separated from each other, but also when together, to practice continence.

c) *Panglihi concerning building or occupying a new house:*

1. New houses should be built facing the east.

Comment: To let the house face the east is quite logical and universal. The sun being the source of light, warmth and energy cannot but affect the life and well-being of those who dwell in it.

2. Those building a house should insert silver coins into the bottom ends of the posts in order to bring prosperity to its inhabitants. (Romblon, 1946).

Comment: The practice to place silver coins under the posts is as ancient as the Sumerians. The long lasting quality of silver is meant to influence the posts against the ravages of pests and decay and, by sympathy, also the entire house and household are favorably affected.

3. Before one occupies a newly built house, he should slaughter an animal and spill its blood at the base of every post so that the house will not be haunted by evil spirits. (Romblon, 1946).

Comment: The slaughtering of animals and the spilling of blood around the posts before the house is occupied is also a very ancient and time-honored practice. Historians of religions refer to this ritual as "animating the house," that is, "giving the house a soul," because of the belief that the blood is the carrier of the soul of the animal. Giving the house a soul is equivalent to making it strong, lasting and prosperous.

d) *Panglihi concerning the condition of life of animals and plants:*

1. Pigs meant for fattening should be castrated one or two days before the full moon. This will make their bodies full and round in a very short time. (Romblon, 1942).

Comment: The castration of pigs intended for fattening coinciding with the full moon is also a common practice. Placing this act under the aegis of the full moon reminds us of the natural sympathy of the celestial and sublunary worlds. As the moon is full and round, so the bodies of the castrated swine are expected to be likewise. Imitative magic is at work here.

2. Regarding the observances for planting on *All Saints' Day* (November 1) and on *All Souls' Day* (November 2), the planter should:

- a. Take three strands of human hair, nine pieces of small hot pepper (*sili*) and nine pieces of sea shells called *tapok-tapok*;
- b. Plant only in three holes and no more;
- c. Recite the complete following prayer: "*Maghimaya ka Maria...*" ("Hail Mary full of grace...") until the end, as he digs the holes;
- d. He should plant thus: into each hole he should bury one strand of hair, three pieces of red pepper, and three pieces of sea shells.

Comment: The Philippines is much devoted of saints: San Roque, San Guillermo, San Antonio, San Pedro, Santa Rosa, San Raymundo, San Miguel and others. Thus it is hardly surprising that *All Saints Day* is especially regarded. The same is true with the day dedicated to *All Souls* when people flock to the cemeteries, spruce up the graves of relatives, light candles and bedeck them with flowers. This devotion to the souls of the dead is based on the belief that they take a special interest in their living relatives and their activities. Through their help fishes are abundant for fishermen; farmers, get plentiful corn and rice; and children grow up healthy.

Regarding the ingredients to be buried in the three holes, namely, the human hair, the hot pepper and the seashells, we notice again the cooperation of at least three levels of existence: the human, the plant and sealife. All three cooperate in bringing about a rich harvest from the earth. Thus the universal sympathy of the various elements of the cosmos is once again highlighted.

3. At harvest time, the farmer should make an offering of the new harvest to the dwellers (spirits) in the earth who are not-like-us, whether the crop harvested be rice or corn. And do not partake of the new crop until this offering has been made. (Romblon, 1946).

Comment: Finally the injunction to make an offering of thanksgiving to the spirits of the earth and the ban on partaking of the new

harvest before making the offering underscores the value of gratitude for favors received as well as self-control in times of abundance.

Recapitulation

From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that our Filipino folk beliefs and practices are concerned with values. It is not difficult to see that a good number of these values foster the common good, or that they help build up our nation both materially and spiritually.

Respect for the dignity of the human person and for the activities people perform to express their deepest beliefs are necessary for the spiritual growth of a nation. Freedom of belief and of worship are democratic imperatives as well as Christian values. Since ours is a pluralistic society, then every person must enjoy full religious freedom and be allowed to behave in accordance with his choice. The ecumenical spirit in religious matters should be fostered among the young, so that they not only grow up in their own religious traditions, but also become respectful and sympathetic with the other traditions to which their fellow citizens adhere. While there is no ban in spreading one's beliefs and practices, still all forms of proselytizing should be avoided, and no one should be forced against his will to adopt another system of beliefs foreign to his own. Ridicule, mockery, frontal attacks should never be employed. While dialogue, understanding and respect for the individual person should be paramount in religious matters.

Self-control in sexual matters, even in marriage, as well as in satisfying the appetite for food are good human qualities and should be fostered among young adults. A sense of hope, respect for the dead, readiness to welcome guests, a long life, are qualities that subserve the nation. Esteem for marriage as an institution to which everyone has a right to enter cannot but likewise contribute to build up the nation. For marriage is the solid ground upon which the family stands. And a nation is as strong as the families that compose it. The consciousness of the ever nearness of death and the need to be ever ready for it is quite Christian and can be a factor in shaping a mature country.

Another salient value is the concern for human life whether it be of the mother-to-be or of the child to be born. The injunctions for rendering birth easy and the prohibitions of certain practices by the expectant mother have but one aim: to preserve life. Even the belief in witches and the practices linked with it are ultimately meant to

safeguard the life of the fetus within the mother's womb, since witches hanker after it, and seek to destroy it. The pregnant woman is said to smell sweet (like *nangka*, they say) to the witch. And many others are the folk practices ordered to foil and malice the witch who desires to destroy human life at its very source.

Linked with esteem for human life is sadness at the latter's loss. This, too, underscores the value of life as the foundation of human dignity.

Other *panglihis* connected with marriage are clearly meant to foster among the newly weds the virtue of self-control, so necessary for their marriage to last, for the good of the children and for their mutual fulfillment as mature human persons in marriage. For wherever marriage is held in high regard and the mutual obligations and privileges of the spouses are underlined, the community and the country stand to benefit. For it means the down-grading of selfishness or self-centredness, and the growth of generous, unselfish spirits among the citizenry.

Even the injunction to refrain from making use of the new harvest -rice, corn or *camote*- until the thanksgiving offering has been made to the spirits is salutary for fostering moderation and self-control as well as to acknowledge man's dependence on powers other than human.

Death is a constantly present element in Filipino folk beliefs. Central to all these beliefs about death is the closeness of family ties and the fear of breaking them. The many reminders of death once again underline the great value placed on human life, as well as the realization that it can be lost any moment, anywhere. The suddenness of a dropping spider, for instance, the strangeness of a dog digging in the yard, the singing of an insect culturally accepted as foretelling death, loud knocking on walls, the failure of light during a dance, the blowing of cold air, the smell of burning candles and dreaming of sailing on clear waters that gradually become dark... - these are among the evidences that show us that the thought of death is always in the mind of the Filipino.

And this in itself is a value: it brings home the transitoriness of human life and, consequently, also the implicit warning to live in such a way as to be ever ready to face death. A country whose citizens have this awareness can be said to be composed of mature and responsible citizens.

Values for Nation Building in Our Indigenous and Folk Catholic Practices

Foreigners marvel at the patience and endurance of the Filipino. These qualities have often been symbolized by the silent strength of the carabao. It is more than that, however. For the capacity to sustain suffering and pain patiently and calmly is not only physical; it is above all mental or psychic. The result of spiritual discipline. Seventy per cent of our people live below the poverty line. Living in such a situation is already a training ground for strength of character.

A value stressed by our native religions and folk Christianity is the following: one must suffer hardships before obtaining any boon. The power to cure diseases, to penetrate the secrets of the heart, to master the names of herbs and their medicinal powers, the ability to shamanize, to commune with spirits and gods, to summon them to be present during rituals - these are gifts vouchsafed only after long, lonesome and, quite often, fearsome initiation. However, these initiatory trials are not enough. One must strictly adhere to other requirements and taboos, connected weekly with Fridays, monthly with the waxing and waning of the moon, and yearly with the evenings of Holy Thursday and Good Friday. One must fast, kneel or stretch out his arms for long hours in lonely caves, crowded church entrances or in cemeteries in order to have one's powers renewed or replenished. (Cf. *Myths and Symbols*, 355).

Nor is this limited only to the religious agents. The community serve by the *shaman*, the *arbolaryo* or the sorcerer is expected to participate in the rigors undertaken by the religious leader. They too must keep long vigils, observe silence, fast, and keep themselves from sexual pollution, for their medicines, oil and herbs, to become efficacious again. And they are to go through all these practices without murmur, disgust or ill-will. Everyone seems to understand the purpose of all these rituals.

The ability to endure pain and stress is emphasized also in the re-enactment of the *Cenaculo* which culminates with the Crucifixion and the entrusting of Mary to John and John to Mary, and finally in the death and burial of Jesus. Other folk practices like the *flagelantes*, the *pabasa*, the Way of the Cross, the Seven Last Words, the procession of the *Santo Entierro* and the *Mater Dolorosa*, as well as the climb of Mt. Banahaw, the walk around Camiguin Island or going up Malasag Hill in Cagayan de Oro - all these traditions have one and the same purpose: to help the people mature spiritually, strengthening them and implanting in their consciousness what was already instilled in the animistic

level, that is, if one wants to acquire spiritual strength, he must pay for it. The whole community is reminded that even Christ had to suffer before entering into his glory. And Christians must plant their steps into the footprints of the Savior to be risen with Him. (*Ibid.*, 337-338).

If this whole disciplinary setting is not conducive to making people capable of enduring strain and pain, what would? This trained capacity to stand under enormous odds seems to have a cause and effect link with the rigors required to building up a nation. Herein lies the contribution of the native religions and folk Christianity. (*Ibid.*, 335-336).

Conclusion

A group of foreign sisters, students at the East Asian Pastoral Institute, Manila, helped out with the poor folk in the barrios close to the Ateneo University during their bout with typhoon "Yoling" some years ago. They witnessed the misery of the people as their makeshift roofs and cardboard walling flew in all directions at the height of the storm. The day after, these foreigners marveled at the brisk activity of the folk as they began to mend their walls and pounded nails to fix the tin roofs again. There was an air of recovery, of over-riding hope. There was even joy. They heard people whistling, women humming or singing as they went about their ordinary chores. Yet only sixteen hours before, they had shrieked under the lash of the storm. "Even the trees in the Philippines," remarked one of the nuns, "manifest an atmosphere of hope." She was referring to the many acacia trees lining the walks on the campus which had been uprooted by the storm and that a couple of days later were shooting green leaves again . . . The foreign sisters remarked on the optimism so common among our people as compared with the grim defeatism reflected on the face of human harshness which they had observed among other people of South East Asia.

May not this be the product of a psyche schooled in native initiatory discipline and strengthened further by the Holy Week penitential observances, in imitation of Him who died in order that we might learn to live fully, accepting the harsh reality with courage and with hope?

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