

The New Order of Worship for Native Filipinos*

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The native Filipinos acquired a political identity before the Spanish Laws of the Indies upon settling in pueblos. After they accepted baptism, the Filipino Indios in a pueblo formed an ecclesial community. During the acts of worship or liturgical functions they acted as liturgical assembly. It was at liturgical functions that the pueblo community appeared according to Vatican Council II theology as Church in the fullest sense. We can say, therefore, that the Christianization of the Filipino Indios was complete when the Christian order of worship had been transplanted on the Philippine soil and had become the basic structure of Filipino religious culture.

It is agreed among missionaries (and historians) that the Filipinos in general accepted the Christian order of worship not only without fierce resistance but also with marked enthusiasm. But at the same time traces of the pre-Christian religion persisted in Filipino pueblos for as long as the Spanish hegemony lasted in the Philippines. Our studies revealed that the enthusiastic acceptance of the Christian order of worship and the persistence of pre-Christian religion can be accounted for by the fact that the Filipino pre-Hispanic religion was similar to the Spanish version of Catholicism in some external aspects. To understand the development of ecclesial and liturgical life in Franciscan

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pueblos and the interaction between liturgical and non-liturgical religious practices in the Philippines, it is necessary to discuss how the pre-Christian religion of the native Filipinos was indeed similar to Spanish Catholicism in some important aspects and served as religious predisposition of the Filipinos to Spanish Catholicism. Thus, we shall now discuss the pre-Christian religion of the Filipino Indios and the encounter between this form of religion and Spanish Catholicism which resulted in a unique form of Filipino order of Christian worship.

I. THE RELIGIOUS PREDISPOSITION OF THE NATIVE FILIPINOS TO THE SPANISH VERSION OF CHRISTIANITY

We have seen in our previous study* how the Spanish missionaries set out to wipe away the religious culture of the Filipinos on the simple ground that it was false and silly. Unwittingly, however, they presented the Christian order of worship as not totally different from the Filipino pre-Christian religious practices at least externally and insofar as religious values were concerned. They saw the religious phenomenon in the Philippines from their first contact with them from the point of view of the medieval Christian thought pattern. Their conclusion was that the Filipino religion was not worthy of the name religion. But surprises await us, if we try to recognize and decipher the religious structures and conceptions of the native Filipino religion, that is, from the point of view of our contemporary historians of religions.

There are many approaches to the study of religions nowadays. But we found the approach of Mircea Eliade quite revealing, after we accepted the general description of religion as *man's interaction with the Holy or the Sacred* as the starting notion of religion.¹ His method

* See *Philippiniana Sacra*, vol. XXX, n.88 (Jan.-April, 1995), pp. 5-79.

¹ Robert D. Baird called Mircea Eliade's method 'essential-intuitional method' "in which the historian of religious does not recognize a need to begin his work with a definition of 'religion,' thereby marking the limits and extent of his study" and which "assumes that we all know what is meant by the word, and that, given room for accidental differences, 'religion' is essentially unambiguous" (R.D. Baird, *Category Formation and the History of Religions* [Mouton: The Hague, 1971], p.2). Eliade identifies 'religion' with the 'sacred' or 'man's response to the sacred,' in a broad way. And he defines the 'sacred' as 'the opposite of the profane' (cf. M. Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* [New York: The World Publishing Company, 1971], pp. xiii-xvii). Essential-intuitional method is widely used by historians of religions, not only

has helped us understand why the native Filipinos were religiously predisposed to the kind of Christian order of worship which the missionaries transplanted on the Philippine soil.

A. The Hierophanies in the Pre-Christian Filipino Society

The kind of rites of a people's religion is determined by the kind of experience that people has of the Holy. The Eucharistic celebration of the Christians, for example, was determined by the revelation of God in his Incarnate Son, although in the course of history Christian liturgical rites came to be regulated by the Church authorities interpreting the will of God. The native Filipinos—deprived of special divine revelation and not belonging to any “church structure”—responded spontaneously to the divine manifestations in the different levels of creation. Through these cosmic divine manifestations or *hierophanies* the native Filipinos learned to experience the Holy and live a genuine religious existence.

Man has experienced from time immemorial that he is master neither of this world nor of his own life, because the real world appear to be grounded on, and hedged in by, some power beyond the sphere where he is at the control of things. Man has experienced this power as something that produces feeling of terror (*Mysterium tremendum*), as something that produces the feeling of overpoweringness (*Majestas*), and as something that arouses the experiences of awfulness, wonderfulness and over-aboundingness (*Mysterium fascinans*).² This something which is not like man and not like the things around him is called descriptively as the Wholly Other (*Ganz Andere*). And since it is totally distinct from man and things around him, and separate from them, it is the Holy, the Sacred or the *Numinous*, which is basically different from the natural or profane world where man has absolute control.³

by Eliade, without raising question of definitions; when it does, it happens at the end of one's study or of one's career (cf. Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough, “A Historian of Religion Tries to Define Religion,” *Zygon: A Journal of Religion and Science*, 2-1 [1967]: 7-22).

² The sacred or holy as ‘*mysterium tremendum et fascinans*’ and as ‘*majestas*’ was first discussed by Rudolf Otto in his *The Idea of the Holy*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), esp. pp.8-11.

³ Ibid.

Like the other non-literate or the so-called primitive people, the native Filipinos grasped the Holy as the stable, the meaningful and real, and as that which really mattered in the midst of the fortuitous and meaningless appearances and disappearances of things.⁴ They lacked the precise and adequate concepts to express the Holy as Christians do, but their awareness or feeling of it was a genuine religious experience.

In what way then did the Holy manifest itself to the pre-Hispanic Filipinos? Many times the Holy appeared to the primitives as power, such as the *Mana* of the Pacific Islanders and the *Wakan* or *Orenda* of the North American Indians, or still as the *Oké* of the Africans.⁵ But the pre-Hispanic Filipinos experienced the *Majestas* and *Mysterium tremendum et fascinans* not so much as power but as the old, the 'venerable,' 'the primordial.' These are the modalities under which the Filipinos —according to the *crónicas* and *relaciones* of the missionaries and Spanish settlers in the Spanish Philippines— encountered the Holy. For this reason we submit that Filipino hierophanies were not exactly *kratophanies* (*kratos* = power) but we should rather call them more properly *paleophanies* (*paleos* = old).

Whenever the pre-Christian Filipinos were confronted by anything that carried the aspect of the old, venerable or primordial, they responded in a religious way —venerating, imploring, sacrificing. According to the missionaries records, the Holy manifested itself to the Filipinos in animals, trees, birds and rocks and in lonely places.

1. Theriomorphic Paleophanies

The theriomorphic paleophanies among the pre-Hispanic Filipinos occurred in the form of the bird *Tigmamanukin*. This bird was, according to Franciscan Fray San Antonio, the size of the turtledove⁶

⁴ M. Eliade, *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), Preface.

⁵ Eliade, *Patterns*, pp. 19-23.

⁶ Juan Francisco de San Antonio, OFM, *Chronicas de la Provincia de San Gregorio Magno de religiosos descalços de n.s.p.s. Francisco en las islas Philipinas, China, Japon, ...* 3 Vols. (Sampaloc: 1738-44). [Sigla: *Chronicas*]

and was of blue color according to Colin and Chirino.⁷ The *Boxer Codex* said it was reddish blue and black⁸ but yellow according to Morga.⁹ Jose Rizal, in his edition of Morga's *Sucesos*, noted that he never saw such a yellow bird and considered it might as well have been only a symbolic figure.¹⁰ But it is not difficult to believe that it had become extinct by his time, like the crocodile, which is also no longer found in the Philippines today. Fray Juan de Plasencia, who is considered to be the first to have written something about the religion of the pre-Christian Filipinos, referred simply to a bird called *Tigmamanukin*, object of superstition, with no further elaboration.¹¹ *Tigmamanukin* was also called *Bathala*, which was also the name of the Supreme Being among the Tagalogs. But the *Boxer Codex* explained that the natives themselves admitted it was not *Bathala* himself but only his messenger.¹²

Another bird object of Filipino veneration was the black *Uwak* (the crow), which the Filipinos renamed *May-lupa* meaning 'proprietor of the earth,' and synonymous to *Maykapal*, meaning 'creator,' the proper attribute of *Bathala*.¹³ One characteristic of *Uwak*, which must

⁷ Francisco Colin, SJ, *Labor evangélica, ministerios apostólicos de los obreros de la Compañía de Jesús: Fundación y progresos de su provincia en las Islas Filipinas*. (Madrid: 1663), I:63; Pedro Chirino, "Relation of the Philippine Islands," in *Readings in Philippine Prehistory*, ed. M. García (Manila: The Filipiniana Book Guild, 1979), p. 252.

⁸ *Boxer Codex, Relación de los ritos y serimonias gentilesas de los yndios de las Yslas Philipinas*. Newberry Library, Ayer Collection Chicago [Sigla: NLAC] Ms. 1409a, folio 62r.

⁹ Antonio de Morga, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, trans. and ed. J.S. Cummins (Cambridge: University Press, 1972), p. 279.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, ed. Jose Rizal (Paris: 1809), p. 311.

¹¹ Juan de Plasencia, OFM, "Relación del culto que los indios tagalos tenían y dioses que adoraban, y de sus entierros y supersticiones," in Francisco de Santa Ines, OFM, *Crónica de la Provincia de San Gregorio Magno*, (Manila: 1892), II:598-603. See trans. in BRPI 7:187.

¹² *Boxer Codex, Relación de los ritos...*, fol. 62r-v: "Este nombre quiere dezir dios y asi dicen los yndios ques este nombre le es ynproprio porque ellos no lo tienen por dios sino por un mensajero suyo."

¹³ Juan Delgado, SJ, *Historia general sacro-profana, política y natural de las Islas del poniente llamadas Filipinas*. Manila: Imp. de El Eco de Filipinas, 1892. I: 361; San Antonio, *Chronicas*, I:150.

have been also the characteristic of the *Tigmamanukin*, was its dark color and its aged appearance. These birds revealed the Holy to the Filipinos and consequently signified divine presence. In addition, the *Kuwago* (the owl) and the *Limokon* (a sort of forest dove) also aroused religious fear among the natives, not only because of their appearance but also because of the haunting sounds of their cry.¹⁴

But among the animals venerated by the Filipinos, the *Buaya* (crocodile or cayman) attracted more attention, and the veneration rendered to it was even more criticized by the missionaries. For the Filipinos would kneel down before it, lay offerings to it, and call it *Nono* (old man).¹⁵ Unlike the birds, the cayman was venerated in reference to ancestors' spirits more than in relation to the Supreme Being. Again in this case the appearance of the cayman is one of old age and venerability, so that the Filipinos were prompted to call this animal *Nono*. This name indicated that the Filipinos considered the *Buaya* as the manifestation of their mythical ancestors or gods.

2. Vegetal Paleophanies

Like the cayman the Old Tree was also venerated by the pre-Christian Filipinos in relation to the *Nono*. The tree or rather the Sacred Tree is a characteristic religious symbol or object of cult among the primitive peoples because of its polymorphic meaning. Historians of religions have encountered the Sacred Tree in diverse religious cultures as the microcosmos, the Tree of Life, the *Axis mundi* (the center of the world), the habitation of the divinity.¹⁶

The missionaries reported that the Filipinos did have their own sacred tree, the *Baliti* (*orficus indica*, according to Ferdinand Blumentritt in his *Diccionario mitológico de Filipinas*).¹⁷ But they also venerated other trees provided they were old. "[The Filipinos] adored any old tree,

¹⁴ Delgado, *Historia general*, I:361.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁶ Eliade, *Patterns*, p.265.

¹⁷ Ferdinand Blumentritt, *Diccionario mitológico de Filipinas*, ed. W.E. Retana y Gamboa (Madrid:1895), p.29.

Fray San Antonio wrote, but especially that which they called *Balete*; even nowadays people still respect it."¹⁸

Fray Juan de Plasencia did not mention any sacred tree at all. But later writers with improved methodology said that the Filipinos venerated the *Baliti* because they thought it was the dwelling place of their dead ancestors, the *Nono*.¹⁹ Reminding ourselves of how the *Baliti* looks, we shall readily admit that it appears "old" because of the many aerial roots that hang below its branches to the ground. By the principle of association this tree was the logical manifestation of the *Nono* or at least their dwelling place.

3. Lithic and Other Telluric Paleophanies

The missionaries also pointed out that the natives of the Philippines laid offerings to big stones, huge rocks, thickets, foreboding coves and capes, caves and mounds on the field. Like the sacred tree the Sacred Stone is a universal religious object of cult among the primitive peoples.²⁰ There is always something in this lithic form that seizes and overpowers and overwhelms man. Its sturdiness, rudeness, strength, durability through time, stability all these properties represented in the religious consciousness of the primitive people a hierophany or kratophany. All sorts of power have been attributed to it. In India for instance and many other places funeral stones have been believed to keep the souls of the dead hedged in at a place near the living, so that it could fertilize the fields or make the barren woman conceive.²¹ It also signified the house of God (*bethel*), the center of the world (like the black stone in Mecca), the gate of heaven (the stone of Jacob) and so forth. It was used as an amulet.

¹⁸ San Antonio, *Chronicas*, I:150: "Adoraban a qualquier árbol viejo, especialmente al que llaman *Balete*, que aun los vivientes de aora le tienen respeto."

¹⁹ Ferd. Blumentritt compared the belief of the Filipinos concerning the *Baliti* with the belief of the old Germans concerning the oak which was their sacred tree (cf. his *Diccionario mitológico*, p.29). For the varied meanings of Sacred Tree, see Fredrich Heiler, *Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion* (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1979, 2. verb Aufl.), pp. 67-73; also Eliade, *Patterns*, pp.271-274.

²⁰ Heiler, *Erscheinungsformen*, pp.34-35.

²¹ Eliade, *Patterns*, pp.217-222.

But for the Filipinos the stone's durability meant old age, so that they laid offerings on it, perhaps as the dwelling place of their ancestor's spirits.²² They revered it and as much as possible kept away from it, because it engendered in them the feeling of respect and awe and sometimes religious fear. Less-frequented creeks, thickets and uncharted coves in a society where there was a strong apprehension of ancestors' spirits could easily become inhabited by these spirits, and arouse in the Filipinos mixed feelings of awe and fear. Mounds in the field, created by ants and termites, were also considered sacred because they were inhabited by special spirits called *Nono sa punso* (the old man of the mound).²³

The pre-Christian Filipino daily life was continuously in contact with all these hierophanies or paleophanies. The *Tigmamanukin*, *Uwak*, *Kuwago*, *Baliti*, *Buaya*; the coves, mounds, thickets and rocks and anything that revealed or signified the old and the venerable were around them. The historians of religions remind us that these realities were adored or venerated not for what they were in themselves but only for what was *revealed* through them and for what they *signified*.²⁴ As a matter of fact, in the case of the pre-Christian Filipino paleophanies, they say that the *Tigmamanukin* was just a messenger of God, and that the *Baliti* and the *Punso* were simply the dwellings of the Old One.

B. The Myths of the Filipino Pre-Christian Religion

The pre-hispanic Filipinos had mythic or mythical mentality; their actions were guided not by logic or scientific reasoning but by religious

²² Delgado, *Historia general*, I:362: "...hasta en las mismas piedras y peñascos del mar y puntas tenían supersticiones y agujeros; así cuando pasaban por cerca de ellos les ofrecían alguna cosa, aunque fuera solamente un pedazo de palo como muchas veces lo he advertido al pasar por alguna punta o promontorios."

²³ Ferd. Blumentritt, *Diccionario mitológico*, pp.87-88: "...llaman *nono* a un anciano fantástico de muy avanzada edad que reside en los bosques, particularmente en los montones de tierra que forman en la espesura los *anays* [i.e., termites]. Se llama también *Matanda sa punso*."

²⁴ Eliade, *Patterns*, p.23. Even some missionaries recognized this fact; for instance, J. Delgado, in his *Historia general*, I:361, wrote: "...soy de sentir que en estas supersticiones y agujeros no reconocían deidad en aquellos...sino que por miedo que le tenían y porque no les hiciese mal, le ofrecían algunos sacrificios de cosas de comer."

myths. In M. Eliade's approach to religion myths have a very important place; he discovered that to the so-called primitive people nothing can have meaning—because everything is fortuitous, unstable, appearing and disappearing—, unless it is justified by myths which give the paradigmatic models of realities designed by supernatural beings from the beginning of time.

Myths are kinds of symbolic narratives which manifest the reality of a people's experience of the divine in and through cosmic realities. M. Eliade emphasized that "*myth*" is not fable or fiction but sacred history of the great beginnings of reality, of a thing or part of it, of human institutions, inasmuch as the gods willed them to be in the beginning of time.²⁵ History of religions shows us that the imitation of transhuman models or *imitatio Dei* has been always, indifferently of

²⁵ Myth is about the intervention of the sacred, of the transcendent, of the Wholly Other, or of the supernatural in the history of creation; it is therefore 'sacred history'. Because it is sacred history, it is "true history." It is true because the realities themselves are there to prove it. For the archaic and primitive cultures, myth expresses absolute truth. For who could deny for instance that man is a sexed being, mortal, needs other persons than himself? Myth tells us how man came to be such a being. In the holy and primordial time, when the gods began to create, *in illo tempore*, the gods have willed man and things around him to be what they are now.

In the so-called primitive societies myth was a living reality always connected with religious rites. Narrating myths forms an integral part of the religious rite in many forms of primitive and archaic religion. When the Greek poets, notably Hesiod and Homer, put the myths in verses the myths were separated from rites and became 'desacralized.' They became now mere literary *opera*, creations of imagination.

Christianity knew Greek mythology as literary creation and not as part of the Greek primitive cult. Genuine Greek religion has been lost forever, because the myths that justified it were desacralized or secularized by the poets. We have only a few information about it from archeological findings or indirect references to it in same writings. During the Renaissance the renewed interest manifested by the Christian world for the classical Greek did not recover the lost meaning of religious myths, namely, chapters 1-11 of Genesis, the Creation Myth. But Christians do not call this creation narrative myth but 'Sacred History' (which is the original meaning of all religious myths in fact) and consider the account of the Great Beginnings used among pagan people in their religious rites—if they ran counter to what the Bible says—as myths (in the sense of fable) and therefore superstitious and ridiculous. The Spanish missionaries who came to the Philippines had such concept of myth and superstition. When they came in contact with the Filipino myths of origin, they condemned them as "vain belief, lie and fable."

To rediscover the sacredness of myth, cf. M. Eliade, *Myth and Reality* (Harper & Row Publishers, 1968); Id., *Patterns...*; Id., *The Quest*, op.cit.

culture and epoch, one of the primary characteristics of "religious life" and norm and guideline of human existence.²⁶

When the pre-Hispanic Filipinos killed the servants to be buried together with their dead master, they were only doing what they thought was most proper and meaningful, because it had been always done by their ancestors from the beginning who were considered to be gods or interpreters of the will of the Supreme Being.²⁷ To do otherwise would mean to fall into meaninglessness of life and death. The pre-Hispanic Filipinos were using different thought patterns and categories and norms of conduct which did not necessarily coincide with those of the Spanish missionaries. What appeared barbaric or childish to the missionaries was nothing but a traditional religious act.

In order to understand the pre-Christian religion of the Filipinos, we must discover their myths that can disclose to us their understanding of being, meaning and truth in a chaotic, unknown and fearful world. The ideal approach to the Filipino myths is to take them as "living," that is, in the state of *coming-into-being* as the historian of religion Arnold van Gennep put it.²⁸ This is, however, an impossible task to carry out with reference to Filipino myths because of the fact that they were recorded by the Spanish missionaries and conquistadores as mere "stories," dislodged from their natural cult locus or ambience. It is a well-known fact among historians of religions that a myth

²⁶ Eliade, *The Quest*, Preface.

²⁷ Miguel de Loarca, "Relación de las Yslas Filipinas," in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands 1494-1898*, 55 vols. Cleveland: 1903-1909 [Sigla: BRPI] 5:134-136: "La causa porque matan a los esclavos que diximos quando muere algun principal dicen ques antiguamente, que a la cuenta qe ellos dicen a más de diez mil años un principal que se llamaba *Marapan* estándose proveyendo pidió a un esclavo suyo un poco de cacate para limpiarse y el esclavo le arrojó una caña grande de carrico y parece que le acertó en una rodilla y lastimóle y, como era ya muy viejo, de aquel achaque dicen que murió; y antes qe muriese dexó mandado qe quando él muriese matasen aquel esclavo y a todos sus hijos y de aquí quedó yntroducido el matar esclavos quando se mueren los principales."

²⁸ Arnold van Gennep, "On the Method to be followed in the Study of Rites and Myths," in J. Waardenburg, *Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion* (Mouton: The Hague, 1973), p.296: "Studying a phenomenon at the moment of its coming-into-being does not only mean considering that phenomenon itself, but also all circumstances surrounding it, whether or not they condition it, in short, its *environment*. And as we have seen that the genesis of the fact in question must be *natural*, and not artificial, it follows that the environment I have in mind, is also natural."

is always connected with a religious rite or cult. In pre-literate societies myth and cult are inseparable.

But the Spanish writers recorded Filipino religious practices without myth at all. Their reports simply carried almost invariably a section under the heading: *La falsa religión y supersticiones de los Indios de Filipinas*, in accordance with the Christian logical framework. In this way the strict unity that bound cult and myth was broken. When the early Tagalogs spent long hours of the *Tibao*, "singing about the deeds of the dead," they could in fact be singing myths in connection with death and burial, justifying the act of killing the servants.²⁹ When they were feasting, planting, hunting, rowing or offering food to the spirits of the dead—singing or narrating their *fábulas y antigüallas*³⁰—they were proclaiming myths in connection with the rites of feasting, planting, hunting, rowing and food offering. But the Spanish writers were not interested in these "childish fables."

Many Filipino mythical accounts were irretrievably lost forever, although some may have survived only in camouflaged form.³¹ From our study of available documents we were able to recover some mythical accounts we deem sufficient to justify in a general way the Filipino religious mentality which predisposed the pre-Christian Filipinos towards the Christian order of Catholic worship. These accounts are the Filipino myths of origins which came from the religious world of the Visayans. From the religious world of the Tagalogs we have only a camouflaged myth of the *deus otiosus*.³² Nevertheless, according to a

²⁹ San Antonio, *Chronicas*, I:153: "...dejaban en la mesa el mejor lugar vacío, para el huesped muerto: comían, y bebían, como en un convite muy espléndido, y gastaban lo restante del día en contar, y cantar las proezas del difunto: y luego se iba a su casa cada uno; y a esta ridícula ceremonia llamaban *Tibao*."

³⁰ Delgado, *Historia general*, I:361: "Todo lo que en este punto [i.e., en materia de religión o doctrina] se ha podido averiguar ha sido solo debido a la tradición constante de padres a hijos conservada en algunos cantares antiguos, que usan en sus fiestas y convites, y también en sus faenas, cuando concurren muchos; o cuando en las navegaciones cantan al compás de los remos. En estos cantares, se cuentan y refieren muchas fabulas y antiqualas de sus genealogías y hechos de sus dioses."

³¹ For the survivals and camouflages of myths in Christian societies of today, cf. Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, p.162.

³² There is a camouflaged myth in the report of the missionaries that the Tagalogs considered *Bathala* to be the creator of all things but is now governing the

sixteenth-century Manila manuscript, the Boxer Codex, the religions of the Tagalogs and the Visayans and the lowland Filipinos in general were similar to each other.³³ The close similarity of the Tagalog and Visayan languages in the beginning³⁴ also indicates that they shared the same cultural background and basic religious convictions.

We made use of the accounts of the early missionaries and Spanish settlers who most probably had contact with the myths while still as living realities among the Filipino, even if recorded without their cultic ambience. Our sources are the Boxer Codex, Loarca's *Relación* and Colin's *Labor evangelica*.³⁵ Recently the Jesuit Francisco Demetrio mentioned another source of Filipino myths, *The Povedano Manuscript of 1572*, which gives a version of myths of origins extraordinarily rich in details. This richness in detail makes it a suspect and, in fact, the

world through the *Anitos*. There must have been a myth explaining or justifying why *Bathala* removed himself from men and this world; this myth might not be recovered anymore in its original state.

³³ Boxer Codex, *Relación de los rictos*, fol. 59r: "Aunque es verdad que en estas yslas de Luzón, Panay y Cebú ay ynfinidad de lenguas unas diferentes de otras, y por consiguiente diferentes trages unos barbarísimos y otros de mediano entendimiento y otros de muy más claro, en lo que toca a rictos y serimonias gentilicias casi todos concuerdan y si en algunas partes difieren en algo, es tan poca la diferencia que sería ynconveniente tratar de cada nación de estas de por sí y asi de todas ellas se haze un epílogo."

³⁴ Up to the present there are many similar words in both languages with the same meanings, with only slight modifications in vowels such as *leeg* (Tagalog)-*leog* (Cebuano)=neck; *kain* (T)-*kaon* (C)=rice.

³⁵ The Boxer Codex appears to give us a version of the Filipino myth of origins which was still lively circulated at the time of writing. C.R. Boxer, who appraised the authenticity and value of this manuscript, said that this document was executed "in a late sixteenth century hand...unsigned and undated, but it is written (or dictated) in the first person by somebody who was on board one of the ships which passed through these islands in May, 1590." For more on the Codex, cf. C.R. Boxer, "A late Sixteenth Century Manila Ms," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* April (1950), esp. p.38.

Loarca's *Relacion* carries two versions of the Filipino myth of origins: one is the *Yliqueynes* version (from the coastal people) and the other, the *Tinguian* (from the mountain people); cf. BRPI 5:121 ff.

Colin's version was much later composition which might have made use either of the two in its writing; cf. Colin, *Labor evangelica*, pp. 54-55.

study of William Henry Scott on that manuscript concluded that it is not authentic.³⁶

1. The Cosmogonic Beginning

In the beginning —so the myth goes according to the Boxer Codex— only the sky and the water existed. And then there was a bird that came flying between them. Tired from continuous flying because there was nothing to alight upon neither in the sky nor on the water, it provoked a fight between them. It made the sky believe that the water would rise and drown it, and told the water that the sky would send huge stones down to keep it on its level. The conflict broke out. The water rose up and up and up. The sky reacted by dropping stones to keep the water on its level. Now the bird was happy to be able to rest on the shore (since the stones had become islands). According to the Colin version, the sky did this so that the bird could rest and leave them in peace.³⁷ But Loarca's version³⁸ related that the sky first made a peace treaty with the water, and then treacherously showered all the islands of this Philippine Archipelago to subdue the water. The myth said this was the origin of taking revenge.

³⁶ F.R. Demetrio, SJ, said: "In folklore investigation the important thing is not whether so and so did actually write such and such a passage, or whether he actually said this or that statement, and where this might be actually found in his writings or sayings, but rather, what is written and said, and why this story is told, that proverb or riddle repeated, or such a belief held. To answer these questions, the exact identification of the author, and the historicity of the statement or 'fact' may be quite unimportant" (*Myth and Symbols Philippines*, [Manila: National Book Store, Inc., 1978], p.65).

Folkloristic studies do not indeed take into consideration the historicity or authenticity of a document, but we in this historical study of the pre-Christian religion of the native Filipinos cannot use this source as historical document, since the thorough historical investigation conducted by William H. Scott showed that it is inauthentic. What the author of the late nineteenth century or of the early twentieth century wrote may not reflect the belief of the people of the Philippines at their first contact with the Spaniards but only creations of his imagination, just as the verses of Hesiod and Homer did not reflect faithfully the original myths of the Greek religion. Cf. William Henry Scott, "A Critical Study of the Prehispanic Source Materials for the Study of Philippine History," *Unitas*, 41-3 (1968): 347-48.

³⁷ Cf. Colin, *Labor evangélica*, p. 54.

³⁸ This is the *Tinguian* version, in BRPI 5:124-27.

2. The Origin of Mankind

There came afloat —the myth goes on— a piece of bamboo with only two sections. It struck the feet of the bird because the waves tossed it on the shore to and fro. Upon being hurt, the bird pecked on the bamboo so vigorously that it broke open. From one chamber came out the man called *kalake*, and from the other, the woman called *kabae*; or according to the Yligueynes version, *sikalak* and *sikabai*.³⁹ For this reason man is now called *lalaki* and woman, *babae*.⁴⁰

In the Yligueynes version there was no element of conflict. The land breeze and sea (water) breeze were married and the land breeze brought forth a bamboo planted by the god Captan. The bamboo grew and broke open in two sections which became man and woman.

One day the man asked the woman to marry him. But she refused on the ground that they were brother and sister, being separated only by one node in the bamboo from which they came. Their principal gods, Maguayem and Malaon (according to Loarca, Maguayem and Captan) would punish them, she continued. They therefore consulted the tunnies of the sea and the doves of the air, and finally the god Linuk (that is, the tremor of the earth) All said it was the right thing to do in order to populate the world with their children. The gods would not punish them for it. The Boxer Codex explained that the Filipinos believed their ancestors were the gods, who helped them in their needs and gave them health or deprived them of it.

3. The Races of the World

The woman conceived and brought forth at one time many children, whose sustenance became a burden to the father because they were idlers. One day the father chased them away with a whip. In

³⁹ This Yligueynes version in BRPI 5:120-24.

⁴⁰ 'Ka-' and 'Si-' are prefixes denoting a definite person or persons. Modern Tagalog and Visayan languages still use the particles 'Si' and 'Ka' (no longer as prefixes) before name of person, and have the same function as the definite article 'Ang' or 'Ng' (equivalent to English 'the') before common noun. 'Si' and 'Ka' are not translated in English. 'Narito si Pedro' means 'Peter is here'; literally, 'The Peter is here!'. *Lalaki* and *babae* are common nouns now. *Sikalaki* and *Sikabai* would mean 'the man' and 'the woman.'

confusion they ran away for safety to different parts of the house, some even outside the house. Those who fled away to the inner rooms in the house were the *principales* who now gave orders and whom the people respected and served. Those who remained in the living room were now the *timaguas* or freeman. Those who hid behind the walls were the slaves. Still others went to the kitchen and chimney. They were the negroes of the Islands. The majority went out of the house. They now populate other lands of the world. The Tinguian version added that the woman's name was *Kabuhi*, while according to Yligueynes version the name of the first son was *Sibo* and of the first daughter, *Samar*.

4. Immortality and Death

The reason why the dead do not return to this world —the myth goes on— in other words, why they became mortal, was the mistake committed by one of the ancestors, Pandaguam, who was married to the daughter of Sibó and Samar, Lubluban. Pandaguam who was the first to make use of the art of fishing caught a shark and brought it out of the water. It died out of water and he was upset, complained to the gods, and made obsequies on its behalf. The gods did not like him to make obsequies on behalf of a fish; they punished him and killed him with a thunderbolt. The Boxer Codex said the gods brought him to their place in the sky, but the Yligueynes myth sent him to the infernal regions. After thirty days he was sent back to earth.

In the meantime Lubluban became the concubine of Marakoyrun and did not believe her son, Anoranor, who brought her the message that Pandaguam had returned to earth and wanted to see her. She was at banquet, feasting on the pig which Marakoyrun had stolen. This was the first theft ever committed on earth. The refusal of Lubluban to see Pandaguam angered him and in retaliation Pandaguam left this world, went down to the infernal regions called *Sular* and was seen no more. Had Lubluban obeyed his summons, he would not have left the world, and man could have remained immortal. All those who died thereafter went to *Sular*.

5. The Origin of Sacrifice

This infernal region called *Sular* —according to the Boxer Codex— was the abode of those who died until a certain woman came who was

called Sibayk or Mahelucy or Matrasan who ordered a sacrifice to be performed to the gods on behalf of the souls of the dead. By means of sacrifice the dead would not go to the infernal regions but to a certain part of the islands in the thick forest so that they were not seen by the living. There they passed the time in pleasant life and in continuous feasting.

6. Meaning and Function of pre-Christian Filipino Myths

What does all this mean from the religious point of view? Can we make out anything of the religious mentality of the Filipinos from these myths? First, we must take them *on their own plane of reference*, that is, as symbolic expressions of the Filipino pre-Christian religious ideas; they are in no way their logical and scientific explanations of things. Myth is symbolical language. Mythic language is like the language of Genesis 1-11; for, that Biblical portion is a genuine myth in the sense of sacred history.

Eve's coming out of Adam's rib for example is symbolic. In myths of origins the Godhead is represented in all forms, not only anthropomorphic but also cosmic, ouranian, chthonian, theriomorphic, vegetal, and usually in the plural. The narratives seem child-talk and illogical, because there is no pre-occupation to explain events by cause and effect. The Filipino myth simply said that a bamboo came afloat after the struggle subsided between the water and the sky. Where did it come from? Even the bird just soared between the sky and the water. Where was it before? Who created all these things? These questions are simply out of the scope of the myth and there is no use looking for the answers because there are none. The idea of creation *ex nihilo* by one God is the exclusive property of the Biblical myth.

Since the pre-Hispanic Filipino myths as summarized above are not longer found in their natural cultic ambience, they have not attracted the attention of our contemporary historians of religious. They may have neither the great stature of the myths of India, of the North American Indians, nor of the African aborigines. But in the Filipino mythology we find the symbolic elements that are authentic leitmotiven of universal mythology.

The water as the *fons et origo* of all things and of all existence is found in almost all the cosmogenic myths of all peoples of the earth. The creation poem, *Enuma Elish*, now well-known to Biblical scholars, tells

us that the primordial chaotic waters of Apsu, Mummu and Tiamat mingled their waters into one, whence all the worlds were born.⁴¹ The Vedic tradition of India may be summed up also in the idea that water is the source and foundation of the whole world or cosmos. It contains in itself all possibilities and sustains the development of all things. It precedes all forms and upholds all creation.⁴² In one version of Indian mythology, Visnu, the third generation, went down to the depths of the primeval waters and drew the earth up from the abyss.⁴³ This is also the idea of the Earth-Diver Creation myth of the Maidu Indians of California.⁴⁴ The Filipino myth offers a modification to this theme, because the sky "rained down" the earth and stones on the water and the earth did not emerge from the abyss. The Filipino mythical water is entangled with the idea of the *Tellus Mater*, the Mother Earth, which is fertilized by water. This is in consonance with many archaic cultures where the height of water's creativity or fertility is found in the mud.⁴⁵ Genesis for one said that God formed man out of mud.⁴⁶

The version of the Filipino myth recorded by Colin told us of the marriage of the sea breeze and the land breeze and from their union came the bamboo reed from which the first man and woman emerged. Water which is supremely fluid acquired its static form through its union with the earth. Earth fertilized by water became a single source of all realities, and of all living things and of man. Even man is of the same basic stuff as the rest of the cosmos so that the first two offsprings of the first couple according to the Yligueynes version had the name of two islands in the Visayan archipelago, Sibo (Cebu) and Samar. But even before them, the man and the woman came out of the bamboo which the land brought forth through the intervention of the god

⁴¹ Cf. John L. McKenzie, SJ, *Myths and Realities: Studies in Biblical Theology* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1963), pp. 38, 43, 96, 100, 136, 153; for the text of the poem in English, M. Eliade (ed.), *From Primitives to Zen* (London: Collins, 1977), pp.97-109.

⁴² Eliade, *Patterns*, p.187.

⁴³ Ibid., p.191.

⁴⁴ Eliade, *From Primitives*, pp. 88-90.

⁴⁵ Eliade, *Patterns*, p.192: "The creative forces of water are at their height in mud, *limus*."

⁴⁶ Genesis 2:7.

Captan. Man then by divine will participates of the elements of the cosmos. Just as Eve is said to come out of Adam's rib to signify their unity and equality, so *Si Lalaki* and *Si Babae* came out of the same bamboo where they had been separated only by a node. A cosmic solidarity!

Because of the inexhaustible fruitfulness of the *Aqua-Tellus Mater*, the Filipinos connected the fertility of the woman with it. The Tinguian version of the myth said that the name of the first woman who brought forth a multitude of children all at one time was *Kabahi*. This must be an archaic form of *Kabuhi*, a modern Visayan word meaning "life." The woman was likened to the primordial Mother Water-Earth, the source of the life just as the Eve of Genesis was the mother of all the living.⁴⁷

In many myths of origins the sky and the earth were joined —*in illo tempore*— in close embrace out of which came the offsprings, the rest of creation. This is the motif of Hesiod's myth of origins according to which Mother Earth (*Gaia*) and Father Heaven (*Ouranos*) brought forth from their union all living things —first the Cyclopes and Titans, then the gods and finally men.⁴⁸ So also is the case with the Filipino myth: the bamboo came out of the union of the land and the sea, the Filipinos came out of the union of *Sikalak* and *Sikabae*. But realities more often came out of a conflict! The islands were produced because of the fight between the sea and the sky. The first man and woman came out of the bamboo reed, when the bird broke it in two for having hurt its feet. The world began to be inhabited because of the wrath of the father of the human race.

In this respect the Filipinos shared in the religious vision of the Oriental people. To the Ngayu Dayaks of Borneo the cosmic reality came out of the repeated clashes of two primordial mountains, their ancestors came from the spoils caused by the fight between the two hornbills.⁴⁹ So from destruction and death the cosmos and new life

⁴⁷ Genesis 3:20: "The man called his wife Eve, because she became the mother of all the living."

⁴⁸ Cf. Edith Hamilton, *Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes* (New York: New American Library, 1962), pp.24 ff.; Eliade, *From Primitive*, pp.114-116.

⁴⁹ Eliade, *The Quest*, pp. 77-78.

spring forth. In this respect the Filipino mythical (religious) mentality is open to the Paschal Mystery, which is the central mystery celebrated by Christian liturgy.

The Dayaks are obsessed by two aspects of the sacred: primordiality and totality.⁵⁰ Cosmic realities and life sprang from the breaking of the primeval totality of the Godhead. At every level of creation the same totality of the Godhead under three different forms—that is, cosmic (the two mountains), anthropomorphic (Mahatala and Putir) and theriomorphic (the two hornbills)—is destroyed. But creation must be renewed periodically and must return to the divine totality which existed at the beginning. All creation and life must return to the primeval Godhead, when they cease to exist in this worldly existence. Man must return to the realm of the divine. Man is nothing if not in proper relationship with the Godhead.

This proper relationship with the divine is emphasized in a special manner in the Filipino myth. It saw the Godhead as the authority to be obeyed and as one who has the capability to carry out punitive measures. Everything in the cosmos and the world had been placed in its proper place and order and provided with proper nature. Any misplacement, disorder or unnaturalness upsets the cosmos. The sky cannot tolerate the rising of the waters; they must be kept on their natural level. The first death came to the world when the shark was put out of its natural habitat; the second death, when Pandaguan offered obsequies on behalf of a mere fish.

The Filipino myth showed the beginning of things from cosmically equal pairs but one of them was stronger than the other. The sky-above forced the sea-below to keep its own level, the bird smashed the bamboo, the father chased the children away. The pre-occupation of *Sikalak* and *Sikabae* to put their marriage in order is very remarkable, a unique element of the Filipino mythology! Their marriage must not be against the will of the Godhead, not against nature. And so, they sought painstakingly the approval for their marriage from all levels of creation: chthonian (the earthquake Linuk), aquatic (fish), ouranian (bird). On the other hand, the disobedience of Lubluban manifested in contempt of her husband's authority cost mankind very dearly the loss of immortality. Every act of disobedience caused displeasure in the

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Godhead and attracted punishment (*parusa* in Tagalog, *gaba* in Bisaya), although through the ingenuity of Matrasan a food-offering or sacrifice may appease divine wrath.

This respect toward established authority is a unique property of Filipino myth of origins. We submit that his mythic idea of respect and obedience was the core of the pre-Christian Filipino religious mentality. The myths have revealed to us that the native Filipinos were religiously provided with an innate disposition and attitude of respect and obedience toward authority. This authority in reference to the pre-Hispanic hierophanies was actually identifiable with the Old One. From the point of view of religion the native Filipinos were perfectly justified in their practices which —as we shall see below— can be categorized as ancestor worship.

Perhaps we shall never know exactly how the myth was told in the Filipino cultic ambience. But we can be sure of the fact that these myths had the same function among the pre-Hispanic Filipinos as the living myths do have among our present-day so-called primitive peoples. To these people mythical events are the acts of the Transcendent, of the gods or mythical ancestors and heroes, of the Wholly Other. These mythical events were performed *in illo tempore* or *in initio temporis* and for this reason serve now as the paradigms or exemplary schemes of human, religious actions.

In like manner Filipinos have been entering into wedlock because the first couple did so first. People learned to catch fish because of the example of Pandaguam. Even bad actions had precedence in the mythical time: the first theft was performed by Marakoyrun. People die because their ancestors had died in the mythical time. Most importantly, the Filipinos must follow the *Wika ng matatanda* (the sayings of old men) and respect the old in general while they are in this-worldly existence, because *Sikalak* and *Sikabae* took pains in securing approval for their marriage. They had to give food-offering in a rite called *Pag-aanito*, because Matrasan had taught them that the gods or their ancestors' spirits could be persuaded to give them favor or deliver them from bad luck by means of this rite.

There must have existed other myths besides those described above which guided the pre-Hispanic Filipinos in their daily life. And we might not be able to recover all of them. But the little that we have can give us the general pattern by which the religious behavior of the

native Filipinos took shape. Myth was the heart of the Filipino pre-Christian religion. It provided the justification for the way they responded to their experience of the Holy.

C. The Filipino Pre-Christian Religious Rites

The man who has experienced the Holy in an hierophany cannot but react to it in some religious rites within which mythical narratives are recited, sung, mimed or dramatized to bring the *homo religiosus* in contact with the original events that happened *in illo tempore*, in the mythical time. The rites then are the means by which man seeks to establish contact with the Holy.

The religious rites in the so-called primitive and archaic societies like that of the pre-Hispanic Filipinos' are mostly liminal, sometimes called "rites of passage."⁵¹ Unfortunately, no liminal rites of the pre-Hispanic Filipinos were recorded scientifically by the Spanish writers. For one thing, this kind of rites is usually of secret character; moreover, the missionaries lacked both interest and adequate methodology.

But the pre-Hispanic Filipinos most surely have had such rites, because the unpublished document, *Idolatria en Santo Thomas*, listed many curious instruments used by the *Katalonan* in their "idolatrous ceremonies," when a girl had her first menses, when a wedding was celebrated, when they went to the field to harvest, when someone was sick, when they went hunting and fishing, and so forth. On every occasion it seemed that a sort of sacrifice to the spirits of the dead ancestors had always been an important part of the rite. Consequently our present discussion shall treat mostly on the sacrificial rite to the ancestors' spirits.

1. Sacrificial Rites as Means of Communication with God and the 'Anitos'

The religion of the people is manifested in the way they react to the presence of the Holy or Numinous in hierophanies. Man desires to

⁵¹ Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, tr. M. B. Vizedom and G. L. Caffee (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960); Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1968), esp. pp.94-130.

communicate with it, to be with it and to participate in its vital power and greatness, because he feels so helpless by himself. The intimate and reciprocal exchange between man and the Holy is what we call *cult*. It is a mysterious intercourse by which the Holy is not only revealed to man in various forms but also the deeds and God's intervention in history are presented to man who is invited to participate in them. Cult is not static but dynamic *commercium* between man and the Holy.⁵² But why the pre-Hispanic Filipino sacrificial rites were directed to ancestors' spirits (the partial-Holy) and not to the Supreme Being (the absolute-Holy) calls for some clarification.

The simple reason is that the Supreme Being in the religious world of the native Filipinos was outside the world affairs. "In the beginning God walked with men," but some time in the remote past the Holy One decided to separate itself from men and their affairs.⁵³ The Biblical myth said it was not precisely God who detached himself from human affairs but man who disobeyed the divine command.⁵⁴ We have no way of knowing what exactly motivated this divine withdrawal in the context of the Filipino world because we are not able to recover the myth that could explain the primordial event. Perhaps the Filipino mythical past contained the same reason of withdrawal as the Biblical. In fact it was through Lubluban's disobedience to Pandaguan that man forfeited immortality. We know that the pre-Hispanic Filipinos had a myth of how God became *deus otiosus* —unfortunately now lost— from Loarca's *Relación*:

When the natives were asked why the sacrifices were offered to the anito, and not to the Bathala, they answered that the

⁵² Heiler, *Erscheinungsformen*, pp. 176-177: "Der Mensch will sick aufs innigste mit dem Gottlichen berühren, einigen, and seiner Lebenskraft und Herrlichkeit teilnehmen. Er will mit Gott umgehen und will Gottes Umgang mit ihm. Er verlangt nach dem Tun Gottes am Menschen, und zugleich will er selbst von Gott nicht nur nehmen, sondern ihm auch geben und schenken. Die sinnenfällige Form dieses wechselseitigen Tuns ist der Kultus. Er ist ein Mysteriendrama, welches nicht nur die sinnenfälligen Erscheinung Gottes zeigt, sondern die Taten und Geschicke Gottes aufführt. Der Mensch soll mit Gott zusammen handeln, gleichsam seine Rolle spielen." This dynamic interaction between man and God has been expressed in the Latin liturgy as '*commercium*'; cf. for instance, *Missale Romanum Conc. Trident., In Nativit. Domini ad primam Missam: Secreta; Fer. Vinfra Oct. Paschae: Postcommunio*.

⁵³ This is a universal belief in cultures where the Supreme Being has become '*deus otiosus*', cf. Eliade, *Patterns*, pp. 46-50.

⁵⁴ Cf. Gen. 3.

Bathala was a great Lord, and no one could speak to him. He lived in the sky; but the anito, who was of such nature that he came down to talk with men, was to the Bathala as a minister, and intercede for them.⁵⁵

In Filipino religious culture where the Holy has become a *deus otiosus* religious rites have been confined to lesser gods—the *Anitos*—who participate of the qualities of the Holy One but who are closer to men than the Supreme Being himself. Even Christianity has the cult of the saints, although the God of the Christians revealed himself to be transcendent and immanent at the same time and has lived among men in his Incarnate Son. The saints are invoked in Christian liturgy as intercessors or intermediaries of men before God. In this respect Christian religion conserved that element which is an important part of natural or cosmic religions such as the pre-Christian Filipinos possessed. On this aspect natural religions and Christianity could carry on a fruitful dialogue. And in fact the Filipino pre-Hispanic cult of the *Anitos* became the missionaries' point of contact with the religious world of the native Filipinos.

So, while Bathala (the Supreme Being) was "otiose," the *Anitos*—being in the other-worldly existence—were still active and very much a part of this-worldly existence where the living lived. At the same time they had contact with the Supreme Being up there somewhere in the other-worldly existence of the spirits. "God-up-there" was now too far away for the living themselves to reach. They needed some sort of mediator who could go back and forth to the *Illud tempus*, to that original mythical time wherein the Holy or the Old One had retired. In this situation the *Anito* (not Bathala-up-there) really had the *kapangyarihan* (*kratos*, *kraft*, *puissance*, *power*) to give them good or bad luck, to inflict sickness or death, or to prevent it.⁵⁶

The *Anito* were the spirits of the dead ancestors whom the native Filipinos invoked almost at every occasion. There were *Anito* of the

⁵⁵ Loarca, "Relación," in BRPI 5: 172-73: "Preguntádoles que porqué causa hacían el sacrificio al *anito* y no al *batala*, que el *batala* es tan gran señor que no le puede hablar nadie que está en el cielo, y qe el *anito* ques de tanta calidad y que bajaba acá a hablar como el ministro del *batala* y que yntercedía por ellos."

⁵⁶ Cf. *Idolatría en Zambales*, in *Archivo General de Indias* (Sevilla) [AGI//Filipinas, 75 r.5, no.78.

household, the fields, mountains, rivers, and so forth. The *Anito* of the household were the spirits of their parents and grandparents who, during earthly existence, had exercised authority in the family affairs and were considered to have acquired special relationship with the Old One, being generally old themselves when they died. Of these *Anitos* the missionaries found statuettes or idols called *Lik-ha* or *Larawan*.⁵⁷ *Anitos* were more popularly known as *Nono*, meaning, "grandfathers" or simply "old men."⁵⁸

Not all *Anito* or *Nono* were known to the people. Some had unknown kinship. Others simply lost their identity through the passage of time and joined the vast pantheon of the unknown *Anito*. Because they were unknown, no *Larawan* of them were made. They inhabited the fields, the trees, thickets, mountains, the skies, rivers, creeks, coves, promontories, the mounds, the crocodiles... everything and everywhere! They were considered as protectors and were thought to cause fructification of their lands but they also played pranks or inflicted punishment, misfortunes, sickness and bad luck to the irreverent living descendants.⁵⁹

Although in the Filipino myth the dead went to a place or state called *Sular* —a sort of gehenna, or *Kasamaan*— a place of punishment, it was not a prison. They left it through a sacrificial rite which in the myth the Filipinos were taught by Matrasan to perform. In fact, the missionaries reported that on the third or fourth day of their mourning ceremonies called *Tibao*, all relatives would meet in the house of the deceased to encounter the spirit who was to pay them a special visit.

⁵⁷ Colin, *Labor evangélica*, p. 64: "Entre estos *Anitos* ponían a sus antepasados, cuya invocación era la primera en todos sus trabajos y peligros; y en su memoria guardava algunos idolillos pequeñuelos, y bien mal hechos, de piedra, palo, oro, o marfil, a que llaman *lichá*, o *Laruan*."

⁵⁸ Blumentritt, *Diccionario mitológico*, p. 88. *Nono* or *nuno*, meaning *abuelo* (grandfather) was first applied to the spirits of the dead ancestors. But much later it became the popular name of all *anitos* with known or unknown kinship.

⁵⁹ Colin, *Labor evangélica*, p. 64: "Los Bissayas los llaman *Diwata* y los Tagalos *Anito*. De estos unos eran para los montes y campos, a quien pedían licencia para andar por ellos. Otros para las sementeras, a quien las encomendaban para que fuesen fértiles: y además de los sacrificios, ponían en ellas cosas de comer para el *Anito*, en orden a más obligarle. Había *Anito* del mar, a quien encomendaban sus pesquerías, y navegaciones; y *Anito* de casa, cuyo favor imploraban en naciendo alguna criatura, y quando tomaban el pecho, y se les ofrecían."

[They] would place a basin or pitcher of water at the foot of the stairs of the house to enable the deceased to wash off the earth of the grave from his feet; they would have a lighted candle all day and they would place a mat or carpet on the ground, covered with ashes where the deceased would leave his footprints. At mealtime, the best place was left vacant for the dead guest, and they would eat and drink as in a very splendid feast and would spend the rest of the day in telling stories and singing about the dead's deeds. They would then all go home.⁶⁰

The dead did not cease to influence the living. They were only in the other-worldly existence, *sa kabilang-buhay* (in the other life), as the Tagalogs still say today. And there was a continuity between this-worldly life and the other-worldly existence. From their mourning practices we saw that the living and the dead continued their social intercourse. It appeared that the dead still had an active part in the management of the household, or had an important role to play in the welfare of their descendants.

This dynamic intercourse between the living and the dead was also perceivable in their burial customs. The dead were buried as near as possible to their houses. The corpse would be deposited in the house itself "at its highest points, a sort of an attic," or beneath the house called *silong* (that is, the space between the ground and the elevated floor), or in the ground itself below the house where a hole had been dug. Still others were buried in the fields or by the seashore at high places, marked by special signs as a warning or invitation for veneration.⁶¹ The

⁶⁰ San Antonio, *Chronicas*, I:153: "Ponían, a la punta de la escalera de la Casa, agua en una bacía, o barreño, para que el difunto se lavase allí los pies, y se quitase la Tierra del Sepulchro: tenían encendida una candelá, todo aquel día entero; tendían un petate, o estera en el suelo, y le polvoreaban de ceniza, para que dejasse allí señaladas las huellas el difunto; y para el tiempo de comer, dejaban en la Messa el mejor lugar vacío, para el huesped muerto: comían y bebían, como en un convite muy espléndido, y gastaban lo restante del día en contar, y cantar las proezas del difunto: y luego se iba a su casa cada uno."

⁶¹ San Antonio, *Chronicas*, I:153-54: "La *Sepultura* de los pobres era un hoyo, que hacían debajo de la misma casa, que llaman *Silong*. A los ricos, y poderosos los tenían sin enterrar tres días llorando, y cantando: hacían una caja, o ataúd de una pieza, que era un tronco de árbol cabado, y le ajustaban bien la tapadera, para que no pudiese entrar viento. [...] En uno de tres lugares colocaban este ataúd con el cuerpo, según la disposición del difunto. O en su misma casa, en lo alto, en uno como sobradillo, donde solían poner sus alhajas, y otros trastos: o debajo de la casa, que es

missionaries found many hallowed fields which the natives dared not cultivate for years and years, because some dead had been buried in the vicinity.⁶²

2. The Private Rites of '*Pasing-tabi sa Nono* and *Pag-aanito*'

The native Filipinos made use of religious rites to express their basic feeling of reverence towards the Old One and to carry on a dynamic *commercium* with it. The most common practice which the missionaries did not cease to attack was called *Pasing tabi sa Nono* (Asking permission from the *Nono*). This simple rite consisted in asking permission or excuse from the *Nono* with the words, "*Tabi po, Nono,*" meaning, "Please excuse me, I beg you, *Nono.*" They uttered these words before passing by, or doing something in a place where, so they believed, the spirits of the dead roamed around.

The ritual interaction between the native Filipinos and the spirits of the dead was in no way limited to the *Pasing-tabi sa Nono*. The missionaries also noticed a sort of sacrificial rite which consisted in laying the choicest food and drink on a place deemed to be inhabited by the *Anito* such as the *punso*, the foot of the Baliti, river-banks infested by caymans, creeks, coves, caves, seashores, ricefields, and especially old mens' graves. This could be done by anybody in need of the *Anito*'s help. The purpose of the offering was to appease or placate the offended *Anito* and to supplicate them for deliverance from evil and for favor of good luck, prosperity in life, bountiful harvest, successful battle against enemies, cure from sickness, easy deliveries of babies, the fall of much-awaited rain, and so on. Sometimes they directly offered food and drink to the cayman or crocodile, not only because their external appearance signified the Old One but also because they were known to devour

el *Silong*, levantando del suelo; o si era en el mismo suelo, abrían un hoyo, y le cercaban de Varandillas sin cubrirlo, y allí depositaban la caja con el cuerpo: a otros los enterraban en los campos, y en la casa encendían fuegos, y ponían guardias de vista, para que no viniese el difunto a llevarse consigo a los vivos. Otros se mandaban enterrar a las riberas del mar, en un lugar alto, para su veneración y culto; y se ponían centinelas, para que no pasase por alli embarcación alguna, por determinado tiempo."

⁶² Colin *Labor evangélica*, p.64: "...en los montes de Antipolo se había hecho sepultar en ciertas tierras, por cuya reverencia ninguno las osaba cultivar, temiendo que el que alla fuese, sería muerto. Hasta que un Ministro Evangélico les quitó el temor, y hoy se cultivan sin daño, ni recelo."

human victims. The spirits of these victims must have been thought to go on thriving in these amphibians.⁶³

3. The Communitarian, Shamanistic '*Pag-aanito*'

This sacrificial rite the pre-Christian Filipinos could perform as silently as possible individually, but it could be a solemn and communitarian affair, wherein the whole neighborhood was gathered in their makeshift shed (*simbahan*). The whole community participated in eating and drinking, in singing and dancing, which invariably formed part of the ceremonies towards the end. In this case the professional sacrificers to the *Anito* —*Katalonan* and *Babaylan*— presided over this rite, called *Pag-aanito*. These performers possessed special techniques of communication with the *Anito* and were able to enter into the spiritual dimension of existence where the *Anito* moved. On account of the intervention of these shamans the sacrificial rites were considered to be more effective.

The *Katalonan* and *Babaylan* —considered *sacerdotes* or *sacerdotisas* by the Spanish missionaries— were shamans who had special psychic abilities that gave them power to act as intermediaries between man and the spirits. One of the most important functions of the shamans in natural religions has been the healing of sickness. But they were not simple medicine men (*herbolarios*) who used roots and herbs in healing.⁶⁴ Usually shamans lived a secluded life sometimes with fellow shamans who shared the same ritual techniques and ritual language unknown to the laymen. Not anybody could become a shaman, but only those who were called to become shamans by some spiritual power. They were persons who experienced the Holy with greater intensity than the rest of the community so that they, as it were,

⁶³ Blumentritt, *Diccionario mitológico*, p.88: "Ese mismo nombre [i.e., Nono] daban a los caimanes, seguramente porque estos comen hombres y así tuvieron en sí el alma del devorado."

⁶⁴ Medicine men (*herbolarios*) differ from shamans (from *Tungus* saman) in the fact that shamans use techniques of ecstasy or trance during which they seek the cure of sickness from the spirits. Cf. I.M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1971); M. Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: University Press, 1972).

incarnated the Holy. They "were lived" or singled out by the religious power that seemed to possess them.⁶⁵

The "election" to become shaman could be likened to the radical separation of the *Baliti*, the cayman, the *Tigmamanukin*, and other hierophanic objects from the surrounding zones. In this manner they became the "chosen receptacles" for the manifestations of the magico-religious realities. By going through a process of initiation —usually characterized by a mood of depression and anxiety or some form of psychological sickness, dreams and ecstasies which gave way to a pervasive feeling of deliverance, enlightenment and control of the spirit—the "chosen one" associated himself with professed shaman and learned from them the advanced techniques of his new trade.⁶⁶

After having overcome sickness himself and learned the techniques of communication with the spirits through ecstasies or seances, the shaman could heal sickness, prevent diseases, and prophesy.

A shaman was the right leader to preside over the Filipino *Pag-aanito* with solemnity and efficacy. Shamanism did not constitute a form of religion in itself but it were a mere system of techniques of communication with the Holy through ecstasies. It has existed in different religious cultures independently of any particular form of religion.⁶⁷ In the pre-Hispanic Philippines it mingled perfectly with the cult of the *Anitos*. The native Filipinos recognized and availed themselves of the power of the shamans.

Shamanistic ceremonies differed for each people according to different spiritual backgrounds. The Spanish missionaries and settlers of the Spanish Philippines were not familiar with the religious phenomenon called shamanism. But let us see how the chronicler of the first circumnavigation of the world described the shamanistic ritual in the Philippines:

⁶⁵ One who was called in primitive society to become a shaman experienced first a kind of initiatory sickness, passed through symbolic death onto an ecstatic experience or celestial ascent during which he acquired initial shamanic power. Cf. Eliade, *Shamanism*, esp. first four chapters.

⁶⁶ Eliade, *Shamanism*, pp.33-66.

⁶⁷ Cf. Adolf E. Jensen, *Myth and Cult Among Primitive Peoples*, (Chicago: University Press, 1963), p.215.

In order that your most illustrious Lordship may know the ceremonies that those people use in consecrating the swine, they first sound those large gongs. Then three large dishes are brought in; two with roses and with cakes of rice and millet, baked and wrapped in leaves, and roast fish; the other with cloth of Cambia and two standards made of palm-tree cloth. One bit of cloth of Cambia is spread on the ground. Then two very old women came, each of whom has a bamboo trumpet in her hand. When they have stepped upon the cloth, they make obeisance to the sun. Then they wrap the cloths about themselves. One of them puts a kerchief on her hands, and dancing and blowing upon her trumpet she thereby calls out to the sun. The other takes one of the standards and dances and blows on her trumpet. They dance and call out thus for a little space, saying many things between themselves to the sun. She with the kerchief takes the other standard, and lets the kerchief drop, and both blowing on their trumpet for a long time, dance about the bound hog. She with the horns always speak covertly to the sun, and the other answers her. A cup of wine is presented to her of the horns, and she dancing and repeating certain words, while the other answers her, and making pretense four or five times of drinking the wine, sprinkles it upon the heart of the hog. Then she immediately begins to dance again. A lance is given to the same woman. She shaking it and repeating certain words, while both of them continue to dance, and making motions four or five times of thrusting the lance through the heart of the hog, with a sudden and quick stroke, thrust is through from one side to the other. The wound is quickly stopped with grass. The one who has killed the hog, taking in her mouth a lighted torch, which has been lighted throughout the ceremony, extinguishes it. The other one dipping the end of her trumpet in the blood of the hog, goes around making mark with blood with her finger first the foreheads of their husbands, and then the others; but they never came to us. Then they divert themselves and go to eat the contents of those dishes, and they invite only women [to eat with them]. Thus no one but old women consecrate the flesh of the hog, and they do not eat it unless it is killed in this way.⁶⁸

Pigafetta perhaps did not have enough time or curiosity to ask more about these old women. Even the purpose or occasion of this *bendición del cerdo* was disregarded in the foregoing description.

⁶⁸ Antonio Pigafetta, "Primo viaggio attorno al mondo," in BRPI 33:166-171.

Loarca's *Relación* gave us a more interesting report:

The natives of these islands have neither time nor place set apart for the offering of prayers and sacrifices to their gods. It is only in case of sickness, and in time of seed-sowing or of war, that sacrifices are offered. These sacrifices are called *baylanes*, and the priestess, or the men who perform this office, are also called *baylanes*. The priestesses dress very gaily, with the garlands on their heads, and are resplendent with gold. They bring to the place of sacrifice some *pitarillas* (a kind of earthen jar) full of rice wine, besides a live hog and a quantity of prepared food. Then the priestess chants her songs and invokes the demon, who appears to her all glistening in gold. Then he enters her body and hurls her to the ground, foaming at the mouth as one possessed. In this state she declares whether the sick person is to recover or not. In regard to other matters, she foretells the future. All this takes place to the sound of bells and kettle-drums. Then she rises and taking a spear, she pierces the heart of the hog. They dress it and prepare a dish for the demons. Upon the altar erected there, they place the dressed hog, rice, bananas, wine, and all the other articles of food that they have brought. All this is done in behalf of sick persons, or to redeem those who are confined in the infernal regions. [...] For the redemption of souls detained in the inferno above mentioned, they invoke also their ancestors and the dead, claiming to see them and receive answers to their questions.⁶⁹

This description was made by Miguel de Loarca who was not a priest but one of the first encomenderos in the Visayas. The shamanic ceremony he gave us must have been observed in the Visayas, because the name of the "priestess" was *Babaylan* as well as the ceremony itself. Loarca's description carried several elements which were not mentioned by Pigafetta. We will refer back to them later. But now let us turn to a report of a missionary, the Jesuit Francisco Colin. New interesting details surface:

If the sacrifice was because of the danger of death in case of sickness, the Minister ordered that a new, large, and capacious house be built at the expense of the sick person, in which to celebrate the feast. That work was performed in a trice, as the materials were at hand and all the neighbors took part in it. When it was finished, the sick person was taken to the new lodging.

⁶⁹ Loarca, "Relación," in BRPI 5:130-132.

Then preparing the intended sacrifice —a slave (which was their custom at one time), a turtle, a large shellfish, or a hog— without an altar or anything resembling one, they placed it near the sick person, who was stretched out on the floor of the house on a palm mat (which they used as a mattress). They also set many small tables there, laden with various viands. The *catalona* stepped out, and dancing to the sound of gongs, wounded the animal, and anointed with the blood the sick person, as well as some of the bystanders. The animal was then drawn slightly to one side and skinned and cleaned. After that it was taken back to its first location, and the *catalona* there before them all, spoke some words between her teeth while she opened it, and took out and examined the entrails, in the manner of ancient soothsayers. Besides that the devil became incarnate in her or the *catalona* feigned to be him by grimaces, and shaking of the feet and hands, and foaming at the mouth, acting as if out of her senses. After she had returned to her sense, she prophesied to the sick person what would happen to him. If the prophecy was one of life, the people ate and drank, chanted the histories of the ancestors of the sick person and of the *anito* to which the sacrifice was being made, and danced until she fell through sheer exhaustion. If the prophecy was one of death, the prophetess bolstered up her bad news with praises of the sick person, for whose virtues and prowess she said the *anito* had chosen him to become one of them. From that time she commended herself to him and all his family, begging him to remember her in the other life. She added other flatteries and lies, with which she made the poor sick person swallow his death; and obliged his relatives and friends to treat him from that time as an *anito*, and make feasts to him. The end was eating and drinking for that marked the termination of their sacrifices—gold, cotton, birds, or other things— according to his capacity and wish. The offering was given to the priest or priestess who had performed the sacrifice.⁷⁰

Here we have the descriptions of shamanistic ceremonies observed by a sailor, an *encomendero* and a missionary at the time of the Spanish contact with Filipino religious culture. There are other descriptions made by later writers to which we shall also refer in time, but the three given above are representative of them all. We can only wish that they were either anthropologists or historians of religions;

⁷⁰ Colin, *Labor evangélica*, pp. 65-66.

things would have been clearer. But they were not so. Nevertheless, we can single out the main features of the Filipino *Pag-aanito* from these descriptions, if we compare them with recent studies on shamanism.

First, there is a preparatory rite: preparation of food, wine (actually liquor from rice or coconut) and a living animal (commonly a fine pig) to be slaughtered during the ceremony. This preparatory rite was preceded by the construction and adornment of the place of sacrifice (Colin), because the pre-Hispanic Filipinos did not have permanent edifices for worship (Loarca). This was decorated in accordance to the means of the sponsor on whose behalf the *Pag-aanito* was being performed. The whole community took part in this activity, "all the neighbors taking part in it." The offering consisted of food stuff and local beverages and the victim to be killed was a choice pig, chicken, turtle, shellfish. Colin said at one time it was a slave, but it must have been only during the *Pag-aanito* in connection with the burial of the chieftain, as we have seen in another place.

Secondly, the execution of the *Katalonan's* (or *Babaylan's*) esoteric techniques of singing, dancing, trumpeting, beating gongs and drums to produce a state of ecstasy or trance. It was the shaman's competence to perform all these ecstatic techniques in order to fall into a trance. Dancing and drumming were common means used by shamans, especially in Southeast Asia, to induce trance.⁷¹

Thirdly, the shaman's communication with the *Anito* in that state, visible through grimaces, unintelligible words and actions. Pigafetta said that the old women spoke continuously and *covertly* to the sun, but did not specify that they did it in a state of trance. But Loarca and Colin saw the trance as did many other writers. The *Katalonan* and *Babaylan* feigned possession by the devil according to the chroniclers. This was part of the techniques by which the shamans were able to act out symbolically what was supposed to be happening in the spirit world. For, during the trance the shamans travel in the other-world, seeking contact with the spirits (or *Anito*, in the case of Filipino shamans) in order to solicit result for which the *Pag-aanito* was being performed. In the Boxer Codex the cause of sickness was reported

⁷¹ Eliade, *Shamanism*, pp.337-374.

to be the "escape of the soul" from the body of the patient.⁷² During the trance the *Katalonan* and *Babaylan*, like other Asian shamans, must be searching all the corners and heights of the spirit world to get hold of or capture it and bring it back to the sick man's body.⁷³ This cure of "soul loss" cases was properly a shamanic function outside the competence of ordinary *herbolarios*.⁷⁴

Fourthly, the prophecy concerning the favor petitioned like the cure of the sick person. Prophesying was one important part of the ceremony, during which the result of the shaman's communication with the spirits in the other world was made known. This was eagerly expected by all those present. The *Katalonan* and *Babaylan* then were able to announce to the community what happened during their trip in the extraterrestrial regions while in trance: whether they were able to secure the cure of the sick (or obtain other favors) from the *Anito* and what they should do now in response.

Fifth, the act of slaughtering the victim and offering part of it to the spirits. "They dress it and prepare a dish for the demons [that is, the *Anito*]," reported Loarca. It was placed on a table which he called "an altar." Other documents said food offering was sometimes thrown unto the sea, held on a pole, laid in the mouth of an *Anito's larawan* if there was a *larawan* around.⁷⁵ Beverage was splashed on the ground

⁷² Boxer Codex, *Relación de los rictos*, ffol.60r : "... llaman *catalonan* y estos administran lo necesario y dicen que la causa de la enfermedad es que el alma se le aydo y que hasta volvérsela al cuerpo no sanaría y luego le ruega al enfermo que de orden como se le vuelva."

⁷³ Our sources do not speak of the techniques of capturing souls. The early Spanish writers were not interested in symbolisms used by the shamans, because they were of no importance to them. The Indonesian shamans use, for instance, a boat in the course of the trance. "If he thinks that the patient's souls has been captured by an aerial spirit, he makes a miniature boat with a wooden bird at one end. In this boat he journeys ecstatically through the air, looking to left and right, until he finds the patient's soul." (Eliade, *Shamanism*, p.357).

⁷⁴ Sickness caused by the spirits can be cured only by virtue of ecstatic capacities of shamans. Simple 'medicine men' as the Filipino *herbolarios* (experts on medicinal herbs) are helpless before 'soul loss' cases. Cf. Eliade, *Shamanism*, pp. 300.

⁷⁵ "Informe sobre los naturales de la diócesis de Cebu," *MHisp* 6 (1949):396; "...comiéndose todo el Cuerpo con borracheras, bayles deshonestos, tactos torpes, y echando la cabeza al mar, o, si están en tierra dentro, fijándola en una madera..." Again in "Customs and Usages of Moros in the Philippine Isles of the West," F. Landa

for the *Anito* to drink.⁷⁶ Pigafetta and Colin noted that the foreheads of the sick and some bystanders were smeared with blood of the sacrificial victim. This could mean the symbolic unification of those persons with the victim. The men of Pigafetta's account could be preparing for a war or for an important task on behalf of the community.

Sixth, the participation of all present in the offerings, eating and drinking, singing and dancing —a sort of communion. This latter part of the *Pag-aanito* attracted the attention of the missionaries so much that some said the Filipino sacrificial rites consisted mainly in festive eating, drinking, singing and dancing spree.⁷⁷ And it is to be remembered that this festive spree was also the end of their *Tibao*. This was also noticed in the secret *Pag-aanito* conducted in caves by the native Filipinos in the vicinity of Santo Tomas.⁷⁸ "*Yaquí se acababa lo grande de este sacrificio,*" wrote Fray San Antonio, "*sin Dios, ni Altar a quien ofrecerlo!*"⁷⁹

A last point regarding the purpose of this sacrificial rite. Observing the simple food-offering made by individuals and the solemn shamanistic *Pag-aanito*, the missionaries were at once sure that what was wanting among the Filipinos was a sacrifice or religious feast

Jocano (ed.) *The Philippines at the Spanish Contact* (Manila: MCS Enterprises, Inc., 1975), p.193: "...they hold on occasion drinking feast in the fields under a covering which they have for this purpose; in which they erect a sort of an altar and wooden statue which they say is the god *Lacanbaco* with teeth and eyes of gold, the genitals gilded and of the size they want —it may be the spike of their rice— and the body is all hallow. Around it those who are offering the sacrifice eat and feast, and the priests we have mentioned [*catalonas*] place in the mouth of the god *Lacanbaco* the food they eat and give him to drink the wine they have; and by saying some superstitious words they ascertain that he will give them very good and abundant fruits asked of him."

⁷⁶ Boxer Codex, *Constumbres y usos, serimonias y rritos de Bisayas*, NLAC Ms. 1409a, foli.32r: "...derramando por el suelo mucha de la bebida que alli tienen para solo este efecto diziendo que aquello que se derrama es para que beban sus dioses ynvocando junto con esto a sus antepasados teniendo por cierto que les pueden favorecer y dar salud, porque también los tienen por dioses."

⁷⁷ San Antonio, *Chronicas*, I:151: "Sus *Sacrificios* redundaban siempre en utilidad de sus cuerpos, porque se reducían a comer, beber, y holgarse todos."

⁷⁸ *Idolatría en Santo Thomas*, AGI/Filipinas, 75, r.5 no.79.

⁷⁹ San Antonio, *Chronicas*, I:151.

celebrated merely as an act of worship, praise or adoration of God. The native Filipinos simply performed their *Pag-aanito* whenever there was a need, during time of sickness, peril of war, harvest, marriage, burial, planting and so forth. Nobody felt obliged to seek the ministration of the shamans all the time, although the rites presided over by these professional sacrificers were surely more effective and assuring because of their special techniques. The solemnity of the ceremonies was determined by the economic means of the sponsors on whose behalf the *Pag-aanito* was being performed. People of modest means had simpler food offering ceremonies, without the presence of the *Katalonan* or *Babaylan*.⁸⁰

The pre-Christian Filipinos established communication with the Holy (under the modality of the Old One) by means of the *Pasing-tabi sa Nono* and *Pag-aanito*. These rites had served them to respond adequately and meaningfully to the many hierophanies which were part of their workaday life. Individually they could practice the *Pasing-tabi* and *Pag-aanito* to fulfil their personal religious needs and to follow the dictate of their mythical mentality. And through the intermediary of the *Katalonan* and *Babaylan* the community could express their solidarity with a member of their group in common festive supplication of the *Anito*. Even if God-up-there was beyond reach (*deus otiosus*), the native Filipinos had their *Anito* and shamans to help them. They could maintain a meaningful interaction with the Supreme Being through the *Anito* and, sometime availing themselves of the special techniques of the shamans, obtain their requests and wishes for good luck and freedom from evil.

D. Pre-Christian Filipino Names for the Divinity

We complete our survey of the pre-Christian religion of the native Filipinos in its fundamental structure of *commercium* with the Holy—symbolic hierophanies, myths and rites, of which Eliade's approach to religion is the primary concern—by attempting to understand their idea of the Supreme Being. We achieve this by understanding the

⁸⁰ Boxer Codex, *Relación de los rictos*, fagl.50r: "Otros que no tienen tanto caudal y costilla para gastar ofrecen un poco de arroz cocido y un poco de pescado y vino pidiendo salud al anito. Otros con mediana borrachera ofrecen al anito y asiste una sacerdotisa o un sacerdote de los ynferiores..."

meaning of the "names" or "titles" the Filipinos used to refer to the Holy. With this we make a theological synthesis of the native Filipinos' understanding of God and their relationship with him.

The Holy in itself is inexpressible. It eludes definition and overwhelms understanding, because it is perceived not so much by the intellect as by feeling. Rudolf Otto made it clear in his classic work, *Das Heilige*, that the perception of the Holy is originally not rational or conceptual. He called man's perception of the Holy "creature-consciousness" or "creature-feeling" of submergence into nothingness before an overpowering reality.⁸¹ Basically, the Filipinos had knowledge of the transcendent only in terms of feeling more than in terms of "logical-scientific" thinking.

On the other hand, the Christian religion the Spanish missionaries brought to the Philippines was rational, "grasp-able" by the intellect and one that admitted conceptual analysis and definitions. The missionaries could talk about their beliefs in clear and definite concepts. This superiority of Christian religion in terms of unique clarity and abundance of religious concepts was a glaring contrast to the fundamental, basic and original expression of the 'nature religion' of the pre-Hispanic Filipinos. The native Filipinos simply acted out their religious convictions and spent no time in deep speculation because of environment adverse to intellectual leisure. Nevertheless the Filipino God was not totally an "Unknown God"; they called him by some names.

1. '*Laon*,' '*Bathala Maykapal*,' '*Anatala*'

The principal God of the Filipinos according to Loarca's *Relación* was *Laon* or *Malaon*, meaning "The Old One" (*antiguo* or *antigüedad*) among the Cebuanos.⁸² The Tagalog language which was very close to the Bisayan language still uses now the adjective "*laon*", which means "of long time," "old" or "stale" when applied to food, and the adverbial phrase "*malaon na*," meaning "a long time ago." The Bisayan Cebuano has the same significance of these words. Although the Tagalogs did

⁸¹ Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, trans. John W. Harvey (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), p.24.

⁸² San Antonio, *Chronicas*, I:150; Chirino, *Relación*, pp. 387-388.

not call him *Laon*, they used another name with the same meaning plus a qualifying property. He was *Bathala May-kapal*, meaning "Lord, maker of all things."⁸³ He was a sky-god, because the Tagalogs also used "*badhala*" or "*bathala*" to name some comet or stars that preceded happy, successful events.⁸⁴ "*Tala*" in modern Tagalog language means "bright morning or evening star." This must have come from the sanskrit "*tara*," meaning "light."⁸⁵

The unpublished document *Idolatría en Santo Thomas* disclosed that the Supreme Being was called by the Tagalogs *Anatala*, which had the same meaning as *Bathala*, "Lord of all and maker of all things."⁸⁶ Here again the root word "*tala*" means the star or heavenly body. There is a possibility that *Anatala* and *Bathala* had the same origin as *Mahatala* (god of the Dayaks in Borneo), who with *Putir* created the upperworld and the underworld.⁸⁷ It is important to note that even *Laon* or rather *Si-hon* is also used by the Bataks to name the most ancient spirit of their ancestors.⁸⁸ *Laon*, *Bathala* or *Anatala* of the Filipinos had no partner and was a *deus otiosus*, because he left the world after having created it.⁸⁹ For this reason the missionaries called him "*Dios sin providencia*." He was up-there, outside time or at least *in initio temporis* (in the mythical beginning of time), being the creator. He is therefore the primordial, the ancient, the beginning of all things.

2. 'Poón'

Still another name of the Supreme Being was disclosed to us in another unpublished document, *Idolatría en Zambales*; a name that

⁸³ Boxer Codex, *Relacion de los rictos*, fagl.59r; Loarca, *Relacion*, in BRPI 5:170-72; San Antonio, *Chronicas*, I:150; Delgado, *Historia general*, I:361; Chirino, *Relación*, pp.387-388.

⁸⁴ Blumentritt, *Diccionario mitológico*, pp.34-35.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ *Idolatría en Santo Thomas*, AGI/Filipinas 75, r.5, no. 79.

⁸⁷ Eliade, *The Quest*, p.78.

⁸⁸ Blumentritt, *Diccionario mitológico*, p.70.

⁸⁹ Heiler, *Erscheinungsformen*, pp.456-57. The idea of *Deus otiosus* is a common motif in world religions wherein people seek the help of lower spirits or gods (demagods ancestral spirits) because God the creator had retired up-there.

expresses God's primordially more explicitly than *Bathala's*. He is *Poon*, meaning 'el principio', that is, the beginning.⁹⁰ This name must also have meant "The Holy One," since the Spanish missionaries used this title very widely in prayers to mean "holy." The saints were called *poon*; even the wooden images of saints were called (and are called until now) *poón*. Sometimes it was used in conjunction with the property *Bathala* to signify God himself, thus: *Poóng May-kapal*, which translates very adequately the Latin, *Deus conditor*; *Poong Makapangyarihan sa lahat*, used to translate *Omnipotens Deus*. '*Bathala*' was widely used by the missionaries in sermons, but "*Poón*" was the preferred name in prayers.

According to the pre-Hispanic Filipinos *Poón* came out of the primordial earth, but like *Bathala* he became *deus otiosus* although he was more earthly than heavenly. He possessed a host of ministers-god such as *Apolaki*, *Akasiganciam*, who were more or less like the dema-gods of other religions.⁹¹ Among the Filipinos these ministers-gods were called *Anito* or *Nono*.

3. A Theological Reflection on Filipino Names of the Divinity

The names which the native Filipinos used to call the Holy One showed us that behind the many *Anito* and hierophanic objects they acknowledged one Supreme Being. To this one God they gave various names according to different experiences the people had of the sacred in different places. The various names gave us his fundamental attributes.

"*Bathala*" and "*Anatala*" connote his "heavenly" properties. He was a sky-god, the divinity whose dwelling was in heaven. In this aspect *Bathala*, or *Anatala* was similar to the "High God" of many so-called primitive peoples among whom God was generally considered as the "Great Father" and "Author of all." Also in this aspect he was like the Israelites' God, "who [is] enthroned in heaven" (*Psalms* 123:1b). The

⁹⁰ *Auto sobre la Idolatría en Zambales*, AGI/Filipinas 75, r.4, no.72: "...conocen a otro Dios que llaman *Poon*, que es lo mismo que Principio el dize que salió en la tierra."

⁹¹ *Ibid.* The role of these dema-gods is very well explained by Ad. E. Jensen, in his *Myth and Cult Among Primitive People*, pp.88ff.

Evangelist Matthew used the locution "Kingdom of heaven" in place of "Kingdom of God"; Jesus prayed, "Our Father in heaven" (*Matthew* 6:9). "Heaven" is one religious symbol which bespeaks immensity, greatness, omnipotence, omnipresence, eternity.

What was lacking in the Filipino concept of the Supreme Being was "providence" to his creatures. The concept of sky-god is generally connected with the myth of God's withdrawal from his creatures. Only Christian revelation was able to tell mankind that God "cares" for men because he "loves" them. "*God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him may not die but have eternal life*" (Jn 3:16). The pre-Christian Filipinos did not know God as the Father who "cared for" and "loved" his children but as the Great Old Father who simply ought to be revered and obeyed.

The Supreme Being who was the Old One to the Filipinos was accurately described by the name *Laon*. Because of the lack of revelation that "God is love," the attribute of primordality was emphasized. The meaning of *Poon* enhanced this idea. *Poon* is the "The Holy One" because he is "The Beginning." Being the Beginning and Author of all, he is the one who had put order in all things, as parents put order in the household. This demanded a more stringent response of reverence and obedience.

The Filipino response to the Old One was determined by what we may call "mythical mentality." Confronted by varying hierophanies, the native Filipinos responded religiously according to the dictate of this mythical mentality by performing rites which acknowledged the presence and authority of the Old One. God did not dictate any sacrificial rites with which people could appease him. There was no pact between *Bathala*, *Anatala*, *Laon*, or *Poon* and the native Filipinos similar to the covenant between Jahweh and Israel.

The experience of hierophanies made them realize that they were helpless in their unstable surroundings, and needed the Holy One. Unfortunately, he was too far *in initio temporis* to be reached by mortal men. *The Anito and shamans happily served as intercessors. They could help the living to be freed from bad luck, sickness, or death —the price of disturbing the order of things laid down by the Old One.*

The pre-Christian Filipino conception of God and the relationship between him and men was very basic and elementary; it could really appear as "a mere bunch of superstitious beliefs." But it was a religious

vision that did not only present strong resistance to Christian religion but also was very open to the purifying influence of Christian revelation.

II. THE ENCOUNTER OF FILIPINO PRE-CHRISTIAN RELIGION AND SPANISH CATHOLICISM IN THE PHILIPPINES

On many scores the pre-Christian cult of the *Anito* among the Filipinos predisposed them to accept with ease Catholicism and Christian form of worship and the cult of saints. The pre-Hispanic Filipinos became Christians without much resistance because they had no need to change their general religious attitude. No violence was done on the religious psychological constitution of the pre-Christian Filipinos. Even if the Spanish missionaries vigorously condemned the pre-conquest superstitious practices and beliefs, they replaced them with Catholic practices and beliefs which—on account of minimal doctrinal foundation—also appeared as superstitious.

With the establishment of “*Escuelas de niños*” and the institution of the ministry or office of the native *fiscales*, the young Church in the Spanish Philippines was on its way to solid entrenchment. We have seen how the boys were trained in a special manner to serve at the altar and sing liturgical music and play traditional musical instruments. We have discussed the indispensable role of the ecclesiastical fiscals in the ecclesial and liturgical formation of the native Filipinos. We shall see now the factors that contributed to the easy transition from the pre-Christian religion to Spanish-shape Catholicism, from godless and altarless form of religious rites to the Christian order of worship.

A. The Main Predisposing Factors in the Encounter

The pre-Christian cult of the *Anito* was at the juncture of the meeting between pre-Hispanic Filipino religion and Catholicism. The *Anito* were in no time equated with the saints; that is, Christian saints took over the role of the *Anito* in the new Christian world of the Filipinos.

It is not difficult to understand why the saints came to be considered as *Anito* by the native Filipinos. Christian spirituality of the

time favored the tendency to invoke the saints in order to obtain spiritual as well as material aids, and deliverance from eternal and temporal evil. In fact, not a few Spaniards themselves who settled in the Philippines acted in as much superstitious manner towards the saints as the native Filipinos were deemed by the missionaries to act towards the *Anito*.⁹²

The saints were invoked more often than God himself in spite of the doctrine of the Incarnation. The feast of the saints —especially of the Blessed Virgin Mary— overshadowed the genuine liturgical feasts, which commemorated the Mystery of Christ. The very symbol of God's presence among men in his Incarnate Son under the Eucharistic species was watered down by triumphalism. Christ Jesus the Lord was only numbered among the saints in his images as the *Santo Niño* (Holy Child), *Santo Cristo* (the crucifix), and *Santo Sepulcro* (the Dead Christ in the tomb). In several places the image of *Santo Niño* was not only considered as a saint but as a *larawan* of *Anito*. It was called *Deobata*, meaning "child," and the Spanish word *Dios* meaning "God," to the effect that it meant "a child which is at the same time God."⁹³ But we must be aware of the fact that "*deobata*" sounded very, very close to *Diwata*, which was the local name of the ancestors' spirits instead of

⁹² "Carta de Fr. Eusebio Polo al Señor Arzobispo D. Basilio Sancho de Santa Justa y Rufina," in Angel Pérez, OESA, *Relaciones Agustonianas de las razas del norte de Luzon* (Manila: 1904), p.274: "Pero si lo dicho es reprehensible en los indios ignorantes, mucho será, lo que creo hacen algunas veces los españoles de Manila en algunos barcos. Digo esto, Señor, por haber padecido muchos días vientos contrarios por proa, y no merecer ser oído en nuestras oraciones, y súplicas a Dios, y sus santos, querían ya atar con un cordel largo una imagen de S. Antonio de Padua, y echarla al agua para que así les diese viento; lo que (al parecer) hubieran ejecutado a no haberlo contradicho un Religioso que se hallaba presente, quien les reprendió acremente su poca fe, y supersticiosa confianza, tan irreverente para el santo como inútil al remedio de la necesidad que padecíamos. Lo mismo *in terminis* me sucedió en otra navegación en un Barco de Portugueses los que (aunque se abstuvieron) me dieron a entender, que hacían otras veces, y con aprobación eclesiástica [!]."

⁹³ *Chronica de la Provincia de San Gregorio de Philipinas, Sucesos, y Guerras sucedidas en ellas, desde que los primeros españoles entraron a conquistarlas compuesta por F. Antonio de la Llave*, Archivo Franciscano Ibero Oriental (Madrid) [Sigla: AFIO], Sección Códices, Códice Llave C. fol.25, col. esq.: "...y como avían oydo dezir muchas vezes a los castillas este nombre de Dios llamaban al niño *Deo Bata*; componiéndole del nombre de Dios y 'Bata': que en su lengua quiere dezir 'niño', que es lo mesmo que dios-niño, estimábanle todos los yndios en mucho y reverenciábanle mucho."

Anito. The natives of the place held this statuette in high reverence—being taken as the very image given to the queen of Cebu by Magellan at her baptism in 1521—and took it occasionally in procession to the seashore to be bathed in order that their petition for rain would be quickly granted.⁹⁴

The blending of the cult of the *Anito* with shamanism was also predisposing factor to the reception of the Christian form of cult of saints in the liturgy. The *Katalonan* and *Babaylan* were the living receptacle of the Holy and spokesmen of the *Anito*. They dressed differently from the rest of the community in woman's attire even if they were men.⁹⁵ They spoke unintelligible, esoteric language during the *Pag-aanito*. They could communicate with the spirits as a matter of course.

⁹⁴ Ibid.: "...quando les faltava agua para sus heredades sacaban el niño con mucha reverencia y acompañamiento y bañábanle en el mar porque les dicesse agua, y era cossa maravillosa que luego llovía lo que era necessario."

⁹⁵ Boxer Codex, *Relación de los rictos*, fol. 59v: "...aunque estos yndios no tienen templos, tienen sacerdotes y sacerdotisas los quales son los principales maestros de sus seremonias, rictos y agueros y a quien en todos los negocios de ymportancia todos se encomiendan, pagándoles muy bien su trabajo. Ellos ordinariamente en traje mugeril, su modo [*illegible*] es tan afeminado quien no los conoce juzgara ser mugeres casi todos son ympotentes para el acto de la generación y así se casan con otro varón y duermen juntos como marido y muger y tienen sus actos carnales y finalmente son sometidos estos se llama *bayog* o *bayogin*. Las sacerdotisas ordinariamente son viejas y estas es su oficio curar enfermos o con palabras supersticiosas o asistiendo en las borrácheras ynvocando las almas de sus antepasados para el fin que pretenden y haziendo las serimonias que adelante se verán. El oficio de los sacerdotes es acudir a todas las necesidades en general acudiendo a ynvocar lo que las sacerdotisas aunque con más serimonias más pompa y más actividad ay también otro género de estos a quien llaman *catalonan*. El oficio de los quales es el propio de las sacerdotisas y estos [*illegible*] & autordiad como los que anda en hábito de muger, finalmente los unos ni los otros son hechiceros y quanto hacen o es con hechiceiras o engaños para vaciar las bolsas del pueblo yñorante."

According to historians of religions the shamans are commonly asexual, bisexual and impotent, that is, they combine in themselves the two sexes, because they are regarded as intermediaries between two cosmological planes—earth and sky—; they combine in their own persons the feminine element (earth) and the masculine element (sky). This is a ritual androgeny, a well-known archaic formula for the divine biunity and the *coincidentia oppositorum*. Here we have the value of 'intermediary' which abolishes polarities. Cf. Eliade, *Shamanism*, p.352. Is it because Catholic priests have been considered also as intermediaries that they also wore women's 'petticoat' (the original meaning of Italian *sottana*)?!

The *frailes* embodied all this in themselves in the context of the Christian cult. They did not practice any techniques of trance, but the pomp of liturgical and paraliturgical services presided over by them compensated for them. The prophetic function of the *Katalonan* and *Babaylan* was taken over by the moralistic preaching of the *frailes*. The *frailes* were also known to have special contact with God and the saints in their Latin prayers, the power to bless, and at times miraculous power.⁹⁶

A problem attendant to this situation was the persistence of the indigenous pre-Christian beliefs and practices and their co-existence with those of Christian Faith for a long time. The *Pag-aanito* disappeared completely in most places towards the end of the Spanish occupation of the Philippines. But the Christian Filipinos retained in their innermost being a profound religious respect towards the "old," which was expressed in their devotion to the saints and deep respect towards the *frailes* and religious persons in general.

B. The Changeover of Pre-Hispanic Religious Feasts to Christian Order of Worship

The native Filipinos began to keep a new cycle of Christian feasts which substituted their pre-Hispanic cycle of religious rituals as soon as they received Christian religion and resettled in pueblos. The idea of "cycle of feasts" was not totally new to the Filipinos even though they did not possess a written instrument which we call a *calendar*.

The Franciscan chronicler Fray Antonio de la Llave in his unpublished work noted:

⁹⁶ The belief in the miraculous power of the *frailes* must have grown out of proportion, if we would try to understand the implication of the following poignant satire: "Y llueven milagros sobre aquellas hermosas islas, más necesitadas, en verdad, de libros y maestros que de bromas y chanzonetas de ese género. Milagros en Visayas, milagros en Mindanao, milagros en Luzon, en todas partes milagros. Un indio que se muere y resucita por la sola virtud de una untura de no sé qué propinada por el fraile no sé cuántos; un carabao que habla como una cotorra para denunciar a un *taho* que no confesó y comulgó por Pascua Florida...un *Cabeza de Barangay* que recobra la salud con sólo regalar al cura un caballo que tiene fama de andador en la provincia; milagros en suma, que hacen patente la existencia de lo sobrenatural interviniendo en la vida de los pacíficos habitantes de aquel Archipiélago." (Francisco Cañamaque, *Recuerdos de Filipinas*, (Madrid:1877), I:110-11).

The natives did not have determined years, months, nor days. But they managed [to divide the time] for their work on the fields by observing the moons and the changes in the trees—when they sent forth flowers, fruits, and leaves; this served as a year. They distinguished summer as the season of sunshine (*tiempo de sol*) from winter as the reason of the rains (*tiempo de aguas*); the latter served as winter because in this place it does not become cold, it does not snow nor does it freeze.⁹⁷

There were no dates of feasts to talk about. But the pre-Christian Filipinos did hold religious feasts which sometimes lasted for four days, a week, even a whole month when the sponsor could afford it. These were the shamanistic, festive *Pag-aanito* or neighborhood offering to the *Anito*.

The missionaries observed that in most cases the *Pag-aanito* was performed on the occasion of the neighborhood supplication of ancestral spirits for the cure of the sick. But they also performed it as *rites of passage* or *orliminal rites* as at the time of the first flow of blood of young woman's *regla*, at marriages and deaths; also at important turns of the cosmic mutations as the offering performed and directed to the "*Dalaga sa buwan*" (the Lady of the moon) during the full moon; and before executing activities connected with life preservation such as hunting, regularly-recurring needs of human nature and the mutations of nature outside man, as though in a cycle but not tied to definite days of a calendar.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ *Chronica de San Gregorio por Antonio de la Llave*, AFIO/C—dice B, fobl.262: "No tenían estos naturales años, ni mes, ni días, determinados: pero entendíanse para la labrança de sus sementeras contando las lunas y los effectos de los árboles en dar flor, fructa y hojas, esto les servía de año. Y el invierno y verano deferenciaban con decir, tiempo de sol, tiempo de aguas, que les servía de invierno por no hacer en estas partes frío, ni nevar, ni helar."

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, fobl. 263: "La causa porque hacían este sacrificio y adoración era ultra de cosas particulares por la salud de algun enfermo, por el buen viaje de los que se embarcaban, por la buena cosecha de sus sementeras, por el buen parto de las preñadas, y por las q se habían de casar. [...] Y también a la doncella quando le baxaba la regla, las tapaban los ojos quatro días con sus noches, y entretanto venían y comían los congregados a esta fiesta."

Also, *Idolatría en Santo Thomas*, AGI/Filipinas 12, r.1, no. 1: "Item si saben, que dichos naturales adoraban una doncella que fingen está en la luna, que la llaman: *Dalaga sa Boan*. [...] A la tercia décima pregunta dixo, que sabe como adoran a la dicha Diosa que esta en la luna y que la ofrecen un gallo y una gallina, que los hacen volar quando está la Luna llena..."

Upon reception of baptism they acquired the obligation to celebrate "Sunday," which recurred every seven days. Sunday —like the Sabbath for the Jews— became sacred time to the Christians.⁹⁹ Sunday is the day on which the Christians as a people remember and thereby celebrate in an atmosphere of adoration and thanksgiving the act of saving wrought by God in the mysterious Passing-over of Jesus Christ from death to new life —a salvific event in which the Christians mystically share. The Vatican Council II has reminded us that Sunday is the original feast of the Christians.¹⁰⁰ At the core of this Christian feast is the Eucharist, which is the ritual remembrance of that saving act of Christ, presided over by a sacred minister and participated in by the people.

From the beginning of Christian religion, Sunday —also called the Eighth Day—¹⁰¹ has been considered the day par excellence for the celebration of the Eucharist, because it is the Day of the Lord.¹⁰² This special day of the week has been considered the most appropriate day for the fulfillment of Christ's injunction himself to make this memorial as part of the New Covenant with God, which Christ himself in the

⁹⁹ S Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, (Roma: Gregorian University Press, 1977). The author shows that there is no clear evidence in the Gospels that Jesus intended to change Sabbath to another day as 'holy day' or 'sacred time' of the Christians but only indicated a new meaning and a new manner of observance of the Sabbath (pp.71-73). Much later Sunday observance grew out of the Christians' desire to be different from the Jews in a context not totally exempt of anti-semitism. The Fathers of the Church understood that Sunday was more appropriate to become the Lord's Day because it surpasses the Sabbath. The aim of Sunday is the fulfillment of worship obligation but the objective of the Sabbath rest, "solemn rest, holy to the Lord" (Exod. 31:13; 16:23,25; 35:2; Lev.23:3), or sanctification of time. To consecrate Sunday to worship in commemoration of Christ's resurrection—the author explains— was weakly founded on subjective motivation (pp.316-17).

But see, C.S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica dalle origini fino agli inizi del V Secolo*, (Roma: 1969), and W. Rordorf, *Sabato e domenica nella Chiesa antica*, (Torino: 1979), explaining the position of the majority of Christians keeping Sunday as the Lord's Day.

¹⁰⁰ Vatican Council II documents: SC, n. 106.

¹⁰¹ Cf. J. Danielou, "Le Dimanche comme Huitième Jour," in Dom Botte et al., *Le Dimanche*, Lex Orandi 39 (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1965), pp. 61-89; S. Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1977), pp.270-302.

¹⁰² Cf. Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, pp.123-131.

name of mankind sealed with his own blood. On this day Jesus Christ by his resurrection from the dead showed that He is the Redeemer of mankind, and promised the same glory of the resurrection to those who believe and follow him. The celebration of the Eucharist became the pledge of that eschatological glory.

This Eucharistic celebration substituted the pre-Christian Filipino *Pag-aanito*, while Sunday replaced the pagan sacred time, that is, the time during which the *Pag-aanito* was performed. But whereas this shamanistic offering to ancestral spirits was festively performed according to the rhythm of their work in the fields and whenever a particular need (sickness, for example) presented itself to the community, the Christian Eucharist has been celebrated as a stipulation of a covenant with the divinity, a covenant that was sealed with a sacrificial rite.

The Christian idea of a sacrificial rite as a part of a covenant with the divinity was alien to the Filipino religious or mythical mentality. The Filipino pre-Christian sacrificial rite to the ancestral spirits was a means of communing with the Holy One (or the *Anito*), first, through the techniques of the shamans and, secondly, by partaking of the hallowed (because offered to the *Anito*) food and drink. They had to seek communion with the Holy and Old One in a sacred time more or less regularly according to particular needs, so that they could acquire a sense of stability and feeling of security and freedom from misfortune and thereby enable them to carry on meaningfully in the unstable, chaotic, insecure world.¹⁰³ They also sang and danced out their myths through which they re-enacted in words and in actions the deeds of their ancestors in the primordial time. By performing these rites they shared in the godly creative power that periodically renewed their wearing world.

As in other cosmic or nature religions the Filipino pre-Christian festive rites only offered temporary relief from the everyday pre-

¹⁰³ Eliade, *The Quest*, Introduction: "The awareness of a real and meaningful world is intimately related to the discovery of the sacred. Through the experience of the sacred, the human mind grasped the difference between that which reveals itself as real, powerful, rich and meaningful, and that which does not —i.e., the chaotic and dangerous flux of things, their fortuitous, meaningless appearances and disappearances."

occupation of evading bad luck and seeking cure from ills to which they inevitably fell back time and again.¹⁰⁴

The Christian celebration of Sunday —new for the native Filipinos— centered on the Eucharist or *Santa Misa*, could offer the Filipinos something more than the short-lived escapes from evil through the assurances of the shamans. The *Santa Misa* actualizes the saving sacrifice of Jesus Christ the Redeemer on the cross, whenever it is celebrated by the Christians so that they could join Christ mystically in his death and resurrection and transcend the workaday battle against evil. The cycle of the ever-returning time of conflict with the forces of evil which could only drive mankind to desperation was broken by Christ's victory over death and are made to experience with hope the foretaste of the definite and eternal glory.

But all this was too difficult for the Filipinos to understand. Nor did the Spanish missionaries take pains to explain the significance of Christian celebration in this way. The main emphasis of the discourses on the Holy Mass in those times was the Real Presence as well as its sacrificial aspect, while there was no serious study of the Filipino pre-Christian religion in view of relating the Eucharistic sacrifice with the shamanistic offering to ancestral spirits. And yet, the native Filipinos —with or without sufficient grasp of the ritual significance— had to celebrate Sundays with the *Santa Misa* as the main feature, because it was part of their new Christian obligation.

The Filipino neophytes then began to follow the Christian calendar wherein every seventh day is a Sunday. The adoption of the Christian calendar was the beginning of the new Filipino conception now no longer as a mere cycle but a spiral tending towards the end of time where eternity has its beginning. Every Sunday is a step nearer eternity, although eternity is already anticipated somehow during the celebration of Sunday.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ The pre-Christian Filipinos were caught up into the ongoing renewal of time which has been conceptualized by historians of religions as the 'myth of eternal renewal' (cf. Eliade, *Patterns*, pp.388-408; *The Myth of Eternal Return*, [London: 1955]).

¹⁰⁵ A. Mistrorigo, *Liturgia: Linee di fondamento teologico-pastorale* (2^a ed. : Vicenza: Favero Ed., 1969), p.226.

The annual cycle of Sundays was identified as *Temporal Cycle* during which the celebration of the Holy Mass was performed in conjunction with the remembrance of the different phases or mysteries of the 'Saving Act of God', manifested in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Lord. In the span of one year the different Sundays were classified according to their relationship with any of the *Cuatro Pascuas* (four paschal feasts) before or after them. The *Cuatro Pascuas* in the Spanish Philippines were: *Natividad* (Christmas), *Epifania* or *Los Reyes* (Epiphany), *La Florida* or *Resurrección* (Easter) and *Pentecostés* (Pentecost). Thus, there were Sundays of Advent before *Natividad*, Sundays after Epiphany, Sundays of Lent before *Resurrección*, and Sundays after Pentecost.

The *Cuatro Pascuas* are the main phases of salvation history, which—as the titles indicate— can be reduced into one *Pascua*: the Paschal Mystery.¹⁰⁶ The whole work of salvation was accomplished in the Passing-over of Jesus Christ from this earth to the Father through his dying and rising and ascending to the Father. And the principal aspects of the saving action were celebrated during the *Cuatro Pascuas* in the Spanish Philippines with the singing of the Holy Mass and the Divine Praises.

The *Cuatro Pascuas* in the Spanish Philippines became the four columns of the Temporal or Sunday Cycle. All Sundays of the year served either as preparation or prolongation of any of the four *Pascuas*, although the *Pascuas* themselves did not necessarily fall on a Sunday. These four paschal feasts were celebrated with utmost solemnity in the liturgy as the rubrics of liturgical books testify. But they were not necessarily the most engaging or appealing to the native inhabitants. In fact these paschal feasts and Sundays were not merely Christian feasts which the missionaries brought to the Philippines and which, fortunately, made the whole Christian liturgical structure attractive

¹⁰⁶ '*Pascua*' is the original name for the Resurrection (cf. Herbert Haag, *De la antigua a la nueva Pascua* [Salamanca: Ed. Sígueme, 1980], esp. pp. 139-155).

In present-day Philippines, the term *pasko*—from the Spanish *pascua*—without qualification means for Filipinos 'Christmas' and not Easter. The missionaries were able to show that Christmas is also part of the Paschal Mystery not only as 'the commemoration of the birth of Jesus.' The fact that Christmas is still called *pasko* can help greatly in explaining to the people that 'paschal character' of Christmas—already forgotten in most sectors—and on the other hand a good starting point to restore the original paschal significance of the feast of the Resurrection.

to native Filipinos. The other set of feasts constituted the *Sanctoral Cycle*.

The 'Sanctoral Cycle' contained feasts that the Church instituted to honor the saints (for example, Saints Peter and Paul), to celebrate theological ideas (like the feast of the Most Holy Trinity), to honor the Blessed Virgin and Our Lord himself in their different advocations (such as the feasts of Our Lady of Sorrows and of the Most Holy Name of Jesus). But any feast in the sanctoral cycle has liturgical meaning only insofar as it is related to the Mystery of Christ —the Paschal Mystery— which the Church celebrates in her liturgy.¹⁰⁷

The first feasts of the Sanctoral were those of the martyrs because they clearly shared in the Paschal Mystery by shedding their blood for the sake of their Christian faith. But later on more saints of different categories were also honored with feasts —namely, the confessors— who were also deemed to have shared in the Mystery of Christ even if they did not suffer martyrdom. Feasts of saints were celebrations of Local Churches in the beginning.¹⁰⁸ But when the intercessory power of the saints was more widely sought after by the faithful, many feasts of saints became universally kept in the Christian world.¹⁰⁹ In the Middle Ages too many such feasts endangered obscuring the feast of the Paschal Mystery itself so that the Council of Trent tried to correct the imbalance in its reformed liturgical books.¹¹⁰ After the reform of the Council of Trent, however, the Sanctoral was again encumbered with new feasts of saints, notably by the feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary which the baroque spirit seemed to favor.¹¹¹ It was in this situation that

¹⁰⁷ P. Rouillard, "Sanctoral Cycle," in *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* [NCE], 1967 ed.

¹⁰⁸ H. Reifenberg, *Fundamental Liturgie* (Klosterneuburg: Oesterreiches Katholishes Bibelwerk, 1978), 2:270-75.

¹⁰⁹ R. van den Broek, "Popular Religious Practices and Ecclesiastical Policies in the Early Church," in P. CH Vrijhof and J. Waardenburg (eds.), *Official and Popular Religion: Analysis of a Theme for Religious Studies* (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1979), esp. pp. 18-20.

¹¹⁰ Cf. E. Cattaneo, *Il culto cristiano in occidente* (Roma: C.L.V. Ed. Liturgiche, 1978), pp.317-19.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p.396: "Il culto dei santi era stato ridimensionato a Trento contro esagerazioni e superstizioni ed anche perché non prevalessse ogni giorni da soffocare

Catholicism reached the Philippines. No wonder, in the liturgical calendar followed in the Spanish Philippines, there were also many such feasts of saints.

In addition, therefore, to the *Cuatro Pascuas*, all Sundays and other "holy days of obligation" (to which we will come back later) the native Filipinos in the pueblos were also enticed to celebrate the *fiestas clásicas* of the Religious Order to which their *Ministro* belonged. In Franciscan pueblos the *fiestas clásicas* were the following:¹¹²

January	14	<i>Santísimo Nombre de Jesús</i>
February	5	<i>San Pedro Bautista y sus Compañeros, Mártires de Japón</i>
March	9	<i>Santa Catalina de Boloña</i>
	19	<i>El Patriarca San José</i>
	—	<i>Los Dolores de la Virgen</i>
May	3	<i>Invención de la Santa Cruz</i>
	—	<i>Santísima Trinidad</i>
June	2	<i>San Juan Bautista</i>
	13	<i>San Antonio de Padua</i>
July	14	<i>San Buenaventura</i>
	25	<i>Santiago Apóstol</i>
August	12	<i>Santa Clara</i>
September	4	<i>Santa Rosa de Viterbo</i>
	29	<i>San Miguel Arcángel</i>
October	4	<i>Nuestro Padre San Francisco</i>
	19	<i>San Pedro Alcántara</i>
November	1	<i>Todos los Santos</i>
	29	<i>Todos los Santos del Orden</i>
December	8	<i>Inmaculada Concepción</i>
	18	<i>Expectación del Parto</i>

le idee proprie dei cicli liturgici particolarmente della Quaresima. Ma a poco a poco riprese gran parte dei giorni dell'anno."

¹¹² These are the feasts of saints found in an official Franciscan liturgical book, *Manual-Cantoral para el uso de las religiosas de Santa Clara de la Ciudad de Manila. Serie segunda. Misas clásicas, Procesiones y Bendiciones* (Manila: Litografía de Oppel y Ca, 1872). AFIO A 6/2.

Furthermore, the Franciscans —and the missionaries of other Orders— did not hesitate to assign “patron saints” to every church or pueblo, an European practice which proved most welcome in every Filipino pueblo.¹¹³

The *Cuatro Pascuas*, Sundays, holy days, the Order’s classical feasts, and the pueblo’s patron saint were all celebrated in Franciscan pueblos on the same level of solemnity in the sense that the Holy Mass and the Vespers of the Divine Praises of those days were always sung.¹¹⁴ Only in those days, however, which carried the obligation to attend Mass and abstain from servile works did the Holy Mass become strictly communitarian, because there was no obligation of Mass attendance and abstention from work —the Holy Mass (not to speak of Vespers) was mostly attended only by the boys of the *Escuelas*, the *cantores reservados* and by a limited number of devout persons.

But quite a good number of feasts of saints —even if not holy days of obligation— were solemnly celebrated by a sizable group of devotees. They were feasts of saints whose intercessory power was more impressive than the others. The celebration of the feasts of more notable saints was always community affair, especially when a *cofradía* (confraternity or sodality) in the saint’s honor had been formed.¹¹⁵ And the *Día del patrón* —the feast of the pueblo’s patron saint— was the Filipino fiesta par excellence, when the whole pueblo left their workaday activities behind to celebrate it.

Planned by the missionaries or unplanned, the additional feasts of the saints proved to be the principal factor in attracting the native Filipinos to the *Santa Misa* even if they did not grasp adequately the significance of the Eucharist. The saints with their intercessory power

¹¹³ The introduction of many patronal feasts was the exact opposite of the Jesuits’ approach in the sixteenth-century Japan where feasts were kept to the minimum (cf. J. López Gay, *La liturgia en la misión del Japón del siglo XVI* [Roma: Lib. dell’Università Gregoriana, 1970], pp.45-49).

¹¹⁴ *Estatutos* 1730, p.135: “Todos los Cantores...asistir[án] a la Iglesia a cantar todas las Vísperas de los domingos, Fiestas de guardar de los Indios, Clásicas principales de nuestra Orden, y a la Prima y Missa mayor de dichos días.”

¹¹⁵ Confraternities were a principal factor in the promotion of devotion to the saints and in their celebration of their patron saints (cf. Phelan, *Hispanization*, p.74). In Franciscan pueblos the *Archicofradía del Cordón* was especially promoted by the *frailes* themselves.

reminded them of their pre-Christian *Anito*, so that the celebration of their feasts came about spontaneously in Filipino pueblos.

The same thing cannot be said about Sundays and holy days, for whose observance a certain measure of force had to be used.

C. The Sunday and Holy Day Observance in Franciscan Filipino Pueblos

Certainly the concept of obligation or duty was not unknown to the pre-Christian Filipinos. But when going to Mass on Sundays and holy days was emphasized as obligation while lacking the attraction of the saints' fiestas and the motivation not yet sufficiently clear, special sanction had to be employed by the missionaries to assure this observance. The Franciscan *Báculo de Ministros* ordered fifty *azotes* (lashes) for those who customarily did not hear Mass on Sundays and holy days without sufficient excuse; twenty-four *azotes* for the first offense.¹¹⁶

During the first centuries of Christian Era, the practice of coming together on Sundays for the Eucharistic celebration was not regarded as obligatory under pain of sin. But the Council of Elvira in the beginning of the fourth century decreed that anyone who neglected to go to church for the Mass on three Sundays was to be excommunicated for a short time for his correction. The Apostolic Constitution of the late part of the same century suggested that it was seriously binding, because the precept came from the Apostles. Whereas the participation of all Christians in the Eucharist is of divine precept from the injunction of Our Lord —“Do this in remembrance of me” (Lk 22:19)— the attendance at it *on Sundays and holy days* is ecclesial law, which as such goes back to Gratian's Decretal (*circa* 1150).¹¹⁷

Since attendance at worship required time, securing leisure for worship became imperative. Sunday (and also holy day) became a day of rest from servile works. In 321 Constantine decreed a weekly holiday on the “Day of the Sun” —*venerabilis dies Solis*— which coincided with

¹¹⁶ *Báculo*, cap. 10, par. 4: “...a los que acostumbran no oyr Misa los Domingos, y fiestas sin tener impedimento bastante, cinquenta azotes, y por la primera vez veinte y quatro.”

¹¹⁷ M. Herron, “Sunday and Holyday Observance,” NCE (1967), 13:799-802.

the Christians' "Day of the Lord" —*dies dominica*— (Apoc. 1:10)¹¹⁸ Charlemange forbade in 789 all labor on Sunday as violation of the Third Commandment. As Church law the abstention from work on Sunday was the subject of the Synod of Laodicea toward the end of the fourth century. Afterwards many local synods took it up from the eighth century onward until it became a general law of the Church in the Decretals of Gregory IX in 1234.¹¹⁹

Because of the deeply judicial and theological culture of Spain, the Spanish missionaries in the Spanish Philippines could not but also give importance to Sunday and holy day observance as part of Christian obligations in their pueblos.

The Sunday observance was extended to other feasts which were called "holy days of obligation" or simply "holy days." The holy days were feasts commemorative of events in the life of Our Lord in addition to the *Cuatro Pascuas*, the feasts of Church's dogmas, feasts commemorative of events in the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of her privileges, and feasts of prominent saints, which were considered so important that the faithful must celebrate them by attending at Holy Mass with the accompanying abstention from servile works. Although over the course of the centuries the list of such feasts became quite lengthy in some countries in Europe, by virtue of Pope Paul III's Bull *Altitudo divini consilii* (1537) the newly converted Christians in the Spanish Indies—in due time also those in the Spanish Philippines—were given the privilege of observing only the following feasts in addition to Sunday with the same obligation:¹²⁰

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Nativity of Our Lord | 7. Pentecost |
| 2. Circumcision | 8. Nativity of Mary |
| 3. Epiphany | 9. Annunciation |
| 4. Resurrection | 10. Purification |
| 5. Ascension | 11. Assumption |
| 6. Corpus Christi | 12. Saints Peter and Paul |

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ For text of the Bull *Altitudo divini consilii*, see Appendix 8, p.526.

Sunday and holy day observance also became a part of the ecclesial and liturgical life in Filipino pueblos. Because the native Filipinos were *neófitos en la fe*, they had to be compelled to observe the Sunday and holy day obligation. According to the missionaries' moral standard the native Filipinos were so incapable of using right judgment and so irresponsible that some sort of pressure must be used. In this situation the services of the *fiscales* were indeed necessary. According to the authorities commonly cited in those times it would take two hundred years and more for the natives to go out of their *incapacidades*. Solorzano commented:

When one knows that some men, because of the lack of full capability, neither appreciate nor embrace what is offered to them for their own welfare, it is licit for one who is in charge of them to direct them and lead them to enter the way, even if they would refuse to do so.¹²¹

Hence, the lashes! The missionaries invoked the *Derecho divino y natural* as the origin of the extensive authority they enjoyed over the Filipino Indios, being the "fathers of infants" and ministers of believers "*tan menores de edad*." Until the last century of the Spanish hegemony in the Philippines, the Spanish missionaries took the native Filipinos for *grandes niños* (big children) and treated them as such.¹²²

Because of this situation there came to be three kinds of holy days in the Spanish Philippines: *fiestas de tres cruces*, *de dos cruces* and *de una cruz* (feasts of three crosses, two crosses and of one cross). In liturgical calendars used in the Spanish Philippines the different categories of feasts were distinguished by means of marks in the form

¹²¹ *Báculo*, cap. 10, par.1: "Quando se conoce, q algunos hombres por falta de entera capacidad no saben estimar ni abraçr lo que se les propone para bien suyo, lícito le es al q los tiene a su cargo, y más siendo primeramente dirigirlos, y hazer q entren por camino aunque rehussen."

¹²² In a Franciscan manual, published as late as 1886, the author advised the newcomers in the Philippines: "Es necesario de toda necesidad que el religioso destinado a ejercer la cura de almas aqui en Filipinas desde luego, y se haga cargo de que, los que han de ser feligreses suyos, son unos niños grandes en los que hallará perfectamente amalgamento de todas las impertinencias, molestias e inconsecuencias propias de la infancia, con la sensatez, sagacidad, rectitud de juicio, o criterio y hasta la astucia adherentes, por lo común, a la edad viril o madura." (L. Bustamante, *Instrucciones a los jóvenes franciscanos*, [Manila: 1886], p. 29).

of crosses. The feasts of three crosses (together with all Sundays of the year without exception) were holy days of obligation for every Christian wherever he might be in the Islands and of whatever nationality to hear the entire Mass and abstain from all servile works the whole day, under pain of mortal sin. Feasts of two crosses were those observed locally in a diocese and only by the Spaniards (and all other Europeans) residing in that diocese. Feasts of only one cross were feasts of obligation for Europeans in a particular city of a bishopric; for example, only in Manila Intramuros, Cavite, Tayabas, Naga, Cebu, or San Fernando, and nowhere else.¹²³

In these calendars other privileges of the Filipino Indios were honored on the basis of their presumed immaturity in faith. The Spaniards (always including any other Europeans) were under obligation to fast and abstain from meat on all days of Lent except Sundays (when abstinence from meat was the only obligation), on the Vigils of certain principal saints mostly apostles, and on the Ember days. The Filipino Indios, however, were obliged to fast and abstain only on all Fridays of Lent, Holy Saturday and on the Vigils of the Nativity of our Lord; but they had to abstain from meat on all days of Lent, the Ember days, the Vigils and all Fridays of the year.¹²⁴

Even if the Filipino Indios were only obliged to observe the precept on holy days of three crosses and Sundays of the year, on feasts of one and two crosses they could not be forced to work in case they did not want to. Some Ministros de Indios advocated that it was licit for the employers to force them to work, if only to prevent them from offending God, because a lot of them acquire the habit of spending the day idly, drinking and gambling. In short they thought this privilege was detrimental to their spiritual welfare.¹²⁵

It proved beneficial, however, to the cause of liturgical life in Filipino pueblos. On these days the native Filipinos gained an oppor-

¹²³ Cf. *Tabla general de todas las fiestas y vigilias deste Obispado de Nueva Caceres...*, año de 1743. AFIO 40/1. See Appendix.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ *Báculo*, cap. 19, par.1: "...y parece deuer ser lícito [obligarles a trabajar], pues se les obliga a que hagan lo que pueden hazer sin pecado, y si les impide que gasten el día en borrachera, y otras cosas ofensivas a la Magestad de Dios."

tunity to go to church and hear the Mass just like their Spanish masters. Many indigenous inhabitants were attracted by the devotion to the saints whose feasts were of one or two crosses and to the saints of the religious Orders. Whereas most of the Sundays of the year were dedicated to Our Lord, the feasts of one and two crosses and those of the religious Orders were almost exclusively in honor of particular saints, famous for their special intercessory power. The saints in this way attracted the indigenous inhabitants —after the example of the Spaniards— to the sung Holy Mass and Solemn Vespers.

For this reason it became a practice in Franciscan pueblos to announce to the people not only the forthcoming feasts of three crosses but also of "...the principal feasts of our Order, and feasts of the Spaniards, because someone might have devotion to one of the saints of our Order and the saints of the feasts of the Spaniards, making it clear that they are holy days of obligation for the Spaniards only."¹²⁶

By emphasizing the holy observance the Franciscans led the native Filipinos in their pueblos to celebrate Christian feasts. But on Sundays they had to make use of the services of the *fiscales* and to invent ways and means to attract the people to the church. On the feasts of one or two crosses, on the contrary, and on feasts of the saints of the Order, the particular intercessory power of the saints was attraction enough for the Filipino Indios to come to church. The Filipinos also learned to celebrate Christian feasts even if there was no element of force, on account of the intercessory power of the saints. And here was where they were more enthusiastic, because the devotion to the saints bore immediate meaning in their lives.

Conclusion

Contrary to Fray Pablo de Jesus' report to Pope Gregory XIII that the native Filipinos "did not manifest any vestiges of religion," the fact surfaced now —thanks to the methodology of modern historians of

¹²⁶ Ibid., par.2: "Mas aunque no sea de su obligación hara bien que se les publiquen las fiestas principales de nuestra Orden, y fiestas de españoles por si alguno tuviere devoción con algun santo de los de nuestra orden, de los que son fiestas de españoles, advirtiéndoles, que son fiestas de guardar para los Españoles, las que fueren y las que no, como no lo son."

religions— that the autochthonous Filipinos were genuinely religious. They had a religious *commercium* with the holy or with the Divinity day in and day out. The Holy communicated itself with the pre-Hispanic Filipinos through different facets of nature called “hierophanies.” The religious response of the native Filipinos to these hierophanies (or rather paleophanies) was expressed in meaningful rites, which the missionaries labeled summarily as “bunch of childish superstitions.”

To dub the Filipino indigenous religion simply as “animism” —as it has been generally done in the past— is quite inaccurate. As a matter of fact they had “cosmic religion” or “nature religion,” wherein hierophanies (or paleophanies) and myths shaped the people’s daily behavior in reference to the Holy. Hierophanies were the Divinity’s self-manifestation to the people through nature, while myths offered them the “reasons” things were so and not otherwise from the beginning, and why their ancestors maintained some set of customs and practices which they in their turn had to follow. Moreover, the pre-Christian hierophanies and myths generated among the native Filipinos the religious conviction that God’s will (expressed through the wishes of the *Anito*) had to be followed strictly. For, he was the Maker (*Bathala Maykapal*), or the Beginning of all things (*Poón*), the Old One (*Laon*).

Their dead ancestors’ spirits —sharing the characteristic of “being old” with the Divinity— became the intermediaries between them and the Holy One because they still maintained an active influence on the lives of the living even though they already belonged to the spirit world. In consequence, the ancestral spirits (*Anito*, *Diwata*) held in reality the power to make them happy and lucky or unhappy and unlucky in this life; they held the key to good health and success and prosperity. Ancestor worship became the basic response of the pre-Christian Filipinos to the paleophanies, a response which was performed through some rites, primarily through the *Pasing tabi sa Nono* and *Pag-aanito*. *Pag-aanito* presided over by the shamans (*Katalonan*, *babaylan*) became the most solemn rite of the pre-Christian Filipino nature religion.

The native Filipinos were forced through the Spanish civilizing and Christianizing machinery to adopt the Christian life style and follow the Christian order of worship as their new form of communion with God. But their acceptance was selective as regards the observance

and celebration of "sacred days." Sundays and the *Cuatro Pascuas* were solemnly celebrated by the pueblo community, but some sanction or measure of force had to be devised in order to assure their observance. The feasts of saints, on the contrary, carrying no obligation of observance, were enthusiastically solemnized by the native populace. The native Filipinos welcomed the feasts of the Sanctoral Cycle of the liturgy more than those of the Temporal Cycle. This was so, because ancestral worship had many external similarities which *religiously* predisposed the native Filipinos to accept the Christian order of worship and Catholicism in general.

The doctrinal aspect of Christianity was not given emphasis by the missionaries in their preaching. For, they were only being realistic. The mysteries of Christian faith which were expressed in Greco-Roman concepts could not be easily grasped by the Filipino Indios who had different autochthonous thought categories. The external of Spanish Catholicism such as the cult of saints were more meaningful to the Filipino Indios than a careful exposition of Christian doctrine. But, perhaps, Christianity's first contact and ongoing dialogue with the native Filipinos, whose religious conduct was governed by hierophanies and myths, could not be truly meaningful and fruitful, unless it happened through the cult of the saints. A heavily intellectual approach could have been more of a failure than a success. The celebration of the feasts of saints might not be essential to Christianity and its liturgy but it could, as it did in the Philippine context, lead the *neófitos de la fe* to the core of the Paschal Mystery.

Appendix 1

**TABLA GENERAL DE TODAS LAS FIESTAS Y VIGILIAS
DEL ARZOBISPADO DE MANILA**

mandada publicar por el Ilustrísimo Señor Arçobispo Doct. Don Miguel de Poblete, año de 1660.*

Adviértese, que las Fiestas, que llevan tres Cruces (+++) obligan universalmente a todo Fiel Christiano; las que llevan dos (++) obligan solamente a los Españoles en qualquiera parte que estén deste Arçobispado; las que llevan una Cruz (+) obligan solamente a los Españoles dentro de los muros de Manila, y no a los que estuvieren fuera en los Pueblos, sino en las Fiestas de Santo Domingo, San Francisco, San Agustín, San Ignacio de Loyola y San Nicolás de Tolentino, que obligan a los Españoles también en Cavite. Y es declaración, que los naturales y negros pueden trabajar los días que no son de fiestas para ellos, si quieren; pero sus amos no los pueden compeler, no obligar a que trabajen e dexen de oír Missa, ni no quisieren trabajar, o no oírla.

Enero

- 1 La Circuncision del Señor...+++
- 2 La Epifanía, o Adoración de los Reyes...+++
- 17 San Antonio Abad, Patron de Manila...+
- 20 San Fabián, y Sebastian Mm...+
- 26 San Policarpio, Patron de Manila por temblores..+

Febrero

- 2 La Purificación de nuestra Señora...+++
- 5 Los Santos Protomártires de Japón, Patrones de Manila...+
- 24 y el año bisiesto a 25. San Mathías Apostol, trae Vigilia...+

Marzo

- 7 Santo Thomás de Aquino, Doctor de la Iglesia...+
- 19 San Joseph, Esposo de la Santíssima Virgen, Patron de Manila...++
- 20 San Joachin, Padre de Nuestra Señora...+
- 25 La Anunciación de Nuestra Señora...+++

Abril

- La Resurrección del Señor...+++
- El Segundo Día de Pascua...++
- El Tercer Día de Pascua...++

* Source: *Ritual para administrar los santos sacramentos*, por el P. Fr. Alonso de Mentrída, OSA. ed. de 1710. Tablas.

25 San Marcos Evangelista...+

29 San Pedro Martyr...+

Mayo

1 San Felipe y Santiago, Apóstoles, no traen Vigilia...++

3 La Invención de la Cruz...++

4 Santa Mónica, Madre de San Agustín...+

8 La Aparición de San Miguel...+

19 Santa Potenciana, Patrona de las Islas...+

— La Ascensión del Señor ..+++

Junio

— Primer Día de Pentecostés, o Fiesta del Espíritu Santo, trae Vigilia...+++

— El Segundo Día de Pentecostés...++

— El Tercer Día de Pentecostes...++

11 San Bernabé Apóstol, no trae Vigilia...+

13 San Antonio de Padua...+

24 La Natividad de San Juan Baptista, trae Vigilia...++

29 San Pedro y San Pablo, Apóstoles, trae Vigilia...++

— Corpus Christi...+++

Julio

1 La Visitación de Nuestra Señora...+

22 Santa María Magdalena...+

25 Santiago Apóstol, Patrón de España, trae Vigilia...++

31 San Ignacio, Confesor, para Españoles en Manila y Cavite...+

Agosto

4 Santo Domingo Confesor, Manila y Cavite...+

6 La Transfiguración del Señor...++

10 San Lorenzo Mátyr, trae Vigilia...++

12 Santa Clara Virgen...+

15 La Assumpción de Nuestra Señora, trae Vigilia...+++

24 San Bartolome Apóstol, trae Vigilia...++

28 San Agustín, Obispo y Doctor de la Iglesia, Manila y Cavite...+

Septiembre

8 La Natividad de Nuestra Señora...+++

10 San Nicolás de Tolentino, Patrón de Manila y Cavite...+

21 San Matheo Apóstol, trae Vigilia...++

29 San Miguel Arcángel...++

Octubre

1 El Angel de la Guardia, Patrón de Manila...+

4 S. Francisco Confesor, Patrón de Manila...+

15 Santa Teresa de Jesús, Virgen...+

18 San Lucas Evangelista...+

28 San Simón y San Judas Apóstoles, trae Vigilia...++

Noviembre

- 1 La Fiesta de Todos los Santos, trae Vigilia...++
- 2 San Martín Obispo, Confessor...+
- 21 La Presentación de Nuestra Señora...+
- 25 Santa Catalina Virgen y Mátyr...+
- 29 La Commemoración del Santísimo Sacramento...+
- 30 San Andrés Apóstol, Patron Principal de Manila, trae Vigilia...++

Diciembre

- 2 San Francisco Xavier, Apóstol de la India, Patrón de Manila por las Naos de Castilla...++
- 8. La Concepción de Nuestra Señora...+
- 13 Santa Lucía Virgen y Mátyr...+
- 18 La Espectación de Nuestra Señora...+
- 21 Santo Thomás Apóstol, trae Vigilia...++
- 25 La Natividad del Señor, trae Vigilia, y obliga a todos a ayunar...+++
- 26 San Estevan Protomártir...++
- 27 San Juan Apostol y Evangelista...++
- 28 Los Santos Innocentes Mátyres...++

PATRONES PRINCIPALES, CON OCTAVA: De toda España Santiago Apóstol; de todas las Islas Santa Potenciana; de Manila San Andrés Apóstol. Los demás Patrones menos principales, y Abogados, como San Antón, San Policarpo, y los que se refieren, doble mayor tan solamente.

Son de ayuno a los Españoles la Quaresma, las Vigilias y Quatro Temporas. Los ayunos de los Naturales: Están obligados a ayunar todos los Viernes de Quaresma, y el Sábado Santo, y la Vigilia de la Natividad, y no más. Pero están obligados a no comer carne toda la Quaresma, las Quatro Témporas, las Vigilias y todos los Viernes del año.

Appendix 2

TABLA DE TODAS LAS FIESTAS Y VIGILIAS DEL ARZOBISPADO DE MANILA, según su actual observancia [1854] desde el año 1790*

Adviértese que las fiestas que llevan tres cruces (+++) obligan universalmente a todo fiel cristiano; las que llevan dos (++) obligan solamente a los españoles en cualquiera parte que esten destas Islas; las que llevan una

Source: *Ritual*, por P. Fr. Alonzo Mentrída, OSA, 5 Ed. Madrid: 1854.

cruz (+) obligan solamente a los españoles dentro de los muros de Manila y Cavite, y no a los que estuvieren fuera en los demás pueblos. Debiendo tenerse presente, que en las fiestas de una o dos cruces que está señaladas con una estrella, pueden los españoles trabajar, pero deben oír misa.

Y es declaración que los naturales y negros pueden trabajar los días que no son de fiesta para ellos, si quisieren; pero sus amos no los pueden compeler ni obligar a que trabajen, si no quiesieren trabajar, o dejen oír Misa, si quisieren oírla.

[Note: The "estrella" mentioned above is substituted here with this sign *]

Enero

- 1 La Circuncisión del Señor...+++
- 2 La Epifanía o Adoración de los Reyes...+++

Febrero

- 2 La Purificación de Nuestra Señora...+++
- 24 Y el año bisiesto a 25. San Matías Apostol, trae vigilia...* ++

Marzo

- 8 San Juan de Dios...* +
- 19 San José Esposo de la Santísima Virgen, Patrón de Manila...* ++
- 25 La Anunciación de Nuestra Señora...+++

Abril

- La Resurrección del Señor...+++
- El Segundo Día de Pascua...++
- El Tercer Día de Pascua...* ++

Mayo

- 1 San Felipe y Santiago Apóstoles, no trae Vigilia... * ++
- 3 La Invención de la Cruz...* ++
- 15 San Isidro Labrador...* ++
- 19 Santa Potenciana, Patrona de las Islas...++
- La Ascensión del Señor...+++

Junio

- Primer Día de Pentecostés of Fiesta del Espíritu Santo, trae vigilia...+++
- El Segundo Día de Pentecostés...++
- El Tercer Día de Pentecostés...* ++
- La Fiesta del Corpus Christi...+++
- 13 San Antonio de Padua...* ++
- 24 La Natividad de San Juan Bautista, trae vigilia. ++
- 29 San Pedro y San Pablo Apóstoles, trae vigilia +++

Julio

- 25 Santiago Apóstol, Patron de España, trae vigilia. ++

- 26 Santa Ana, Madre de Nuestra Señora...* ++
 31 San Ignacio Confesor: para Españoles, Manila y Cavite...* +

Agosto

- 4 Santo Domingo Confesor: Manila y Cavite...* +
 10 San Lorenzo Mártir, trae vigilia...* ++
 12 Santa Clara Virgen...* +
 15 La Asunción de Nuestra Señora, trae vigilia...+++
 24 San Bartolomé Apóstol, trae vigilia...* ++
 28 San Agustín, Obispo y Doctor de la Iglesia: Manila y Cavite...* ++
 30 Santa Rosa de Lima, Patrona de las Indias...* ++

Septiembre

- 8 La Natividad de Nuestra Señora...+++
 10 San Nicolás de Tolentino, Patrón de Manila y Cavite...* +
 21 San Mateo Apostol, trae vigilia...* ++
 29 San Miguel Arcángel...* ++

Octubre

- 4 San Francisco Confesor, Patrón de Manila, para Españoles, también en Cavite...* +
 28 San Simón y San Judas Apóstoles, trae vigilia...* ++

Noviembre

- 1 La Fiesta de todos los Santos, trae vigilia...+++
 30 San Andrés Apóstol, Patrón Principal de Manila, trae vigilia...* ++

Diciembre

- 8 La Concepción de Nuestra Señora...++
 21 Santo Tomás Apóstol, trae vigilia...* ++
 25 La Natividad del Señor, trae vigilia y obliga a todos a ayunar...+++
 26 San Esteban Protomártir...++
 27 San Juan Apóstol, y Evangelista...* ++
 28 Los Santos Inocentes Mártires...++

(NOTA: No se ponen en esta Tabla las fiestas particulares de los demás Obispos de estas Islas, como San Vidal en Zebu, &c.)

PATRONOS PRINCIPALES CON OCTAVA: de toda España, Santiago Apóstol; de todas las Islas, Santa Potenciana; de Manila, San Andrés Apóstol. Los demás patronos menos principales y abogados, como San Antón, San Policarpo y los demás que se refieren en la Tabla, doble mayor tan solamente.

Son de ayuno a los españoles la Cuaresma, las Vigilias y cuatro Témporas. Los ayunos de los naturales: Están obligados a ayunar todos los Viernes de Cuaresma, el Sábado Santo, y la Vigilia de la Natividad, y no más. Pero están obligados a no comer carne toda la Cuaresma, las cuatro Témporas, las Vigilias y todos los Viernes del año.

Appendix 3

**TABLA GENERAL DE TODAS LAS FIESTAS Y VIGILIAS
DE ESTE OBISPADO DE NUEVA CACERES**

mandada publicar por el Yllustríssimo Señor Doctor Don Phelipe de Molina del Consejo de su Magestad Obispo de dho Obispado. Año de 1743 en que van señaladas las fiestas particulares nuevamente instituídas, y mandadas guardar en el por su Yllustríssima Señora, y están quitadas otras propias del Arzobispado de Manila*

Enero

- 1 La Circuncisión del Señor...+++
- 2 La Epiphanía del Señor, o Adoración de los Reyes.+++
- 3 San Antonio Abad, Patrón por el fuego...++

Febrero

- 2 La Purificación de Nuestra Señora...+++
- 23 (o a 24 siendo año bisiesto) Vigilia de San Mathías Apóstol
- 24 & 25 San Mathías Apóstol...++

Marzo

- 19 San Joseph, Esposo de Nuestra Señora...++
- 20 San Joachín, Padre de Nuestra Señora ..++
- 25 La Encarnación del Hijo de Dios en las purísimas Entrañas de Nuestra Señora...+++

Abril

- Domingo de la Pasqua de la Resurrección...+++
- Los dos días siguientes Lunes y Martes...++
- 25 San Marcos Evangelista...+

Mayo

- 1 San Phelipe y Santiago Apóstoles...+++
- 3 La Invención de la cruz...++
- La Ascensión del Señor a los cielos...+++
- El Sábado antes de la Pasqua del Espíritu quando se celebrare Vigilia
- La Pascua del Espíritu Santo...+++

Junio

- La fiesta del Corpus Christi...+++
- 13 San Antonio de Padua...++
- 23 Vigilia de San Juan Baptista...
- 24 San Juan Baptista...++
- 28 Vigilia de los Príncipes de los Apóstoles San Pedro y San Pablo
- 29 Los Apóstoles San Pedro y San Pablo...+++

* Source: Archivo Franciscano Ibero Oriental, Madrid [AFIO] 40/1.

Julio

- 2 La Visitiación de Nuestra Señora...+
- 24 Vigilia de Santiago Apóstol
- 25 Santiago Apóstol...++
- 26 Santa Ana Madre de Nuestra Señora...+

Agosto

- 6 La Tansfiguración del Señor...++
- 9 Vigilia de San Lorenzo
- 10 San Lorenzo Mártir...++
- 14 Vigilia de la Assumpción de Nuestra Señora
- 15 La Assumpción de Nuestra Señora...+++
- 23 Vigilia de San Bartolomé Apóstol
- 24 San Bartolomé Apóstol...++
- 28 San Agustín Obispo...++
- 30 Santa Rosa Virgen Patrona de las Indias...++

Septiembre

- 8 La Natividad de Nuestra Señora...+++
- 20 Vigilia de San Matheo Apóstol
- 21 San Matheo Apóstol...++
- 27 Vigilia de San Simón y Judas Apóstoles
- 29 La Dedicación de San Miguel Archángel...++

Octubre

- 2 Los Santos Angeles Custodios... ++
- 4 San Francisco de Asís Confesor...++
- 15 Santa Theresa Virgen...+
- 18 San Lucas Evangelista...+
- 28 San Simón y Judas Apóstoles...++
- 31 Vigilia de todos los Santos

Noviembre

- 1 La fiesta de todos los Santos...++
- 2 La Commemoración de todos los fieles Difuntos en el qual día desde las primeras Visperas hasta puesta del sol los que haviendo confessado, y comulgado visitaren la Yglesia de su Parrochia rogando a Dios por la Paz entre los Príncipes Christianos, extirpación de las Heregías y exaltación de la Yglesia Cathólica ganan Indulgencia plenaria que se puede aplicar pormodo de Suffragio por las Animas del Purgatorio de la obligación de cada uno. Y los señores sacerdotes sacan del Purgatorio el Anima por quien dixeren la Misa.
- 21 Presentación de Nuestra Señora...+
- 29 Vigilia de San Andrés Apóstol
- 30 San Andrés Apóstol...++

Diciembre

- 8 La Concepción purísima de Nuestra Señora...++
- 18 La Expectación de Nuestra Señora...+
- 20 Vigilia de Santo Thomás Apóstol
- 21 Santo Thomás Apóstol...++
- 24 Vigilia de la Natividad del Señor en que también obliga el ayuno a los naturales
- 25 La Natividad del Señor...+++
- 26 San Esteban Protomártir...++
- 27 San Juan Apóstol, y Evangelista Titular de esta Santa Yglesia Cathedral de Nueva Cáceres...++
- 28 La fiesta de los Santos Niños Innocentes...++

1. Primeramente que todos los Domingos del Año generalmente sin exceptuar alguno son días festivos dedicados al Señor, y que se deben guardar todo fiel Ctno oiendo en ellos Missa entera debajo de pecado mortal, y absteniéndose de toda obra, y servicios personal, y mecánico.

2. Que las fiestas que se señalan con +++ en la Tabla referida obligan universalmente a todo fiel Xtno, en qualquiera lugar que estuvieren y las que llevan ++ obligan solamente a los Españoles en esta Ciudad de Nueva Cáceres, y en las Cabezeras de las Provincias de Tayabas y Albay que comprehende su distrito.

3. Que los Natt.es, y Negros, y demás Naciones, que no son Europeas pueden trabajar los días que no son de fiesta para ellos si quisieren. Pero que no pueden ser compelidos a ello, ni aún por sus amos los que fueren esclavos, ni a que dejen de oir Missa si quisieren oirla, y no quisieren travajar.

4. Que menos los Domingos de Quaresma todos los demas días de ella las Vigilias, y Quatro Témporas son de Ayuno para los Españoles, y los dhos Domingos de Quaresma de abstinencia de comer carne solamente.

5. Que los Yndios natt.es estan obligados a ayunar teniendo 21 años de edad, y no pasando de los 60 todos los Viernes de Quaresma, y el Sábado Santo, y la Vigilia de la Natividad del Señor y no más; pero que estan obligados a no comer carne toda la Quaresma, Quatro Témporas, y Vigilias y todos los Viernes del año.

Ultimamente se advierte que por dia de fiesta de guardar no se entiende solamente la mañana, en que son los fieles obligados a oir Missa entera: sino todo el día de fiesta, que es la mañana, y tarde de ella en que igualmente se deben abstener de toda obra servil, y trabajo mecánico.

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