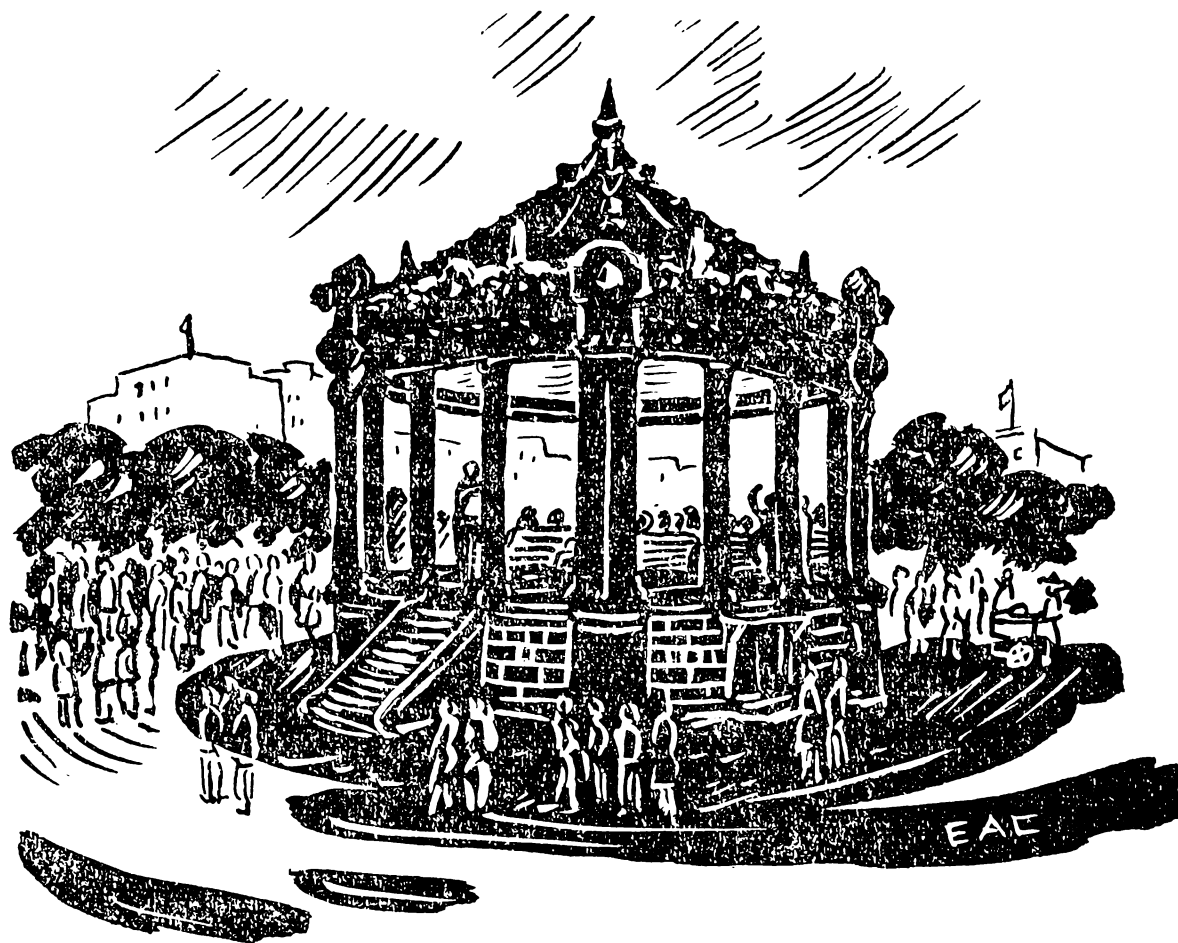


Nothing Can Stop Us

BY THE CHAIRMAN•

Philippine Executive Commission



AS I look upon this vast gathering of my countrymen who have assembled here from all parts of this city with unequalled enthusiasm—when I consider that on this historic day throughout the length and breadth of our native land the Filipino people are marshalling themselves in solid ranks to dedicate all their thoughts and energies to the speedy consummation of our dream of independence—I am filled with a deep emotion of solemn consecration. This day is indeed a day of consecration for the Filipino people. Never before in our long and tragic history as a subject people has the independence of the Philippines been up to us Filipinos to win and to deserve. Countless generations of heroes and martyrs who died before the dawn, countless generations of future Filipinos who will bask in the warmth of the noonday of freedom, are calling now upon our chosen generation to demand that we do not fail. And we shall not fail.

It is only right and proper that this day also should be a day of profound gratitude, of sincere homage, and of heart-felt loyalty, to the great Empire of Japan which has placed freedom within our grasp. The magnanimous and unprecedented promise of independence to the Philippines in the shortest possible time, confirmed as the sacred and irrevocable pledge of the Japanese Empire several days ago, has no equal in the entire recorded history of men and na-

tions. In our own experience in the struggle for freedom, we find it impossible to match the chivalry and supreme generosity of Japan. We find it so unimaginable, so difficult to believe, that the most powerful nation in Asia should be so benevolent and solicitous toward those who only lately were misled into facing the Imperial Japanese Forces on the field of battle, that some misguided Filipinos may even doubt the truth and sincerity of Japan's promise of independence.

But this doubt crumbles before the indisputable and undeniable facts. Japan has amply proven her high and honorable intentions with acts. At the very beginning of this war Japan proclaimed that she entertained no territorial ambitions, no schemes for exploitation, and no dreams of tyranny, but only a sincere desire to liberate the peoples of the Orient from Western imperialism so as to secure the prosperity and peace of Asia and the world. We are convinced that Japan has remained faithful to the letter and to the spirit of that noble proclamation in every corner of Greater East Asia where the Imperial Japanese Forces have entered on the wings of victory.

Japan Keeps Word

Japan has remained true to her ideals and her promises with respect to the Philippines in spite of

the fact that a portion of our people, deceived and misguided, resisted the Imperial Japanese Forces. She liberated the Filipino prisoners of war, rising above all the rules of war and all the canons of international law. Instead of exploiting and enslaving us, she has been helping and encouraging us in the gigantic task of national reconstruction and in the even greater task of building a new Philippines for the Filipinos. These measures of unparalleled nobility find their explanation in the sacredness of Japan's word, in the inviolability of her promises, in the chivalry of her proud traditions, and in the unblemished splendor of her national virtue.

I could cite numerous other examples of Japan's fidelity to her obligations and to her pledged word. I could point to Nationalist China, to whom Japan promised the restoration of all degrading special privileges wrung from her by the Western nations. Japan has fulfilled that promise. I could point to the people of Burma, to whom Japan promised the fulfillment of their aspirations for independence within this very year.

In the face of our own experience and of the experience of others, we cannot but accept wholeheartedly, without doubts or reservations, the solemn announcement made by Japan to grant independence to the Philippines. We know that behind the word of Japan stand 2,600 years of knightly traditions and the sacred honor of one hundred million people united under an unbroken line of Emperors, coeval with the ages. We, therefore, accept the promise with profound and boundless gratitude and we here resolve that the promise will never be regretted and that its sure fulfillment will give honor and joy to both Japan and the Philippines.

All over the Philippines, every Filipino feels at this moment the need of displaying the overpowering sense of gratitude that we have toward Japan. It is impossible to find words adequate to express the emotion that overwhelms us. Fortunately there is no need for words. Japan has shown us by her inspiring example that she does not lay stock by words so much as by deeds. What shall these deeds be?

We are asked only to find ourselves, to become once more true Filipinos and true Orientals, standing on our own feet, shoulder to shoulder with our brothers in Greater East Asia. We are not asked to submit to injury, harm, or discrimination. We are, on the contrary urged to seek our own good. We are not asked to starve in economic chaos. We are, on the contrary, urged to share the blessings of prosperity with our fellow-Orientals. We can be truly free as a nation only if we are also economically and culturally independent of the West, and therefore Japan asks us to lay down stable foundations for our enduring freedom, prosperity and happiness.

Grave Responsibility

That grave and historic responsibility is placed squarely on our shoulders. Our independence is definitely up to ourselves. Japan has done everything on her part by making the promise of independence. Now the Filipino people, all of us, must do our part. We must prove that we deserve independence.

In the past our heroes did not hesitate to lay down their lives, to sacrifice their fortunes, and to consume all their energies, to win the independence of the Philippines. Those martyrs and heroes of the past look down upon us now, from the glorious heights of their immortality. They challenge us to equal or surpass their mighty exploits of will and resolution. They call upon us not to betray the sacred ideal for which they sacrificed all that they had and all that they were. They inspire us to unite for the last irresistible drive toward the national freedom which, throughout the ages and generations, has been our Holy Grail.

I therefore call upon all the Filipino people gathered in solemn assemblies today throughout the Philippines to make a solemn and unforgettable consecration of our lives, our fortunes, our energies, our constant efforts, and our unhesitating sacrifices, to the sacred ideal of our freedom. I call upon each and every Filipino to help in the maintenance of peace and order without which it would be impossible to finish our gigantic task of national reconstruction. I address myself more particularly and with all the energy at my command to our brother Filipinos now in hiding in the hills and in the mountains, and I ask them to realize that, by their own misdirected activities, they are hindering and delaying the independence that we all so devoutly desire. I call upon our farmers and our laborers, our industrialists, our merchants, our engineers, our men of letters and our men of thought, to unite their talents and their energies in a vast and irresistible stream of productive activity that will make the Philippines a land of plenty and self-sufficiency, and a valuable asset to the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. I call upon all the elements of the population, men and women, the old and the young, the cultured and unlettered, to discover themselves as true Orientals, to cast off all harmful and shameful imitation, and to practice those virtues of honor, sincerity, courage, industry, frugality, and self-sacrifice for the common good, that have always characterized our people as Filipinos and as Orientals. I call upon all the Filipino people to rise as one man and highly resolve that nothing shall stop us, nothing shall delay us, nothing shall divide us, in the crusade to win and deserve the independence of the Philippines, an independence that shall be securely founded on the brotherhood of Oriental nations, existing and prospering together in peace and union under the inspiring leadership of the great Japanese Empire.