

# The Psychology of the Filipino

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*Lecture delivered in the hall of the Ateneo de Manila on February 13th, 1924*

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## I. Preliminary Remarks

A story is told of a certain missionary who was asked to write his opinion of the Filipinos, and was given big books in blank for this purpose. The missionary accepted the task. Years elapsed and the

missionary died. Time and efforts were not spared in looking for the books to find what the missionary had written. The books were found; but upon turning over the pages, not more than a single line was written on the first page of the first volume. And it runs thus: '*Here is all that I have found about the Filipinos*'. The rest of the page, as well as the next succeeding pages and books, was in blank.

This was understood to mean that the Spanish missionary must have found it impossible to comprehend the Filipino, and that the same was for him a blank page, fittingly represented by the blank books. I cannot vouch for the veracity of this story, but I give it here merely to emphasize the fact that it is, indeed, difficult for the occidental to understand our idiosyncrasy.

The peculiar Psychology of the Filipino was recognized, although not fully understood, I think, by the Spanish legislators, as shown by the insertion in our Penal Code, of the provision contained in act. 11, which says: "*the circumstance of the offender being a native, mestizo, or chinaman, shall be taken into consideration by the judges and courts in their discretion, for the purpose of mitigating or aggravating the penalties, according to the degree of intent, the nature of the act, and the circumstances of the offended person.*"

## I. The Need of Knowing the Filipino.

This difficulty of knowing the Filipino, is due, in my judgement, to the difference in the manner of thinking and acting between the occidentals and the orientals; and this is aggravated by the fact that, very often, we have to communicate our thoughts and feelings in a language not our own, and must make our manner of thinking and speaking to conform with it. I refer, of course, to the great mass of Filipinos, and not to some of the new generation who begin to grasp more readily American ideas and ways.

The present lecture is aimed at facilitating this knowledge of the Filipino, and is here given upon invitation by the Rev. Fr. President of the Ateneo, my *Alma Mater*. Our dear President wants the Americans, in general, and the American community in the Philippines, in particular, to know the Philippines and the Filipinos better, that thereby, out of this better understanding, mutual respect and esteem may grow between the two peoples.

I do not feel equal to the responsibility imposed upon me, but I shall try my best to respond to such a laudable desire of the Rev. Fr. President.

## 2. Explanation of the Subject.

The method followed in this lecture is more analytic than synthetic, because the subject itself so requires, it being a broad and fertile field not wholly explored; and right at the outset, I am thus giving you an instance of the manifestation of the Filipino psychology, which is that of leaving the observer to draw his own conclusions.

I shall talk to you about the psychology of the Filipino, as especially manifested in our literature and arts. I deem it necessary, however, to give first, the historical background of our islands, that you may better grasp the natural relations which our history has with our arts and literature. History and literature are kindred conceptions, both being the written story of the life that has been lived. While Philippine history places before us the life of the pioneers of our race, as exhibited by their action, literature presents the inner life, — thought, emotion, and ideals — of our people. Both history and literature reveal to us the life of a nation.

In giving some historical data, I shall not aim designedly at any particular epoch of history, but shall pick up those historical points which, in my judgment, may be taken as demonstrative of the Filipino idiosyncrasy. Thus, the data I shall give, refer more to the pre-Spanish times.

## 3. Historical Data.

### a). Primitive Inhabitants and Immigrations.

There is a diversity of opinions among the historians as to the ethnology of the different races that people the Philippine Archipelago. Following, however, what we may consider well founded conclusions, we can say that, besides the aboriginal Negritos, there were two separate immigrations, the first being the Indonesian, and the next, the Malay, both occurring many centuries before Christ. Many of us have seen Negritos, the aboriginal race in the Philippines.

The Indonesians, forced the Negritos to the mountains, and, afterwards, the Malays came, and occupied, in turn, the coasts and plains, and compelled the Indonesians to work their way to the interior regions of the Islands.

The *Igorots*, *Ginanes* *Apayos*, and *Gaddans* in Luzon; the *Bagobos*, and *Mandayays* in Mindanaw; the *Tagbanwas* in Palawan; and the *Samals*, in the island of Samal near Dabaw, are the remnants of those Indonesians who formed the first stream of immigrants. The *Tingyans* are also Indonesians. But it must be observed that the name *Tingyans* (derived from the Malay 'tinge' which means "mountain")

means, in general, men of the mountains; hence, the word *tinge* or *tyange* has been used for market, that is, a place where people of the mountains bring down their products to the plains, to sell. However, nowadays, the name *Tingyans* is only applied to the inhabitants of some parts of Abra, the Ilokos provinces, and Union.

In the Philippines, we can see every day, types of the first immigrants, — the Indonesians. There are some of these types in this hall. I myself being a native of Leyte, might have something Indonesian in my type.

The Malays who definitely occupied the coasts and plains, are the predominant race among the Moros of Mindanaw, the Bisayans, the Tagalogs, the Pampangans, the Ilokanos, and the Kagayans.

The Malay race is a product of a fusion of different peoples of South-eastern Asia, and of Malacca, Java, and other Oceanic Islands.

Many of the Malay immigrants to the Philippines, came from Malacca.

With reference to the Malay immigration, there are certain accounts relative to the first Malay chiefs called *datus* who arrived at the island of Panay. According to one of these accounts, the said *datus* were called *Puti*, *Bankaya*, *Paiburog*, *Sumakwel*, *Padohinog*, *Dumansol*, *Lubay*, *Dumalogdog* and *Bakalsusa*, disgusted with their king named *Makatunaw*, who abused them cruelly. This information ap-

pears in a manuscript which may be found in the archives of the Augustinian Fathers. It is very probable that this same account was copied in a pamphlet entitled "*Maragtas*", published in Iloilo in the year 1907, with a prologue by the ex-Secretary of Commerce and Communications, Hon. Salvador Laguda. Mr. Manuel Artigas, a bibliographer in charge of the Filipiniana Division of the Philippine Library and Museum, makes reference to these names and manuscript in his "*Historia de Filipinas*."

## b). Conquests.

There is a belief that, before the coming of the Spaniards, this Archipelago was subject to Hindu-Malayan empires in Sumatra, Indochina, and Borneo. In my opinion, the historical data available do not fully justify such a conclusion. As we have seen, the Malay *datus* just referred to, left their land, due to troubles with their king, for which reason it cannot be said that they conquered this Archipelago in the name of said king. There are historians, like Hervás y Panduro, who assure that the immigrations of the Brown or Mongoloid race into the Philippines was due, in part, to troubles with their country-men in their native land, which confirms the account about the immigration to the island of Panay above referred to.

*To be continued.*