

The Psychology of the Filipino

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(Continuation)

d). Social and Political Conditions.

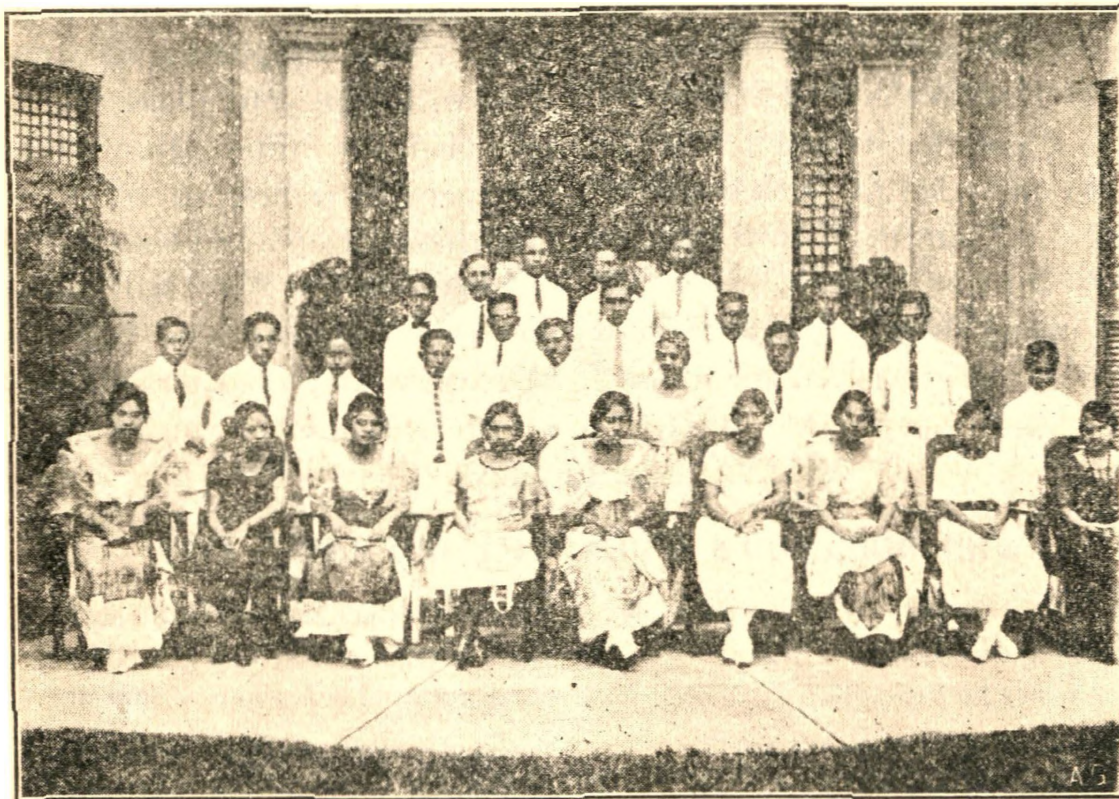
There is no doubt that among the Malays and Indonesians who occupied, and still occupy, the Archipelago, there is racial unity. As Fr. Zuñiga said, everything shows that the Filipinos belong to one and the same race.

Our physical appearance confirms this conclusion. Here is a picture showing Filipinos from different regions, including Mohammedans, Christians, and Pagans. This picture

was obtained through the courtesy of the Director of Non-Christian Tribes, Mr. Sanvictores:

Of the girls of this group, 5 are Christians, 3 Mohammedans, and 2 Pagans. Of the boys, 7 are Christians, 8 Mohammedans, and 2 Pagans. The picture was taken in the inner court of the Normal Hall, Manila, on Nov. 25, 1923.

The ancient division of the Filipinos into groups is due to their having come in different boats called *balagay*.



Each of these groups occupied and cultivated a certain area of land. As the members of each group were relatives, they recognized the oldest man among them as their chief, who was called *hadyé* (Malay term for *king*), or *radya* (Indonesian word for *king*), or *datu* (Malay name of *chief* or *noble*), or *matanda sa nayon* (*old man* or chief of the place), according to the importance of each group. The words *sultan* (emperor), and *paglima* (*chief of five divisions*, because *paglima* is a derivative of *limá* which means five), must have been brought many centuries after, when Islamism was introduced here after the 14th century.

Rizal had reason to believe that there may have existed a confederation, since we know from the early Spaniards who settled here, that the ruler in Manila, in the year 1570, was *Radya Matanda*, who had jurisdiction over the territory from the northern banks of the Pasig river northwards, and was the uncle of *Radya Solimán* who had jurisdiction over the territory from the southern banks of the Pasig river southwards.

Professor Blumentritt, in an article entitled "*De los Estados indigenas existentes en Filipinas en tiempo de la Conquista española*" ("Revista Contemporanea", year 12, vols. 63, 64) tells us of the following prominent men: *Gat-Dakil*, lord of San Pablo, Laguna; *Gat-Bulin-tag*, lord of Pagdayaan, Batangas; *Gat-Salukáb*, lord of Lumot; *Gat-ugayan*, lord of Makupa; *Gat-*

Maytan, lord of Bulakan; *Gat-Salyan*, lord of Malolos; *Gat-Dulá*, lord of Hagunoy.

The term *gat* represented a national or social prominence and title, given to a person in consideration to his learning, wealth, power, or personal courage.

There was another title, of a more strictly official character, applied to persons exercising some jurisdiction and authority, such as the title of *lakán*, probably derived from *laki* (big or greatness). Such was the title of the Chief of Tondo in 1570, called *Lakán-Dulá*. This name was kept after the arrival of the Spaniards, and was used as a surname of the descendants of that chief of Tondo. So, the first Filipino who entered a Catholic Religious Order, was Martin Lakandula, probably a son of said Chief, a member of the Augustinian Order, who died in Manila in the year 1590 (See "Indicaciones Bibliograficas" of Retana in his edition of Morga's "Sucesos de Filipinas", p. 543.)

We use at present this word *lakán* very frequently, not isolated, but in a composition. I refer to the name *Malakanyan*, the place where the palace of the Governor-Generals of the Philippines is situated. This word *Malakanyan*, as explained by Mr. Jose Sevilla, a notable Tagalog writer, is a compound of *ma* which is a Filipino particle used to express abundance, *lakán* which, as I have said, means chief, and *iyán*, a Tagalog demonstrative pronoun equivalent to *that* or *that place*. So, *Ma-*

lakán-iyán, means the place of the Governor-Generals.

You will pardon me for indulging in the explanation of native words, tracing their etymology. I do it, for I believe that much more light and interest are thus thrown on the subject.

The Filipino society was based on the family as a social unit. The family relations were, and still are, so close, that they are not limited to the parents and children, but are extended to remote relatives.

The society was divided into three main classes, the nobles, the freemen, and the slaves. It must be noted that slavery was much more humane in the Philippines, than in Greece and Rome. This was probably due to the fact that the immigrants who settled in these Islands were imbued with sentiments of liberty; they were a people forced to leave their native land because of the tyranny of some of their kings.

It may be said, therefore, that Providence prepared our forefathers for Christianity, which they did, in fact, receive most willingly, and which taught and teaches equality of men, and that a person, by the mere fact of being a member of the human-kind, is endowed with, and possessed of, all the natural rights common to all men, because of their common nature, origin, and destiny.

The Filipinos had their economic, military and political government. The government, as Fr. San Antonio tells us, was not monarchical, for they had no absolute king; nor

was it democratic, but it was an aristocracy, in accordance with their traditions. Each group or state was called *balagay*, which was similar to the districts of Rome. We have already indicated that *balagay* was each group of immigrants coming in the same boat. These groupings were kept by them, and afterwards found by the Spaniards who adopted them as divisions for purposes of personal taxation, the head of each group being called *cabeza de barangay* (head of a *balagay*).

The highest chief of each political group was vested with legislative, executive and judicial powers. He made laws, by and with the advice and consent of the *datus* and *eldermen*, who also acted as delegates, especially in the judiciary, where they performed the functions of judges. The litigants could appoint a referee. The groups maintained interstate relations.

e.) Laws.

Besides their traditions and customs, they had positive laws, actually made, promulgated and published, as Loarca indicates, and as shown by a Penal Code written in the year 1433 by Kalantiaw, the third chief of Panay, of which I shall speak later.

There were laws as to marriage, but there was only one kind of ceremony, the religious one. The ceremony was more or less solemn, depending on the rank of the contracting parties. According to Morga, the wife was on the same level with

her husband, not only in her person but also in regard to property. The wife was supposed to be the boss of the house. Thus, among the Tagalogs, the wife is called *may-bahay* (the owner, the chief of the house).

The solemnity of the marriage is maintained in many places up to the present time, but, of course, somewhat influenced by the Spanish customs.

Of course, distinction was drawn between legitimate and illegitimate children; there was a procedure of legitimation, and of acknowledgment, and adoption of children. There were laws on property, succession, wills, betterments, obligations and contracts, partnership,

loans, court procedure, etc.

Naturally, upon the establishment of the Spanish sovereignty, the Spanish laws were put in force, and some of these Spanish laws are still laws in these Islands.

There are in force up to the present time some native customary laws, such as some rules among the Moros of Mindanaw, and some Filipino contracts, like the Tagalog *sanla*, which is called *prenda* in Bisayan, which is very similar to the old Roman contract called *fiducia*, when said *sanla* or *prenda* refers to real property. There are also some special partnerships of agricultural or commercial character, and even in the fishing industry.

(To be continued)



BE KIND, SPEAK GENTLY

Speak gently; it is better far
To rule by LOVE than FEAR.
Speak gently, let no harsh word mar
The good we might do here.

Speak gently to the little child,
Its love be sure to gain;
Teach it in accents soft and mild,
It may not long remain.

Speak gently to the aged one;
Grieve not the careworn heart:
The sands of life are nearly run,
Let such in peace depart.

Speak gently kindly to the poor;
Let no harsh tone be heard;
They have enough they must endure,
Without an unkind word.

Speak gently to the erring; know
They must have toiled in vain;
Perhaps unkindness made them so.
Oh! win them back again.

Speak kindly: 'tis a little thing
Dropped in the heart's deep well;
The good, the joy which it may bring
Eternity shall tell.

In the man whose childhood has known caresses and kindness, there is always a fibre of memory that can be touched to gentle influences.