

WHAT WAS THE REASON for the Greater East Asia War?



IN East Asia which should be the most tranquil region of the globe, in East Asia where the people are most peace-loving, a war of continental proportion has been in progress since 1937. This conflict is what is known as the "China Incident". And before this China Incident had time to subside, on December 8, 1941 the Greater East Asia War broke out, to envelope the whole of East Asia in a great conflagration. Every where over this wide area we have witnessed bombs raining from the skies, heard the thudding of heavy guns shake the earth, and seen monster-like mechanisms of war thundering over the once peaceful lands. In all this there has been an incessant shedding of Asian blood.

The question is, Why did such a misfortune come about? Why was it necessary for Japan to rise, stake her very destiny, and declare war not only against one, but against two enormous countries that have boasted as being the most powerful in the world. It is one of the boldest moves ever made in history, and it seemed an almost disastrous step on the part of Japan. Already, she had been engaged for over four years in a war against the China controlled by Chiang-kai-Shek. Her determination to further take up the challenge against such colossal nations as Great Britain and the United States must have astounded the world.

People of other countries had some idea that Japan was a strong nation nevertheless, they saw it only as a small island country of Asia. Furthermore, she had been fighting in China for almost 5 years, they believed her to be in great difficulty. They imagined that her arms and ammunition were almost exhausted and her food supply reduced to a precarious level. Her whole economic setup appeared to be on the verge of complete collapse. Moreover, it is not to be forgotten that she had for quite some time been subject to economic blockade by Great Britain and the United States, and she could not possibly have had the time nor the resources to replenish her economic strength, or so they thought. They analyzed that under such circumstances it would be about all she could do to continue her war on the continent. To even think of undertaking a war against the enormous nations of Great Britain and the United States seemed like committing national suicide.

But Japan did rise up against the two countries simultaneously. Why did she do this, a thing that seemed almost like madness? It was because she considered the fate of the peoples of East Asia. It was not for her interests alone. It was for that of the one billion East Asian people.

Champion of the Oppressed

NEVERTHELESS, utilizing the Chiang régime to the utmost, the Anglo-Americans next decided their countries under political and economic control by the powerful nations of the West, particularly Great Britain and the United States. And who, besides Japan, was capable of redeeming them? In all Asia, what country was powerful enough to stand up against the dominators? By all lines of reasoning here was no way out unless Japan undertook to oust the aggressors, if the Asian peoples were not to be permanently enslaved. It is true that there had been persistent if feeble cries of self-determination among a few of the countries, for all practical purposes they were too debilitated by Western thought to really and truly realize their precarious condition. It was necessary to awaken them to the reality of their slow but surely impending doom. Japan decided to resurrect Asia by crushing the forces of oppression, to re-invigorate Asia by building it on the foundations of a permanent and stable new order.

Such a goal, and such a program was naturally bound to be anathema to the powers that claimed to have "discovered" and opened up the backward countries of the East. These outsiders were chiefly Great Britain and the United States. They objected, and contrived to obstruct Japan's great mission. Their

national policies not only featured ways and means of defeating Japan's purpose of liberation, but they included the ultimate subjugation of Japan herself. Their international conspiracy was at one time augmented by Holland and France.

The Anglo-Americans had further ideas. Asia is an enormous continent and there was China, a giant of a country with a population of more than 400,000,000 enjoying, dubiously it is true, the status of a sovereign nation. There were 3 independent countries in all of Asia, Japan, Thailand, and China. Thailand, however, was at that time so completely under British influence that she was practically a British colony. There remained only Japan and China. To the Anglo-Americans China was tremendously large and offered great possibilities to be utilized for their own purposes. They knew that if China worked with Japan they could not carry out their plans for imperialism. It was for this reason that they used every possible means to influence and manipulate China to be a part of their nefarious plans. They proposed to use China as a cat's paw. They worked to involve her in a conflict with Japan and thereby weaken Japan. China, their tool, began a thorough-going preparation and campaign to oppose Japan. It is obvious that Japan could not idly watch the threatening moves with folded arms. She took up the sword to forestall China. With the outbreak of the China Incident, the Anglo-Americans realized their immense chances for a successful intrigue. They made every effort both from within and without to prolong the conflict indefinitely by aiding Chungking.

In time, however, there arose a Chinese leader, truly Oriental in spirit. He is Wang Ching Wei. Wang broke away from Chiang-kai-Shek and established a new Chinese government in the former capital of Nanking. He is now the acknowledged leader of the New China and is working hand in hand with Japan in the establishment of the New Order in Asia. As

to the renegade Chiang-kai-Shek régime, it is now in the throes of dissolution and faces inevitable defeat.

Japan Intervenes

NEVERTHELESS, utilizing the Chiang régime to the utmost, the Anglo-Americans next decided to stop Japan by a move of encirclement, by linking Chunking with the colonial outposts of France and Holland. France, was subsequently defeated by Germany in Europe so finally the partnership in the encirclement conspiracy became the ABCD powers, with A as America, B as Britain, C as China, and D as Dutch. The loop of the noose was now stretched from the Eleutians at the north, down across Hawaii and Midway and Guam and the Philippines, through to Australia, the Dutch East Indies, the Malay Peninsula and on to India.

They then took turns to map out their strategy of strangling Japan by calling a series of conferences, holding them first in Singapore, then in Manila, and so on. If they succeeded in their plans, they calculated that Japan would not only be reduced to impotence but the subject peoples of Asia could be exploited at their will. With Japan out of the way they could again get together to divide up Asia as they did Africa and as they once started to do with Asia before Japan rose to power.

Knowing the tragic consequences of an armed conflict, Japan endeavored to avoid it and tried to reason with them. This effort was demonstrated by the sending of Ambassadors Nomura and Kuruusu to Washington to somehow make a peaceful settlement. It was useless. On November 26 of the year 1941, in a final answer to Japan's suggestions, the United States handed to the Japanese envoys a counterproposal which was a veritable ultimatum. Japan was told to accept it, or else!

How many of the Filipinos know what that ultimatum was?



Textual Comparisons

For any textual comparison for this particular stanza of the different editions of *Plorante* it would be necessary to point out certain characteristics of Tagalog poetry and of the Tagalog language, in order to clear up doubtful points with regard to the rhyme scheme of the lines here quoted. In Tagalog poetry, the perfect rhyme does not exist,²⁰ and rhyme (*tula*), as generally understood in this language, is what corresponds to the assonant or vowel rhyme in English, French, and Spanish. Gummere says that "assonance deals generally with the vowels alone...—the interior or middle sound (vowel) of a syllable."²¹ Isable Butler states, however, that "a common assonance had the same vowel in the last accented syllable of each line in a given stanza, although the consonants following vowels need not be the same, as in rhyme."²²

The text here given contains the loan-word *pincel*, at the end of the first line, and the words *panimdim*, *akin*, and *libing* at the end of the second, third and fourth lines, respectively. According to Gummere and Butler, the existence of the vowel *é* in *pinsel* would be a violation of the rule of assonance, since each of the other three words has *i* in its last accented syllable. However, if we consider that in Tagalog (as in other Philippine languages) the clear Spanish *e*-sound does not exist, and that the original *pēpēt ě* of the Indonesian group finally became *i*, with a sound intermediate between *e* (as in every) and *i* (as in ill) taking the place of either sound, when either occurs in writing in the final or penultimate syllable,²³ then it can be clearly seen that the first line of the stanza here quoted is in perfect assonance with the other three lines. All the last syllables of the stanza may be pronounced with the intermediate sound between *e* and *i*.

In the last line of the same stanza, *na* is used in the 1906 edition of Mr. Cruz. Mr. Santos Cristobal, however, says that *at* is the correct word, appearing in his edition of 1853, as well as in the editions of 1875-A, 1875-B, 1894 and 1901. According to him, *at* "is a copulative very much in vogue at the time of Balagtas," and in this particular instance, "gives, moreover, the emphasis required by the thought of the author and by the sense of the stanza."²⁴ He is correct, as far as he goes. The use of *at* instead of *na*, however, is governed by more steadfast rules than those of vogue and emphasis. If we examine the last two lines, we shall see that *na* is a particle of relation which stands between the modified and the modifier. In this particular case, the *na* becomes a ligature *-ng* and attaches itself to the noun modified (*sanla*) and the phrases which modify it,—*naiwan sa akin* and *dímananakaw* . . . The particle of relation, *na*, in the last line, is, therefore superfluous, and is out of place, since the ligature *-ng* is already used, which for euphony, is more appropriate than *na* which should

stand between *sanla* and the modifiers beginning with *naiwan*. *At* is more appropriate, because it connects two phrases which do not modify each other but are both modifiers of the noun *sanla*.

The sense in which a loan-word is used in any piece of literature is an important factor in determining the real meaning which the writer wishes to give to it. The exact meaning which the writer gives to a word, in turn, has a direct bearing on the faithfulness of translation of any piece of literature into another language. In the stanza which we have here for discussion (To Celia, Stanza 6), appears the loan-word *pincel*, which, Mr. Santos Cristobal says, is accepted, both in current and classical Tagalog, for *pen* (*pluma*) or *chisel* (*cinzel*). To prove that *pincel* has the sense of *pen*, he quotes the "ascetic Florentino Ramirez" as saying:

" . . . naquiquita mo na ang huling daan nang ualáng uastóng *pincél* na aquing ipinag-guhit . . ." (you already see the last stroke of the brush with which I draw . . .)

and then explains that the *brush* is "the pen with which he (Ramirez) wrote his famous *Mga sariling uicang mag-isa*, p. 140."²⁵ Here, *pincel* (brush) is used figuratively, which is done not only in Tagalog but in almost every language which uses figures of speech. So we have no quarrel to make with Mr. Santos Cristobal on this account.

But when he says that *pincel* as *cinzel* (chisel) is current and even classical, in Tagalog, and then quotes the first two lines of Stanza 6, with the explanation that "here *pincel* is the *cinzel* (chisel) of the engraver", he is not only distorting facts of the Tagalog language, but is also sowing the seed of confusion in an otherwise clear meaning of the famous lines of Balagtas.

So sufficient had the testimony seemed to those who are unfamiliar with the Tagalog language, that Professor St. Clair and those who helped him in his English verse translation of *Plorante at Laura*, accepted Mr. Santos Cristobal's views, without giving as much as a glance at the original language in which the poem is written.

The Spanish translation of Stanza 6 by Mr. Santos Cristobal, is as follows:

- (a) "Imagen trazada por el *pincel* amante,
grabada en el corazón y en el entendimiento,
prenda única confiada a mi custodia,
y que no será robada ni en la sepultura."

Literally translating this into English, we have:

- (b) "A picture, sketched (drawn, traced) by a lover's brush,
engraved into the heart and into the mind,
unique token, confided to my care,
and which can not be stolen, even from the grave."

Compare this to Prof. St. Clair's rhymed translation:

- (c) "An image cut by chisel dear,
And graven deep upon my heart;
The only gift now left to me here,
Nor in the grave from it I'll part."

Note the inconsistency in (a) of *pincel amante* (lover's brush), line 1, with *grabada en el corazón* (engraved into the heart), line 2. If Mr. Santos Cristobal thinks that *pincel* is used in Tagalog for *cincel* (chisel), why has he not translated it *cincel* instead of preserving its form (*pincel*) as in the original? It would have been more in accordance with his theory and in harmony with his *grabada* (engraved) of the second line. Professor St. Clair saw the inconsistency of *pincel* (brush) with *grabada* (engraved) and tried to rectify Mr. Santos Cristobal's error by using the word *chisel* in his translation.

Professor St. Clair could have started in the right direction had he disregarded the latter's suggestion that *pincel* is *chisel* instead of "an artist's brush." At least, had he resorted to the original stanza, he would have had a clearer understanding of the poet's real meaning, and would have been able to render a closer translation. As it is, his English translation, based on Mr. Cristobal's Spanish version, changes the meaning of the stanza entirely. See translation (b) of the stanza cited above.²⁶

5. "Parang naririnig ang lági mong wika:
'Tatlong araw na dí nagtatanaw táma'
at sinásagot ko ñg sábing may tuwa:
'sa isa katao'y marami ang handa.'"
(Kay Celia, Stanza 12)

Para, in the first line, is not the Spanish preposition *para* (for), but is the modification of the adjective *parejo*, *-ja*, (equal, similar, even). In the sense of "like, similar," the word suffers further modification in meaning when it is used in Tagalog to mean "as, it seems as" etc. Modern Tagalog writers would suggest the use of some native word, like *Wari*, *gaya*.²⁷ But if such masters of Tagalog poetry like Pinpin,²⁸ Fr. Pedro Herrera²⁹ and P. de la Merced,³⁰ considered *para*, in the sense used by Balagtas, quite appropriate, there is hardly any need of using the Tagalog equivalent in the poem written at the time when the use of *para* and other loan-words was considered perfectly natural and legitimate.

The edition of 1906³¹ has *wikang* instead of *wika*. The latter form is used in all the editions³² of Mr. Santos Cristobal as well as in our edition of 1850. He considers *wika* as the correct form, "for the simple reason that the rhyme of the stanza is in vowels and

not in consonants. The rhyme of the stanza is in *wiká, tamá, tuwá, handá*." While apparently the addition of the particle *-ng* to *wika* would not affect the assonance of these four words, in reality it does, for the *-ng* sound opens the preceding vowel, making it continuous. To make the *a* a continuous sound by adding *-ng* is to make it dissonant with the final *á*'s in the words *tamá, tuwá, and handá*, which all bear the glottal check (*hamseh*). Moreover, the ligature *-ng* is uncalled for, inasmuch as the word to which it is attached does not have the character of a noun modified, but simply introduces a direct quotation. If, in the latter case, the ligature were really necessary, then the word *tuwá* (third line) should have the form *tuwang*, which it does not have, even in the edition of 1906.³³

On Textual Changes

A FEW remarks on the textual changes adopted in the present edition should suffice for a conclusion to this brief study:

The abbreviated forms of *nang* and *manga* and the use of *i* and *o* or *u* for consonants (or semi-vowels) *y* and *w*, respectively, or vice versa, have been eliminated.

Typographical accentuation has been considered unnecessary, even for semantic differentiation, since meanings and pronunciations of words and phrases, whether typographically accented or not, are more easily and correctly mastered through a regular exercise in contextual interpretation.

Spanish loan-words which have not been completely assimilated into Tagalog have been restored in their original form, in order to facilitate the determination and study of such loan-words so skillfully used by Balagtas throughout the *Plorante*.

Other changes have been based on the requirements of correct metre; e.g.: the change from *Bay* to *Bai*, etc.

Finally, it should be noted here that the present edition cannot be anything more than a preliminary step toward the reconstruction of a more critical edition of *Plorante at Laura*. Many textual differences in the various editions examined have to be more closely analyzed; many controversial points have to be settled in a more objective manner. If the present edition, therefore, can serve for nothing else than to arouse interest and critical comments from more competent authorities, the efforts spent on the present study will have been more than fully compensated.

