

Archipelago

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF THE PHILIPPINES



Tabuena: nostalgic poet of the brush

Philippine movies: how to see them

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Trends

Tourism: thrust on facilities

The following report was made by Honorable Jose D. Aspiras, Secretary of Tourism, for the *Fookien Times Yearbook 1975*. Secretary Aspiras was named man of the year for international tourism in 1975 by the *World Tourism Organization (WTO)*, Paris, France.

THE YEAR 1975, which marks the second of the country's Four-Year Tourism Development Plan, has witnessed the sustained growth of the Philippine tourist industry, which was optimistically dubbed last year as "the newest miracle of Asia."

In fact, the mass movement is going on in accordance with the timetable, in spite of the multifarious problems occasioned by the ravaging inflation and oil crisis. During the first six months of this year, for instance, tourist arrivals reached a total of 258,755. This figure represented an increase of 41 per cent over that of the same period last year.

On the basis of the arrival trends, it is a cinch that the Philippines will be able to generate at least half a million visitors in 1975. The original target under the Four-Year Development Plan was only 345,000 visitors for this year, and the 500,000th mark was not expected until the end of the program by 1977.

However, as early as last year, projection had to be revised upward in view of the continuous heavy influx of tourists. Thus, for this year may be hopefully attained what had been set out to be attained by 1977. In other words, the existing favorable tourism climate has catapulted the tourism program two years ahead of time, a situation more than bargained for.

But if the current efforts of the Department of Tourism have accomplished something more other than the record growth of tourist traffic, it is the development of hotel accommodations and facilities which are considered tourism plants. The truth of the matter is that the DOT thrust now is aimed more at development than at promotion in view of the critical shortage of hotel rooms.

Eighteen hotels of international standard are now going in the Greater Manila area. Their construction is being rushed in time for the World Bank-International Monetary Fund Conference in October next year. To facilitate the completion of these projects, the Central Bank endorsed 14 of them to three financing institutions, namely the Development Bank of the Philippines, the Government Service Insurance System and the Philippine National Bank.

These hotels are the Manila International Hotel, Monarch Hotel, Manila Midtown Plaza, Century Park Hotel, Manila Garden Hotel, Manila Peninsula Hotel, Manila Mandarin Hotel, Hotel Mirador, Holiday Inn, Manila Hotel (renovation and new addition), Philippine Village Hotel (extension) and Swiss Palace.

The four others are Hotel Aurelio (expansion), Floro Hotel, KBS-Kanlaon Towers and Western Hotel.

All told, these new luxury hotels will provide an additional 7,871 rooms,

more than enough to service the room requirements of the 5,000 delegates to the WB-IMF annual meeting in Manila.

At present, there are 4,217 rooms from existing hotels in Greater Manila. The government's crash hotel building program will treble this capacity by early 1977 and will thus raise new challenges for the tourism industry.

But it is not only in Manila that the steady upsurge of visitor traffic is being felt. Even the 6,000-odd rooms in the provinces are registering an appreciably high rate of occupancy compared to that in the previous years when tourism was in the doldrums.

The government's long-range program actually revolves on the development of destination areas beyond the Greater Manila area, such as Northern Luzon, Davao, Zamboanga and the Bicol region. This is quite imperative if the material benefits of tourism must be spread out to the rural areas while at the same time obviating further congestion of

HOTELS	Total Number of rooms	Room Firm	Blockings Tentative
1. Hyatt Regency	265	173	
2. Intercontinental	420	240	
3. Manila Hilton	425	250	
4. Phil. Village Hotel	285	238	
5. Sulo Hotel	51		
6. Hotel Filipinas	333	117	
7. Bayview Hotel	266	200	
8. Aloha Hotel	84		
9. Hotel Aurelio	138		100
10. Manila Royal Hotel	220		
11. Hotel Enrico	231		
12. Tower	120		100
13. Ambassador Hotel	247	200	
14. Hotel Otani	137		100
15. El Dorado	81		50
16. Copacabana Apt. Hotel	141		10
	<u>3,444</u>	<u>1,418</u>	<u>360</u>
Newly Constructed Hotels			
El Grande Hotel	426		
Makati Hotel	234		
Hotel Frederic	113		
Total	<u>773</u>		
GRAND TOTAL OF ROOMS FROM EXISTING HOTELS - 4,217			

highly urbanized centers of population.

A sample survey conducted by the DOT last year showed that 70.52% of the foreign visitors stayed outside Greater Manila as against 29.48% who simply stayed within the Greater Manila area. This is a very significant observation considering that, in the past years, only about 50% preferred to go beyond Greater Manila.

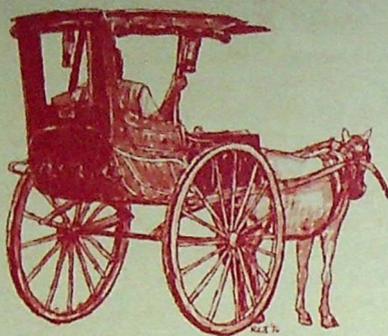
The priority program of developing known and identified tourist destinations in Greater Manila and other parts of the country is being carried out as an integral part of the Four-Year Plan, through a coordinated harnessing of private and government resources.

The bulk of the massive investments required by this program will be shouldered by the government, representing the cost of infrastructural projects like roads, bridges and airports that will link the different tourist priority areas of the country. The private sector, on the other hand, will participate more particularly in the areas of accommodations and transport. According to estimates, the amount of private investments required for the Four-Year Plan is in the order of \$300 million.

The entire scheme for planning, programming and financing this aspect of the tourism program is being translated into reality by the Philippine Tourism Authority, the implementing arm of the Department of Tourism.

However, inspite of the country's acute need for expanded accommodations and inspite of the enthusiastic response of the private sector along this line, as evidenced by the proposals that have flooded the DOT, the Philippine Tourism Authority has flashed the red light to hotel investors to avoid overbuilding. Lessons have been learn from other Asian countries where frenzied construction of luxury hotels was undertaken only to find them practically empty later on because of the inevitable glut.

The measured capacity up to 1977 for tourist hotels has been reached, and having been reached the PTA has applied the brakes. By 1977 about a million tourists are anticipated and when this materializes then probably the door will be opened anew to hotel investors who, it seems, are all aching to sink their



funds into the hospitality trade.

On reaching the millionth mark, the Philippines, will be placed for the first time on the same footing as her successful neighbors today, like Hong Kong, Thailand and Singapore. By then the tourist trade shall have become the country's chief dollar earner, with total receipts estimated at some \$300 million. Since local tourist receipts are known to change hands at least five times and generate economic activity 3.2 times their original value, the total impact on the national economy shall be worth well over two billion pesos.

On the basis of last year's figures, a foreign visitor is estimated to have spent U.S. \$261.30 for the entire duration of his stay (the average length of stay is computed at 7.76 or 7.8 days). Of the total expenditures, \$60.44 was spent for accommodation, \$63.52 for shopping, \$34.41 for entertainment, and \$14.55 for miscellaneous items.

On the other hand, an overseas Filipino visitor, otherwise known as a *Balibayan*, is estimated to have spent U.S. \$500 for the whole duration of his stay, which is computed at 21 days. This is quite significant, considering that Filipino returnees have outnumbered even the American visitors, to occupy the number two slot. The Americans used to hold sway, so to speak, in the record of tourist arrivals until they were dislodged by the Japanese.

Judging from the current trend, Australia bids fair to be one of the Philippines' three major tourist markets, to push the United States to the fourth berth. Already the Australians now rank as the fourth biggest number of tourists to the Philippines with 18,388 of them having arrived during the first six months

of this year. This represents an impressive increase of 97% over the same period last year.

This year at least 40,000 Australian visitors are expected, as against an earlier projection of only 25,000. The emergence of Australia as the Philippines' big source of tourists is due largely to the joint promotional efforts of Philippine Air Lines and Qantas Airways which has sponsored its "Jetabout" and "Swingaway" travel programs. These twin programs aim to bring to the Philippines a regular number of Australians every week through low-cost package tours.

Of course, the Department of Tourism's travel and cultural mission to Australia early this year has served to explore this important market.

As continued improvements are made on accommodations capacity and tourist facilities and services, other potential markets are also being explored notably in various parts of Europe.

Of transport services, the Philippines will be needing a total of 12,444 tour bus seats and 1,122 tour car seats up to the end of the Four-Year Plan in 1977. These require new investments totalling U.S. \$20.32 million (\$18.65 million for bus seats and \$1.67 million for car seats).

AT PRESENT, the Philippines has—based on its measured capacity—6,651 tourist bus seats and 739 tourist car seats. Percentage-wise, buses and cars account for the biggest means of transportation utilized by visitors in moving around Greater Manila and other places in the country (80.92% and 60.03%, respectively). Domestic planes, which come in third, account for only 17.40% of the transport utilization.

What are the most important factors that attract foreigners to the Philippines?

First and foremost, are the friendliness and hospitality of the Filipino people. In fact, the World Bank tourism mission that came to the Philippines two years ago stated in no uncertain terms that the people themselves are the country's biggest tourist asset.

Next is inexpensiveness. Tourists have generally considered the Philippines less expensive than other countries in Asia or in the Pacific area. Since this is

actually one of the come-ons in the total promotional effort, the Department of Tourism sees to it that those in the hospitality trade do not kill the goose that lays the proverbial golden egg by not allowing them to jack up their rates unreasonably.

Tourism as a major foreign exchange earner has definitely found its place in economic development. From a drawing board export commodity it has turned into a glorious reality through a combination of happy circumstances, not the least bit of which is the new-found wholesome partnership between the government and private sectors.

Another factor that attracts travelers to the Philippines is the beauty of natural and man-made attractions, both in Greater Manila and in the country-sides.

Last, but not least, is the excellent peace and order obtaining in the country. Time and again, it has been pointed out that the flowering of Philippine tourism is, in a large measure, more directly traceable to President Marcos himself. With the declaration of martial law public order and safety were restored. Big and small crimes have been greatly minimized. And there is now more efficiency in government and less red tape.

WITH all these changes, the New Society has emerged. The New Society is based on the belief that national development can be achieved by a developing nation not through a choice between Western-style democracy or social-

ism but through a determined, disciplined and united effort to realize objectives and ideals of the new Constitution.

Actually, tourism's relationship with the New Society and martial law transcends the level of mere propaganda and has to do with the fundamental question of survival. The equation is simple enough: without the New Society, there is no stability, no peace and order. And without stability and peace and order, no tourism can be possible.

Needless to say, President Marcos' creation of the Department of Tourism and his promulgation of a number of decrees granting incentives to the tourist industry have considerably accelerated the record growth of the sector. Among these was Presidential Decree No. 535, providing for a comprehensive investment incentive program for the industry.

This decree, for instance, grants the following incentives to registered tourism enterprises, such as hotels, resorts and transport services, heretofore granted only to pioneer and priority industries:

□ Fifty per cent (50%) of foreign exchange earned in the first five years from the start of operations shall be deductible from net taxable income subject to other provisions of Section 10 of Republic Act No. 6135 and rules and regulations to be promulgated by the Authority.

□ A net operating loss incurred in any of the first ten years of operation shall be carried over as a deduction from taxable income for six years following such loss as provided for in Section 7

(c) of Republic Act No. 5186.

□ A tax credit shall be granted for taxes withheld on interest payments on foreign loans as provided for in Section 7 (f) of Republic Act No. 5186 and defined under Section 3 thereof.

□ Exemptions from real estate taxes on land improvements and building shall be granted for the first five years from the start of operations.

□ Importations of machinery and equipment, and spare parts shipped with such equipment, shall not be subject to tariff duties and compensating tax within seven years from the date of registration with the Authority subject to the other provisions in Section 7 (d) of Republic Act No. 5186.

□ A tax credit equivalent to one hundred per cent of the value of the compensating tax and customs duties that would have been paid on machinery and spare parts had these items been imported shall be given to the registered tourism enterprise who purchases machinery, equipment and spare parts from a domestic manufacturer, and another tax credit equivalent to fifty per cent thereof shall be given to the said manufacturer subject to other provisions in Section 7 (e) of Republic Act No. 5186, and defined under Section 3 (j) thereof.

□ Undistributed profit or surplus which a registered tourism enterprise reinvests shall be allowed as a deduction from its taxable income in the year such reinvestments were made, subject to other provisions of Section 7(h) of Republic Act No. 5186, to the extent of:

□ 50 per cent for expansion of registered tourism facilities within the Greater Manila area;

□ 75 per cent for expansion of registered tourism facilities outside of Greater Manila; and

□ 75 per cent for the expansion of existing registered tourism facilities in Greater Manila to additional facilities outside of Greater Manila. It must be reiterated that the Philippine tourism industry today is the latest miracle story on the Southeast Asian scene. The miracle does not lie so much in the figures that reflect the industry's phenomenal growth as in the transformation taking place in the tourism climate from the time President Marcos instituted martial law in September 1972. ■



Arjuna

Letter from Zamboanga

The place for pearls

ZAMBOANGA CITY at the southernmost edge of Mindanao is a place that never ceases to amaze the visitor who happens to stumble across it or who deliberately seeks it out. I imagine it would be like coming upon Malacca or Amboina in its heyday with gems, perfumes and rare textiles, people, sights and smells and the exotica that only a city like Zamboanga could have. In the history of Spanish Philippines, it was the only real hold the Spaniards ever had in the Muslim part of the Philippines. Fort del Pilar still stands silent guard over the edge of the Sulu Sea and is one of the few such almost completely intact structures in the country.

The Spaniards were never able to subjugate the fierce *Moros*—the Spanish word for Moors—which was applied to the followers of Islam whom they encountered when the country was settled in 1565. The fort fell into the hands of the Americans at the turn of the century. It was from here that Gen. John J. Pershing—then only a lowly major—went about his famous Moro campaigns, which saw some of the bloodiest clashes of American rule.

The *Moros*—particularly the fierce Tausug of Jolo island, further southward towards Borneo—put up some memorable battles. Two in particular—Bud Dajo and Bud Uwak—are still talked about by the Tausug when they talk of war as they love to do. They were also the last and heaviest fighting the Americans had to do. After that the country subsided into a “Pax Americana” that was not to be broken until the outbreak of the Second

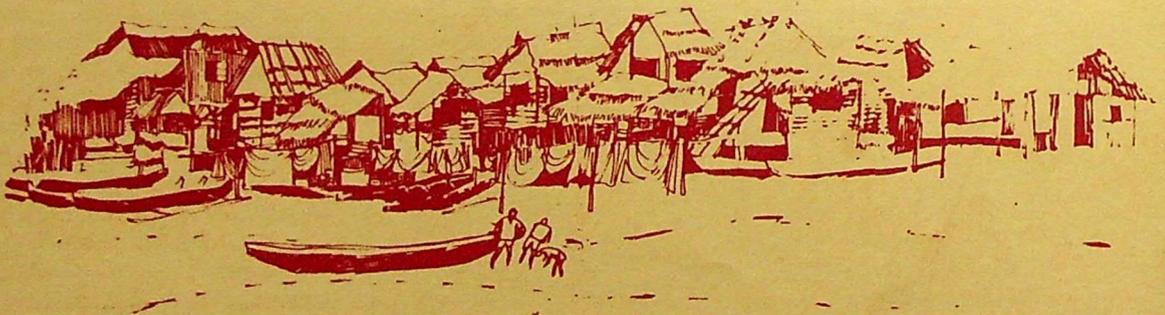
World War in 1941.

Today Zamboanga has an atmosphere born of the mix of those colonial wars of the Spaniards and the Americans. The Tausug are still very much around. Now a free port, Zamboanga is quite a place to buy pearls, which come from pearl beds in the Sulu Sea further southwards. They are still a bargain even at today’s inflated prices; they aren’t those effete cultured things either.

Gems play a poor second to pearls and one does come across a good ruby or sapphire (obviously brought in via the ancient smuggling routes through the Sulu Sea, from places like Singapore and Sabah). By and large though, the gems aren’t that spectacular.

Rare textiles are a good buy. Very often you’ll find material here that has yet to make its appearance in the fashion houses of Manila. But I guess you have to have an eye and a feel for cloth or you could find yourself stuck with cotton material available elsewhere at cheap prices. This might be a good time for textiles, as they probably come from Hong Kong with its glut of textile inventories through Singapore and Sabah.

Souvenir items are perhaps the most attractive gift items and you’re most likely to come across authentic pieces here, like old gold coins dating to Spanish times or even the old Spanish piece of eight. There is quite a bit of brass pieces, handicraft of unknown Muslim artisans, certainly much more authentic than the ones being sold in some of the curio shops on Mabini street in Manila’s tourist area. ■



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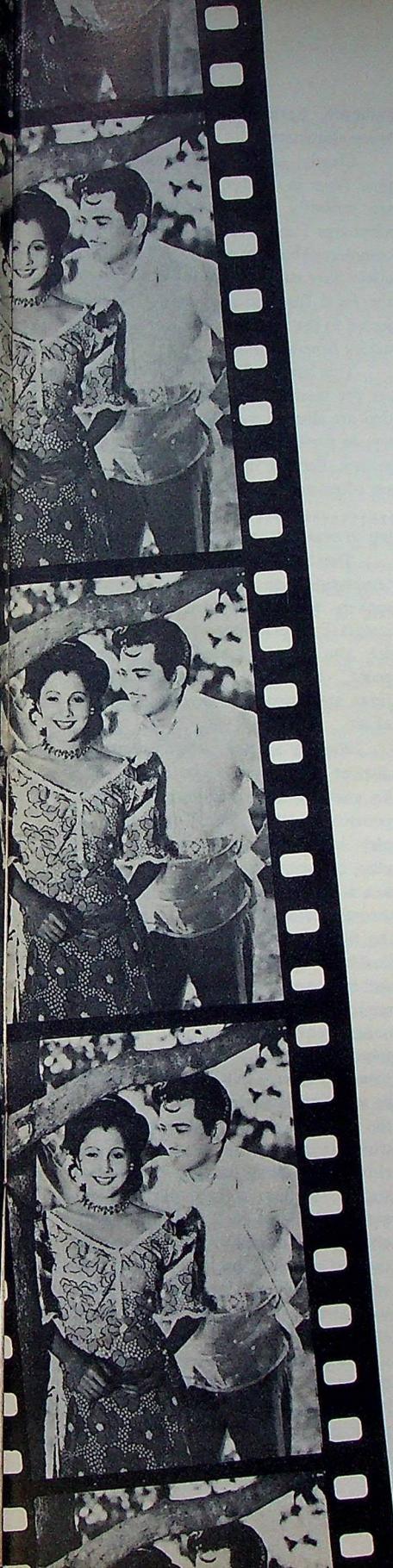
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Bienvenido Lumera

A yardstick for Filipino cinema

FILM ART came to the Philippines with the occupation of the country by the Americans. Films were brought into the country as commodities that would bring profit to American businessmen.

When films were first made in the country, the first investors were Americans. At the very outset, then, circumstances had made it inevitable that criteria applying to the products made in the United States would be the very same ones used in evaluating local products.

There is nothing ostensibly wrong with applying "universal" norms in judging the worth of Filipino film art. Putting a film together, whether done in the US or Senegal, involves the same principles of directing, acting, photographing, editing, etc.

However, a film is not merely an interplay of light and shadow, of movement and stillness, or of sound and silence. It is *about* something, and this something is rooted in the realities of the society which produced the film.

Subject matter, after all, is always, particular, and it is for this reason that the aesthetic criteria applied to American films do not always apply to Filipino films.

Even in the area of technology, comparisons between the products of the US and the local film industries tend to be misleading. Such comparisons usually overlook the fact that the two industries resulted from two very different histories. The US film industry developed under a free enterprise economy that charted its own course. The Filipino film industry grew up under a colonial economy and its products have had to compete with films coming from countries with vaster capital and superior technology.

two very different histories. The US film industry developed under a free enterprise economy that charted its own

course. The Filipino film industry grew up under a colonial economy and its products have had to compete with films coming from countries with vaster capital and superior technology.

The advantage enjoyed by American films extends even to subject matter. Because these films are intended for world-wide distribution the choice and approach to subject matter are not hamstrung by national aptitudes and attitudes.

They can experiment with bolder, more controversial, more sensationalistic (and therefore, more saleable) material, because they cater to an international market, and they can afford to fail financially in one sector of its broad

audience, having ways of recovering losses elsewhere.

Clearly, on these two counts, Filipino films in relation to imported ones are seriously disadvantaged. The disadvantage I am speaking of is not only commercial but also artistic. All along its critics have assumed that the products of the local film industry should be subjected to the same set of norms for evaluating American films.

This has led Filipino film artists to set for themselves goals and objectives that are alien to conditions in the industry, in particular, and in the country in general. Because his goals and objectives are often not attainable within the Phil-

.....

ten or oral text as a guide to evaluation.

Theater and the film make the temptation even stronger by reinforcing spoken words with live and moving images. Even practitioners of these forms are also thus tempted to "make a point," to state a case; these inclinations are essentially alien to the idea of art.

What is a film? What makes it a distinct and separate medium of art? To answer that, let us look at its components. A film is based on a kind of play, using actors as does a theatrical play, but with the whole world available as a setting instead of a stage backdrop; through cinematography, the action of the film can be seen through an almost limitless variety of perspectives, from the microscopic close-up to the panoramic shot; action may be depicted in normal sequence or out of it, at normal speed or faster or slower than normal speed; color may be used naturalistically or impressionistically or not at all, when the film is photographed in black-and-white or in some monochromatic tone; cutting or editing controls the pace of staging, so that a particular incident can be depicted in its entirety, (with characters entering a scene, enacting the pertinent incident, then leaving it) or only in part, as segments of a more extensive chain of development; music and sound effects and even silence are used to intensify or, conversely, to dilute certain impressions created by the visible action; props, decor and special photographic effects are used to reinforce the visual impact of the presentation.

Eddie Romero

A film director speaks out

A FEW observations about content in Filipino as well as foreign films may be useful at this point. I never know what to think when I read of a particular film that is well-made but lacking or inconsequential in content. It seems ungrateful to take issue with people who defend film as a "serious" art form, yet I think it is necessary to remind ourselves from time to time that in our insistence on having "good" films convey ideas that are relevant to contemporary life, it is easy to forget that film is essentially a distinct art form and that the primary virtue of a film should be that it is a film rather than, say, a kind of cinematographic editorial.

No one questions the need for relevance in art, but like so many other catch-phrases, this one tends to be so broad as to be in danger of becoming meaningless. This sort of relevance, when all is said and done, has to do with what an individual derives out of an aesthetic experience.

Most critics demand that such an experience should serve to widen or intensify one's awareness of himself in relation to the world he lives in. But even if we were to accept this as a definitive criterion, it is necessary to note that

awareness takes many forms.

To some, awareness takes the form of articulate knowledge; to others, of disposition or moods that are largely emotional. To most of us, it is shaped and reflected by a complex interaction of intellect and emotion, which is precisely what art is all about. For art takes over where information and opinion leave off; and that is why in film, as in any other art, form is inseparable from content.

A film that does nothing more than convey information or express an opinion may be a lot of things, but one thing it cannot be is a representative example of film as art, for—to belabor a point—a painting, a symphony, a piece of sculpture, a poem or a film qualifies as a work of art only when the intellectual or emotional impact it creates is generated out of the form of the work itself.

This dictum causes a certain amount of confusion in the literary arts for obvious reasons. Music, painting, sculpture and the dance do not use words, and therefore do not have written texts that can be analyzed for rational meaning. Theater, the novel, poetry and film do deal in words, thus tempting many to simplify aesthetic appreciation by using writ-

ippine setting, a certain apologetic air informs the artist's attitude towards his work and, sometimes, there is even a tone of belligerence in his defense of the "inferiority" of local pictures as compared to foreign films.

The point that I have been trying to put across through this repetition of commonplace observations on the local film industry is that each time the art of the cinema in the Philippines is discussed, it is absolutely essential that Filipino films be located in the context of Philippine history, noting their peculiar features (faults as well as virtues) as manifestations and effects of traditions and conditions created by the

All this is true enough, but it is a mistake to assume that film is theater expanded by a variety of technological tools, or even that a film is the bare sum of its parts. For when good acting, cinematography, sound recording and editing are imaginatively combined to present a film scene, they fuse into a single distinct effect far removed from the individual components that went into it, in much the same way that water bears little resemblance to pure oxygen or pure hydrogen.

Therefore, although film borrows lavishly from theater, painting, ballet and fiction and makes use of certain arts that are indigenous to it, such as cinematography, special photographic effects and editing; although all those arts contribute to the form of a film, that finished form is distinct and apart from any of its components or all of them combined, because in bringing these elements together, the chemistry of art has created an altogether new element capable of evoking mental impressions, moods and emotional states in a fashion that is entirely its own.

For the first two or three decades in the history of film criticism (1915-early 40s), some of the most prestigious writers on film in the western hemisphere staunchly insisted that film was essentially a visual medium, and that speech, sound effects, music, and even acting were merely contributory elements, serving only to magnify the visual experience of a film. That view fell by the wayside as the medium grew in technological complexity, but as far as some

Philippine colonial past and by Filipino struggle to exorcise that past.

To give Filipino films fair viewing, critics will have to begin to develop aesthetic standards that are attuned to Filipino films. In this endeavor, they will not be working alone, for more and more Filipino scholars and critics interested in other areas of cultural studies have been searching for an alternative to aesthetic norms developed in Western societies.

Aesthetic standards are formulated after an analysis of *specific* works located within a *particular* cultural continuum. For this reason, values native to the society in which the norms have been

critics are concerned, all this might as well have never happened; like the early Soviet cultural commissars, they still cling to the notion that film should have important statements to make.

Not too long ago, a Manila newspaper published a series of articles featuring a number of interviews with well-known film people, writers and other artists in which they were asked to name what they thought were the ten best Filipino films ever made. I have no quarrel with their choices, but the overwhelming majority of the interviewees admittedly made their selections on the basis of *purported content*: this film was based on a novel by Rizal, here was one about an oppressed cultural minority, here one about cherished Filipino traditions, and there one about social injustice. Nobody sounded as if he were disposed to endorse, say a musical comedy for no other reason that it was good, if not great, film.

This is an all-too-familiar phenomenon. In the many years that I have worked in film industry, announcement of some grandiose theme was all it ever took to get a film hailed as a masterpiece even before it hit the screen, and strangely enough in virtually every case the encomium has never been withdrawn regardless of how the project turned out. As a consequence, the tendency here is to reward intention rather than achievement, bombast rather than artistry.

It is clear, I hope, that I am not trying to say that films should not deal with important ideas or issues; but ideas can be presented in any number of

formulated adhere to aesthetic standard.

Thus, in using standards set in the US for American films to judge Filipino films, the worth of Filipino films is measured on the basis of American values.

Many are the occasions when these values have interfered with genuine understanding of Filipino films, leaving Western-oriented critics baffled and resentful. And often the absence of these values in Filipino films has been mistaken by the younger, more adventurous film-makers for aesthetic failure and so they force these values into their works regardless of the distortion created in the image of the culture reflected by the films.

ways, and the ideas in themselves have nothing to do with art. The fact that Picasso's "Guernica" happens to be a slashing commentary on the insanity of war is not what makes it a great painting; that "War and Peace" is a gripping account of Napoleon's invasion of Russia is not what makes it a great novel.

Surely it is self-evident that an artist's first loyalty is to his art, and that an artist who uses his medium primarily as a platform for his ideas, however provocative or original, is no artist at all but a pamphleteer.

JUST as a good idea is not diminished even when it expressed poorly, a good work of art is not diminished by paucity of intellectual content, and those who insist on the primacy of content over form in films have no real interest in the art of the film; they are just looking for another propaganda medium.

Has art, then, no obligation to truth? Of course it does, but let us first ask Pilate's question, "What is truth?" and refer to Confucius for the answer: "The truth can never be said; it can only be hinted at."

Good art was never meant to answer questions with the brisk pragmatism of an Ann Landers or a Tia Dely. Good art flashes quick little beams of light on the dark corners of the human soul. For a fleeting instant we see with awesome clarity what we fear even to imagine, and are plunged once again into the comforting half-light of banality. But hopefully, we remember. ■

Filipino films are a product of the history and culture of the people for whom they were originally intended

In view of the many attitudes that have to be corrected, of tendencies that ought to be re-directed, and values that demand to be changed, there is a dire need for a comprehensive history of motion pictures in the Philippines, a history that will situate the art and the industry in the Philippine setting.

At present, there is only *Motion Pictures in the Philippines* (1952) by Vicente Salumbides, a source-book whose limitations are becoming more and more acute as interest in the local film industry increases among university students. An adequate film history will go a long way towards endowing Filipino films with respectability that will attract more intelligent writers and researchers.

Such a history will also be a corrective to the tendency already noted to evaluate Filipino films in the light of norms intended for films made in countries where conditions are very different.

Corollary to the need for a film history is the need for a film museum where old and even recent Filipino films can be viewed and studied. Fires and careless and prolonged use have destroyed most of the old films, so that invaluable information that could be obtained only from actual contact with early samples of Philippine film-making has been irretrievably lost.

Now the interested researcher has had to rely on the few reviews in magazines and newspapers that have themselves become rare documents, and on publicity write-ups published in magazines and newspapers along with paid ads for the films being exhibited.

What has been the consequence of the absence of a clear historical perspective in the evaluation of Filipino films? Primarily, it has stymied the efforts of artists involved in the making of films.

Without a sense of tradition, directors can only follow trends set by foreign films, or bumble around searching for a definite horizon that would stimulate them into greater creativity. Screenplay writers get bogged down with repetition of plots and themes pre-

vious pictures have done to death, so that any breakthrough in content is all but precluded. Cinematographers, film editors, musical directors, and other technical men are unable to learn from the virtues and flaws of past films, resulting in technical and artistic retardation.

Even if all these do not happen, something infinitely worse does—the artists are forced to look to the example of Western products that dominate the local film market, the result being further reinforcement of the tendency among producers and directors to imitate foreign models, and the tendency among the audience to keep on comparing local films with foreign products.

Secondarily, the absence of a historical perspective has led to the victimization of the audience by producers who exploit them through trendy films that contribute nothing to the education of taste or sensibility. Thus, instead of providing them with an instrument for their uplift, producers sell the audience opiates that dull their response to what goes on around them and to what is being done to them.

BECAUSE the Philippine film industry did not grow out of any real need of the country but was grafted into the economy by the colonizing power, its product is often treated as a step-sister to the other cultural forms in the country. It has received much scolding from the intellectuals who normally take a kindlier attitude towards Filipino fiction, poetry, music and painting.

Often, the recourse is to see the Filipino film as existing independently of the other arts, as deriving its concerns and effects from foreign models, usually American or European. This would explain why well-meaning commentators are usually flabbergasted when certain elements in Filipino films elude justification according to the tenets of film-making as this is practised in the West.

It is a common complaint, for instance, that the pacing of Filipino films

is slow and ultimately tedious. To a Westernized Filipino, the pacing might indeed seem slow, but to peasants in the rural areas, it might just be too fast, their timesense being based on season rather than clock-time.

Another complaint has been that the acting of Filipino actors and actresses tend to be over-indicative, lacking restraint and subtlety that Westernized Filipinos prize in the acting of their favorite Western stars. An ordinary movie-goer whose experience of acting has been limited by language to what is seen in Filipino films, might very well remain unmoved by an understated performance by Jeanne Moreau or Lawrence Olivier.

As regards economy of detail in narration, a virtue variously described by Westernized admirers as “tightness,” “restraint,” or “compactness,” it is not unusual for ordinary audiences to complain that certain Filipino films are “too short,” “too simple,” or worse, without a story.

The point here is that “flaws” a Westernized sensibility might pick out in a Filipino movie are “flaws” only insofar as the person concerned has not seen them in the context created by other more thoroughly-described art forms in the Philippines.

For instance, to fail to locate the film within the tradition of the theater in the Philippines is to misunderstand and misjudge the acting, scripting and staging of certain traditional scenes in many Filipino films. The same may be said of the values implied by certain plots and situations that recur in many films. It is possible to miss their significance in the structure of meanings simply because one is not aware of their roots in Philippine literature.

This, then, should be the first concern of the student of Filipino films: to see them as integrally related by history and tradition to the other arts in the Philippines. Such a perspective will lead him to discover what makes these films distinctively Filipino, films that are the product of the history of the people for whom they were originally intended and of the culture this people has evolved.

In the Third World, business investments are always limited by the potential of the people as consumers. For the



film industry, this has resulted in limited technical facilities and a low level of expertise. For the director who recognizes the boundaries set by an underdeveloped economy on his art, it is essential to cultivate less the technical, formalist side of film-making and concentrate instead on the human resources that are abundantly available to him.

There can be no excuse in the Philippines for films whose main concern is formalist experimentation, for while such films might make sense, or even be significant, in a highly sophisticated capitalist society, their self-indulgence in an underdeveloped country is a sheer waste of resources.

In lieu of experiments made possible by sophisticated equipment, a director might focus his energies in telling substantial stories about man and his role in changing a stagnant society, or drawing out of his stars acting that makes real for the audience problems that plague their society.

In this regard, the example of neo-realist Italian film-makers is instructive. Active between the years 1945 and 1951, such directors as Roberto Rosellini and Vittorio de Sica demonstrated that severe limitations on technical facilities can be turned into an asset.

A SECOND concern of the film student should therefore be the centrality of content in evaluating a Filipino film. What does the film say about man in a society in ferment? How does it view the problems that confront man in his struggle against Nature and men who seek to exploit him?

This is not to insist that every film make a philosophical statement or engage in social analysis. This is simply to remind the directors that film-making in an underdeveloped country should be primarily "a way of saying," not making magic with picture machines.

The third and very important concern of the film student ought to be the audience for the Filipino film. Who are they? What are their needs and concerns? How does the film relate to their condition?

They come mainly from the lower middle class and the poor in the cities and from the middle class and the pea-

santry in the provinces. Being poor, they have only a limited choice when they seek entertainment, and films are the cheapest and most accessible form of diversion available to them.

They have been labelled as *bakya* (unsophisticated, indiscriminating, uncouth even) simply because, having no other choice, they have allowed themselves to be suckled by unscrupulous producers on escapist entertainment and illiterate melodrama. Their economic condition has thus rendered them prone to exploitation by producers who make millions even as they sneer at the victims who make their profits possible.

The audience for Filipino films deserves better treatment. They comprise the bigger portion of the population and, as such, they represent the Filipino people. Critics should insist that the Filipino film-maker demonstrate awareness of the great potential of his medium for influencing and bringing about social change by constantly reminding him that he creates within a society that needs "developing."

That society has a long colonial past that has left scabs and scars, and these need expunging if the people are to attain some degree of progress and stability.

In such a society, film art has to assume the responsibility of contributing to development and change as the other media must.

In such a society, nationalism and social consciousness ought to inform film-making, for these are the twin forces that would help secure for the people freedom from foreign domination and raise the level of their consciousness regarding rights and obligations.

When producers ask for "constructive" criticism, the sincere ones are really saying that they cannot do much about the "faults," these being largely technical and, given limited means, quite beyond their capability to correct.

The three concerns that I have outlined are being offered here as guideposts towards a truly constructive criticism of Filipino films. These are admittedly extra-aesthetic norms, but if they could lead to a better understanding of Filipino film art by critics or to a sharper perception of artistic directions by craftsmen, then they have served a most vital purpose. ■

Teodoro A. Agoncillo

The last years of Intramuros

Among the Orient's finest, it was a city of culture and religion

KNOwn as the Walled City, Intramuros was still very Spanish in the 1920s. It was Spanish not because of the Spanish population, which was negligible, but because of the Spanish footprints that had been left there almost undisturbed since the Americans entered that city of medieval design on August 13, 1898 to accept the surrender of Spanish arms.

In the 1920s in Intramuros, there were the seven churches, all except one bearing the patina of ages, which solemnly proclaimed the religiosity of the Spanish inhabitants who fought foreign invaders and Chinese residents of the suburbs with touching heroism and fierce loyalty to God and King. There were the colleges for girls which, in an age when separation of the sexes



As seat of the Spanish colonial government, the Ayuntamiento building where the Governor General held office dominated Intramuros for 300 years. Inset: a group of young musicians playing bamboo instruments entertains American soldiers at their barracks in Intramuros at the turn of the century.



In the air was the oily smell of Spanish cuisine, by the Moorish fountains, little boys gamboled

had the ring of God's commandment, stood quietly, almost hugging the colleges for boys—a juxtaposition which may not have been intended by their builders but which, to the suspicious eyes, was disturbingly significant. There was the Sta. Clara Convent nestling along the south banks of the Pasig whose thick walls and rooftops Jose Rizal celebrated with pained alacrity to delineate the tragic joys and sorrows of an innocent young woman, beautifully naive and untouched by a sophistication, being hounded by a relentless hound of Heaven. There were the two hospitals to minister to the medical needs of the residents—the San Juan de Dios and the San Pablo whose patients

were served by dedicated nuns and Spanish priests who were ready at all times to administer the last sacraments to those about to die.

The streets were straight and narrow and occasionally sprinkled with water from a huge tank pulled by a plodding mule. The Americans had macadamized most of the streets, but a few were cobblestone against which the hoofs of the horses pulling rigs and *carretelas* struck with sharp staccato. The houses were mostly Antillan with a wide enough *zaguan* and *patio*; at the back was the ubiquitous *azotea* where the family met after vespers to breathe the evening air.

Around the city were thick walls, began late in the Sixteenth century and

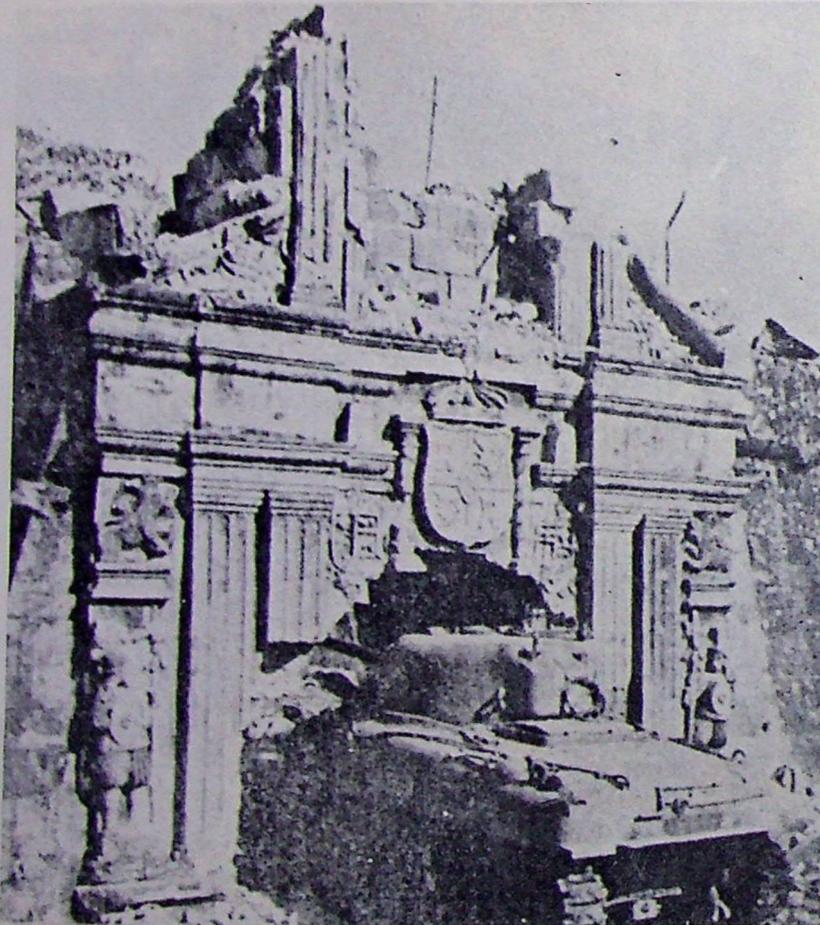
completed only after many years of hard labor and collection of taxes to strengthen the City's defenses. In places the walls were moss-covered and showed faint traces of wear, but they were as solid as the reputation of their architects and engineers.

At the mouth of the Pasig, beside the forbidding Santa Clara convent, was Fort Santiago, a sentinel watching over the safety of the city. The fort had a storied past reminiscent of medieval European ramparts which played a colorful role in the defense not only against ambitious kings, princes, and dukes, but also against the heathens. In turbulent days, Fort Santiago served as a prison and a dungeon where the recalcitrants found unfriendly reception to be the rule rather than the exception.

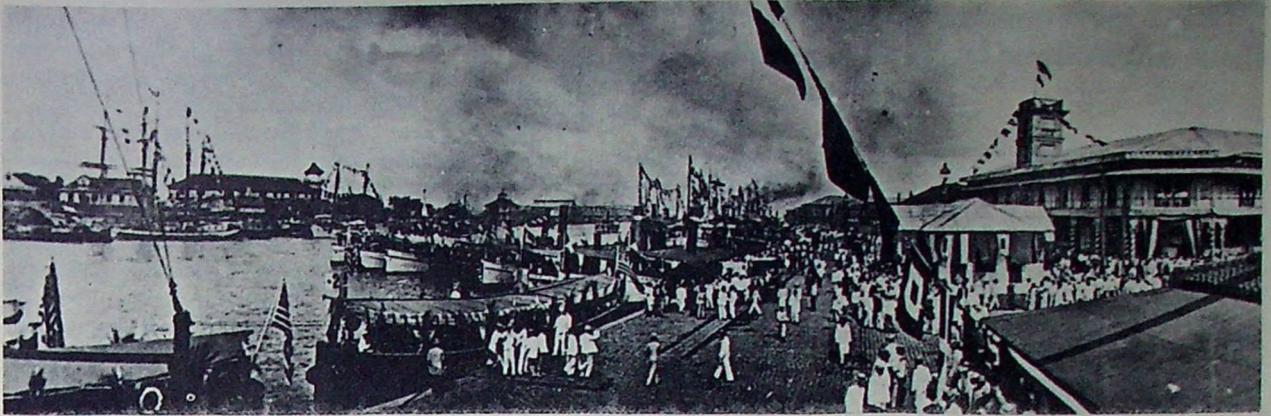
To complete the Spanish aura of the city, there were the gurgling fountains, Moorish in their spirit if not in appearance, which tempered the fierce rays of the sun during summer when boys, in their innocence, gamboled in the clear water of the fountains. On Real Street and along a portion of Magallanes Street, one could get Spanish ham, sardines, and *chorizos*, *queso de bola* and other European groceries, while inhaling the oily smell of Spanish cuisine.

Spanish was spoken in Intramuros, for the Walled City had many Spanish residents as well as Spanish-speaking Filipinos. The colleges, like San Juan de Letran, Ateneo, Santa Rosa, Santa Isabel, Santa Catalina, the University of Santo Tomas, and the Philippine Law School, were still using Spanish as the medium of instruction. The atmosphere was predominantly Spanish, and the only evidences of American presence in the Old City were the two hotels where some American minor officials and transients billeted for the moment, and the bars on Real Street where American soldiers and sailors gulped their beer. Also on Real Street was the famous Spanish bakery and dining hall, *La Palma de Mallorca*, whose *pan de sal*, a crusty bun, has to this day of sophisticated bakers' technology not been equalled.

The spirit of Intramuros even after three decades of American rule remained closely intertwined with religion. No doubt the seven churches within the



Through ancient gate of Fort Santiago, centuries-old fortress of Intramuros, U.S. Army tank forces its way through during Manila liberation, 1945.



Across Pasig River to the left are buildings of Intramuros seen from Muelle de Binondo, then principal port of Manila.

walls contributed immensely to the predominantly religious character of the Walled City. Wherever people went they were confronted with churches whose patron saints were honored on feast days with processions. The religious processions of those days were perhaps as solemn and as orderly as those during the heyday of Spain in the Philippines, for the presence of so many churches in so small a community was conducive to the expression of religious sentiments.

The Walled City, too, was the center of Spanish culture in the Philippines; within its small confines were the famous colleges of San Juan de Letran and Ateneo and, of course, the oldest university in Southeast Asia, the Pontifical University of Santo Tomas, aside from the colleges for girls. There were printing presses, the biggest on Beaterio Street between Magallanes and Solana, published religious books along with such worldly things as commercial advertisements, wrappers, and so on. There were bookshops which usually opened at nine or ten in the morning, depending upon the humor of the owners. Students and men of affairs, especially those working in offices at the Ayuntamiento, where the Department of the Interior held its offices, could be seen thumbing Spanish books and French books translated into Spanish in these bookstores.

In the streets, students and elderly employees and minor officials spoke less softly in Spanish, probably to impress the boors with their knowledge of the mellifluous language of Cervantes. Many residents of Intramuros were acquainted with Spanish. So popular was

this language that even *criadas* and *sorbeteros* spoke a version, perhaps ungrammatically but with tolerable fluency. The prostitutes, too, spoke the Spanish with color and verve, especially when potbellied American policemen, taking advantage of their bulk and authority, refused to part with their money after savoring blissful moments. But at dusk, the churchbells tolled the *oración* to remind the people of God's Kingdom in their hearts. By ten o'clock, the streets were deserted and only the occasional staccato tak-a-tak-tak of a horse' hoofs could be heard punctuating the silence of the night.

This was the Walled City under the American regime. It was a city of culture and of religion. Outside its walls was heathen territory where business and commerce, as in Santa Cruz, Binundok, and Kiyapo, were the main preoccupation of the people. But Intramuros since the second half of the Nineteenth century had been giving way to Binundok and Kiyapo and Santa Cruz as financial center, and had to depend on these *arrabales* for its needs. The Walled City, by the time the Revolution came in 1896, had become a residential area for *peninsulares* and, perhaps, some *insulares* who had a reputation for culture and/or lucre. When finally the Revolution broke out, the population of Intramuros shrank: many frightened Spaniards, including high government officials, evacuated to places of safety. But the Governor-General and the Archbishop remained to safeguard the interests of the Spanish community. The migration continued unabated until the

Truce of Biyaknabato in December, 1897 was concluded to end the fearful bloodletting that decimated the ranks of both combatants.

The cessation of hostilities was a boon to Intramuros. In January 1898, the city populace rejoiced and made merry to celebrate what they believed was the end of the Revolution. At the Cathedral on January 23, a *Te Deum* was sung at almost the same time that it was being sung in the Palacio Real in Madrid (January 24, Madrid time). So exhilarated was the city government that it approved the unbelievable sum of six thousand pesos as expenses for the festivities. There were horse and boat races; plays staged at the Zorrilla Theater to honor the valiant Spanish troops; fireworks to light the skies with blazing colors; and a magnificent ball held at the Ayuntamiento to cap the festivities. To commemorate the return of peace, the city government published a brochure entitled *La Paz* whose lithographed illustrations, if we are to believe the enthusiastic appraisal of those who had seen it, was the best done in the Philippines, not excluding the famous colored illustrations of Father Manuel Blanco's grand edition (1877-80) of *Flora de Filipinas*.

The Spaniards celebrated the event too soon. Within a few months, armed conflicts between them and the Filipinos flared up in many parts of the country. The Walled City was shocked into a painful realization that the future of its Spanish inhabitants was dark, particularly because war between Spain and the United States had been declared.

'This is a bitter moment for us'—Spanish officer at the surrender of Intramuros to Americans, 1898

Meanwhile, General Emilio Aguinaldo, who had exiled himself to Hong Kong in accordance with the Truce of Biyaknabato, returned to the Philippines in May 1898 and soon the intensity of the Revolution was felt once more by the Spanish troops and outposts. Social activities within the Walled City ceased and the alacrity with which the Spanish populace met the singing of the *Te Deum* was transformed into a tearful dirge. With the Cavite arsenal in the hands of Commodore George Dewey and the Spanish fleet nestling at the bottom of Manila Bay, the city inhabitants could only listen glumly to the musical band of the *Olympia* playing the lilting strains of *La Paloma* and other beautiful Spanish airs. To the Spaniards, perhaps, the playing of Spanish songs by the American band was a taunting gesture, a mockery, and a Spanish colonel of artillery, proud of the glory of Spain and now ashamed of the ignominious defeat, blew out his brains to end his misery and to re-affirm his Spanish *orgullo*.

The defeat of the Spanish fleet at Manila Bay reminds one of the defeat of the Spanish Armada by the English in 1588. Just as the latter ended Spain's mastery of the seas, so the former sealed the fate of her Oriental colony. It was, in a manner of speaking, the beginning of a new era for Spanish Manila which was built on the ruins of Rajah Sulayman's kingdom-by-the-river. Another blow, more painful and humiliating, came when the Americans decided to take the city by storm. There were hurried consultations among the Spanish officials, from the Governor-General and the Archbishop to the members of the Council of Defense, for the danger to the centuries-old city was real and immediate.

Dewey and General Wesley Merritt had issued an ultimatum to General Fermín Jáudenes asking him to surrender the Walled City in order to spare it the rigors of war. Seven council members voted for capitulation, but eight voted for resistance against the enemy even in the face of a hopeless situation. Span-

ish honor demanded that there must be a fight. But in a meeting with the foreign consuls and the Spanish State and Church officials, Jáudenes was made to understand that Spanish honor had already been satisfied by the self-denial of the Spaniards. Even so, it was finally decided not to surrender the city without a fight.

General Jáudenes dilly-dallying was understandable: he was a military man. As his field commanders also knew, he realized that the city's defenses were weak and could not possibly withstand the assaults of the superior American forces, especially the long-range guns of the American naval vessels. But he had to uphold Spanish honor, on the one hand, and to save the city from destruction, on the other. Finally, he elected to come to a secret understanding with Dewey and Merritt, according to which the Spaniards would surrender the City only after a token exchange of fire. The purpose, of course, was to satisfy Spanish honor and pride. Fearing the Filipino troops might harm the Spaniards, especially the women, Jáudenes asked that the Americans prevent the Filipinos from entering the city. And so, true to the Spanish commander but faithless to the Filipino allies, the Americans—when the white flag was hoisted at the southwest corner of the walls of Intramuros, near the site of what is now the Manila Hotel,—foiled the Filipino troops' attempts to enter the city to participate in the triumphal march to the Ayuntamiento, the seat of the city government.

General Merritt, learning of the surrender, disembarked at the mouth of the Pasig near Fort Santiago and marched to the nearby Ayuntamiento where the Oregon Company formed a solid line around Plaza de Palacio (now Plaza Roma). At the quadrangle formed by the Ayuntamiento and the Cathedral, the Spanish troops, neat and looking cool, massed in perfect order.

In one of the rooms of the Ayuntamiento, Merritt and Jáudenes were conferring with their respective staffs.

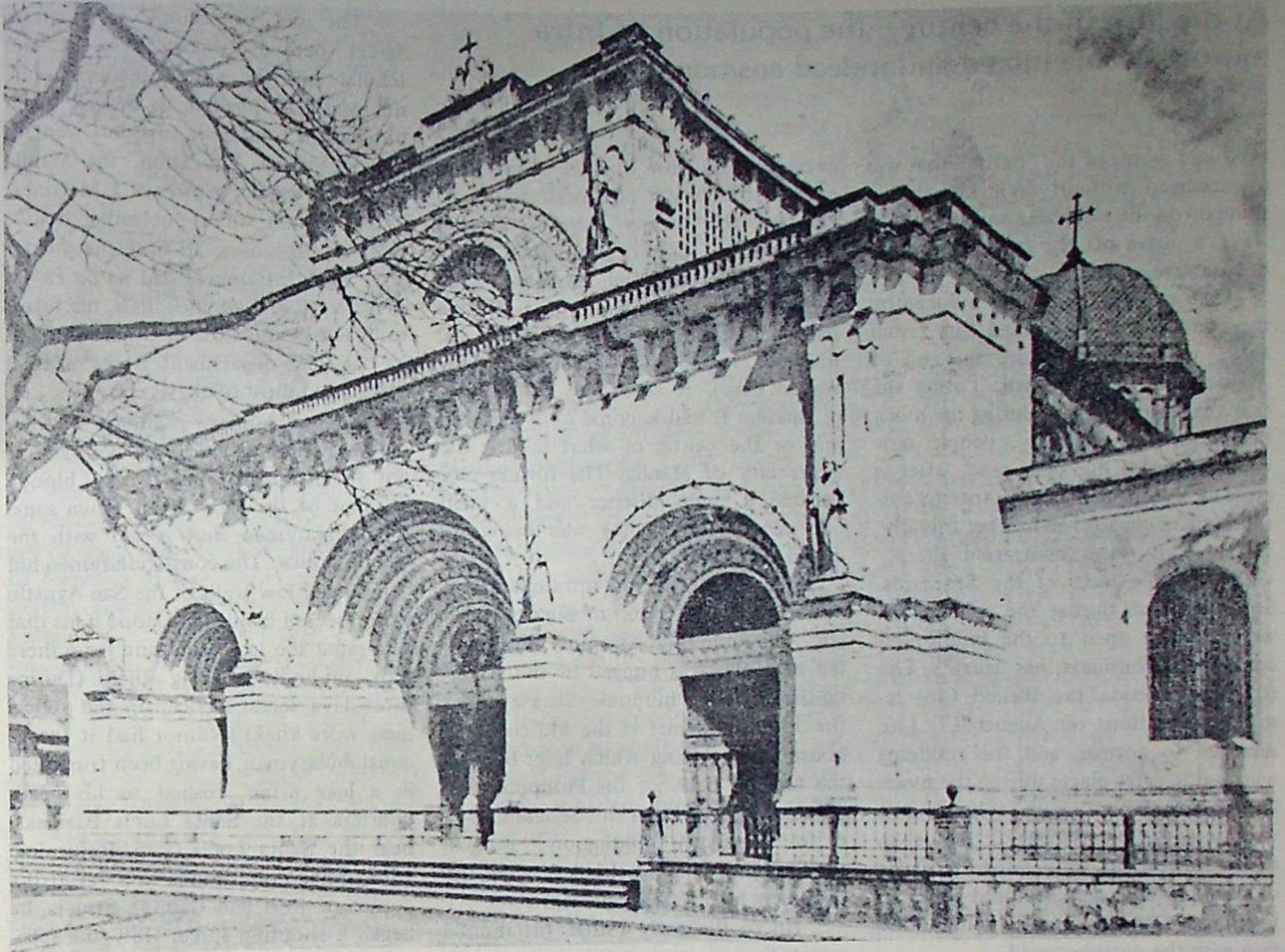
People, civilian as well as military, could be seen entering and leaving the rooms, talking in loud voices, and brushing shoulders with each other.

There was an air of informality in the proceedings and one would not suspect that this was history-in-the-making. To a casual observer, there was a ludicrous contrast between the Americans and the Spaniards: the former, tall and with an easy air, towering over the smaller but dignified and ostentatious Spaniards; the Spanish officers wearing dazzling uniforms with broad red sashes, their ornamented swords dangling by their side, while the Americans were wearing ordinary gray uniforms and looked as if they were the ones suing for peace. Merritt, a huge chunk of a man, looked across the table opposite him and found Jáudenes short and professorial looking more like a lecturer than a military man.

By five in the afternoon of August 13, the temporary terms of capitulation had been signed. At dusk, Major Sturdis, acting on orders of Merritt, hauled down the Spanish flag fluttering for the last time over the Ayuntamiento and hoisted the Stars and Stripes. There was bitter resentment in the faces of the Spaniards who witnessed the hoisting of the American flag. "This is a bitter moment for us!" exclaimed a Spanish officer as he looked with despair at the flag ceremony. The Spanish troops, sullen and dejected, moved toward the Cathedral, while men and women, all inhabitants of the once glorious city, wept bitterly as if they had lost their honor.

Meanwhile, at the Ayuntamiento, Spanish soldiers were piling their rifles at the foot of the wide staircase. Then, slowly, some returned to their barracks, while others went to the Cathedral probably to seek solace in spiritual exercises.

That night, Merritt celebrated the American victory with a sumptuous dinner at the Ayuntamiento. While he and his companions gloated over their almost bloodless victory at the expense of their allies, the city lay prostrate and, except for the occasional tramp-tramp-tramp of the American foot soldiers performing guard duties, looked like a graveyard. Even the districts across the Pasig River were quiet and no activity could be observed. The American troopers,



Once a medieval city of churches, Intramuros was the site of every important church of the religious orders and of the metropolitan cathedral of the archdiocese. Today only two of these magnificent churches remain: the cathedral, above, which was reconstructed and looks today as it did when it was first built and the San Agustin church, left, which was only slightly damaged in the 1945 holocaust of Intramuros, a fact considered astounding particularly because it served as shelter for hundreds of Filipino refugees.

At the turn of the century, the population of Intramuros became mixed and indeed cosmopolitan

tired and weary of the "battle" that was pre-arranged without their knowledge, slumped on the sidewalks and near doorways to drive off the fatigue they did not deserve.

The enforced inactivity induced by the conquest of the Walled City lasted for a week or so. Before the end of August, life began to stir. Losing the fear that gripped them during the mock battle for the Old City, people now ventured into the open and, after a close look at the conquering *Americanos*, found them cheerful and rather friendly. Their ruddy faces contrasted sharply with the pale faces of the Spaniards. Stores, closed during the emergency, were thrown open to the public and conducted "business as usual." The streetcars outside the Walled City resumed operations on August 17. Life returned to normal, and the residents who fled to safer places during the mock battle returned to make it hum again with activity. On August 20, the cable, which Dewey cut soon after the battle of Manila Bay, was restored and the Ever Loyal City was again in communication with the outside world.

The transfer of the city to the Americans did not radically change its character. The spirit of the Old World lingered on although a new climate had set in. Some Americans came to live in Intramuros and Filipinos, who were not allowed to take up residence within the walls before the fall of the city, were now free to live with the Spanish residents. Some of these returned to Spain, but others elected to remain and, finally, to become Filipino citizens. Thus, with the coming of the Americans, the population of the City, which was exclusively Spanish, except for the Filipinos working as *cocheros* and *criados* and *criadas* for the Spaniards, now became mixed and indeed cosmopolitan.

The change of sovereignty from Spanish to American led to the expansion of the city beyond its walls. The city had become small because of its exploding population, and so the Americans, who had (and still have) an in-

curable mania for bigness, decided to extend the city's territorial limits to embrace the former suburbs—Ermita, Malate, Pako, Kiyapo, Binundok, Trozo, Santa Cruz, San Miguel, Pandakan, Sampalok, Tundo, and Santa Ana. To the rising generation of American-oriented Filipinos, Intramuros was the W.C. (for Walled City). It ceased to be the city of Manila; it had become *loob ng Maynila* or the center of what is now the larger city of Manila. The former city became a mere district—and a small one—whose importance was being reduced progressively.

For years, however, Intramuros continued to be the center of the expanded city. The Philippine Assembly, inaugurated in 1907, was housed in the Ayuntamiento. The Philippine Senate under the Jones Law met at the old customs-house by the Pasig which later became the Central Bank of the Philippines on Aduana Street. When the Senate moved to the Legislative Building on P. Burgos, the building it left behind became the Intendencia or Philippine Mint.

Up to the early 1920s, Intramuros was still an important educational, but not the financial and business, center of the enlarged city. Historic Ayuntamiento retained its importance, for it became the office of the Secretary of the Interior. By the 1930s, the Walled City had already lost its primacy as the center of culture. The former suburbs, especially Binundok, Sta. Cruz, and Kiyapo, had progressed economically, leaving Intramuros behind. The University of Sto. Tomas, the oldest university in Southeast Asia, perhaps in all Asia, felt the necessity of expanding its facilities and had to take its leave in the 1920s to settle in Sampalok. The old Ateneo on Anda and Arzobispo Streets was razed to the ground by fire in the early 1930s and had to migrate to Padre Faura near the old University of the Philippines. San Juan de Letrán also felt the pressure of progress and had to demolish the old building to give way to a new one with better facilities and a more imposing facade.

The old bookshops on Beaterio Street became almost deserted and scholars and the general reading public no longer dropped in to browse or to purchase a volume or two, but went to the Philippine Education, the Manila Filatélica, the bookstores of J. Martinez, P. Sayo, and other publishing houses then mushrooming all over the greater city. Still, Intramuros had its *La Palma de Mallorca*, the two hospitals, the furniture factory and store of Gonzalo Puyat, its bars and department stores on Real Street, and most of all, its churches.

To the ordinary residents of Intramuros, San Agustín Church was famous not for its beauty but for the bloody incident of the early 1920s when some constabularymen shot it out with the Manila police. The constabularymen hid behind the low walls of the San Agustín *patio*, peered behind the stone lions that decorated the low walls, and from there shot anybody wearing khaki. (During those days, secret servicemen and policemen wore khaki.) Rumor had it that a constabularyman, having been frustrated in a love affair, rushed to his headquarters at the Santa Lucía Barracks, near the Santa Lucía Gate. Returning with armed companions to a bar at the corner of Real and Cabildo Streets, he began a shooting spree. Only the spiritual intervention, it was said, of courageous Father Tajón of the Cathedral prevented what, in the opinion of adults who witnessed or thought they witnessed the event, could have been a civil war.

By the late 1930s, Intramuros had completely lost its ancient glamor and glory. Higher education had shifted from the Walled City to Ermita, Santa Cruz, and Sampalok. Only San Juan de Letrán, Santa Rosa, Santa Catalina, and Santa Isabel were left as a reminder of an age gone by. They were the survivors of a great culture that had won the admiration of the world, and even as survivors they were then being swamped by the mighty wave of Anglo-Saxon civilization represented by the public schools and higher institutions of learning established by the Americans. Business and commerce, which have never been directly associated with culture, had not corrupted the Walled City, for it was the habitat of the religious, the educated, and the cultured. Even so, artists, schol-

ars, and writers who grew up in Intramuros found the city, as years went by, becoming cramped and crowded, and so they migrated to other places beyond the Walls.

It was thus that the Walled City began to decline. Then the less cultured and some ne'er-do-wells invaded it and, like the barbarians who invaded ancient Rome, contributed to its decline. By 1941, Intramuros had declined considerably. Only San Juan de Letrán remained an oasis in that walled-in desert that was once a garden of culture, the pride of Spain in the Orient.

And then the war came in December 1941—on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Like the rest of Manila and surrounding towns, Intramuros experienced days and nights of terror from the bombing of the Japanese airplanes. General Douglas MacArthur, who had chosen No. 1 Victoria Street in the Walled City as his General Headquarters, declared Manila an open city on December 26 to spare it the cruelty of war. But the Japanese airmen, either by design or by incompetence, bombed Intramuros partially destroying the Santo Domingo Church, the Intendencia Building (later the Central Bank and now the National Treasury), the Santa Rosa and the Santa Catalina Colleges, the D-M-H-M Building, and other structures near the Pasig.

I witnessed this bombing from where I stood at the waiting shed on

Plaza Lawton (now Liwasang Bonifacio) waiting for a streetcar to take me home. The bombing of the Gothic Santo Domingo Church and the two colleges for girls was the beginning of the physical destruction of the Old City.

When the Japanese entered Manila on January 2, 1942 and treated it like a conquered city, they commanded, among other buildings, the San Juan de Letrán College and used it not for cultural purposes, but for billeting their soldiers who, from mid-January, guarded the main entrance to the Walled City.

This entrance is not found in the Spanish maps of Manila. It was made by the Filipinos in 1916, under the Americans when, under the leadership of Speaker Sergio Osmeña, a grateful people breached the thick walls on the Anda side of San Juan de Letrán in order to make a passage for the returning Resident Commissioner Manuel L. Quezon, a Letrán alumnus who was bringing home the Jones Law, the Constitution of the Philippines under the American regime which committed the United States to Philippine independence. Thus, the Filipinos added one entrance to the existing gates of the Walled City—an entrance which became the major point of ingress and egress to and from the Walled City that Governor Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas thought fit to surround with protective walls. It was at this breached portion of Intramuros that the Japanese sentries, with the mien of conquerors,

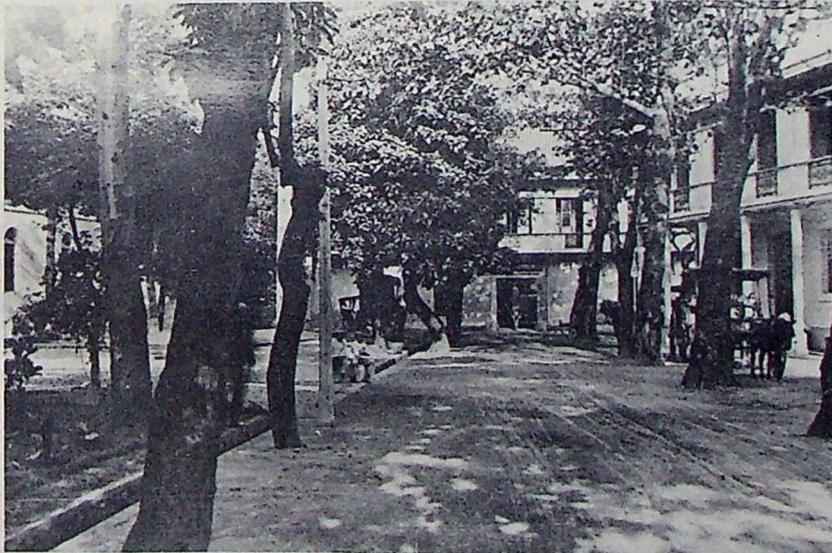
exacted respect and fear from the hostile Filipinos who had to bow to the inscrutable sentries

Life within the Walled City during the Japanese Occupation was no better or worse than in other parts of Manila. The economy, poor since the late Nineteenth century, deteriorated and its residents had to work outside the walls to make both ends meet. Social activities took the bizarre form of catching dogs and butchering them.

Intramuros became a vast prison surrounded by formidable walls guarded by very suspicious Japanese sentries armed to the teeth. There seems to be a sad irony in this situation, for while the Spaniards previous to the Twentieth century posted sentries in strategic places and provided *bahartes* to defend the old city from enemies without, the Japanese guarded the city to prevent it from becoming a huge dissident camp. The one was friendly and protective; the other, hostile and suspicious.

The old Calle Real lost its prestige as the commercial and financial locus of the old city. It had become deserted and only dirty boys and emaciated men and women plied their secondhand trade. The patients going to the San Juan de Dios Hospital, which the Japanese transformed into a hospital for tuberculars in order to appropriate for themselves the sprawling buildings of the Quezon Institute on España Extension in Quezon City, could be seen walking like some mechanical toys on the *patio* of a church. The spirit of the old city was dying, if not already dead, and the prayers that were being said in all its seven churches could not turn back the tide of history-in-the-making. The old men and women who had been accustomed to praying at Matins and at Vespers, had grown weary and timid and went out of their homes only occasionally to continue their trembling prayers in the church. To these old religious people, the conqueror was a heathen deserving of being prayed against.

In September 1944, American airplanes bombed Japanese installations in Greater Manila. The residents of Intramuros, like the others in the Philippines, secretly rejoiced, for deliverance from cruelty and madness seemed at hand. Those who had a bottle of imported whiskey or a bottle or two of *Ginebra*



Two boys sit in tree-shaded courtyard of Fort Santiago in Intramuros in 1901.

San Miguel celebrated the flight of the American war planes over Manila by getting tipsy, for in the Philippine setting liquor has been for centuries the main offering in any celebration. The wounded old city suddenly stirred, and while the churches could not ring the bells to announce the joyous event, the residents in the sanctum of their homes dedicated their prayers to the Americans who were knocking violently at the gates of the Philippines. Even the patients at the San Juan de Dios Hospital felt a surge of energy coursing through their frail bodies, while the doctors and nurses could not hide their jubilant joy from the patients and their visitors. In the *azoteas* and *patios* hidden from the prying eyes of the Japanese Kempetai, the people were quietly looking up the skies to see the Grumman and the P-38s zooming up and down and trying to shoot down the Japanese Zeros. Greater Manila witnessed the progressive destruction of Japanese power.

The Americans landed at Lingayen in January 1945 and knifed their way through Tarlak, Pampanga, Bulakan and finally Manila. The northern districts of the city suffered but little, for the Japanese in the area were taken by surprise and had to retreat in haste destroying bridges here and putting to the torch a few houses there. It was their hasty retreat that saved North Manila from irreparable damage. In South Manila they retreated and holed up. It was obvious to the Americans that the enemy would make his last stand in the southern districts of the city.

Heavy fighting took place outside Intramuros, particularly in the vicinity of the Philippine Normal School and the Legislative Building. Flame throwers spouting hellish fire and the constant rat-tat-tat-tat of machineguns could not persuade the Japanese to surrender.

Meanwhile, General MacArthur, sizing up the situation and learning that the Japanese refused to evacuate the Walled City, issued an ultimatum for the Japanese to leave Intramuros. MacArthur took the enemy's silence as refusal to surrender.

He watched the bombing from atop the Insular Life Building overlooking Intramuros. We were being considered for positions in the civilian affairs branch

of the American Army, with temporary offices at one of the top floors of the Insular Life Building at the foot of Jones Bridge. From that vantage point, I witnessed the destruction of the centuries-old Walled City.

Hovering over Intramuros was a Piper Cub airplane from where the observer radioed his findings and range to the artillery commander. When the Japanese showed signs of fighting to the last man, MacArthur ordered a continuous drumfire and bombing of the Old City. The guns did their work of destruction: the thick walls were repeatedly bombarded, while the bombers dropped their deadly cargo to destroy the enemy.

Again and again the Piper Cub directed the artillery to finish the Japanese who could not retaliate and had herded the residents together in churches and big structures or in some houses and guarded them as hostages. Even before the heavy bombing and the MacArthur ultimatum the Japanese had already intended to prevent the residents of the Old City from leaving it by prohibiting them from venturing into the streets. The residents thus became hostages of the Japanese Army.

The bombing took their heavy toll: all the structures—churches as well as houses—were completely destroyed. When the smoke of the brutal bombing and artillery fire lifted, only the oldest church—the San Agustín—remained standing although fractured in places. The other churches were mere skeletons. The residents were dead; they were either bombed to death or were massacred by the desperate and infuriated Japanese.

When civilians were allowed to enter Intramuros, I surveyed the damage done to the old city. I was reminded of ancient Troy after the Trojan war. The Walled City was totally desolate. The old landmarks, the streets and houses which could tell on what street one was standing, were no more. Everywhere was debris, burned posts, blackened pieces of red tiles, twisted iron sheets that were once roofs. Everywhere too was the stench of death. The massive walls withstood the nerve-shattering impact of the angry artillery shells, but in two or three places there were in-

dentations showing some adobe stones pulverized by the severity of the bombardment. Even so, the destruction of the walls was not complete, testifying to the great work done by the Filipino and Chinese masons who labored under the direction of Spanish engineers and architects.

The Walled City was rubble, ashes, dirt, ruins. From the skeletons of its churches hung the broken threads of a tragic story woven at dusk when the reflection of the sun's faint rays cast a pall of nostalgia over the desolate scene. San Agustín, but slightly scarred, stood like a forlorn chanter of old, surveying with sadness the empty battlefield where the warriors died to redeem their honor or to re-affirm their manhood. In the gathering gloom, one could almost hear the stories of old Manila being retold out of the broken pieces of stained glass and burnt stones: the sobbing of a nun whose plea to be released from her vow in order to marry the man she loved was rejected by the high religious authorities; the dying lament of a young lady whose secret love affair with another man was discovered by her husband, the governor and captain-general, no less; the echoes of the rabble's feet on the cobblestone streets on their way to the palace near the Cathedral to murder the King's representative; the hymns that resounded throughout the country to celebrate the victory over the Dutch corsairs; the voices of young and the old giving thanks to God for guiding the Manila galleons to safety; and a hundred and one ballads and rituals that had made the Ever Loyal City a sparkling jewel in the Spanish Imperial Crown.

The Walled City did not die a natural death, but a death so brutal and so swift it could hardly be borne by any tender heart. Intramuros began and ended its life in tragedy: it sprang from the ruins of Sulayman's kingdom and was laid to rest amidst its own ruins. It took the Spaniards three hundred years of careful, painful labor to make Intramuros one of the finest cities, if not the finest, in the Orient; it took American bombers and artillery only two weeks to reduce it to ashes and debris.

The Walled City is dead.
Long live the Walled City!



Pink tablecloth, acrylic, 1975

Leonidas V. Benesa

Tabuena: poet of the brush

He has fashioned a private art out of nostalgia

TWO YEARS ago, Mexico-based Romeo V. Tabuena exhibited 20 paintings at the Galerie Bleue in what was described as the artist's first major exhibition in the Philippines since his retrospective show at the Philippine Art Gallery in 1959. Tabuena will be remembered as one of the six painters called the Neo-Realists who constituted the postwar avant-garde (there was a prewar avant-garde) which broke the ground for

modern art in the Philippines.

There are a number of Filipino or Philippine-born artists living and painting abroad. Tabuena is unique in that in both his 1959 and 1973 shows he was not present. In fact, since he left the Philippines 20 years ago he has not been back at all, unlike other voluntary exiles like Nena Saguil, F. Aguilar Alcuaz, Fernando Zobel, Juvenal Sanso, Bencab, Oscar Zalameda, and even that solitary

old man by the Breton sea, Macario Vitalis.

Romeo V. Tabuena is again exhibiting acrylic paintings (December 1975) at the Galerie Bleue. Again he is presenting his latest works *in absentia*. It is an event in which practically all the works have been pre-sold, snapped up by collectors and admirers who are seduced by the charms of this poet of the brush who can't come home again, but who con-



Woman with blue bottles, acrylic, 1975

tinues to paint as if he never left the country, nor lived for almost two decades in the golden shadow of the Mexican giants of modern art: Tamayo, Orozco, Siqueiros and Rivera.

Mexico and the Philippines may have many things in common, like culture, people, flora and fauna. But the coconut tree and nipa hut are definitely Tabuena motifs that are Philippine genre in origin. And the artist's ubiquitous carabaos with their delicate spindly legs give him away as a creative person who has fashioned a private art out of nostalgia, as the following 1975 works appear to indicate: *Sunset Haze*, *Pounding Song*, *Summer Yellow*, *By the Well*,

and others.

In one particular work entitled *Blue River*, showing a man and woman of rustic stock riding a banca, going home presumably at the end of the day against a typical rural scene of nipa huts, coconut trees and white-horned carabaos, Tabuena even flirts with sentimentalism (which is the weak underbelly of nostalgia) as he unabashedly presents Mayon Volcano rising gradually in the sky on one side of the work.

The painting is saved from becoming tourist art by the flowing bands of color in the foreground representing the stream in flux, and especially with the use of a leafless tree with tortured branches writh-

ing like serpents against a light background (*O mango tree of memory!*). Another saving factor is the unusual color of the carabao horns, a shining marmoreal white or ivory which gives a magic-realist if not surreal touch to his Philippine daydreams in acrylic.

In a monograph written for the reminiscing artist's 1973 show at the Galerie Bleue, R. Paras-Perez also notices this seared-edge dream quality in both the early watercolors and the later Mexican acrylics depicting his famous weightless carabaos floating in mist and his nameless men and women with "undefined visages": remembered images which have "the haunting persistence



Girl with butterflies, acrylic, 1975

and elusiveness of a dream.”

Except for those tell-tale touches of *angst* arising from homesickness and other sources, however, Tabuena's remembrances of scenes past are generally on the gentle and poetic side, the pink and lavender side, of memory. His painting brush is a soothing one. There is no violence or condemnation of any sort present in spite of his predilection for the working class in terms of subject matter: fisherman, peasant, washer-woman, sidewalk vendor, itinerant musician, and so on.

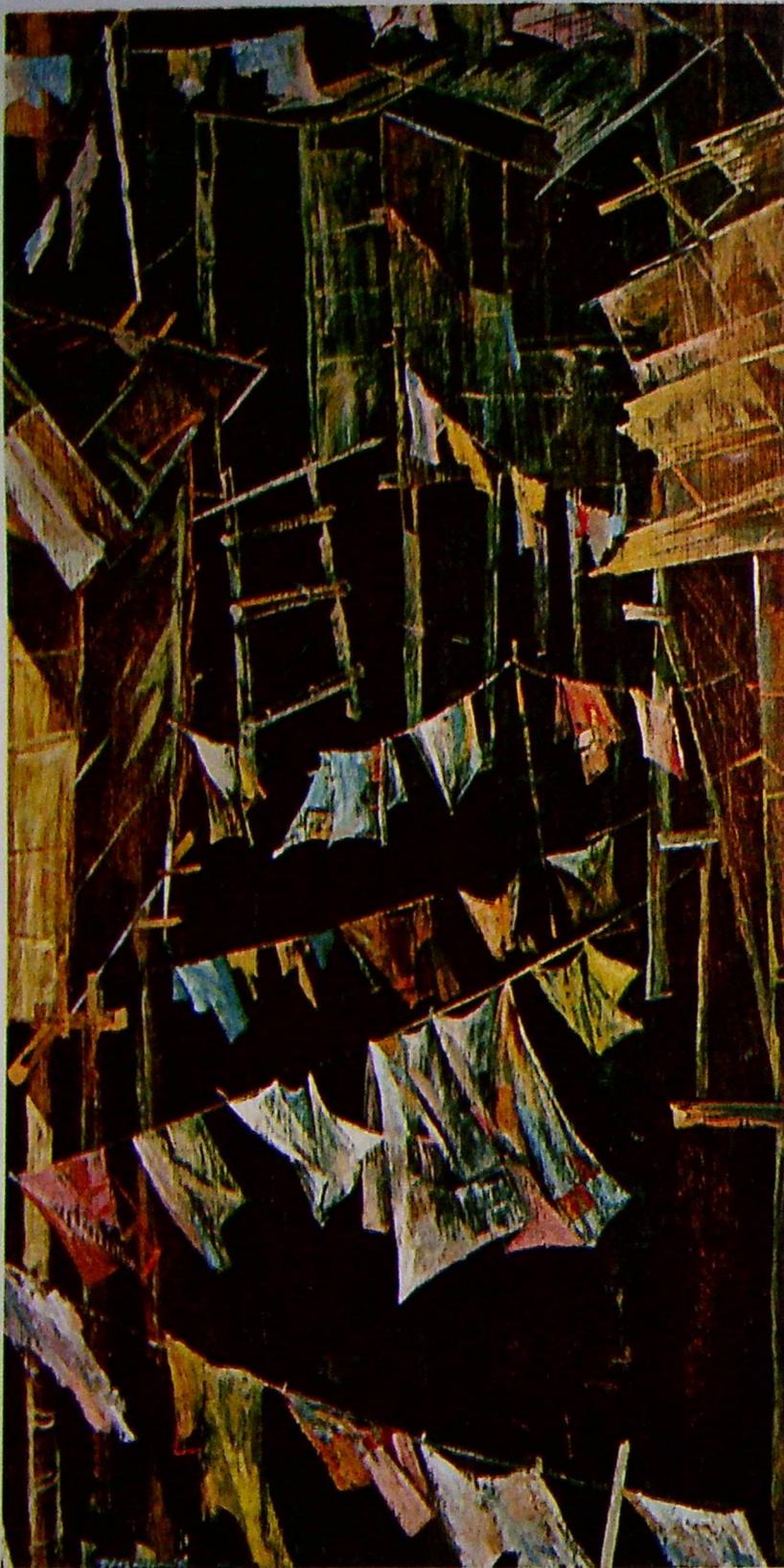
Social protest was never a motivating animus in the works of Filipino painters, at least not those of Tabuena's genera-

tion, although H.R. Ocampo did flirt with it briefly. But that was when he was still primarily a writer with tendencies towards proletarian literature and only secondarily a Sunday painter with tendencies towards symbolist art. The *barong-barong*, for example, instead of becoming a rallying point for protest art, has been treated instead as a beautiful object or subject, at least for the painter's brush.

Tabuena was no exception to this prettifying tendency of the Filipino artist looking upon and glossing over scenes of poverty and depression like the idealist that he is. In fact, Tabuena was one of the early practising examples of the

barong-barong syndrome. But as Lyd Arguilla points out in a 1960 monograph commemorating ten years of his art (1949-1959), he was more interested in dynamic movement on the canvas or board rather than a mere representation of the subject, and least interested if at all in movements aimed at up-ending the social order.

There was a time, however, in the 50s while he was doing his *hombre y mujer* series which was the main offering of his Philippine Art Gallery retrospective in 1959, when Tabuena watchers thought he had gone expressionist in a dissective sort of way. They felt, looking at those works described by Lyd Ar-



Laundry, oil, 1951

Emotion more than reason shapes his vision

guilla as massive, powerful and monumental, that he had sacrificed the poetic touch in favor of the dramatic and forceful presentation of his subject, the working man and woman, under the influence of revolutionary Mexican art.

But the pieces were merely exercises for developing a stronger feel for structure, which he needed. They were undertaken as the cumulative result of studies in New York and Paris, travels in other European cities visiting museums, and especially after settling down in Mexico in the mid-50s. As his subsequent artistic interests showed, the *hombre y mujer* expressionism was merely a phase, and did not actually engage his deeper sensibilities.

Intuition rather than intellect continued to dictate the kind of painting he was to do from the mid-50s onwards. The idiom that he subsequently chose to paint in, cubism, is a highly analytical approach, but emotion rather than reason has continued to shape his artistic visioning, so that there is not a single work in his 1975 Galerie Bleue show that does not have a feel for the human and a hint of the universal with which all men can relate.

AS HE HIMSELF said in an interview given to Florinda Trinidad in 1973, "As an artist, the best way I can express myself in my work is: to strive to paint universal things in a personal way. The things in Art that are of universal value are those whose essence appeals to all mankind for all time. I aspire to communicate thru my work the essence of life, the sentiment of all people, and the magnificent beauty of nature. These are lasting truths which I wish to exemplify in my art...."

In the pursuit of such a high and almost quixotic ideal, his imagery has remained constant through two decades. This could be a disappointment to those who expected something iconoclastic from him, considering that he was one

of the angry young men in Philippine art in the early 50s. In fact, in presenting his poetic themes with the same images and icons of his youth through the prism of memory, his artistic vision has mellowed

This ripening is partly attributable to a maturation of technique, which was to be expected, a mastery of means through the lessons of cubism, and through the use of a medium perfected in Mexico, acrylic, which enables him to create effects of fresco art. He himself has observed that in his early works he did not know, partly because of the medium, how to blend his forms and figures into the background.

NOW THE SAME figures and forms grow out of the chromatic matrices of the paint itself, interacting and cohering with one another instead of acting as isolated units. It must also be mentioned that for priming he uses four coats of acrylic (three gesso and one titanium white), and that he does a great deal of scumbling and glazing, not to mention sandpapering techniques on the quick-drying *prima materia*, for the sake of certain transparent effects.

When asked why he has romanticized the carabao into an airy being



Man with rooster, in caustic, 1951



Tabuena: mastery of medium

(and this is equally true of his other recalled Philippine forms), he says, "When I try to recapture impressions of my native land from a far continent like the Americas, my visual crystallization of remembered forms impels me to paint them in terms of fantasy...."

It is good to know that Tabuena possesses the technical skills and knowl-

edge of his medium to impart to these fantasies and daydreams the necessary plasticity and structure to prevent the results from evaporating into thin air, like most daydreams and fantasies. His deep sense of craft is what enables him to indulge in nostalgia and make an art, as well as a way of life, out of this all too human emotion and experience. ■

The blue volcano of Bicol

LAND THAT LIES around a volcano is often rich dark loam that teems with a bounty of crops, a blessing with the bane and threat of eruptions. This is no less true of the Bicol peninsula, which lies southeast on the Pacific side of the island of Luzon, its entire span dominated by the Mayon Volcano. Once a

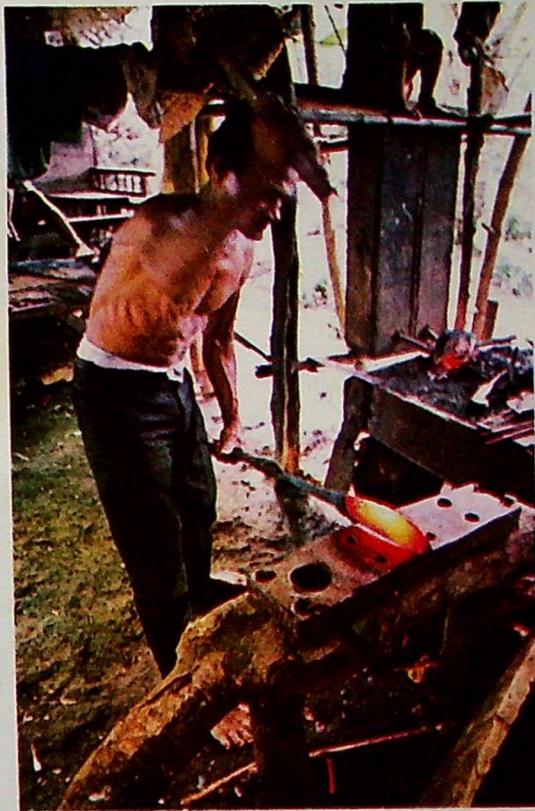
perfect cone until its most recent eruption in 1969, the Mayon dominates the scenery, visible from land and sea for kilometers around.

Six provinces make up the Bicol peninsula, which is lush with tropical greenery, watered not only by the abundant rain but also by rivers, waterfalls,



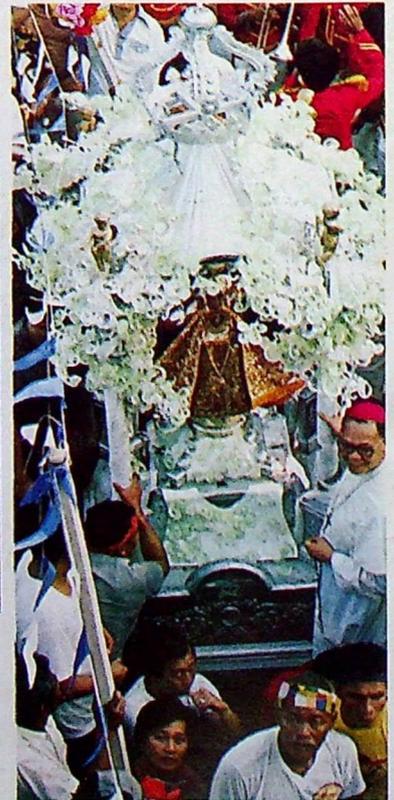
springs and lakes. Along the coast, the sea pounds with bountiful energy, making certain parts of Bicol some of the best surf-riding grounds in Luzon.

The rich land yields coconut and abaca. Going deeper, there are rich mines. Gold has been found; copper and manganese continue to be mined.



The people of the peninsula are a relaxed, gay, hardworking breed. They are farmers, abaca weavers, even iron forgers and smithies, as seen in the photographs on this page, living in towns, left photograph, that lie beneath the grandeur of Mayon volcano.





On the eastern side of the Bicol peninsula, the Pacific pounds with bountiful energy, encouraging some of the most exciting sea sports, like surfing and game fishing, along some of the lovellest beaches, upper photograph, in Luzon. Elsewhere in Bicol, the scenery is anchored with ancient churches built during the Spanish colonial years, above, their shadows harboring young and old alike in the embrace of Christianity. The best-loved festival in the Bicol peninsula centers on Our Lady of Peñafrancia, honoring the Mother of God with a fluvial procession, right, for the bounty of the harvests and for her continuing protection against ravages of nature.

Carmen G. Nakpil

Playback: a historical review

A letter from Cortes

NOTHING shows the cultural shock suffered by Spaniards and Malays at the time of the *conquista* as well as a little-known letter written by Hernando Cortés, the conqueror of Mexico, to Humabon, King of Cebu in 1527, a letter which appears in the appendix in volume five, *Colonel de Viages* by Navarrete. It is disingenuous, crafty, diplomatic to the point of disloyalty to a fellow-explorer, blaming as it does the whole sorry affair on Mactan Island on the "evil pretension" of Fernando de Magellan who perished there. It is also full of factual errors. Cortés thought Cebu was in the Moluccas and that the Philippine archipelago was only "a few days away" from Mexico.

"To you the honored and excellent King of Cebu in the Maluco region: I, Don Hernando Cortés, Captain-general and governor of this New Spain for the very exalted and most powerful King of the Spaniards, my Lord, send you friendly greetings to one whom I love and esteem and whom I wish every blessing because of the good news I had heard concerning yourself and your land and for the kind reception and treatment that you have given to the Spaniards who had anchored in your country.

"You will already have heard, from the account of the Spaniards whom you have in your power—certain people sent to those districts by the greater emperor and monarch of the Christian about seven or eight years ago—of his great power, magnificence and excellency. Therefore, and because you may inform yourself of what you must wish to know, through the captain and people, whom I send now in his powerful name, it is not needful to write at length. But it is expedient that you should know, that this so powerful prince, desiring to have knowledge of the manner and trade of those districts sent thither one of his captains named Hernando de Magallanes with five ships.

"Of these ships but one, owing to the said captain's lack of caution and foresight, returned to his kingdoms; from its people, his majesty learned the reason for the destruction and loss of the rest. Now although he was sorely afflicted at all this, he grieved most at having a captain who departed from the royal commands and instructions that he carried, especially in his having stirred up war or discord with you and yours. For his majesty sent him with the single desire to regard you all as

his very true friends and servants, and to extend to you every manner of kindness as regards your honor and your persons. For this disobedience, the Lord and possessor of all things permitted that he should suffer retribution for his want of reverence, dying as he did in the evil pretension which he attempted to sustain, contrary to his prince's will. And God did him not a little good in allowing him to die as he did there; for had he returned alive, the pay for his negligence had not been so light. And in order that you and all the other kings and seigniors of those districts might have knowledge of his majesty's wishes, and know how greatly he has grieved over his captain's conduct some two years ago, he sent two other captains with people to those districts to give you satisfaction for it. And he gave order to me—who in his powerful name reside in these his lands which lie very near yours—that I too despatch other messengers for this purpose, in order that he might have greater assurance, and that you might hold more certain his embassy, ordering and charging me especially that I do it with much diligence and brevity.

"Therefore I am sending three ships with crews, who will give the very full and true reason of all this; and that you may be able to receive satisfaction and regard as more certain all that I shall say to you, for I thus affirm and certify it in the name of this great and powerful lord. And since we are so near neighbors and can communicate with each other in a few days, I shall be much honored if you will inform me of all the things of which you wish to be advised, for I know all this will be greatly to his majesty's service. And over and above his good will, I shall be most gratified thereat and shall write you my thanks; and the emperor our lord will be much pleased if you will deliver to this captain any of the Spaniards who are still alive in your prison.

"If you wish a ransom, he shall give it to you at your pleasure and to your satisfaction; and in addition, you will receive favors from his majesty and reciprocal favors from me, since if you wish it so, we shall have for many days much intercourse and friendship together. — Hernando Cortes, May 28, 1527"

But the letter had come too late. Magellan's eight remaining crew members had been sold to the Chinese in slavery some years before. ■

INTERVIEW □ Imelda Romualdez Marcos

'My life is a mission'



Imelda R. Marcos: "As long as one lives there is the responsibility to serve."

Throughout the presidency of President Ferdinand E. Marcos for close to ten years now, the First Lady, Imelda Romualdez Marcos, has been actively involved in national life through an integrated social welfare and cultural program. As the personal representative of the President, she has undertaken many special missions to nations throughout the world, particularly to socialist and Third World nations, thus opening or re-establishing diplomatic relations. In several of these missions for the President, she has spoken at international forums. Last September, she delivered the Philippine statement before the 30th session of the United Nations General Assembly. Late this year, Madame Marcos accepted a mandate to serve as the first chairman of the Metro Manila Commission, the newly formed administrative body to manage a conurbation of seven cities and 13 municipalities.

In forums in the Philippines and

abroad, you speak about Philippine efforts to reach out to Third World Countries in a shared endeavor to provide people with a better quality of life and eventually a better world to live in. What has moved you to speak?

We should unite with countries of the Third World because we have similar problems and conditions. Moreover, unity with countries of the Third World means being listened to by the First World, the developed world.

Is it so difficult to get the First World to listen?

Recently at the Seventh Special Session of the United Nations, the situation was clear: that the Third World countries are reaching out to each other and that the First World is beginning to lis-

ten, if grudgingly at first. The First World has to listen because we of the Third World have begun to move as one. There is now force in number among developing countries.

When we are bigger as a group, we need not be as hysterical as we used to be. We had to shout because our individual voices were small and weak, but in unity, the small-voiced nations have a bigger voice with which to speak more effectively, with dignity and sophistication.

The First World must understand the hysteria of the past, the hysterical confrontation that was used by the Third World as an instrument in the desire to provide its people with a better quality of life.

How do you assess the role of the

Philippines in the Third World?

The Philippines is fortunate to be rich in both human and natural resources. Our human resources are literate and enlightened. The President and I believe that the wellbeing of our people is our prime concern. Their wellbeing must take priority, because only an enlightened people can best develop their nation's natural resources.

A rich and prosperous country depends on the wellbeing of its people. With that priority established, our role as a nation, then, must be to set an example for other developing countries.

Isn't some kind of reconciliation necessary, since Filipinos themselves tend to identify more with the West rather than with Asia?

It is not a matter of reconciliation. We were estranged from our Asian brothers by the tyranny of historical circumstances. Our colonization by the Spaniards and by the Americans, even by the British, has made us look more toward the West. But we are not alone. Indonesia looked to the Dutch, Vietnam to the French.

Little by little, however, we are beginning to realize where our home is, where our region is, where we really belong on this planet. It is only a matter of time.

Knowing our brother Asians will be easier and faster than knowing the West, because we share many roots and similarities in culture, history, tradition and environment. Through our exchanges of culture—culture being a way of life and not just the arts, we in Asia are getting to know each other better and sooner.

Do you consider the coming of the Americans a blessing to Filipinos?

Yes and no. Somehow, someone was bound to reach this part of the world. I am glad it was the United States that came. She was aggressive in bringing in her culture, in reaching out for material progress. Through her, there has been an effective transfer of multinational technology and science to the Philippines.

In a way, we were lucky to have been colonized by the United States with her sophisticated technology. I think the United States is one of the few colonizers that gave education to their colonies. The US was generous to

the Philippines in this respect.

But it was America's aggressive transfer of culture and technology that has divorced the Philippines from the rest of Asia.

Our American experience may have divorced us from the rest of Asia but it made us progress. We should not allow this experience to prevent us from knowing our fellow Asians, our immediate environment.

Ultimately, nations should look at one another with an open mind and an open heart. We must look at our neighbors' today as well as their yesterday. It's just like understanding a person. You must look farther back into his past, his grandparents, his birthplace, where he used to live.

Your special missions to Socialist and Third World nations within this year and last year have opened new vistas for the Philippines and revealed your talent for diplomacy. The general expectation is that you'd make either an excellent ambassador or an effective minister of foreign affairs. Given the chance, would you accept such opportunities for service?

I will serve my country in any capacity. But I feel that at the moment, my first usefulness is at home. If the President sends me out in missions for the people—only because the President is prompted ultimately by the people—then I will do so. I will do anything for my people, whatever they want me to do. I look on my life as a mission.

You seem to have a good working relationship with the President.

Oh, yes. The President and I have always been friends—the best of friends. It is not just enough that we are husband and wife, that there is much love between us. Love can be emotionally selfish. But both of us think not just of emotion, not just of the self, but of the country and the people.

It's no longer a question of who comes first, the family or the people. There is no conflict between the two. The people are my family. There are no more boundaries.

Your work spectrum ranges through several aspects of peoples' lives, from nutrition to family planning, from health care to culture, from green revolution to diplomacy, from energy conservation

to rural electrification. Why such a broad spectrum?

I have a broad spectrum of activities because I look at human beings in their totality. I feel a responsibility for their yesterdays and tomorrows, since the people are my family and their abode is the country.

We must always take a total approach to problems. That is why my main projects are oriented to the future. As First Lady, the main thrust of my work is to aid both the gifted and the non-gifted: any Filipino from every walk of life. The gifted are assisted through the cultural program and the non-gifted through the integrated social welfare program.

How do you manage?

I never do my projects singlehandedly. Other people are always involved.

Don't you ever get tired and wish for a holiday?

No, really, truly, I never, never get tired. I enjoy everything I do. Everyday is a holiday for me. I am never tired because I never approach anything with hysteria.

What is your ordinary day like?

Everyday I go over the list of things I must do. I do what I have to do. I try my best to finish what there is for me to do during the day. If at the end of the day some problems still remain, I do not spend the rest of the night worrying about them.

Where do you get your energy?

I have lots of energy because I am not presumptuous. In doing projects, a little humility helps. When I have something to do, I let the experts do the job. I give them my full confidence, knowing that they will do much better than me. So I never get nervous and I do not worry.

I have learned moreover to budget my energy. This is the secret of my calmness. Everyone has energies to spend but I only use up what I need to use up.

In many ways, you have changed the role of the First Lady from being just a social asset to the President to an active and dynamic partner involved in the total life of the nation. If some people cannot understand your role today, perhaps it is because they are unprepared for an active and aggressive First Lady. Past First Ladies were not as involved as you are now.

Maybe that is one reason why I am misunderstood. But I do feel the feelings of the people—and I have had these feelings even before I married the President, even as a young girl in Leyte.

I cannot just look at suffering without trying to comfort those who suffer. I cannot look at poverty without trying to ease it. I cannot see ugliness without trying to remove it.

Let's put it this way: I love my people. I see humanity in the Filipino. I see in every face my mother, my father, my brother, my sister, my everything at once.

As Chairman of the National Commission on the Role of Women, do you see any need for women to be political, meaning rights-conscious?

I've always said that to prove ourselves as women, we don't have to be anti-men; in the same way, to be pro-Third World, we need not be anti-First World.

Women and men make total humanity. Together, in partnership, they must work for the betterment of the world, the future. What women should do is to improve the quality of life of their fellow women, whether they may be in the rural or urban areas.

Sometimes, it is in the urban areas, in the city, where one finds a near-total destruction of beauty and of life. Let us not completely think of the rural woman as the poorer woman. She may be richer in values than the woman of the palace or the ivory tower. Let us not say that the rural woman is the most oppressed, the most impoverished. What we should do is to help everyone, our own kind, to better the quality of their lives, in education, in value-orientation, in all aspects of life.

What plans do you have for the women of the barrios or the so-called rural women?

Concrete plans for women's development should be for all women, not just the rural woman. I have great respect for the rural woman, great concern for her. I too was a rural girl. Because I have been one, I feel I am much better prepared to meet life than the woman in the city. For the city can be completely empty, it can be a vacuum, unlike in the barrios where values are basic. What urban women have is knowledge, what

they need are values.

Village life has served me in good stead as First Lady because it has allowed me to share, to know the feelings, the longings, the dreams and the hopes of people living in the rural areas. From the village, my world has expanded. The village has catapulted me to the world.

Should any women's movement in the Philippines start from the grassroots?

No. The example must be set from the top. Remember what Toynbee said: "A people can be moved by a group of one people. Leaders spark off the great moments of history." For instance, the imagination of great leaders like Napoleon and Alexander the Great catalyzed their people. Leaders should be catalysts of those whom they serve, of their resources and environment.

Please explain this Convention City that's being built at present.

Why am I putting up a Convention City? Because I don't believe in mass tourism. I don't believe that any Tom, Dick and Harry should come to the Philippines in droves.

There are tourists who litter our place without respect for our own ecology. They do terrible things in our hotels, they tear up the curtains for bedsheets and duffel bags, they destroy even the bathtubs by misuse. So what if these tourists pay their bills in their own country? So what if they bring in so many dollars? What they destroy here costs more than the dollars they bring in.

The Convention City is for the great minds, the scientists, the artists, the financiers, cultural missions who would leave us not just their money but also their know-how and values, a part of their culture.

I want quality tourists, not quantity tourists. We don't need droves of people to walk over our heads. We have more than 40 million people to take care of, we don't want extra people to dirty our place.

What kind of tourism, then, would you envision for the Philippines?

I would like to see quality tourism where not just anyone—not those who break our glasses or strut around because they're dissatisfied—comes to us. Let the tourists who cannot take us for what we have stay away from us.

You had the opportunity to speak

with Chairman Mao Tse-tung twice within the space of a few months, the first time in September 1974 when you were special envoy of the President and the second time in June 1975 when you accompanied the President on a state visit to China. Would you share some of your conversations?

I asked him once: "Chairman Mao, why did you close your doors to the world?"

He answered, "When you are putting your house in order because everything has collapsed, you just don't receive anyone. First, you have to fix the house, strengthen it, put things in order. And when you have some two or three benches, you just don't let the crowd in, you limit your visitors to the two or three benches in the house."

Once I also asked, "Chairman Mao, where did you get the support for the Long March?" His answer was, "It is not a good thing to receive or to ask for help every time. That lessens liberty. That means loss of freedom."

How is this applicable in the Philippine context?

When we build the nation, let us not make beggars out of the people. I do not want my people to lose their dignity. Give people incentive and opportunity but not dole-outs. Self-reliance should never be killed by dole-outs.

Indeed, why should I allow my people to lose their liberty and freedom by giving them all that they need? I shall set examples, but I will not be presumptuous—I will not presume to be God, the giver of all. Self-reliance is always the essence of my projects.

Is there anything else in life that you want to achieve and accomplish?

As long as one lives, there is the responsibility to serve. I will serve to the last day and the last hour of my life, probably not to the same extent as now, but I do hope to be useful always to my fellow men.

You have come a long way.

Yes, I have come a long way. For that, I am grateful to the President, to the Filipino people and to God. I never expected to be what I am now and I realize that what I am now is a gift of love, a gift to me by my people and by God. As long as I live, I shall be grateful for all these. ■

Donn V. Hart

A village funeral

Death is the friendly foe



Dr. Donn Hart, Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Illinois University, has spent many years studying Philippine village life. Although a fictional style was used in writing this article, all events and details are based on

facts. All of the incidents, including some conversations, in this article were seen or recorded during funerals attended in Caticugan. All names, of course, are fictional. Acknowledgement is made to Mr. Morton Netzorg for his skilled criticism of a draft of this article.

Night hours waned as soothing prayers for the dead ushered in the new day

IT WAS A BLACK, still night in a small village in southern Negros. There was no moon and the distant stars were faint. The lanky bamboos on nearby Panglirigan hill swayed silently in the gentle wind. Not a single lonely dog barked. The last boisterous male, all too full of *guhang*, a wine made from the sap of the buri palm, had found his confused way home from the *poblacion* marketplace to his welcomed sleeping mat. All village houses were dark except the sturdy bamboo, nipa-thatched dwelling of Manang Engracia. Here old Vicente, her husband, was dying.

The light of the sibilant petromax lantern seeped through the house tightly secured mesh shutters. The soft regular cadence of prayers could be heard from the women kneeling in front of the family altar. On the altar shelf, among paper flowers and lighted candles, stood an image of the devout San Isidro, holding a tiny plow pulled by two miniature wooden carabao—the patron saint of farmers and the village. The night hours waned as their monotonous but soothing prayers ushered in the new day.

Vicente was so ancient that when he smiled only two broken teeth appeared. He told stories of the “old days” when haughty Spanish officials walked the *poblacion* with their imperial black canes with silver heads. For more than two weeks he had lain on his mat, eating only a thin gruel of finely ground corn and sipping hot ginger tea.

Engracia had hid from him the fearful omens of the past week. She noticed that Vicente avoided looking directly at friends who visited him yet stared at them when their backs were turned—as if it might be his last time to see them. The old people said this was the habit of a dying person.

Titay, their niece, had returned one evening last week from gathering fresh-water snails that stick to the smooth stones of the shallow Siaton River. She mentioned that a small snake had darted through the golden circle her torch made on the water—not realizing the baneful significance of this seemingly minor incident.

But worse, thought Engracia as she boiled the morning's corn in the kitchen, yesterday a gaudy red headed, white-bodied moth with huge black-spotted wings had fluttered into the kitchen. Luckily she had shoed it outside before Vicente could see it. It was then that Engracia began plans for her husband's funeral.

She sent word to their nearby kinsmen in Datag, Tayug, Casala-an and Apoloy, villages that lined the narrow Siaton River valley north of Caticugan. Coring, the eldest son, used money Engracia had earned selling vegetables in the *poblacion* to send a telegram to Vicente's only living brother in southern Mindanao.



For the last time, friends and kin gather for graveside photograph.

As Coring paid for the telegram at the wireless office in the *poblacion* municipio, the town hall, he knew it was a waste of money. His father would soon die. The trip from Mindanao to their village by inter-island ship took almost a week.

As he walked home he thought that only the well-to-do, who embalm their dead, can have all their distant kinsmen at a funeral. Most villagers must hasten the



Previous page, village women reading prayers for dying are gentle couriers of death.

body into its grave for in the hot, humid weather putrefaction quickly sets in.

During the following days kinsmen and friends visited the house. They first paid their respects to a listless Vicente. They requested his forgiveness for any past "hot" words and kissed his limp hand. Engracia was pleased; surely Vicente would die with a peaceful "cool" mind. Some kinsmen from other villages stayed since

Vicente was in a semi-coma—it was too far to go home only to return within a few days. Most of Engracia's relatives stayed with their kinsmen since the village was her home community.

By Thursday the small kitchen was too small to prepare the meals for the growing crowd. Large vats and five gallon kerosene cans were put over fire-filled trenches outside the house to cook. Most of the food had been

She was Death's gentle courier, coming to read Vicente's soul toward heaven

donated by the visitors. Visitors gave onions, tomatoes, eggplants, a fish or chicken, a buri bag of ground corn, or a few bottles of Coke or Tru-Orange. Engracia, relieved of all household duties, sat quietly on the floor next to Vicente's mat. Now and then she wiped Vicente's brow with a damp cloth or brushed away an inquisitive fly.

The week before, Vicente in a sudden spurt of energy, had discussed with his family the division of his land—the fields he owned when Engracia and he married nearly forty years ago. His two-hectare paddy in Naga would go to Paco, the youngest son, if he remained with his mother until her death. Coring was counselled to watch over the family properties, to pay the taxes, and to care for his younger siblings and mother. Vicente made Coring vow he would not kill their only carabao for his funeral feast since this was a luxury they could not afford because the younger children had to be educated. Chickens, goats and maybe several pigs would suffice for the feast.

In the early afternoon Severina came with her small paper books. A stout woman, with large wondrous eyes and grey hair twisted neatly into a bun at the nape of her neck, she slowly climbed the entrance ladder to the piled house. Severina was Caticugan's *manalabatan*, a woman honored for her knowledge of devotions to the saints and novenas for ancestral souls. She was Death's gentle courier, coming to read Vicente's soul toward heaven.

As she knelt at the side of Vicente's mat, she read from two books. The title of one, when translated into English, was *Help for the Sick That They May Have a Good Death*. The other book was *Taming sa Kalag*, Shield for the Soul. The women and young girls crowded around Severina; Engracia began sobbing softly. No one thought of sending for the priest in the *poblacion*. He might not have been able to come. Anyway, the old people said asking the priest to give the last rites to Vicente would only hurry his death.

Outside the house, stripped to their waists, men cooked while others chatted, joked and drank *guhang*. Young boys stayed with their fathers, listening intently, never speaking. This was in keeping with the rules of their language and culture that divided *dalaga*, young unmarried girls from *olitao*, their male counterparts and, according to peoples' age and sex, segregate village activities. The approach of Death was women's domain; later the men would fulfill their responsibilities of cooking, making the coffin, and digging the grave. As yet, no one was dead—and there was plenty of food and drink and friends from other villages they had not seen in months.

As Severina was reading from *Taming sa Kalag*,

Engracia noticed that Vicente's eyes did not move when she brushed a fly from his cheek. She looked carefully at her husband and knew he was dead. Engracia glanced at the others and saw they too realized he was gone. A cousin of Vicente went outside to tell the men the news. Two young men who were Vicente's kin left immediately for the Chinese store in the *poblacion* to buy lumber to make his coffin. Severina touched Engracia's arm with her left hand as she continued reading until finished:

Her two daughters took Engracia into the small bedroom while Maria, her sister and the other women began preparing the body. Vicente was washed with water scented with fragrant leaves. His sparse, white hair was rubbed with coconut oil and neatly combed. Cotton was stuffed into his nostrils and ears to prevent seepage of blood or other body fluids.

Vicente was dressed in his best pair of white trousers, a sheer piña embroidered *barong* Tagalog shirt, and shoes. A small cross made of the *bendita* palm that had been blessed in the church on Palm Sunday was put in his folded hands resting on his chest. The blade of a bolo suled by use in splitting firewood was smeared with coconut oil and slipped under his mat—a custom said to delay putrefaction. Then a mosquito net was dropped over Vicente's body and lighted candles were placed at his feet.

Soon the yard of the house was a beehive of activities. Young girls pounded rice to mix with the ground corn. Children returned from the spring, carrying hollow bamboo full of water. More vats and cans were placed over the fire-trenches, filled with rice and corn, chicken stewing with squash, bubbling *mongo* beans mixed with the diced coagulated blood of freshly killed chickens. Several men were sawing and planing the planks for the coffin. Wherever people worked with food, the village dogs and cats stood in hungry vigil, hoping that some would accidentally drop to the ground.

As they built the coffin, the men talked.

"Once we made coffins from hollowed trunks of *buri* palms. It was like making a boat," commented Arturo, the village carpenter, as he sawed.

"I remember my mother's father's funeral when I was a young boy. We fooled the priest." The fact that no one asked how did not discourage Dodong from continuing.

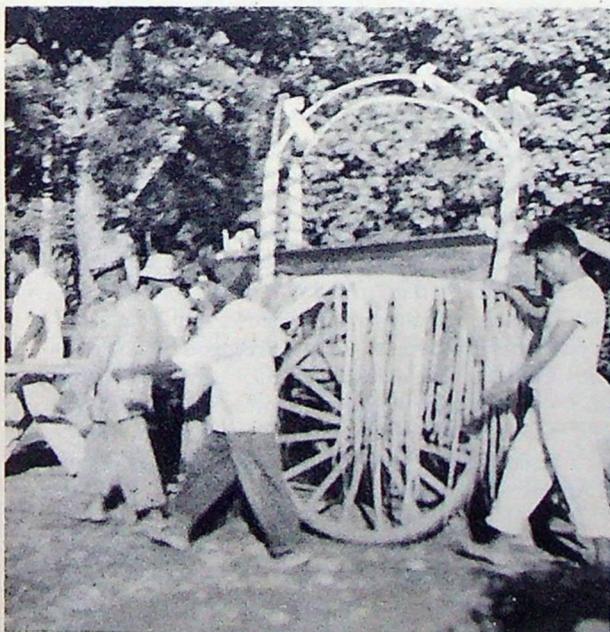
WE MADE HIM a fine narra wood coffin with a glass window in the cover so you could see his face. But we took him to the church in a bamboo coffin used by the mountain people, while others took the wooden coffin to the cemetery. When the priest saw the bamboo coffin he believed us poor, so he charged only two pesos for the services. If we had taken Apo to the church in his fine narra coffin, the old priest would have charged us seven pesos. Later, at the cemetery, we moved his body to the narra coffin and buried him." Everyone laughed for although their Catholic faith was

firm, such little tricks were considered clever.

While the people ate Maria cautiously came down the entrance ladder and walked under the raised house. She tied several pungent *suwa* branches to the floor beams. Later, when it was dark, a lighted lantern would also be hung under the house. This custom, according to the old people, prevented a visit by the dreaded *asuwang*. *Asuwang* are humans with supernatural powers; they can change at will into animals and fly by dabbing a secret concoction in their arm pits. They delighted in



Amid mourners, village carpenter makes coffin.



Kinsmen draw farmer's cart festooned as hearse.

feasting on the dead. A corpse, if not closely watched, could be stolen by an *asuwang* and a banana stalk, looking like the deceased, left as a substitute.

Night came quickly to Caticugan as it does everywhere in the Philippines. The women, having cleared the tables in the yard where the visitors had eaten, were washing the borrowed dishes in the kitchen. Inside the house lanterns were lighted and new candles were added to the family altar. Engracia, refusing to eat, had returned to sit at her husband's side.

At 8 p.m. the church bells tolled—the *De Profundis*. They were rung throughout most of the Catholic Philippines at this hour, to remind the living to pray for the dead. It was time for Vicente's rosary. The old people claimed that if the rosary for the deceased were started before or much later than 8 p.m. the soul could not attend the prayers. The house door was opened so Vicente's soul could easily enter. Many of the villagers believed that a deceased person's soul attended these prayers for three days before leaving the earth for its uncertain destination. Severina led the rosary in front of the altar ablaze with candles, many of them brought by the visitors. Outside the men, sitting on benches on the porch, talked and drank.

BY TEN P.M. all the guests had crowded into the house. Only the children would be permitted to sleep during the all-night wake. To pass the long hours a group of young people decided to hold a mock marriage negotiation. The audience was divided into two sides—the immediate family of Vicente did not participate but watched with amusement. One side represented the girl's group. The other—the boy's side—left the house, shortly re-entering as if coming to the girl's house for a real negotiation. The girl's group began to quiz the suitor. Was he a hard worker? A representative of the boy's group said he was. Was he healthy? Petra, the village wit, a frail bent figure with bright brown eyes and lips stained scarlet from betel chewing, jokingly demanded that the suitor undress so he could be inspected for possible sores or ulcers. Laughter filled the house as a man on the boy's side shouted he was sure that the girl had done this earlier.

The two sides then haggled over the dowry the boy was to give the girl and her group before the wedding could be held.

"Tia Juana asks a basketful of dances."

"Four pigs of twenty kilos each."

The girl's "father" gravely announced that "our sparrow must have a nest (house) with eight windows," using the euphemistic speech employed in such negotiations. But soon the group tired of this game and began a riddle session. Maria muttered to a nearby friend that when she was a young girl no one would permit a riddle session while there was a corpse in the house. But she said nothing for Coring, now the family head, was silent.

"Sunshine or rain, always wearing short pants.

'Now you are going on a long walk
and you won't return—
remember us who are left behind.'

What is it?"

"Rooster," several people cried out. Since this was the correct answer, another riddle was posed.

"Since birth all patches. What is it?"

No one knew the answer so the riddler explained it was a village house whose roof and walls recently had been patched with green nipa that contrasted with its weathered brown nipa.

"When you pick it up it cries; when you put it down it is silent. What is it?" This riddle was shouted out by a young girl, a forwardness that now embarrassed, who nervously covered her mouth with her hand.

"Bata, infant?"

"Dili, no!" Some scoffed for everyone knew that a baby cries only when it is put down.

"Guitar!" With this correct answer all laughed since the answer was now so obvious.

As early morning approached most of the children were asleep, curled in tumbled piles on mats in the bedroom. A small group of women talked softly in the kitchen. Now and then someone would leave the house to urinate. A young man began to play his guitar as he sat on a bench near the window. He sang romantic songs that told of the faithfulness of starcrossed lovers. He sang sad songs of love denied or rejected.

Several young men pointed to Andres who was sleeping while he sat on the floor with his head resting against the house wall. One went to the kitchen and returned with a clay cooking pot. The black soot from the pot was gently wiped on Andres' face. Exhausted from the day's activities, he slept on. Another man then went to the kitchen, this time returning with some coarse salt. Several large pieces were carefully slipped between his lips. Everyone watched. Suddenly, as the salt melted in his mouth, Andres jumped erect, still half asleep. All laughed as he sheepishly rubbed the soot from his face.

A lusty sun rose over Caticugan, making distinct the distant shadowy hulk of *Cuernos de Negros*, the Horns of Negros, the ancient, burnt-out volcano that mutely brooded over southern Negros. In this fleeting sunrise the sun seems to pause briefly while low on the eastern horizon, bringing the most fragrant, cool, if fleeting time of the Philippine day. Chickens, roosting the night in the nearby mango trees, flew to the ground to scratch for food. While some guests walked to the river to bathe, others began to prepare the morning meal.

Soon the group was drinking steaming "coffee" made from parched corn and biting into still warm *pan de sal* rolls from the Chinese baker in the *poblacion*. Plates heaped high with rice and ground corn were placed on the tables in the yard.

As they finished eating, the men returned to the coffin. One painted it black, the paint was made by mixing the black carbon of used flashlight batteries with coconut oil. A white geometric design was painted on the coffin; it had no meaning except to be decorative. Another worker inserted the pane of glass in the coffin top so Vicente's face could be seen. Several young men left with shovels to dig the grave in the municipal cemetery. In the house Vicente's daughters were making for the coffin a black paper wreath with purple crepe flowers.

To the rear of the house, Coring singed the slaughtered pig with a torch of coconut leaves. A young man had dug a pit and filled it with wood and coconut husks. After the pig was cleaned, Coring stuffed it with lemony-scented *tanlad* grass. The spitted pig was slowly turned over the fire. By early afternoon it would be roasted a golden brown—a delicious *lechon*. The one turning the spit would earn the pig's ears which are the crispest part.

Throughout the morning and during the noon feast Engracia remained by Vicente's mat. When a candle burned out, she would replace it with a new one. Shrieking children raced in and out of the house. Some stopped to gaze at Vicente for a few minutes. Two chickens flew from the ground to a window sill. Hopping to the floor they walked toward the kitchen. A small girl saw the chickens and chased them toward the open door. As they flew outside, the men brought in the coffin.

ON SEEING the black coffin, Engracia began wailing. "Ah, my husband," she moaned as she clutched his limp right hand, "you use to take short walks and return. Now you are going to a long walk from which you won't return. Remember us who are left behind."

The daughters embraced their mother, crying with abandon. The men parted the mosquito net and gently lifted Vicente from his mat into the coffin. The top was nailed down. People crowded around, taking their last look at Vicente's face through the pane. Several small girls began crying, less from grief than from fright.

The men carried the coffin down the house ladder and began the thirty-minute walk to the *poblacion* church. A small group, including Coring, followed behind. Engracia, standing at the window, with a daughter at each side, bawled in anguish, waving goodbye with a white cloth, as she watched the men carry the coffin down the path. Shortly after this group disappeared behind bushes, two men passed down the same path carrying a bamboo coffin from the isolated mountain village of Apoloy to the church.

When they reached the church the priest was in another town. The sacristan was found who sprinkled the coffin with holy water as he said a hurried prayer. During the brief service an altar boy rang the church bells. Coring thought his mother in Caticugan would hear the bells and know Vicente's funeral was being properly conducted. The coffin was taken from the two sawhorses

to the church entrance where it was stood on end, the window at the top. The group collected around the coffin as photographs were taken.

The men then put the coffin on a small cart that relatives of Vicente had decorated that morning. The edges of the cart were covered with a lacy green fringe of coconut fronds. A canopy twined with black and white paper was added to the cart. Four men pulled the cart through the poblacion as the others followed behind. The people in the poblacion watched the procession, the women crossed themselves, while the men removed their straw hats.

It was late afternoon when the procession reached the cemetery. The cemetery was overgrown with bushes and vines. Among the tangled vegetation were wooden crosses; now and then a concrete tomb stood with black splotches on its top made by melted candles and forgotten prayers. Coring thought, as the cart moved down the rocky path, the cemetery would look neater after the approaching All Soul's Day. On this day the community—including the Boy Scouts—came to clean their graves, white-wash the tombs, and cut the bushes and vines.

Vicente's grave was open. Lying by the freshly dug earth was a wooden cross on which his name had been painted. The coffin was lowered into the pit into which some water had seeped and the grave filled. Both the decorations from the cart and the wreath were placed on the grave, while the cross was set upright on the soft mound. Severina said a short prayer as other women put lighted candles on the grave. Curious children who joined the procession in the poblacion spied a mango tree loaded with green fruit in the cemetery. With shrieks of delight, they ran away to raid the tree.

Before leaving the cemetery the group stopped at its entrance where a token fire of twigs was lighted. Each person quickly jumped over the smoky fire. This was a measure the old people recommended to prevent *lubatam* that could result from close contact with the dead, especially if the person had sores or cuts. *Lubatam* would cause the sores to spread or the cuts to become infected. The fire was stamped out when the last person had hopped over it.

The men pulling the cart turned toward the poblacion, while all the others took a short-cut to Caticugan, passing through Datag's cornfields that lined the banks of the Siaton River. Several young boys were watching their carabao bathe in the river. After a hot day of plowing the animals had to be cooled. They slumped in the river with only their black eyes and noses above the surface. A young girl came to the river bank to get the family wash that had been drying on the grass. The group crossed the river and returned to Vicente's house.

Engracia, her daughters and others who had not gone to the cemetery were preparing the evening meal. The youngest daughter, Rosa, had sprinkled ashes on the rungs of the house ladder, another *lubatam* preventive.

Around 7 p.m. friends and neighbors began arriving

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'May we all, kinsmen and friends,
be smoothed down together'—
from the verse game, *spadilla*

for the novena that would be held for Vicente for nine consecutive nights. When the church bells rang, Severina, Engracia and the other women knelt in front of the altar. The wall behind the altar was covered with newspapers, many with colored photographs of lovely slim Filipina movie stars, pictures of lush food dishes, or other attractive advertisements. Putting on her glasses, Severina began the novena. When appropriate the women would respond, sometimes singing. Most of the men stayed on the porch where they smoked and talked for a funeral assembled kinsmen and friends one did not see frequently. It was an opportunity to share news of what had happened since their last meeting. When the novena ended thirty minutes later, all the women rose and everyone in unison cried out:

"*Maayong gabi kaninyong tanan*, good evening everyone."

Soon the tables were covered with dishes of ground corn, jars of a salty fish sauce for the cooked cereal, and fish cooked in coconut milk with *kalamongay* leaves. Engracia, Coring and his sisters urged everyone to eat heartily. After the meal the men returned to the porch, while the women cleaned the tables and washed the dishes.

Had the novena been for a child, the young people would have danced after the meal for the soul of an infant, *angelito*, goes straight to heaven after death and there is little need to mourn. However, dancing was not permitted because Vicente had been a respected village elder, and his absence would be missed. Finally someone suggested the group play *spadilla*, a game in which one recited verses, *luwa* from memory.

Coring began the *spadilla* by passing a lighted cigarette to the woman to his left. She in turn passed the cigarette to the next person; the one who held the cigarette when it went out had to begin the game. Basilio, Vicente's next youngest son, was selected. He then chose as his partner, Julita, a young girl from Cabañahan he was secretly courting. The funeral and novena prayers to come would make it easier for him to see Julita without arousing the suspicions of her parents or siblings. Basilio began the game.

"I am Don Isiao,
Scholar of all learning.
The movement of the sun can be stopped
But not the love of man."
Julita, understanding why Basilio had chosen this verse,
responded:
"Source of the river that never dries,
Earth where no plant dies,
True feelings."

The exchange of verses continued until finally Julita admitted she knew no more. Everyone applauded Basilio who was admitted to be an expert in *spadilla*.

Then people began spontaneously to recite *luwa*.

A young boy was the first volunteer. Grinning he recited:

"I am a teen-ager,
As tall as *balili* (short grass).
Milk is still in my mouth
But I know how to court *dalaga*."

The group hooted at his comic presumption. Basilio retorted:

"In the town of Napacao,
Corn cobs are for sale.
But nobody bought them
For their husks were not divided."

Again the audience roared with laughter for most knew Basilio was inferring that the boy was not circumcized.

In time the group wearied of *spadilla*, for it was now late. It was time for most to go home. Outside a ridiculously fat yellow moon flooded the still cornfields with a soft light, making it possible to walk home without a lamp or flashlight.

When the last guest had left, Coring closed the shutters and turned off the petromax lantern.

In the bedroom Engracia lay exhausted on her sleeping mat, too weary to sleep. She thought of the novenas to come. Preparations had to be made for the *kaliwasan* feast on the ninth day of the novena. They might have a hundred guests for the *kaliwasan*. She worried about the cost of the food; it would be necessary to kill more pigs. Next Monday morning she would attend the Mass for the dead at the church. After Mass she would walk to the cemetery to pray over Vicente's grave.

She turned restlessly on her mat. Outside she heard the cicadas. Thoughts tumbled without order through her mind. Engracia wondered if Vicente's brother in Mindanao had received their telegram. No word had come from him but he was probably too feeble to make the long trip. She smiled when she remembered the *luwa* recited by Basilio and Julita—their significance had not escaped her! After the coming rice harvest there would be a marriage negotiation for those two. She had finally heard the whole story about the rumors of the elopement of the disobedient son of her cousin who lived in the next municipality. Well, they would discover that third cousins who married had a luckless life.

The night was still warm so she turned her pillow to get a cool side. The ache of Vicente's death was eased by her knowledge that his funeral had been proper. She liked the fancy design on the coffin. Everyone had plenty to eat. There had been no quarrels among the men who had drunk too much *guhang*. Custom and ritual had been followed. The dead had been honored, the living brought closer together. Engracia felt more secure than ever of her place among kin, neighbors, and friends. Just before she fell asleep she thought of a *luwa* she had almost recited during the exchange the evening before.
May we all, kinsmen and friends,
Be like the hairs on a dog's back—
All smoothed down together.

Milagros C. Jamir

Of chairs and chicken coops

(Part III)



FURNITURE has two functions. One is to support, the other is to contain: to support man's body, to contain his goods and possessions.

Of all pieces of furniture known to man, the chest is universal; it came to

be the natural successor of the basket and the box. From the earliest civilizations of antiquity to the primitive tribes surviving today, the chest evolved as one of the first pieces of furniture specifically meant to contain clothing and

household goods.

The early versions of the chest were rather plain, with flat tops whose rounded edges protruded slightly beyond the sides. The fronts and backs were dovetailed to the ends, and the only decora

tions consisted of handforged iron mounts fitted with keyholes, and attached to the chests with square-headed iron nails. Long iron straps were hinged over these escutcheonlike mounts and locked the chests. On the sides were thin handforged iron handles.

The more common type found all over the Philippines had no feet, but the Batangas version rested on a tall hollow base, which formed a separate piece. Cutouts of stylized Chinese clouds on the front and sides of the base helped to bring down its unusual height. The Baliuag chest had a slight barrelshaped box top, bracket feet, and profuse bone and ebony inlay on three sides, consisting of simulated panels enclosing heavy swags of flowers in diminishing sizes.

A fourth type of chest which became popular in the eighteenth century from the Ilocos region downward to the Visayas was the "coffer," a *mudejar* style decorated with strapwork—a flat carving of hooklike scrolls which was derived from Spanish Moorish sources.

The latest type of chest derived from European period styles to reach the Philippines was the kind known as a "mule chest" because it was a hybrid. It became a minor status symbol in Europe in the seventeenth century, and was the forerunner of the chest of drawers. This was a chest with a box top and one long drawer in the base resting on short cabriole legs.

Last, but not least, and one that

should not be omitted in any description of furniture made in the Philippines during colonial times, was the type of chest produced in Mindanao by the ethnic groups of that island. These chests were made in various sizes from the smallest, 19-1/2 inches long by 8-1/2 inches deep to big ones measuring three feet or more in length by two feet or more in depth. The front and the sides of the chests, and occasionally the top, were almost completely covered with shell inlay in geometric motifs. Diamond and triangular cut tiny pieces of the chambered nautilus shell were arranged in geometric designs of lineal borders surrounding a field of roundels. The result was typical of Islamic art employed in Mohammedan countries bordering the Mediterranean and those on the borders of the Indian Ocean in southeast Asia.

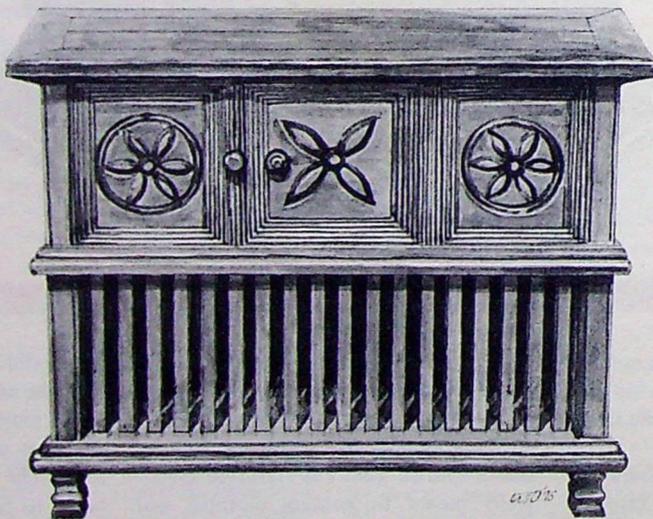
The chest of drawers was not widely dispersed in the Philippines, as evidenced by the very few examples extant that has been handed down today. It consisted of four long drawers, with turned free-standing balusters at the four corners supporting the top.

A variation of the chest of drawers was the combination *aparador*-chest, which was the crowning glory of the Baliuag style of regional furniture. This consisted of twelve assorted drawers and a center cupboard. This gem of the cabinetmaker, with a Louis XIV baroque influence, and which was distinguished by an elaborateness in its dec-

orative treatment, was comparable to some of the best produced in Europe in that era. The proportions of the individual component were excellent and did not outweigh each other. To counter the exuberance of the drawer inlays the center cupboard had minimal decoration, consisting of a simulated paneling in bone inlay centered by a floral motif from which radiated eight spokes formed by triangular-shaped pieces of bone inlaid close together.

The *aparador* or wardrobe was an indispensable piece of furniture in Philippine homes. In simple form it was made with two paneled doors surmounted by two shallow drawers, with a plain slender top and short square legs. This progressed to the type with two paneled doors of high, perpendicular proportions headed by low carved reliefs in half circle arcs. This carving was repeated on the sides. The drawers have been eliminated and the top is now decorated with a cornice.

A third type is the well known and popular Baliuag style *aparador* with squat paneled doors surmounted by two large deep drawers, alongside of which are two small deep drawers supported by four free-standing turned balusters. The decoration is a restrained and tasteful inlaywork of bone and ebony. A variation of this is the three-door *aparador* also from Baliuag, with five drawers, reeded turned balusters at the four corners, and more ornate bone in-



Combination mesa altar gallinera, right, is unusual piece serving at once as table top and as container. Opening of the coop is at lower right side, a surprise element. Previous page, a splendid example of mueble enconchado, furniture with shell inlay, is this cabinet piece made by Philippine artisans in the 17th century as a wedding gift to the granddaughter of the Viceroy of Peru. Similar pieces began to be made later by furniture artisans of Peru.

lay decoration.

Found in many parts of the Visayas is a tall *aparador* made of *narra* and *camagong* (ebony), with a marked Jacobean influence, whose important elements are the heavy applied mouldings on the scrolled pediment and the reeded split-baluster turning of ebony glued to the door frames. Decoration consists of marquetry inlay in contrasting woods like ebony and *lanete* applied to the scrolled pediment and the apron at the base between the turned legs. A denticulated cornice effect was simulated by using contrasting woods like the aforementioned ebony and *lanete*. Two large finials of *narra* terminate the corners of the scrolled pediment. A characteristic feature of this wardrobe is that the body receded from the heavy pediment above it.

The *mesa altar* was a piece of furniture that was prevalent in China and countries of Southeast Asia. It was most probably introduced into the Philippines by the Chinese, as attested to by the earliest pieces made in Batangas of a type with cabriole legs, which were exact replicas of those found in some Chinese temples, except for scale and a variation in the outline of the flanges underneath the table top.

In construction the *mesa altar* varied from the small one-drawer type and, in the Batangas style, progressively the number of drawers increased until in the big massive pieces there were five

drawers. Two distinguishing elements of the Batangas style of altar tables are the presence of the flanges at the sides underneath the table top and the popular Chinese motif of interlaced circles executed in shallow carving on the flanges and aprons of these altar tables. Nearly always this type is constructed with square tapering legs. A deviation of this type is the *mesa altar* featuring a stylized grape motif done in shallow flat carving on the flanges and aprons, with cabriole legs or modified theriomorphic legs.

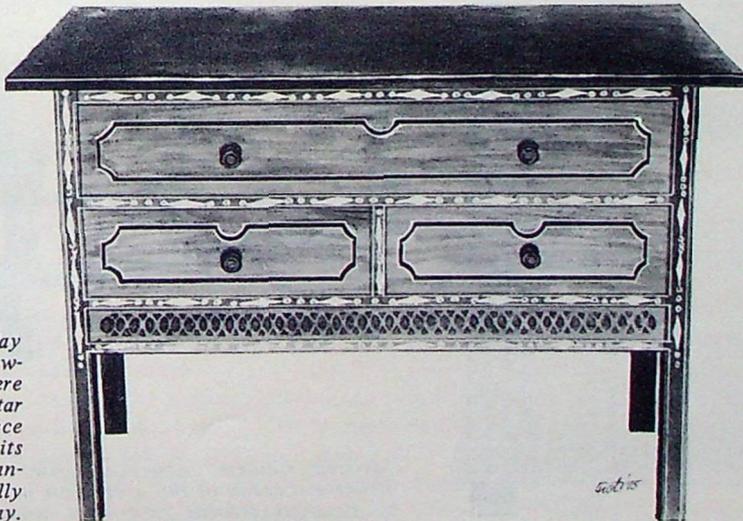
The Baliuag style of *mesa altar* also starts with a one-drawer type, progresses to the two-drawer modification and ends with a three-in-a-row drawer type sporting a serpentine front and two turned pendants terminating from the stiles that separate the three drawers. The main decorative treatment is bone inlaying done in simulated panels enclosing swags and/or rosettes. These altar tables differ from each other in the various interpretations of this all-important swag. Almost all these tables have turned legs, either plain, reeded or fluted, but there are some pieces with square tapering legs in the style of Hepplewhite.

A most interesting variation of the *mesa altar* is the combination *mesa altar-gallinera* of the Ilocos and Pampanga. This is the northern provinces' answer to the Batangas *gallinera* which is a *capia* turned chicken coop. The Ilocos version has two large deep drawers, scrolled

flanges underneath a thick table top with picture-moulding edges, bone and ebony inlaying on the drawers, stiles and rails, a pleasing Chinese-influenced profile and graceful proportions.

The chicken coop unit below the ample drawers has vertical slats placed close together with a center sliding door of solid wood decorated with a whorl done in shallow carving. In contrast, the Pampanga version is a massive, heavy, three-drawer-in-a-row type made of molave, with narrow, uninspired flanges and an awkward attempt at a bombé effect at the four sides of the lower structure that serves as the chicken coop. The vertical slats are too thin and flimsy-looking in opposition to the massiveness of the unit above it.

The *armario* or pillow rack for storing pillows, mats, blankets and mosquito nets is a descendant of an ancient Chinese cupboard with open shelves used by the Chinese for drying ink sticks. The Chinese have a knack for creating simple, utilitarian forms for utilitarian purposes. But the Filipino in adopting this ancient rack had to modify and embellish it to suit his fancy. Thus the Batangas version had elaborately scrolled vertical slats on the front and sides of the cupboard which formed the bottom portion of this structure. This cupboard was further enhanced by a solid wood sliding door carved in the center with the popular Chinese motif of interlaced circles formed into a large circle. The up-



Only mother-of-pearl inlay and incised circles on lower apron break the severe lines of this *mesa altar* from Bulacan. This piece is unusual precisely for its severity of design. Bulacan-made furniture are frilly with carvings and inlay.



Pillow rack or armario from the Ilocos is decorated with scalloped panels which greatly relieve otherwise stark silhouette. Knob on front panel controls self lock.

not's

per part of this *armario* retained the simplicity of its prototype.

However, it was in the Ilocos region where the *armario* proliferated and revealed a great diversity that was astonishing. No two pieces of this type of furniture looked alike. Perhaps this was due to the smallness of its size. Unlike its Batangas counterpart which was large and heavy, and which adhered to the traditional motifs of scrolled slats and interlaced circles, the Ilocos *armario* usually measured a mere twenty inches in width and was made out of lighter wood. This allowed for the use of a wide repertoire of motifs and decorations traditionally associated with furniture such as thin plain slats, scrolled slats, reeding, fluting and beading, paneling, intaglio, raised shallow carving, pierced flat carving, etc.

One whimsical version incorporated two rows of *capiz* shell panels underneath the crested top. These decorations were applied to the bottom cupboard unit, the uprights, the stiles, the series of stretchers on the front, the crested tops and on the canopies that held mats on some examples. Such exuberance is a pleasure to see. Which makes us conclude that what was born from necessity survives for delight. Perhaps "even more than painting, or sculpture, or architecture, furniture reveals the spirit of an age." ■



Stylized Chinese influence shows on flanks and apron of this mesa altar made by Batangas artisans from dark wood.

ARCHIPELAGO
Guide

The Bicol peninsula: lush volcano country



A GREAT, beautiful region poised like a huge albatross in flight, the Bicol peninsula is at the southeastern tip of Luzon, bridging the Southern Tagalog provinces and the Eastern Visayas. This region, which is also known as Bicolandia, is composed of the six provinces of Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay, Sorsogon, Catanduanes and Masbate.

Bicolandia is strategically located at the crossroads of the Tagalog and Visayan regions; as such the Bicolanos are perhaps the least regionalistic among Filipino ethnic groups. They are broadminded, tolerant and good mixers. A Bicolano is proud of his region and his Bicolanas. Perhaps no other part of the Philippines can claim to have more beautiful and charming women per square mile than Bicolandia. Of course, Bicolanos are good-looking and talented, too; the Philippine movie industry has been dominated by actors and actresses from Bicolandia.

The Bicol Peninsula and Catanduanes (excluding Masbate) have a total land area of 17,632 square kilometers (2.8 million hectares) with a population of 3.1 million in 1970.

Bicolandia is a tourist paradise. It is blessed with numerous tourist spots, like the Bicol National Park, Mayon Volcano, rivers, waterfalls, lakes, beaches, caves, hot springs, centuries-old churches and hospitable people.

It has unexploited mineral resources.

The Bicol climate is healthfully cool. There is abundant rainfall throughout the year.

About 32 per cent of the country's total abaca plantation is found in Bicol, which used to be the top exporter (particularly Albay) of the world-famous Manila hemp until Davao took the lead. Of the country's average annual production of 116,289,500 kilos of abaca,

about 20,517,700 kilos come from Bicolandia. In copra production, the Bicol Region ranks sixth (143,800,900 kilos a year) among coconut-producing regions of the Philippines. At the piers of Legazpi City and Tobacco, Albay, are loaded copra and abaca for export to the United States and Europe.

Camarines Sur, which is mostly flat land except the mountainous Caramoan Peninsula, is the Bicol Region's rice granary, together with Camarines Norte and Albay. Rice is grown all over Bicolandia.

There are vast pasturelands particularly in Camarines Sur (Caramoan Peninsula), Catanduanes, Sorsogon and Masbate for grazing cattle and horses.

The seas around the Bicol Peninsula, Catanduanes and Masbate, are among the richest fishing grounds in the country. The principal fishing areas are the Burias Pass off Albay, Ticao Pass off Sorsogon, Ragay Gulf between Camarines Sur and Quezon's Bondoc Peninsula, the Lagonoy Gulf and the sea around Catanduanes. Fresh water fish abound in the Bicol River and in the numerous smaller rivers and mountain streams in the other provinces. Of the country's annual average catch of 515,947 metric tons of fish (valued at P555 million) 3,402 metric tons are supplied by the Bicol region.

The vast mineral resources of Bicolandia have barely been tapped, except those in Camarines Norte, Sorsogon and Masbate which have been in existence since pre-Spanish times. Catanduanes alone has rich deposits of gold, copper, manganese, coal and limestone. Sorsogon has been probed for uranium, a precious mineral used in nuclear power and industrial plants.

The hot springs in Tiwi, Albay which originate from Mayon Volcano are a great source of geothermal power for cheap electricity. The Union Oil Company of

California made a proposal to the National Power Corp. recently to put up a P140-million Geothermal Electric Plant in Tiwi. This will provide cheap electric power.

In terms of regional income, Bicolandia makes more than P600 million a year. If fully developed, Bicolandia is capable of a regional per-capita income of P6,000 or a total of P1 billion.

The writer Kerima Polotan says of the man from Bicol:

"He is all of a piece, a mild creature, driven by no regional hunger. Spoiled by the women of his life, from his mother to his wife to his mistress, he lives off a land rich with volcanic loam. His crops come easy. He need only turn the soil a few times to bring forth, like a well-seeded woman, coconuts and abaca and rice."

The writer goes on to describe the Bicolano as a charming rogue, a self-styled troubadour who loves the good life. But, she says, "he is a kind and generous man, easily content—revolutions may end in Bicol but they will certainly not begin there. Tradition, heredity, the soil, the weather, all bind him securely to a way of life that is as old as the volcano he loves, and in whose shadow he lives."

The modern Bicolano has a proud past.

The people of Bicol, writes the Bicolano historian Dr. Domingo Abella, were the first in Luzon to embrace Christianity. "They had been in fact the first people in Luzon (1569) to be introduced to the Christian faith. While the Muslim standard still waved over Rajah Soliman's fort at the mouth of the Pasig, a makeshift Christian chapel had already been set up in Sorsogon. Legazpi, from his temporary base in Panay, had sent exploration parties to the adjacent islands to look for food and provisions and gold mines. One such had stumbled upon the seacoast village of Ibalon (now Sorsogon) after having reconnoitered the Bicol islands of Masbate (Masbate), Burias and Tikaw. Its Augustinian chaplain baptized the first Bicol Christians."

It was but natural therefore that the first Filipino bishop of the Catholic Church, Most Rev. Jorge Barlin y Imperial (1850-1909), was a Bicolano. Dr. Abella points out, "When the Bicolanos produced the first Filipino bishop in 1905, they had been Catholics for exactly 336 years . . . As it turned out, Bishop Barlin was the fore-runner of the Filipino bishops and archbishops who are now at the helm of Philippine archdioceses."

Naga City, the religious, cultural and educational center of Bicolandia, traces its origin to the old city of Nueva Caceres which was founded by Captain Pedro de Chaves. It became a Spanish settlement in 1571, shortly after Captain Juan de Salcedo's expedition to the Bicol Peninsula in search of the gold mines of Paracale.

Before the end of the sixteenth century, in 1595, the Spanish-built city of Nueva Caceres became the most prosperous city in Luzon after Manila. The Spanish authorities designated it capital of an extensive bishopric (now an archbishopric) under the Franciscan missionaries.

"The Educational Decree of 1863 establishing schools for the training of teachers for primary grades

was extended to the Bicol area. For women teachers the *escuela normal de maestras de primera enseñanza* was opened, and a *colegio* for boys giving secondary instruction was attached to the diocesan seminary which gave ecclesiastical courses," narrates Dr. Abella.

Today, three of the biggest and most prominent educational institutions in Naga City are the University of Nueva Caceres, Ateneo de Naga and Santa Isabel College.

As capital of a vast bishopric during the Spanish times Nueva Caceres's ecclesiastical jurisdiction "included the Southern Tagalog region and the Pacific coast up to Baler to the north, and northern Samar to the south. The city (thus) became the ecclesiastical educational and cultural metropolis of Luzon south of Manila until the end of the Spanish regime. Students of both sexes from the bishopric's vast territorial jurisdiction converged at Nueva Caceres in search of lay and ecclesiastical education. Only those seeking education of university level went to Manila, and those who could afford it went to Spain."

The devotion to Our Lady of Peñafrancia, patroness of the Bicol Region, started during the time of Bishop Andres Gonzales (1685-1709). His vicar general, Fr. Miguel Robles de Covarrubias, took the initiative of having a statue of the Virgin carved by a Bicolano artisan. The image, a replica of the Virgin venerated in Salamanca, Spain, and patron saint of the province of Old Castile, became the patroness of Bicolandia. The Bicolanos' devotion to their patron saint has grown through the years as various miracles have been attributed to the Virgin.

If Spanish culture flourished in the Bicol Region, the early Bikols (as they are known in history) already had their own culture long before the coming of the Spaniards. As early as 200 B.C., during the New Stone Age, the ancient Bikols were already making pottery out of clay, a trade which still exists in Tiwi, Albay.

During the Iron Age (circa 600 A.D.) the Bikols were already mining copper and smelting iron in the island of Masbate. These they fashioned into crude weapons, tools utensils and metal ornaments. The gold mines of Paracale in Camarines Norte existed long before Captain Juan de Salcedo and his men set out to colonize the Bicol Peninsula in 1571 and corner the gold and other mineral deposits. —JUANITO M. BEO



A question of role

Images of the Filipina, annotated by Maria Cristina Velez, Manila; Ala-ala Foundation, Yutivo Foundation and UNESCO National Commission, 1975. 220 pages.

FROM COLONIAL to contemporary times, Philippine written literature on the Filipino woman projects her as a potent resource for nation-building but reserves a certain ambiguity towards her definite role in social development.

This is the observation of sociologist Maria Cristina Velez, in her 220-page annotated bibliography entitled *Images of the Filipina*, considered the first definitive work of its kind in Philippine feminist research efforts. The book presents a bird's-eye glimpse of historical and contemporary accounts written basically on and by Filipino women, whose number today constitutes 52 per cent of the Philippines' 42 million people. Among the works annotated are a documentation of the Filipino woman's progress from pre-Spanish times to her struggle for suffrage at the turn of the century written by Historian Encarnacion Alzona; *Philippine Women and Dolls* by Flora Bass; *Talking Things Over with the Growing Filipina* by Pura Santillan Castrence; *Filipino Women in Politics* by Pura Villanueva Kalaw and essays on women by Carmen Guerrero Nakpil.

Velez notes: "An overview of (existing written) literature portrays Filipino woman in her multi-faceted role in Philippine society in the throes of development... (but) sensitive reading of the literature reveals a certain ambiguity towards woman's role in Philippine society." Statistics report that the Filipino woman constitutes the major labor reserve of the country "but the question of (her) role persists," she adds.

"Shall she be projected approvingly as a liberated woman influencing the shape and direction of politics, economics, social life by her growing involvement in these spheres? (Or) is the desirable role of Filipino woman that which tradition has assigned her... to be the heart of the home, a role definitely vital though unassumingly supportive?"

However, she notes that whatever position is taken by the Filipina, it is



clear that her role and status in the social process impel her "to consider her wealth of resources and to sharpen her awareness of this tremendous potential for developing Philippine society."

While Philippine literature shows, that the Filipina's contribution in nation-building and cultural enrichment dates back to pre-colonial times and the dignity accorded her by men remains "a fact," Velez claims that Filipino women today still need more opportunities "to participate in decisions that affect lives as individuals and as segment of the population."

In the preface, artist-writer Alfredo Roces gives the book its lone *machismo* touch. He writes: "In the light of contemporary scientific analysis, the Filipina... has been analyzed in various roles as heroine, unmarried mother, laborer, educator, career woman, candidate for the teaching sisterhood, senatorial candidate and school principal.

"The Filipina is ubiquitous, if not dominant, in her society, as a child prodigy, painter, even orchestra conductor, not to mention that unique role of First Lady that has no parallel in other governments."

The "quasi-official status" of First Lady, Roces observes, is conferred not only on the wife of the highest official of the land, "but on wives of other government officials as well, and even wives of tycoons and company officials."

"Few Filipinos would consider the

husband as 'influential' with a successful spouse, while everyone recognizes the power of a wife over her husband.

"In fact, it would seem it is this role that is strangely satisfying to the Filipina who, it has been observed, is often the great entrepreneur in the family, capable of establishing business empires while cunningly deferring the figure-head status to her easy-going and somewhat timid male partner."

Roces describes the Filipina woman as a "take-charge type of person, unbelievably self-assured and headstrong," whether in international beauty contests, in a podium addressing dignitaries and scientists or in the back seat of a car driven by her spouse.

"The Filipina is everywhere organizing and hustling so much so that some have considered Philippine society matriarchal. Definitely, the Filipina's role in society as mother, housekeeper... civic worker, social lioness and professional is far from passive. The nation is where it is today because of the Filipina."

But he adds: "At the risk of inviting ire, I venture to say, like the original woman she should be credited with completing Adam's paradise, and likewise will be behind any fall from paradise.

Roces says the Velez bibliography would "help one to know—though not necessarily understand—the Filipino woman. I dread the day the Filipina decides to take apart and study the Filipino male." —MERCEDES A.B. TIRA

Mauro Malang Santos
Lifestyle

Meet me at the movies



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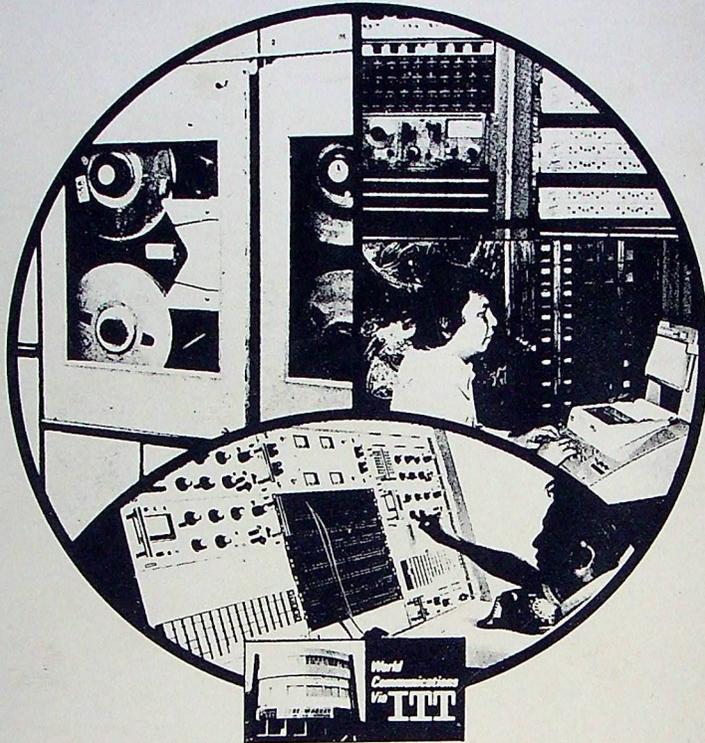
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