

***Ending Hatred and the Start of Healing: President Elpidio Quirino's Pardon
of Japanese War Prisoners in July 1953 and its Effects***

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Abstract

On July 4, 1953 President Elpidio Quirino issued a proclamation granting executive clemency to 105 Japanese convicted war criminals and allowed them to return to Japan. The proclamation came barely a decade after the end of World War II during which thousands of Filipinos lost their lives as victims of Japanese atrocities. Quirino himself lost his wife and three children to Japanese gunfire in the battle of Manila in February 1945. At the time of Quirino's proclamation anti-Japanese sentiment in the Philippines was still high and various sectors considered his action as political suicide. In explaining his act of pardoning the war criminals Quirino said "I do not want my children and my people to inherit from me hate for people who might yet be our friends, for the permanent interest of the country."

This paper discusses how President Quirino's action fostered goodwill with Japan. Philippine-Japanese diplomatic relations were established three years after and 70 years later the Philippines and Japan have become close allies cooperating in economic, political and cultural matters. The main problem of this paper is to examine why Quirino pardoned the Japanese war criminals and what was the reaction of the Japanese and the Filipinos. The conceptual framework of this paper sees Quirino's act of clemency as an important step in the restoration of Philippine-Japanese relations. Why the Philippines had to reestablish ties with Japan is based on the history of interaction and geography. Countries of close proximity would need to interact with each other in economic, political and cultural fields. This forms the theoretical framework of this study. The methodology of this paper is the utilization of official documents like the *Official Gazette* and newspapers at the time of President Quirino's executive clemency.

Keywords: President Elpidio Quirino, clemency, war convicts, Japanese and Filipino reaction, Philippine-Japanese relations

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Introduction and background

At Hibiya Park in Tokyo a simple memorial was unveiled on June 18, 2016 on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of Philippine-Japanese diplomatic relations. The memorial also honors President Elpidio Quirino¹ who was the Philippines's second president after it regained its independence in 1946 from the United States. President Quirino pardoned the last of the convicted Japanese war prisoners from World War II.



Guests of honor beside the newly-unveiled memorial: (from the left) Ambassador Katsura, former Senator Angara, Ambassador and Mrs. Lopez, Councillor Kosaka, LDP VP Komura, Mrs. Gonzalez-Meyer, Senate President and Mrs. Drilon, Atty. Aleli Quirino, Ms. Cory Quirino, Rep. Taku Otsuka, Rep. Hideo Onishi, Mrs. Angara.

The unveiling of the memorial marking the 60th anniversary of Philippine-Japanese diplomatic relations at Hibiya Park (Department of Foreign Affairs)

¹ President Elpidio Quirino was born in Vigan, Ilocos Sur on November 16 1892 to Mariano Quirino, a commissioned officer and Gregoria Rivera. He received his early education in his mother's home province of La Union. Upon finishing high school, he applied for a teaching job before going to Manila to study for a law degree. In 1915 he obtained his law degree from the University of the Philippine after which he served as a law clerk of the Philippine Commission, then the upper chamber in the Philippine Legislature. In 1916 he became the Secretary of Senate President Manuel L. Quezon. In 1919 Quirino entered politics and was elected representative in Ilocos Sur. He married Alicia Syquia, a scion of a wealthy family in Vigan and had six children. In 1925 Quirino was elected Senator and was reelected in 1931. In 1934 he was a member of the Philippine independence mission headed by Quezon which brought back the Tydings-McDuffie Act which set the date for Philippine independence on July 4, 1946. Quirino served as Secretary of Finance and Secretary of the Interior in the Philippine Commonwealth government. When world War II broke out Quirino was a member of the Council of State. After the war Quirino ran under the Liberal Party headed by Manuel Roxas and was elected vice President of the Philippines. When Roxas died on April 17, 1948, Quirino succeeded him as President of the Philippines

Information from the Office of the Vice President of the Philippines,
Source: ovp.gov.org.ph (Accessed November 15, 2016).



Elpidio Quirino, President of the Philippines, 1948-1953
(NHK picture)

The Philippines during the time of the Quirino administration was saddled with various pressing problems. Its economy and infrastructure was heavily damaged during the war. Postwar rehabilitation was among the government's top priorities. Though the country became independent from the United States it was also heavily dependent on its former colonizer for economic and military aid. This close association with the United States aligned the Philippines in the anti-communist bloc and it hosted American bases which were guaranteed to stay for 99 years from 1947 under a military agreement with the United States. The Philippines was also fighting a worsening communist insurgency led by the *Hukbong Mapagpalaya sa Bayan* (HMB) which was the Hukbalahap² during World War II. This neocolonial arrangement forced the Philippines to follow American policy. The Philippines aligned itself with the American-led anticommunist bloc and hosted American bases which was guaranteed to stay for 99 years from 1947 under a military bases agreement.

There were no formal relations with Japan as the Philippines and Japan remained under a state of war until 1951 when the San Francisco Treaty was signed. In 1946-1947 around 15,000 Japanese civilians were deported from the Philippines along with around 30,000 military personnel who were not charged for war crimes. Those charged with war crimes were tried by military commissions. Among those tried and executed were General Masaharu Homma (Sides, 2015) and General Tomuyuki Yamashita. (Barber, 1998)³

Before becoming President of the Philippines he was the country's Vice President under the administration of President Manuel Roxas. On April 15, 1948 President Roxas suddenly died of a heart attack. Quirino succeeded him to the presidency two days later. Like Roxas, Quirino served in the wartime government under Japanese domination. A widower, Quirino lost his wife Alicia along with three other children Norma, Fe and Armando who were all killed by Japanese gunfire on February 12,

² Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon or Hukbalahap, the communist-led people's anti-Japanese army.

After the war it became the Hukbong Magpagpalaya sa Bayan or the People's Liberation Army. avv

³ Both Homma and Yamashita were hanged when the Philippines was still under American rule. Yamashita was hanged on February 23, 1946 for the actions of the Japanese military during the liberation of Manila while Homma was executed by firing squad on April 3, 1946 for the atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers during the Bataan Death March in April 1942. Although both men were not directly responsible for Japanese atrocities on both occasions they were found guilty through command responsibility

1945 in the savage battle of Manila as Japanese forces battled the returning Americans. All in all Quirino lost 18 members of his clan during that month alone.

As president of the Philippines Quirino he took over the herculean task of rebuilding the country and coping with the Huk insurgency which had grown into a rebellion. In 1949 he ran for President and was elected by a narrow majority.

The Slow Restoration of Philippine-Japanese Relations

The Philippines suffered around a million people dead as a result of World War II. Anti-Japanese sentiment among the Filipinos was high. Some former Japanese residents who were to be deported saying that they had no family in Japan begged to stay in the Philippines but they were told that they would be likely killed by Filipinos if they stayed outside of the detention camps. Many Japanese residents served with the Japanese military during their occupation of the country. (Osawa, 1981. 238-239)

It was General Douglas MacArthur who opened the way to the resumption of Philippine-Japanese relations. In his view the recovery of Japan was paramount to the interest of the United States. Japan will become the new bulwark against the rising tide of communism in Asia. In 1947 the United States allowed the export of Japanese goods such as cement and construction materials in exchange for Philippine sugar and coconut oil. In the following year MacArthur appealed for the expansion of Philippine-Japan trade despite severe objections from former victims of the war and some members of the business sector. (Baviera and Yu-Jose, 313, 1999) `



MacArthur: Paved the way for the resumption of Philippine-Japanese relations

President Quirino himself appealed to the Filipino people to transcend the emotional cost of the war saying that if the Philippines should refuse trade with Japan that country will seek other countries for the raw materials in needed. Progress towards the restoration of commercial relations was slow as Philippine exports to Japan in June 1949 was worth only 4.6 million pesos. It increased to 31 million pesos the following year and in 1950 it declined to 22.6 million pesos. Philippine imports from Japan consisted of cement, toys, textiles and other finished products. On May 18, 1950 a trade agreement with Japan allowed the Philippines to export greater quantities of products consisting of iron, manganese, chrome, molasses, lumber, rattan, mangrove bark, copper, buffalo hides, shells, hemp and other raw materials. Japan for its part exported fishing boats, farm equipment, porcelain, glass, chemicals and other finished products trade was reestablished despite the absence of Japanese companies. (Ibid.)

On July 23, 1951 the state of war between the Philippines and Japan ended with the signing of the San Francisco Treaty. Diplomatic relations however was not established.

Pleas for Clemency for Japanese War Prisoners

Since Quirino's election to the presidency in 1949 numerous letters from Japan have been arriving at his desk. Some of these letters came from religious leaders, others came from peace advocates. The plight of Japanese prisoners had long been in Quirino's mind. At that time there were more than 100 Japanese prisoners who were already convicted of war crimes. Already 17 prisoners were executed under the Philippine Republic. Around 50 more await execution. Quirino was thinking of approaching Japan with a view of forming a Pacific Union as early as February 1953. In a speech before delegates of the Philippine-Japan Youth he said: (Quirino, 1953)

“Personally, were I to consider that my wife and my three children were all killed by Japanese machine guns, I would swallow the Japanese allies now; but I am not living in the world alone. “I have my remaining children, and their children to follow. I am not going to allow them to inherit feelings of revenge,”

The Japanese-letter writers were asking Quirino to forgive the convicts for whatever they have done in the war. One of the most eloquent letters came from The Japanese prisoners had long been on his mind. Numerous pleas for clemency had been arriving at his desk since 1949, some from religious leaders in Japan, some came from peace advocates. One of the most eloquent letters came from a former soldier turned poet and artist Kano Kanrai who wrote: (Caruncho, 2016)

“The atrocious deeds carried out during the war, from a humanitarian perspective, cannot be forgiven. However, my wish is that you forgive what is difficult to forgive...”

“I hope you will forgive all under the names of the beloved children that were so cruelly taken from you. Surely your beloved children, who were killed, are wishing for a peaceful world.”

Quirino's granddaughter, Cory, heard from a Japanese friend about a song called *Muntinlupa* - the other name of the New Bilibid prison where the Japanese prisoners were confined. The song was written by two Japanese prisoners Gintaro Shiota and Masayasu Ito who were both awaiting execution

Shiota and Ito wrote the poem after witnessing the execution of 14 of their comrades. The poem was recorded into a song by a famous Japanese singer Hamako Watanabe. The song became very popular in Japan. The song was played in a music box in which 70 letters all asking for forgiveness were placed. It was believed that the song was what led the President to pardon the Japanese prisoners although there was no record this was responsible for Quirino's decision. (Sunday Manila Times, 1953, 11)

President Quirino must have agonized in his decision to pardon the Japanese war convicts. The Philippines still bore the bitter scars of the war and anti-Japanese

sentiment among the people was still strong. Aside from bearing the heavy burdens of state he was suffering from a heart condition and bleeding ulcers which made it necessary for him to be operated on in the United States. The decision to pardon the war prisoners was done even before he left for the United States.

On July 3, 1953 the Presidential office in Manila released the names of 437 prisoners granted executive clemency by the Chief Executive on the occasion of the 7th anniversary of Philippine independence on July 4, 1946. (Rodriguez, 1953) Of the 437 prisoners 114 were Japanese war prisoners and 323 were Filipinos convicted by the People's Court and various courts of first instance for collaborating with the Japanese during World War II. (Official Gazette, 1953, xvii)



Japanese prisoners looking for their names among those who were pardoned by President Quirino (Manila Bulletin)

Of the 114 prisoners 31 were to be set free; 27 were to serve the rest of their sentences at the Sugamo Prison in Japan and 56 were to serve their life sentences in that prison. These included four generals; Lt. General Yoshida Hayashi, former chief of the Japanese military administration department, Philippine department, who pleaded guilty before the war crimes commission for responsibility in the murder of Justice Jose Abad Santos in Mindanao. He was sentenced to life imprisonment. Other generals were Lt. General Shizuo Yokoyama, former commander of the Shimpu Shudan group which fought the Americans and the Filipinos east of Manila late in the war. He was saved from a death sentence by the presidential pardon. Two generals were sentenced to definite prison terms Maj. General Kiyotake Kamaguchi and Maj. General Kensichi Matsuoka who was also sentenced to a definite prison terms and . The top former Japanese navy official in Muntinlupa was Rear Admiral Takesue Furuse, commander of the Furuse group who was saved from a death sentence by the presidential pardon. Furuse was onetime commander of the Furuse (Death) unit which was responsible for the massacre of civilians in Infanta Quezon. (Sunday Manila Times, July 5, 1953, 2)

The executive clemency or pardon has some conditions which have been agreed upon by Filipino and Japanese representatives. These were: (Ibid)

1. The Japanese government will take care of the proper maintenance and support of the prisoners;
2. It should see that those concerned serve sentences meted by the Philippine courts where they were transferred.
3. None of the prisoners with commuted sentences were to be given clemency or parole by the Japanese government without prior Philippine approval.



The exchange of notes between Philippine Foreign Secretary Felino Neri and Toru Nakagawa, head of the Japanese mission in the Philippines after reaching an agreement on the terms of the presidential clemency. (*Manila Bulletin*)



The happy faces of the Japanese prisoners after learning they would be repatriated to Japan (*Manila Bulletin*)



The Japanese convicts being congratulated after the announcement of the Presidential Clemency (*Manila Bulletin*)

Reactions from Filipinos and Japanese

The announcement caught both the Japanese detainees and Filipinos by surprise. Eight years earlier the Japanese laid waste to the Philippines and killed thousands. Many Filipinos who suffered at least one lost in their family during the war found Quirino's act of forgiveness hard to accept.

Quirino's political enemies especially those belonging to the opposition who had earlier accused him of holding the Japanese prisoners hostage for war reparations from Japan now accused him of not using the Japanese as a leverage for Philippine negotiations from that country. (Baviera, Yu-Jose, 314)

Political analysts saw the pardon as an act of political suicide. Already the Americans were not happy about his peace overtures with the Huks. The Central Intelligence Agency was working to unseat him and was grooming his Defense Secretary Ramon Magsaysay to succeed him. The media portrayed him as aloof and uncaring to the needs of the people.(Caruncho)

Quirino's decision to pardon the Japanese also shocked his own family. Eventually he managed to persuade them the soundness of his decision. His son Tomas recalled many years. Quirino said: (Calonsod, November 15, 2016)

'I know it will be hard for you to take, but I'm thinking of forgiving the Japanese, because we are neighbors, and neighbors must learn to talk to each other, live together, trade and help each other... Forget your hatred, because if you persist it will harden your heart that it might even be imparted to your children'.

Quirino's daughter Vicky also remembers his father saying "Our country had nothing to gain from the continued suffering of the vanquished by the victors." (Caruncho)

Eventually Quirino's children realized that their father was looking into the future than most of his contemporaries. Quirino embraced the idea of forging alliances with Asian nations including Japan. He saw Japan as a critical factor in building the postwar period.

From his hospital bed at Johns Hopkins Hospital Quirino explained why he pardoned the Japanese war prisoners. In a release from the Office of the President Quirino said (Official Gazette, 1953)

“I should be the last one to pardon them as the Japanese killed my wife and three children and five other members of my family. I am doing this because I do not want my children and my people inherit from me the hate for people who might yet be our friends for the permanent interest of our country...”

The President also explained that the pardon to the Japanese war prisoners was not an amnesty which requires concurrence of the Philippine congress. (Rodriguez, Manila Daily Bulletin, July 5, 1953, 1.)



Quirino: *“I should be the last one to pardon them as the Japanese killed my wife and three children and five other members of my family.”* (Manila Bulletin)

In an undated draft letter found among Quirino’s papers in which the President wrote about, "In extending the executive clemency, I had no other desire than to express not merely my humanitarian feelings but the nobility of character of the Filipino people." (Caruncho)

"I considered it essential for the preservation of peace and friendship between our two peoples as the cornerstone of our lasting relationship," .

Among the Japanese detainees, the reactions were mixed. Rear Admiral Furuse said “This place” referring to Muntinlupa Prison, “is like my second home. And I do not feel like going home.” Speaking through an interpreter he said he had a wife waiting for him at Si-mani prefecture and had not seen her for nine years. The one-time naval officer expressed his gratitude for what he called the “excellent treatment” given him and his fellow prisoners during their confinement in Muntinlupa.(Rodriguez)

Maj. Gen. Kensichi Matsuoka who was a former provost general and onetime supreme commander of the dreaded Kempeitai was the oldest Japanese prisoner in the group. He was sentenced to ten years imprisonment for command responsibility committed by his military police all over the islands. “I cannot join the Japanese national police because I am already 72 years old.” He said. But when I think of my wife and two children whom I have not seen for nine years, my heart feels joy which I cannot express.” (Ibid.) As he pranced around in his faded G.I. suit, Gen. Matsuoka

said he was grateful for the kind treatment he received in prison. Another general, Lt. General Yoshida Hayashi said that he was so glad over the pardon that I cannot say his happiness.

The last high-ranking prisoner was Lt. Gen. Shizuo Yokoyama. He was ailing with tuberculosis. Prison officials had him confined at the prison hospital.

The prisoners had a brief foretaste of freedom when they marched in review on July 4 during the Independence Day celebrations at Muntinlupa. However the proclamation of the presidential clemency was not read before them because of diplomatic kinks regarding the prisoners' release. Foreign Secretary Felino Neri insisted that the Japanese government give formal assurances that the Japanese war criminals whose death sentences were commuted to life imprisonment would serve the rest of their terms in Japanese prisons and that the Japanese would support the expense that would be entailed in the further incarceration of those convicted by the Philippine war commissions. The formal exchange of notes took place on July 5 with Secretary Neri representing the Philippines while Toru Nakagawa chief of the Japanese mission represented his government. (Manila Daily Bulletin, July 6, 1953, 1)

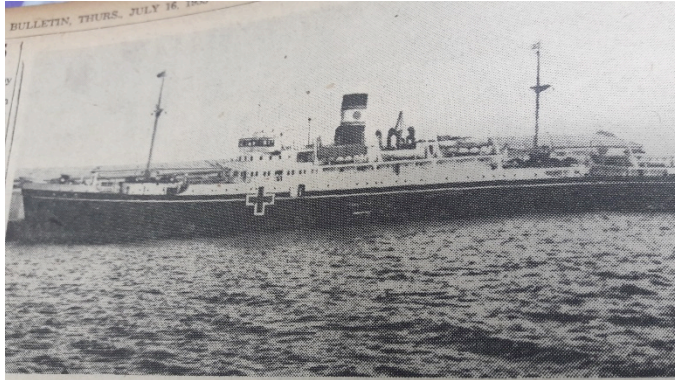
There was also a confusion about the number of Japanese prisoners to be released. Malacañan said there were 114 prisoners, the Japanese claimed 108 while the Bureau of Prisons said there were 107. The Japanese mission revised its figure and said there were only 105. Counsellor Augustine Nakayama said out of the 114 claimed by Malacañan. Eight already gone home after completing their sentences One prisoner former navy commander Mineo Shizuhiko was exonerated by the army war crimes review board. Commander Mineo who was originally sentenced to die was acquitted when the army review board exonerated him of the charges against him. This left only 105 Japanese covered by the presidential pardon. (Ibid.)

The pardoned Japanese remained inside the Muntinlupa prison until the day of their repatriation. Meanwhile Japanese mission officials rushed preparations to exhume the remains of 17 executed Japanese war criminals so these can be sent home along with the 105 prisoners. Permission to exhume the remains was given by the Philippine health department on July 13 and were brought to Funeraria Quioque for cremation. The ashes were placed in urns for shipment. (Manila Daily Bulletin, July 14, 1953, 8)

The official Japanese reaction was that of profound gratitude. Two officials of the Japanese mission Toru Nakayama and Augustine Kanayama head and counsellor of the Japanese mission respectively conveyed expressed their gratitude for the presidential pardon and the kind treatment of the Japanese while in detention. Kanayama said all the official requirements for releasing the prisoners have been fulfilled. (Manila Daily Bulletin, July 8, 1953, 6)

On July 15 a total of 110 Japanese were repatriated aboard the *Hakusan Maru*. The repatriated Japanese consisted of 105 war criminals who were granted clemency, one who was acquitted, two civilians and two former stragglers. Also loaded on the vessel were 17 urns consisting of the remains of executed war prisoners. The departure was emotional for some of the Japanese had resided in the Philippines for 30 years and considered the islands their home. One of them a civilian named Suehiro Tuju who was covered by the presidential pardon. He lived in Davao City

since 1915 and worked at the Furukawa Plantation. He cried as the ship weighed anchor. He was seen off by Manuel Seno, a Davao engineer who had been his friend for so many years. Other former prisoners were happy at the prospect of reuniting with their families. All of the detainees expressed sincere gratitude for the benevolent action taken by President Quirino and they pledged to work hard to foster closer relations with the Philippines. (Owen, Manila Daily Bulletin, July 16, 1953, 1)



The *Hakusan Maru* which brought the pardoned Japanese prisoners back to Japan. (*Manila Bulletin*)

While the former Japanese prisoners were on their way to Japan, President Quirino signed the pardon papers of Shimpei Harada, Koike Kaneyuki and Takao Tsubaki, the three prisoners of war whose death sentences had been commuted to life imprisonment in the presidential pardon of July 4, 1956. The papers of these three Japanese were flown from Manila and President Quirino signed them at his hospital bed at Johns Hopkins Hospital. Meanwhile letters from private persons in Japan continued pouring in, thanking President Quirino for his benevolence and generosity in pardoning the Japanese prisoners who had been imprisoned at Muntinlupa. (Official Gazette, July 1953, xcvi)



The former Japanese prisoners climbing the gangplank of the *Hakusan Maru* (*Manila Bulletin*)

On July 21 the *Hakusan Maru* arrived at Yokohama harbour. Friends and relatives were excited to see their loved ones for the first time and some hired boats to go to Yokohama Harbor climb the ship to join their long absent family members. First to be unloaded were the urns containing the ashes of the convicted war criminals. These were sent to their final resting places. Fifty four prisoners were set free. Fifty six were sent to Sugamo to serve their definite and life sentences.(Bulletin Today, July 23, 1953, 4)



The loading of the urns containing the ashes of the 17 executed war prisoners aboard the *Hakusan Maru* (*Manila Bulletin*)

Since the proclamation of clemency by President Quirino, the Japanese press were all praises for what he did. Japanese newspapers praised the Philippines for its humane treatment of the prisoners. One newspaper the influential *Asahi Shimbun* spoke warmly about the amnesty given by the Philippines to the Japanese prisoners. It cryptically commented it will be Japan's turn to reply to the Philippines and Australia who made their gestures with the hope of reviving friendship with Japan. While it praised Manila's decision to free or commute the sentences of Japanese war criminals with Australia's decision to repatriate its war criminals back to Japan on the proviso they serve out their full terms. (*Manila Bulletin* July 8, 1953, 6)

It said that in view of the reports that some of the Japanese soldiers who were starving on new Guinea violated humanitarian principles, the hostility of the Australian people toward Japan appeared so strong that it cannot even be compared with the hostility of other countries. As a result the treatment of war criminals on Manus Island appeared considerably worse than at Manila. Those who returned reported that they were forced to do hard labor in year round temperatures above 100 degrees, their food was a steady diet of canned food with no change for eight years and they could count the number of times they had fresh fish and vegetables during that time.

“On the other hand over and above our gratitude, we cannot help but respect as a man Philippine President Quirino whose wife and three beloved children were killed by Japanese soldiers who yet extended an amnesty that transcended ordinary generosity. Among Australian government and people (sic) eight long years must have softened their hearts.” (Ibid.)

The *Nippon Times* for its part lauded the magnanimous act of President Quirino and the Philippine government and it urged to return the goodwill of the Filipinos by

rushing war reparations and to do everything possible to satisfy the Filipino desire for war reparations which is the only obstacle in the signing of a Filipino-Japanese peace treaty. (*Manila Bulletin*, July 23, 1953, 8)

Contrasting with the Philippines the *Nippon Times* also mentioned the harsh treatment of Japanese prisoners by Australians on Manus island . and it also took to task the Soviet Union and Red China which still had thousands of Japanese working as working as slave labor . This was an irony as there was practically no resistance against the Soviets by the Japanese in Manchuria. The USSR and Red China which were still have in their custody thousands of war prisoners working as slave labor.(Ibid.)

The right-wing newspaper Jiji Shimbun thanked the Philippines for pardoning the war criminals but it questioned the legality of the war crimes trials calling the judgment as unjust. It wrote: “We have no doubt in view of the generosity of the Philippines those who will be jailed in Sugamo will be released in the future. “ The newspaper charged that the war crimes commissions were based on laws set up after the crimes were committed and there was a miscarriage of justice due to the language barriers. (Ibid, p. 11)

The punishment is neither just nor proper. It is extremely political. The Japanese people desire the release of all war criminals as a logical and just measure to wipe out the memory of the last war and that the Japanese people regard the amnesty the amnesty declared by the Philippines a humane, heroic decision. (Ibid.)

In the Philippines Filipino politicians believed that Quirino’s gesture would hasten the ratification of the Philippines-Japan Peace Treaty. Senator Francisco Delgado felt that the Senate will ratify the 1951 San Francisco Treaty if Japan will pay \$2 billion in war reparations. (Baviera and Yu-Jose, 313)

Since the Senate was in the hands of the opposition such hopes were dashed. Ratification would take place three years later on July 16, 1956. Eventually the Philippines will receive \$800 million in reparations from Japan.

President Quirino’s pardoning of the convicted war prisoners was so popular that even the young Japanese schoolchildren knew about it. They made a thousand dolls and sent them to Malacañan as a gesture of friendship. For years afterward ordinary Japanese citizens moved by his gesture wrote awkward but sincere letters to gratitude and admiration. Many of those letters were addressed to President *Kilino*. (Caruncho)

Concluding Remarks

President Quirino lost his bid to be re-elected as President of the Philippines in the national elections of 1953. His loss was not totally due to the pardoning of the Japanese war prisoners when public sentiment against it was high. There were other reasons such as the perceived corruption in his government, the on-going communist insurgency and the perception that he aloof from the masses. The Americans working at the background helped prop up his successor, Ramon Magsaysay who was said to be everything that Quirino was not. He bore no regrets about pardoning the last Japanese prisoners in Philippine custody or spoke ill about Japan. When Quirino

came to Japan in May 1955 as a private citizen, he was given a rousing welcome by the Japanese in recognition for his magnanimous act. (Caruncho). Three years later former President Quirino died on February 28, 1956.

History vindicated President Quirino in the following decades. His unpopular economic policies such as the no-dollar import policy and curbs on imports eventually stabilized the Philippine economy and gave rise to import substitution and eventually economic nationalism. His support for a minimum wage law which was opposed by employers protected Filipino laborers from exploitation. Quirino's radio chats and social amelioration programs were imitated by succeeding administrations. It was in the field of foreign affairs he would be appreciated: Quirino began the redirection of the country's external policy from one solely oriented towards the United States to one focusing on the Asian region and the country's Southeast Asian neighbors. He was the father of the Association of South Asia the predecessor of today's ASEAN. The center of his foreign policy effort was the beginning of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Japan. Even less than a decade after the end of that conflict which cost the lives of a million Filipinos, he started the healing process which led to healthy relations between the two countries. Japan has been the biggest foreign donor to the Philippines, In 2011 alone it granted 36% of all the ODA given to the country amounting to \$2.68 billion. (www.ph.emb-japan.go.jp/bilateral/oda/q)

Talking about her grandfather, Ms. Quirino remarked, "It takes courage to forgive and he was a courageous man—he really had a courageous heart, he "thought of the country first, Above all else, love for country was paramount. He thought of his country first before personal interest. He drew from his pain. The only way to mend his pain was to really go beyond that pain and to forgive. And then he was free. He was liberated," (Talavera, 2016)

Sixty years after President Quirino's magnanimous act, the Japanese still remembered what he did for them in 1953. In January 2016 Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko visited the Philippines and made a point of visiting President Quirino's descendants.

"What an honor that was," recalls Ms. Ruby Quirino-Gonzales one of Quirino's grandchildren, of their momentous audience with the Japanese imperial family. "Most Japanese have not met their emperor. The feeling was as if you are about to get married. —you're so happy but you're so nervous. When we were in their presence, you could tell they were the emperor and empress, because the tones were hushed." (Ibid.)

"The empress stretched out her hand, cupped my hand in both of hers and very softly, in perfect English, said 'President Quirino was a great man and we must never forget him.' I was tongue-tied and tears started to roll down my cheek," recalled Ms. Quirino. (Caruncho)



The Emperor and Empress of Japan visited the Philippines and sought audience with Quirino's descendants. The Empress praised him as a great man." (NHK photograph)\

"It was like we were suspended in time. We felt that our grandfather was with us because we hoped he had lived to hear the emperor of Japan say that to him. In the absence of his physical presence, it was us. We just felt so touched."

Thus Quirino who was derided for his decisions during his lifetime was proven right decades after. Far from being portrayed as a traditional politician, he was a statesman as he chose peace and forgiveness over bitterness and rancor and political expediency.

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Appendix 1.

List Of Japanese Pardoned By Prresident Quriino

Japanese Army and Navy top brass pardoned were

1. Lt. General Shizuo Yokoyama (saved from death sentence)
2. Maj. General Kiyotake Kamaguchi (sentenced to definite prison terms)
3. Maj. General Kensichi Masuoika (sentenced to definite prison terms)
4. Rear Admiral Takesue Furuse (saved from death sentence)

The 31 pardoned Japanese war prisoners who had been sentenced to life imprisonment were

Conditional Pardon Prisoners

1. Akio, Tagiri
2. Akira Ichikawa
3. Deguchi, Motoaki
4. Goto Shozo,
5. Kamchi Iroshi
6. Katayama, Sakae
7. Kitajima Keyomitsu
8. Kobayashi, Yasaku
9. Masuda, Masaku
10. Matsumura Toshio
11. Morishita, Tsuneo
12. Ochai, Harichi
13. Ogawa, Somin
14. Okosuno Haruo
15. Omura, Yasuo
16. Sato, Katsumi
17. Sakamoto Tsugio
18. Sata, Takenshi
19. Saito, Takao
20. Seki, Sakuyushi
21. Sugimoto, Hiroshi
22. Tone, Seiichi
23. Tsuji, Choichi
24. Tsuneyoshi, Yoshio
25. Uemura, Eiichiro
26. Yamamoto, Eichiro
27. Yano, Tsuneo
28. Takusuo, Yano,
20. Rujita, Takefumi
30. Hayashi, Yoshide
31. Takashi, Sadakichi

The names of 27 pardoned Japanese war prisoners who had been sentenced to various prison terms follow:

Conditional Pardon

1. Doi, Kunio
2. Ruji, Rokuhiuro

3. Fujisaki , Saburo
4. Hamada, Kasuo
5. Hashimoto, Matsuyoshi
6. Imamura, Rokunojo
7. Kakisawa, Shigeo
8. Kato, Fukumatsu
9. Kamaguchi, Kiyotake
10. Kitamura, Takeshi
11. Kodama, Yoshiaki
12. Matura, Seichi
13. Matsuzaki, Hideichi
14. Masuoka, Kensichi
15. Miyatake, Tomomi
16. Motoume, Hisakichi
17. Shimada, Yasumaso
18. Shimizu. Hisamatsu
19. Shioyami, Takeshi
20. Sunahara, Hiroshi
21. Takizawa, Yosuke
22. Tanaka, Hideo
23. Tateishi, Vicente
24. Uemura, Masao
25. Yamashita, Suekichi
26. Yanakawa, Winoru,
27. Fujii, Suehiro

The 56 Japanese war prisoners who had been meted out the death penalty but were commuted to life imprisonment and will serve their sentence at the Sugamo Prisons in Japan are

Commutation of sentence prisoners

1. Ainoda, Hajime
2. Arai, Hatsuyoshi
3. Asano, Toshio
4. Fujimoto, Takao
5. Furuse, Takesue
6. Gotanda, Eichi
7. Hamada, Yoshio
8. Hane, Chockichi
9. Hanoka, Michio,
10. Harada, Shimpei
11. Hatogai, Yoshimasa
12. Horie, Tomekichi
13. Horike, Koichi
14. Hoshimo, Takajashi
15. Ichinose, Haruo
16. Ichimura, Isao
17. Ito, Masayasu
18. Ito, Saburo,
19. Ito Ratsumi
20. Kagai, Masaji

21. Katayama, Yoshimi alias Katakeyama
22. Kobayashi, Masataka
23. Koike, Kaneyuki
24. Kose, Yasumasa
25. Kuwahara Tetsuo
26. Maekawa, Jisuke
27. Masaki, Shioichi
28. Miyauchi, Toshiyasu
29. Mori, Kenkichi
30. Nakamura, Takeichi
31. Nakajima, Shoei
32. Nakamata, Tomisburo
33. Nakanishi , Shioji
34. Nemoto, Teneiji
35. Ogawa, Eitaro
36. Ono, Masao
37. Onoyama, Macaichi
38. Owari, Saburo
39. Saiho, Keiji
40. Saheki, Zenkichi
41. Sakuma, Keiji
42. Sasaki, Tamuls
43. Sasaki, Karuo
44. Sato, Ichiro
45. Shiota, Gentaro,
46. Tadocoro, Minotero
47. Taninaka Katsuyoshi
48. Torakichi, Todasaki
49. Teshima, Hiroshi
50. Tesuka, Toshio
51. Tsubaki, Takao
52. Tsuneoka, Noburo
53. Ueno, Masami
54. Yamamoto, Rikimi
55. Yamnoue, Ichiro
56. Yokoyama, Ichiro

Total 118 prisoners

Source Benjamin Rodriguez. Pardoned Jap Prisoners Signed Away by Neri at Rites
Manila Bulletin, No. 155, no. 4 July 4,1953, p 1.

Appendix 2. Inscription on the Quirino Marker in Hibiya Park, Tokyo

Baltimore, U.S.A., July 6, 1953.

“I have extended executive clemency to Japanese war prisoners serving terms in the Philippines not as an amnesty which requires concurrence of the Philippine Congress.

“I should be the last one to pardon them as the Japanese killed my wife and three children and five other members of the family. I am doing this because I do not want my children and my people to inherit from me hate for people who might yet be our friends for the permanent interest of the country. After all, destiny has made us neighbors.

“I am happy to have been able to make this spontaneous decision as the head of a Christian nation. My fervent hope is that the benevolent feeling which has inspired me will strike a responsive chord in others as an act of faith to humanity. Love of fellow creatures will always be the supreme law among men and nations and the basis of world peace.”

Dedication Inscribed on the Quirino Memorial

“His Excellency ELPIDIO QUIRINO (1890-1956), President of the Republic of the Philippines (1948-1953), granted pardon in June 1953 to all of the 105 Japanese War Criminals who were detained in Muntinlupa prison, despite the loss of his own wife and children during World War II. The National Appreciation Event was held at this site in gratitude for his decision, in July 1953.

“On the 60th anniversary of the normalization of Japan-Philippines diplomatic relations, and in this same year of the State Visit of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress to the Philippines, this monument is erected at this site as a testament to the Japanese people’s appreciation and respect for President Quirino, and as a renewal of their commitment to the friendship between Japan and the Philippines, and to World Peace.”

Source: dfa.gov.ph/index.php/newsroom/phl-embassies-and-consulates-news/9793-tokyo-memorial-to-president-quirino-unveiled-monument-honors-1953-pardon-that-paved-way-to-normalized-relations (accessed November 16, 2016)