

UNDERSTANDING HISTORY

LESSON 1.1 WHAT IS HISTORY?

To many students, *history* may not be as interesting as other curricular subjects. All too often, students say that history is boring! Yet, others argue that learning history is fun and enlightening. The last statement points to the fact that the importance of history cannot be underestimated. The article that follows, which is an excerpt from B.H. Liddell Hart's (1972) "Why don't we learn from history," explains the value of history.

Why study history?

"What is the object of history? I would answer, quite simply—"truth." It is a word and an idea that has gone out of fashion. The object might be more cautiously expressed thus: to find out what happened while trying to find out why it happened. In other words, to seek the causal relations between events.

"History has limitations as *guiding* signpost, however, for although it can show us the right direction, it does not give detailed information about the road conditions. But its negative value as a *warning* sign is more definite. History can show us what to avoid, even if it does not teach us what to do—by showing the most common mistakes that mankind is apt to make and to repeat.

"A second object lies in the practical value of history... The knowledge gained from the study of true history is the best of all educations for practical life... Viewed aright, it is the broadest of studies, embracing every aspect of life. It lays the foundation of education by showing how mankind repeats its errors and what those errors are. "

Uses of history

In addition to B.H. Liddell Hart's elucidation of history's value, Foray and Salevouris (1988) enumerated uses of history, to wit:

- A. History provides a source of personal and social identity.
- B. History helps us understand the problems of the present.
- C. History—good history—is a corrective for misleading analogies and "lessons" of the past.
- D. History can help one develop tolerance and open-mindedness.
- E. History helps us better understand all human behaviors and all aspects of the human condition.
- F. History provides the basic background for many other disciplines.
- G. History can be entertainment.
- H. History, when studied, can teach many critical skills.

Perhaps, history is best valued if it is understood in one's own cultural context as emphasized by the historian Zeus Salazar (2006) in his view of *Kasaysayan*:

Ang KASAYSAYAN ay SALAYSAY hinggil sa nakaraan o nakalipas na may SAYSAY—kahulugan, katuturan, at kabuluhan—sa SARILING LIPUNAN at KULTURA o kabuuang kinabibilangan. Ito ay iniuulat gamit ang mga konsepto at

kategorya ng sariling kultura. [Literal Translation: History is a narrative about the past, which has value—meaning and importance—in one’s own society and culture. It is expressed based on one’s own cultural concepts and categories.]

Theories of History

Throughout the ages, thinkers [philosophers] expressed their perspectives about how historical events happen. Adam (1862) expounded that some people thought that history happens by chance, in that events have no connection with or relation to each other as causes and effects; no designed antecedence or consequence. He (Adam) further explains that other people believe that history unfolds following a Law—an order, in which events are not loosely disconnected, but are intimately related to each other, inseparably interwoven, and mutually dependent.

Patterns of history are said to be discernible according to some thinkers. These may be classified into: (a) pendular; (b) cyclical; (c) linear; and, (d) spiral. Pendular history posits that historical events are swinging between extremes: “war versus peace, times of plenty versus scarcity.” Cyclical history sees “history as traveling through repeated stages in never-ending cycles” in which “everything repeats and comes around again.” Linear history viewed history as the story of ever-mounting progress down through the ages, generally in a straight line. The spiral perspective of history suggests history as having overall progress, which comes in cycles alternating with periods of regression. This last theory is a “dialectical synthesis of the pendular and cyclical theories” culminating into the “optimistic linear theory”. (Busky, 2002)

Other thinkers argue that history is not meant to arrive at some universal law; history does not predict. Agoncillo (1977, in Churchill, 2003), for example, claims that:

In history, prediction is anathema, for it deals with what had passed, not with what the future will bring. [History] is not objective, [but] it is this subjectivity that characterizes all great historians, a subjectivity that makes for divergences in interpretation.

So what is history?

History is the past, that is, the actual past. Studying this past is recreating it, and in so doing, a historian’s interpretations and biases become part of the narrated stories [written or oral] that we call today history [textbook]. History’s meaning and value are contextual, that is, it becomes important and useful to a society that cherishes its past. Hence, while history is viewed differently by different people, the more that history becomes worthy of consideration for diverse purposes.

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

LESSON 2.1 GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF THE PHILIPPINES

The setting of any particular historical event is as important as the story itself. It could not be denied that a country's physical geography—topography, climate, vegetation, soils and minerals—affect much the way of life of its peoples.

Physical and cultural geographical features of the Philippines

1. The Philippines is an archipelago [consisting of more than 7, 100 islands and islets] situated “between the equator and the Tropic of Cancer; specifically, it lies between 4° 23' and 21° 25' north latitude and between 116° and 127° east longitude”. (*Salita, 1997*)
2. Lying along the so-called “ring of fire” (or seismic belt) of the Pacific Rim, Philippines experiences earthquakes caused by volcanic eruptions or tectonic movements.
3. Although the topography of the Philippines is varied [it has plains, plateaus, valleys and mountains], it generally is a “mountainous mass”. (*Salita, 1997*)
4. In terms of precipitation, the country is generally wet for most of the year, though rainfall distribution varies from one region to another. The country also experiences an average of 19 typhoons annually. (*Salita, 1997*)
5. The agricultural sector and agricultural-based businesses are important contributors to the country's economic development. Manufacturing and trade are considerably growing especially in urban areas.
6. Philippines plays a role in world affairs via its membership in various international political and economic organizations.
7. The country's estimated population as of July 2011 was 101,833,938 with an urban population registered at 49 percent of the total population as of 2010 (*Central Intelligence Agency as cited by IndexMundi, 2012*); the annual population growth rate was registered at 2.04 as of 2007. (*National Statistics Office, 2012*)
8. The ethnic composition and culture of the country is diverse. Eight major ethno-linguist groups and “with an estimated 14-17 million Indigenous Peoples (IPs) belonging to 110 ethno-linguistic groups” (*United Nations Development Programme, 2010*) compose the Filipino nation. Added to this cultural diversity are the European, American, and other Asian influences observable in the Filipino traits.
9. The archipelago's geo-political clustering into regions is a result of a colonial history spanning for more than 350 years. These regions were created for administrative expediency. At present, Philippines has 17 regions, which increased from the original 11 regions created in 1972.

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

A Visayan myth narrates that, in the beginning, the world was made up of water and the heavens. A bird named *Manaul* was getting tired of flying that it searched for a resting place. Manaul called on the gods—*Kaptan*, god of the sea; and, *Magauayan*, god of the air—to come to his aid. The gods battled it out trying to outfight each other for the right to help the bird. Kaptan sent winds and that created tidal waves and storms. Magauayan whirlwinds threw back Kaptan's waves, creating land in the process. For thousands of years, they fought until Manaul got tired of their quarrel. Landing on one of the mountains created by the battle, the bird gathered rocks and dropped them on the two gods thereby ending the fight. These masses of rocks the mythical bird have thrown became the many islands that now form the Philippine Archipelago (Punongbayan, 1998).

The preceding myth sheds light to this question: *How did the Philippine archipelago emerge?*

The same question have confronted geologists for so long, so that in the quest for unraveling the processes that shaped the earth that we have today, these geologists have formulated theories that could probably enlighten our minds of a how certain place, an archipelago like the Philippines for example, has taken its present shape, size and topography.

Two major theories explain the origin of the Philippines: Pacific and Asiatic Theory.

Pacific theory contends that a study of the nature of the rocks beneath the ocean and the volcanic character of the archipelago made Dr. Bailey Willis conclude that the Philippines was formed through the marginal and peripheral eruptions of the Pacific Basin. The eruptions of the submarine volcanoes during the remote geologic past and the piling up of their extrusives caused the emergence of the islands above the sea, giving rise to the Philippine Archipelago (Salita, 1997).

Asiatic, on the other hand, holds view that the Philippines was once a part of the continental shelf of Asia. Dr. Leopoldo Faustino (1928) stated that:

The present land areas of the Philippines are merely the higher portions of a partly submerged mountain mass...The outline of the Archipelago was first marked at the close of the Paleozoic Era during the Permian Revolution when a movement of the Asiatic land mass to the south caused the China Sea depression and crumpled the edge of the continental platform. In other words the Philippine Islands formed the barrier that separated the waters of the Pacific Ocean from the waters of the present China Sea.

The present landforms of the Philippines have come about through the complex process of diastrophism, vulcanism and gradation. These landforms are very much interrelated with the origin of the Archipelago itself. The occurrence of tectonic earthquake is an effect of diastrophism. The formation of elongated mountains such as the Sierra Madre and the Cordillera is caused by diastrophism while the conical peaks are the result of vulcanism. Mt. Apo, Mayon Volcano and Kanlaon Volcano are examples of volcanic mountains. The erosion of the highlands and the consequent deposition of

the sediments at the oceanic basin comprise the process of gradation. It is gradation that generally causes the formation of minor landforms, such as rivers, valleys, lakes, deltas, hills, rapids, and falls. The deltas formed by Pasig River and Pampanga River as they enter Manila Bay are the results of gradation process (Salita, 1997).

The location of Philippines on the western margin of the Pacific Ocean, which is comparatively unstable segment of the earth's crust, may help explain the pattern of landform development. The entire margin of the Pacific Basin from Japan to Taiwan, Philippines, Indonesia, and New Zealand owes much of its development to the action of the forces of folding, faulting, and volcanic activity. Geologists call this region as the "girdle of fire" or "ring of fire" because it is a region of frequent volcanic activity (Salita, 1997).

The geologic processes aforementioned resulted to the Philippines as an inverted Y-shaped archipelago consisting of more than 7,000 islands and islets. These islands are commonly grouped into three major divisions namely: Luzon; Visayas; and Mindanao. Its land surface is crisscrossed by mountains and drained by small river systems.

The combined land and water areas of the Philippines are about 1,800,000 km² of which the water areas comprise about five times the land area. The total land area of the Philippines, excluding Sabah, is 300,000 km² or 30,000,000 hectares. It is about the size of Italy, slightly larger than the size of United Kingdom, but slightly smaller than Japan. (Salita, 1997)

***Boundaries:** Being an archipelago, Philippines is bounded by bodies of water: Bashi Channel on the North; Pacific Ocean on the East; South China Sea on the West; and, Celebes Sea on the South.

***Mountain Ranges:** Caraballo del Sur (has its peak at the intersection of the boundaries of Abra, Ilocos Norte, and Cagayan); Caraballos Occidentales (divide into Cordillera Norte and Cordillera Central); Seirra Madre (a.k.a. the Pacific coast range); Zambales Range (follows the China Sea from Cape Bolinao to the coast of Bataan); Tagaytay Range (passes through Cavite and Batangas, and with Mt. Makiling, form the mountain system of the Southern Tagalog region); Mindoro Range (begins at Mt. Halcon); Negros Mountain Range (dividing Negros into two); Panay Range (separates Antique from Iloilo, Capiz, and Aklan); Surigao Range (follows the contours of the Pacific coast); Butuan Range (forms the watershed of the Agusan River and Pulangui River); Central Western Range (Mt. Apo is its highest peak); and the Western Range (extending from Iligan Bay to the shore of Basilan Strait).

***River Systems:** Cagayan River (drains the Cagayan Valley); Agno River (drains Benguet and the Valleys of Nueva Ecija, Pangasinan and Tarlac; Abra River system (drains Bontoc, Lepanto, and Abra); Pampanga river (drains Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, and Bulacan); Rio Grande de Mindanao (largest river system in the Philippines); and Agusan River system (drains the basin of Surigao).

***Volcanoes:** Iraya (Batanes); Taal (Batangas); Banahaw (Quezon); Mayon (Albay); Hibok-Hibok (Camiguin Island); Makaturing (Lanao); Apo (Davao); Pinatubo (Zambales). Of these volcanoes, Taal and Mayon are the most active for these have erupted for more than thirty times. In 1991, Pinatubo erupted and since then, it

has continued to destroy the agricultural and commercial lands of the Central Plain of Luzon.

***Natural Resources:** Forests produce timber for domestic and international use. The arable land produces rice, corn, root crops, coconut, fruits and vegetables for the local and international market. Mining, which is one of the basic industries, produces minerals worth millions of pesos. The seas and rivers are abundant with various kinds of fish, which are also of export quality. Recently, oil deposits have been discovered but the sites remain to be undeveloped.

LESSON 2.2 PEOPLING OF THE PHILIPPINES & FILIPINO TRAITS

The origin of human beings is a continuing object of debate and scholarly investigation. In this regard, theories and stories have been posited by a number of thinkers to explain how the first people of the world emerged. Below are selected arguments/stories that attempt to shed light on who were the first people of the Philippines.

PEOPLING OF THE PHILIPPINES

The Biblical account:

“In the Bible is contained the prophecy that the Lord would spread the nations and His light to *distant islands* who will proclaim His glory (Isaiah 66:19-21). It is possible that the early Filipinos descended from a common stock of Asiatic peoples, some of whom settled in *distant lands*...; Christians believe all mankind descended from Adam and Eve, the first couple in the Garden of Eden (based in the Middle East). After the great flood..., one of the sons of the [Noah’s] youngest, Japheth, named Javan (see Genesis 19:1-4)[had] four sons named Elishash, Tharsis, the Kittim and the Rodanim...Fr. Francisco Colin, a Jesuit Historian, wrote that the first settlers of our country was Tharsis, son of Javan and great grandson of Noah, together with his brothers and their descendants.” (*Zaide, 1999*) These Biblical characters that inhabited the prehistoric Philippines were already “civilized” and did not undergo any “evolutionary” processes.

Separate migration wave theory:

“H. Otley Beyer’s scheme of Philippine history...postulated the peopling of the Philippines via several “migration waves”, starting with...*a primitive human type* similar to the Java man of 250, 000 years ago [Beyer called the man, *Dawn Man*]... Pygmy groups came over from the south via land bridges about 25, 000 to 30, 000 years ago [the Negritos]... This was followed by the pygmy *proto-Malay* who came from Borneo via Palawan and Mindoro some 12, 000 to 15, 000 years ago. Then the *Indonesian A* came to the country about 5, 000 to 6, 000 years ago...; *Indonesian B*..., filtering from Indochina and South China to Luzon and Formosa [Taiwan] by boat about 1500 B.C.; finally, the *Malay* ‘of Mongoloid features’ coming from the south.” (*Patanñe, 1996*) Comparing the way of life of these migrants, it could be said that the Malays were culturally advanced than the Indonesians, and the Indonesians were culturally dominant over the Negritos.

Core population theory/Independent development theory:

“The peoples of prehistoric Island Southeast Asia belonged to the same population...It grew out of the combination of human evolution which occurred...about 1.9 million years ago, as evidenced by the fossil materials recovered..., and of the movements of other peoples from Asia mainland during historic times...This core population shared common cultural orientation...and the configuration of these shared [cultural] elements into a common way of life is

what we call the *base culture*. It emerged from similar responses people made to similar geographical conditions, climate, fauna, and flora...Emerging from a common population with the same base culture, the Malays, the Filipinos, and Indonesians are co-equal ethnic groups..., without any one of them being racially or culturally dominant.” (Jocano, 1975 as quoted by Agoncillo, 1990) This theory further contends that prehistoric Filipinos and their culture developed independently from the civilizations in other parts of Asia.

A creation myth:

Below is an excerpt of a *Creation Story* from a translated Tagalog myth. (Cole, 1916 as cited by Ashliman, 2003)

“When the world first began there was no land, but only the sea and the sky, and between them was a kite (a bird something like a hawk). One day the bird which had nowhere to light grew tired of flying about, so she stirred up the sea until it threw its waters against the sky. The sky, in order to restrain the sea, showered upon it many islands until it could no longer rise, but ran back and forth. Then the sky ordered the kite to light on one of the islands to build her nest, and to leave the sea and the sky in peace.

“Now at this time the land breeze and the sea breeze were married, and they had a child which was a bamboo. One day when this bamboo was floating about on the water, it struck the feet of the kite which was on the beach. The bird, angry that anything should strike it, pecked at the bamboo, and out of one section came a man and from the other a woman.

“Then the earthquake called on all the birds and fish to see what should be done with these two, and it was decided that they should marry. Many children were born to the couple, and from them came all the different races of people.”

The search for the first people to settle in the Philippine archipelago is open to verification and scrutiny. Other than those presented above, several anthropological theories explaining the emergence and movement of “pre-historic” people in the Philippines exist. The debate continues as anthropologists discover fossils and relics (e.g. Tabon Man, Cagayan stone tools, Callao Man) to prove their theories about the peopling of the Philippines. Expanding these theories based on human remains and tools are studies on linguistics (e.g. The Austronesian connection), which arguably points to the possible origins of the first Philippine settlers.

THE PEOPLE

The story of man in the Philippine islands that took place before writing was used to record events is about 1500 times longer than the historic period. The larger part of the story of man (of a Filipino), his culture, the manner with which he obtained his daily needs, his beliefs and values, how he progressed through time from the earliest periods, the changes that he and his manner of living underwent as he met with other peoples not only of these islands but the larger region of Southeast Asia and the rest of Asia and the Pacific, lies far beyond living memory and therefore difficult to recall or even to imagine (Peralta, 2002)

The Filipino is a mixture of races. For many centuries, Philippines has been the “melting pot of cultures”, and that the frequent cross-cultural relations between the early Filipino with his Oriental brothers and with the Westerners made him the more sophisticated. In his veins runs the blood of a Negrito, Malay, Indonesian, Indian, Spaniard, American, Chinese, Japanese, etc. Thus, it is difficult to define a genuine “Filipino”, yet we have to enumerate some traits common to most, if not all Filipinos, regardless of language, ethnic group, or region in order to point out what is Filipino from what is European or American.

***Common Traits**

1. Hospitality. Of course peoples of other nations have their own way of being hospitable, but the Filipino hospitality is something worth noting. The Filipino will offer the “bests” he has to anyone (stranger or kin) who arrives at his doorstep, even to the extent of settling for the second best. He wants everyone to feel welcomed, comfortable, and honored even if his family would worry about the next meal, or that a visitation would mean an additional burden to their debt in the sari-sari store.
2. Respect for elders. Parents, Grandparents, “*Panglakayen*” (old men), “*Manong*” (elder brother), and “*Manang*” (elder sister) of the Filipino family and community deserve much respect. These elders decide for the young, initiate the young to adulthood, and their wisdom are much sought for.

Among the common ways of showing respect to the elders are: “*pagmamano*” (kissing of the hands); the use of the words “*po*” and “*opo*”; addressing the older brother or sister “*Kuya*” or “*Ate*”; giving due recognition to the elders of the community during feasts or celebrations; offering one’s seat to the elderly in a crowded place, or in an overloaded PUJ or bus; obeying the rules and decisions of the parents unquestionably.

3. Close Family Ties. Just like many other Asians, the family is foremost among other things in the society. Among the Filipinos, the “extended family” is common. Typically, it is composed of grandparents, parents, and children living in one roof.

Endogamy (marrying within one’s clan) is observed in many regions of the country. Even at present, this clannish attitude has not disappeared. One reason for such is the idea of preserving the family’s wealth and prestige, or of strengthening kinship. It is also observed that when members of a family get married, they are expected to reside, either with their parents, or near their parents and relatives.

An extension of this trait is regionalism. A Filipino feels secured if he is with his “*kailyan*”, “*katribo*”, or “*kababayan*” (town mate/countrymen). This breeds discrimination among the Filipinos themselves. In big universities, for example, students organize themselves according to place of origin. Thus, we hear about “*Samahang Ilocandia*”, “*Samahang Bisaya*”.

4. Fatalistic. Filipinos believe that whoever they are and whoever they will be is the dictate of fate. This is commonly known as “*Bahala Na*” attitude, which is loosely

translated as “come what may”. At times when one is confronted with a dilemma and he couldn’t arrive at a specific solution or decision, he would resign his fortune to fate and just utter, “Bahala na”. Phrases like: “*Sinuwerte siya*” (He was lucky), “*Gasat na ti bummaknang*” (He is fortunate to get rich), “*Kakambal niya ang malas*” (Misfortune has always been his companion), “*Nai-anak ka nga pobre, matay ka nga pobre*” (Once you’re born poor, you will die poor), and many others, are all manifestations of fatalism.

5. Loyalty. The Filipino’s idea of loyalty is an unending support for a friend or for somebody who has rendered him help for to a Filipino friendship is sacred. Even the little favor you gave will be remembered for life. This kind of loyalty is exemplified by the phrase, “utang na loob” (sense of gratitude).

This act of Filipino loyalty is associated with his “*pakikisama*” attitude — a sense of camaraderie, justice, honesty, and spirit of comradeship. It could also extend to the so-called “*bayanihan*” and “*pakikiramay*” attitudes — a sense of mutual help and sympathy for others’ predicament.

6. Tendency to be indolent. This is the predisposition to not to exert much effort in work. Jose Rizal explained some of the reasons behind such attitude: (a) warm climate; and (b) abundant natural resources. Added to these is due to close family ties. A Filipino is assured that his family and relatives would always be there to “feed” him when he has nothing to eat.

This indolence, with no doubt, is the main reason why a Filipino lacks initiative. A student, for example, is satisfied with a grade of “3” or “75” no matter how hard the teacher would encourage him to exert more effort. And in another instance, indolence could be the reason why Filipinos are so dependent on the government. Once government officials are elected into office, they are expected to provide every “need and want” of their subordinates. Finally, indolence may be the main culprit behind the proliferation of “*istambays*” (stand bye).

The aforementioned common traits are just a partial list of the many attitudes of an average Filipino, although they might give the reader a glimpse of who a Filipino is in general (take note though that there are exceptions to generalizations).

***Regional Traits**

It is also best to identify the common attitudes of each of the major regions of the Philippines in order to understand the cultural diversity (different cultural traits) among the country’s peoples.

1. Igorots (Cordillera Region). These people, as described by Spaniards are generally very agile, bold, well-built, and feared by their neighboring tribes (Scott). Just like the Muslims, the Igorots were not conquered by the Spaniards. Moreover, the Ifugao rice terraces are a living legacy, which shows the engineering skill of these mountain people.

2. Ilocanos/Samtay (Ilocos Region). The Ilocanos are frugal, industrious, hardy, patient, and adventurous mainly because of the natural environment they are in. The steep mountains and turbulent sea bounding their land limit economic opportunities. We would then expect that they would be frugal and would go out of their region for “greener pastures”.
3. Tagalog (Tagalog Region). The Tagalog is a born lover, poet and musician, is strongly attached to his family and kin, and “feels superior” over other Filipinos (esp. Manilenos). The latter description is due to the fact that the Manila is the center of cultural and commercial life, the heart of the region.
4. Bicolano (Bicol Region). The Bicolano is known for his even temper and religiosity. He is also fond of spicy food. The Bicolano is said to be calm and seldom shows his rudeness. The religiosity of the Bicolanos is somewhat justified by the numerous priests that hail from the region.
5. Bisaya (Visayas Region). He is a hedonist—a happy-go-lucky man, and extravagant. The Visayan is also self-reliant and adventurous. He, too, is a lover and expresses his emotions through music. It is said that when a Visayan is afflicted with problems, give him wine and a musical instrument (usually stringed-instrument) and he would “eat, drink, and be merry” then forgets his troubles.
6. Muslim (Muslim Region). The Muslim is the fiercest lover of freedom, a man of honor, hardy, and adventurous. His love for his land made him formidable to subjugate. This is the reason why the Spaniards were not able to conquer the Muslims. And this makes the Muslim proud. His fierce love of his culture and religion makes it difficult for him to be integrated into the Philippine body politic. For many centuries, up to these days, there has been this suspicion of betrayal that the Muslim feels against his Christian brother.

***Major Filipino Languages.** Although the Filipino language is traced from the Malayo-Polynesian language, it has many variations and that even the Filipinos themselves do not understand each other. This makes the more the difficult to define what a Filipino is.

The Philippines has more than a hundred languages and dialects. Here are the major ones: Tagalog (basis of our National Language), Ilocano, Pampango, Pangasinense, Bicolano, Cebuano, Samarnon, and Magindanao.

EARLY PHILIPPINE CULTURE: PHILIPPINE-ASIAN RELATIONS & PRE-HISPANIC CULTURE

LESSON 3.1 EARLY PHILIPPINES AND ITS ASIAN NEIGHBORS

The early Philippine culture could be understood in two ways. First, this early culture could refer to the ways of life that the earliest Philippine settlers have independently developed from their Asian neighbors. Second, such independently-developed culture could have been enriched or revised as our ancient forebears interacted with their Asian neighbors through trade, war, or intermarriage. This interwoven early Philippine-Asian culture is commonly being referred to as the pre-Hispanic culture or those Filipino ways of life that the Spaniards witnessed during their first contacts with our ancestors in the 16th century.

Philippines-Southeast Asian Relations

“By the Christian era, Philippines shared with its Southeast Asian neighbors a Neolithic-based culture, which consisted of the following elements: (1) materially, sawah (rice-field) agriculture, domestication of ox and buffalo, use of metals and navigational skills; (2) socially, the importance of women...and respect for elders and constituted authority; (3) religiously, animism, *anito* worship, ancestor worship, jar burial; (4) culturally, [some “theatrical” shows and musical ensembles] and *batik* painting. With this Neolithic-based culture as foundation, [Philippines] began its accommodation of the *great cultural traditions* of India, China, and Islamic Arabia.” (Evangelista, 2002)

Philippines and the Great Cultural Asian Traditions

Indianization of Southeast Asia. The entry and proliferation of Indian tradition in Southeast Asia resulted to the Indianization of the region, giving birth to Hindu and/or Buddhist kingdoms like those in Funan, Champa, Sri-Vijaya, Majapahit, among others. These states recognized “divine rulers”. Interestingly; however, Philippines was spared from such development. This is because our country was bypassed by Indian traders who exclusively traded with Burma, the Malay Peninsula, Thailand, Indo-China Peninsula and China as the terminal of Indian products. Indianized Southeast Asians then brought Indian influences to the Philippines at a later date (Evangelista, 2002).

An example would be the Orang Dampuans (men of Champa), which, according to Sulu tradition, between 900 A.D. and 1200, these immigrants from the Indianized kingdom of Champa (in Indochina) traded with the Buranons of Sulu (Zaide, 1999).

Relations with China. During the reign of the Sung (960-1127 A.D.) and Ming (1368-1644 A.D.) dynasties in China, Chinese traders established settlements along coastal towns and in the hinterlands of the archipelago. Hence, there was a continuous flow of goods from the port of Canton to the different trading ports in Lingayen Gulf, Masbate, Manila Bay, Mindoro, and Sulu in the Philippines. (Agoncillo, 1990)

Filipinos bartered their products, such as yellow wax, gold, hemp, cotton, betel nut, tortoise shells, and pearls, for the Chinese goods—silk, porcelain wares, iron, tin, bronze gongs, umbrellas and fans. (Zaide, 1999)

Clearly, Filipino-Chinese relations were more economic in nature than political. China's political influence (Confucian system of government) to Southeast Asia was limited to Vietnam due to the conquest of the said country from 111-939 A.D. Moreover, Chinese traders had low social status in Chinese society and therefore could not be bearers of Confucian political ideas (Evangelista, 2002).

Islamization of the Philippines. The coming of Islam in our country in the 13th century is so much related with the spread of Islam in Southeast Asia and it had lasting effects on its island world. From Sumatra, Islam went to Malacca, and from there, to the coastal areas of the Indonesian islands, and finally to southern Philippines. From Sulu, it spread to other parts of Mindanao, then to Visayas and Luzon. (Evangelista, 2002)

Although there are various theories as to how Southeast Asia (Philippines included) was Islamized, traditional accounts mention the arrival of Arab teachers called Makhdumins (singular-Makhdum) in Sulu, which, after sometime, would convert the natives of the island into Islam. This religion was later on strengthened by Rajah Baguinda Ali of Sumatra when he arrived at the end of the 14th century. By the middle of the 15th century, Serif Abu Bakr from Palembang founded the sultanate of Sulu. In time, conversion of the Sulu archipelago was completed (Evangelista, 2002).

Undoubtedly, prior to the colonization of our country by the Spaniards, there has been a long historical tradition of interaction between and among our ancestors with Southeast Asians and other Asians, notably with the Chinese. It should also be noted that other Asians like the Japanese have also traded with the early Filipinos.

It is interesting to note that our Asian neighbors have left lasting imprints on the Filipino character and socio-economic life, which until now are clearly identifiable. These Asian influences are undeniably visible in our festivals, marriage ceremonies, burial rites, food, languages, clothing, business affairs, customs and beliefs. Such influences, in effect, make it more difficult to define who a Filipino is, but certainly make the typical Filipino flexible, resourceful, and dynamic.

LESSON 3.2 POLITICAL LIFE OF THE EARLY FILIPINOS

Early Filipinos had feasible socio-political institutions that provided a framework for efficient and effective management of resources and social affairs. In the following sections, the concepts of barangays, sultanates, ancient Filipino political leaders and laws are elucidated.

Barangay and the Datu; Sultan and the Sultanate

The Barangay. The barangay, (or balangay—from the Malay term balanghay, meaning a “boat”), is the independent political unit of pre-Hispanic Filipinos. “[And] until the coming of Islam, the Philippines did not develop a political system beyond the *balangay* or barangay, as reported by Spanish sources.” “Being small units, balangays were run according to kinship relations,” not only in its internal affairs but also in “outside relationships as well” (Evangelista, 2002). Barangays dotted the coastal areas and were also numerous along navigable rivers. These “communities were usually made up of 30 to 100 families that lived and worked together... and the land they occupied was the *bayan* or settlement” (Arcilla, 1998)

The Datu (chieftain) headed the barangay. His responsibilities included “the duty to govern and lead the people in battle, to defend the barangay against enemies, and to settle disputes among followers. In return, the datu demanded respect, a share in the harvest and the hunt, and service.” (Arcilla, 1998) “The datu was also in charge of the barangay’s economy, i.e., commerce and agriculture... Most datos were merchants who owned sea vessels and used such boats to organize piratical and/or commercial expeditions.” (Salazar, 1999)

Chieftainship was commonly by inheritance; however, among the Visayans, one could become a datu by exhibiting skill, daring, prowess in battle, or by accumulating wealth in the form of warriors and slaves (Arcilla, 1998).

Sultan and the Sultanate. The Sultanate of pre-Hispanic Philippines was composed of several communities ruled by a Sultan. This political unit was firmly established when Islam had its roots planted in the Sulu archipelago and in mainland Mindanao. “In the Sultanates of Sulu and Maguindanao, centralization of political power was in the hands of the Sultan was the essence of such Islamic states. Relevant to this is the role of the Sultan in controlling territorial claims. His concept of ‘domains’ determined his authority over lands, seas, rivers, and all other territories that the sound of his gongs could reach. In Sulu, a council of prominent datos and influential elders called *roma bichara* served as adviser to the sultan in matters pertaining to politics and religion.” (ADHIKA ng Pilipinas at NHI, 2001)

In the selection of a Sultan, there are five (5) criteria: (ADHIKA ng Pilipinas at NHI, 2001)

1. *Bangsawan* (royal blood). A datu could only become a sultan if his parents were of noble ancestry (of *kadatuan* and *kasaripan*). Women had no right to become sultans due to their alleged weakness and they were also forbidden to lead prayers.
2. *Kamagulangan* (“right age”). He is the oldest among the datos.

3. *Ilmawan* (has proficient knowledge of the *shariah* and *adat*). He should be highly knowledgeable with the shariah or Islam laws and the adat or customary laws. He too should prove that he is skillful in speaking foreign languages like for example, in Arab or in Malay. It is also necessary that the would-be sultan should exhibit skill in statesmanship and in jurisprudence. He too should be efficient in making treaties and in establishing alliances.
4. *Altawan* (wealth). This should be measured based on his properties or possessions, scope of territorial jurisdiction, and palaces.
5. *Rupawan* (personality). He should possess a strong personality, unquestioned morality [moral ascendancy] and good manners.

Laws and the judicial process

Agoncillo (1990) explains the nature of pre-Hispanic laws and how these were put in effect by the ancient barangay leaders were. Accordingly, laws were customary and/or written. Customary Laws were orally transmitted from generation to generation. Written laws were those that the chieftain and his council of elders promulgated from time to time when necessary. These were recorded. Laws dealt with: inheritance, divorce, usury, partnership, crime and punishment, property rights, family relations, adoption, and loans.

Laws were made through the initiative of the datu and with the approval of the elders. After a law has been enacted, a public announcer called “Omalohokan” goes around the barangay to announce the new law. It was the responsibility of every member of the barangay to know about the new law.

Disputes were settled through a “court”, with the Datu as the “Judge” and the contending parties disputed their case by presenting their witnesses. It was the duty of the datu and the elders to determine which of the disputants is sincere in his arguments. Usually, the number of witnesses determined the winner of a dispute.

In cases where the criminal among a number of accused could not easily be identified, the *Trial by Ordeal* was employed. This was a series of physical tests used to determine the guilt or innocence of accused criminals. The process involved the following:

- a. A stone is placed in a vessel with boiling water. The suspects dipped their hands, and the man with the most scald was adjudged the guilty one.
- b. Giving of lighted candles to the suspects. The man whose candle died out first was considered guilty.
- c. Plunging into the river. He who came to the surface first was the guilty one. Many drowned in the process since nobody of the accused wanted to be pinpointed as the criminal.
- d. Chewing of uncooked rice. He who had the thickest saliva spewed was considered guilty.

The development of independent units or the barangays by our ancestors could give us the impression of how economic, political and social affairs could be managed effectively. Being a small unit, the barangays of the early Filipinos were able to sustain the needs of its people—from its leader, the datu and elders, to the ordinary persons

that contributed to the continued existence of the barangay. The political independence of barangays however, was somehow changed by the establishment of Islamic sultanates. As sultans consolidated several barangays into one bigger unit, datus had to adapt to this change. It followed, too, that some roles (especially that of women) had to be redefined.

In terms of the ancient Filipino laws and how these were implemented, it could be said that these laws are well in place until today, except that most of our laws today are codified and/or formalized. Moreover, one may rightly or wrongly conclude that the process of trying and hearing criminal cases before is somewhat cruel and unfair for the accused, but perhaps, for our ancestors, they could have thought that such processes like the trial by ordeal was unquestionably just and appropriate. Of course, for us today, the trial by ordeal is unthinkable especially so that our Constitution explicitly provides safeguards for our human rights, in that this security extends even to the accused criminal.

LESSON 3.3 ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE EARLY FILIPINOS

Anywhere in the archipelago, production based on natural resources was the main source of livelihood among the early Filipinos. The physical environment influenced also traditions, beliefs, norms, rituals, and social relations. To the pre-Hispanic Filipinos, their territory was not simply a place to stay, it was life itself.

Ecological niches determining the socio-economic activities of early Filipinos

(Adhika ng Pilipinas and NHI, 2001)

Generally, the socio-economic life of the pre-Hispanic Filipinos revolved around three *ecological niches*:

1. **Sea [marine]-based Societies.** For those living along coastal areas, the sea was of prime importance for every day activity. For the Badjaos of Sulu, for example, their familiarity with the directions of the wind was vital when they sail to the open seas. The sea provided almost everything—food and medicine—necessary for survival.

In 16th century barangays in the Visayas region,

The Visayans spent much of their time in the water with their boat for it was their only means of transportation... Nobody lived beyond 40 kilometers from the seashore. Orientation was focused not on the sun's movement but on the sea's currents. A farmer from the island of Batayan would sail towards Cebu to plant rice in that island; miners from Camarines would cross the sea going to Masbate; that is why the young learned his community's tradition by listening to the sound made by the sea as he paddled. (Scott, 1994 as cited by ADHIKA ng Pilipinas and NHI, 2001)

2. **Plains-based Societies.** People thriving in plains had a favorable position in trade. Things from and beyond the seas—Chinese porcelain and metal products, gongs, salt, and woven cloth—were primary the products that the people of the plains traded with those coming from the mountains. These communities took advantage of their geographical location, that is, their proximity to the sea, to market routes, and their access to foreign goods. (Scott, 1994 as cited by ADHIKA ng Pilipinas and NHI, 2001)

Usually, rice fields relying only on rainfall were located at the foot of hills and mountains. Anybody was allowed to plant anywhere for vacant lands were wide enough for everybody to till. Millet and bananas were the common plants. Sago (lumbia) and gabi (taro) were like grasses that grew everywhere.

3. **Mountain-based Societies.** For the people of the mountains, their life revolved around their land. Their folkways, beliefs, religious rituals, and social institutions were also tied with their agricultural system, which was basically rice farming. The planting and harvesting of rice were almost done simultaneously among the mountain communities. Among the peoples of the Cordillera in 16th to the 17th century, there was also a definite system of

agricultural landownership, which was particularly based on the *payoh* (rice fields). Commonly, rice fields were owned by the rich known as *kadangyans*.

Trade relations between mountain-based people and the plain-based societies were also established. Forest products from the mountains were traded with lowland products such as salt, clothing, jars, and metals.

Boat-building Industry

Boat-building was a flourishing industry in the Philippines before the conquest. The process of building ships proves that the early Filipinos were highly knowledgeable of the different kinds of wood suitable for boats. Sailing was a pre-Hispanic knowledge that paved the way for political and economic relations with other nations.

Indigenous vessels were carved out of single tree-trunk, and some of the bigger ones had seats or benches. There were many types of boats that the early Filipinos used: the *balanghai*—a slender, with narrow stern and prow, light and low-lying, held together with wooden bolts. It had tick bamboo outriggers to hold the boat atop the surface of the water, adding to its speed and balance; the *caracoa*—was sleek, double-ended, and could go forward or backward without turning around. Double outriggers for fighters allowed faster maneuvering. (Rodriguez, 1998)

There was the *paraw*, which was usually used in rivers and bays for trading. It had two paddles and a triangular sail. A *paraw* was used to transport loads from ships to the seashore. It was also used to escort *caracoa* during the conduct of *pangangayaw* (sea raids)

Other economic activities

Pre-Hispanic Filipinos were also involved in other economic activities that included pottery, weaving, mining, livestock-raising, winemaking, fishing, and domestic and international trade. By and large, barter was the primary means of trading goods and services within and outside the archipelago.

Although early Spanish chroniclers reported that the natives had no knowledge of money, this is otherwise disputed by local numismatists due to the hoards of *piloncitos* that have been unearthed in various parts of the country. The *piloncito* is a small gold piece no larger than a pea, shaped like a rounded cone, with a character stamped in relief at the base. The Philippine *piloncitos* are almost identical to those documented as the recognized coinage in Java as early as the 10th or 11th century, and those of Thailand during the Sri-Vijayan period. This, being the case, would then point out that *piloncito* is the earliest coinage used in the Philippines. (Legarda, 1998)

LESSON 3.4 SOCIO-CULTURAL LIFE OF THE EARLY FILIPINOS

The Philippines, before the conquest, was a nation of thriving civilization. The inhabitants' culture had the elements of a highly organized society: policies and laws; an elaborate system of writing and language; literature; arts and sciences; religion; independent governmental units (barangays); markets/trading posts; and weapons, tools, and utensils necessary for existence. Many of these customs and practices have been handed from one generation to another, and interestingly, such traditions persist in today's times.

Social Class

A hierarchical social class existed. At the top were the *Maginoo* (Nobles) composed of the Datu and his immediate family and relatives. Below this class was the *Timawa/Maharlika* (Freemen), which was composed of warriors, merchants, craftsmen, and slaves who won their freedom. The timawa has his own land and followers but were bound to serve the datu (Rodriguez, 1998). At the bottom were the *Alipin* (Dependents/Slaves). These were captives of war, those unable to pay their debts, all illegitimate children; those purchased, and punished criminals. In the Visayas, an alipin was called oripun. There were two sub-classes of *alipin*, and these were (Agoncillo, 1990):

- a. *Aliping Namamahay* (householder)—had his own family, little house and lot, and served the master during planting and harvesting season or in the construction of houses
- b. *Aliping Sagigilid* (hearth slave)—those who are living with the master, had no property, and could not marry without the master's consent. The sagigilid,; however, could buy his freedom in gold

Clothing

Pre-Hispanic Filipino males wore: (a) *kangan*—black or blue sleeveless jacket; (b) *bahag*—strip of cloth wrapped around the waist, passing down between the thighs; and, (c) *putong*—red or embroidered headgear wrapped around the head. Pre-Hispanic women wore: (a) *baro*—sleeved jacket; and, (b) *patadyong/saya*—loose skirt wrapped around the waste. Women wore no hats but they tied their hair in a knot at the back of their head. Both men and women attached to their bodies jewels such as *kalumbiga*—armlets, pendants, bracelets, rings, earrings and leg-lets. They inserted gold fillings between their teeth for adornment. They also tattooed themselves heavily. The early Filipinos, male and female, old and young, walk about barefooted for “sandals and shoes were Spanish innovations”. (Agoncillo, 1990 and Zaide, 1999)

Houses

Typical ancient Filipino houses were constructed out of nipa palm, wood, and bamboo. Such houses are called as *bahay kubo* or nipa hut. A *bahay kubo* was set upon columns [posts] with a ladder that could be drawn up; it had a gallery called *batalan* where water jars are placed. Under the hut were enclosures keeping fowls and an area to pound and clean rice. Others lived in houses built on tree-tops and in boat-houses. (Zaide, 1999)

The typical Ifugao house is another kind of house that is worth mentioning. In Ifugao, it is called *bale*, which is to be distinguished from hut (or *abong*, which are temporary dwellings in the fields or forests). The *bale* stood on four 3-meter high posts. It had a detachable ladder. It had two doors: front and back. Generally, it only had one room with a fire-place located at the far right-hand corner of the house. Parts of the house are well fitted together that no nails are used to hold the boards and planks together (Lambrecht, 1929 as cited by Cordillera Schools Group, 2003).

Language and system of writing

The early Filipinos spoke more than a hundred languages and dialects, which trace their origin from the Austronesian or Malayo-Polynesian language. Tagalog, Iloko, Pangasinan, Sugbuhanon, Samaron, are some of the widely spoken languages. (Agoncillo, 1990) The pre-Hispanic Filipinos also had a system of writing known as *baybayin*: "It was a syllabic writing system; each letter represented a syllable instead of just a basic sound as in the modern alphabet. There were a total of 17 characters: three vowels and 14 consonants, but when combined with the small vowel-modifying marks, called *kudlits*, the number of characters increased to 45."

























































The vowels are: *ᜄ*(a), *ᜅ*(e/i), and *ᜆ*(o/u). The consonants are: *ᜇ*(ba), *ᜈ*(ka), *ᜉ*(da/ra), *ᜊ*(ga), *ᜋ*(ha), *ᜌ*(la), *ᜍ*(ma), *ᜎ*(na), *ᜏ*(nga), *ᜐ*(pa), *ᜑ*(sa), *ᜒ*(ta), *ᜓ*(wa), and *᜔*(ya). (Morrow, 2002)

Literature

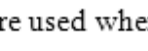
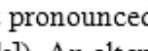
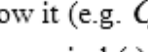
The early Filipino's literature was oral and written. The Tagalog's literature consisted of *sabi* (maxim), *sawikain* (saying), *bugtong* (riddle), *talindaw* (boat song), *kumintang* (war song, which evolved into a love song), etc. (Agoncillo, 1990)

Arts and Sciences

Pre-Hispanic Filipino architectural designs were expressed in the *bahay kubo* and in boat building. Painting was seen in the tattoos using human body as canvass. Sculpture was manifested in statues of gods and goddesses, in clay jars, and in handles of bolos and knives. As for the sciences, the early Filipinos had a wide knowledge of the medicinal value of herbs; they had an idea of astronomy and astrology; and had knowledge of mathematics. (Zaide, 1990) In the Cordillera, the Ifugaos used an agricultural calendar of 13 months in a year and 28 days in a month. (ADHIKA ng Pilipinas at NHI, 2001)

a	 	 	 
	 	 	 
e-i	 	 	 
	 	 	 
o-u	 	 	 
	 	 	 
	 	 	 
	 	 	 
	 	 	Note: The characters used in this table are Baybayin Lopez of 1620
	 	 	

Rules:

1. Each character [titik] is a complete syllable with "a"; with "e/i"—if *kudlit* is above the *titik*; with "o/u"—if below the *titik*; sound of vowel is dropped—if *titik* is with "+" below it.
2. Vowel characters are used when syllable has no consonant (e.g.  = ba \ ba \ e [babae]).
3. If a character is not pronounced with any vowel, don't write it (e.g.  = **bu(n)do(k)** [bundok]). An alternative would be using the *titik* with a small cross "+" (called *virama*) below it (e.g.  = bundok).
4. || = corresponds to a period (.). | = corresponds to a comma (,).