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The Changing Status of Women in the Philippines

Soledad Oriol Soriano

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THE CHANGING STATUS
OF WOMEN IN THE PHILIPPINES

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
The American Academy of Asian Studies

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Soledad Oriel-Soriano
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Approved for the Graduate School

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INTRODUCTION

Among many peoples in the Far East, masculine domination has been flagrantly exhibited. Women have been, until lately, relegated to the background in social, economic, and political affairs. By their customs, traditions, and laws, most women have been held in utter subjection to the men.

That women in the Philippines are on an equal footing with the men socially, economically, and politically would seem incredible to people in the West who grew up with the conception that Oriental women lead secluded and downtrodden lives and are generally slaves to the men. In their opinion, the Philippines, being in the Far East and exposed to the Oriental ideal which renders woman inferior to man, would naturally produce women who are repressed, degraded, and forever dependent upon the male. This is far from the truth. Quite the contrary, even before the Spaniards set foot on Philippine soil, the Filipino woman enjoyed a relatively high position in society as well as in the economic and political life of the people; and, although her position suffered somewhat a setback during the Spanish rule, it grew in importance as the years rolled by. Today the Filipino woman is fully emancipated; she has achieved equality with men.

The inner urge to erase the misconception about the position of women in the Philippines has become very necessary and it is therefore the purpose of this paper to present facts about important

changes which have inevitably affected her status. These facts will be discussed to show her advance, not in comparison to her Oriental and Occidental sisters, but in comparison to the Filipino woman of bygone days.

Many factors have contributed to the transition of the Filipina. Because the history of her country is one of colonial subjection for over three centuries under various foreign rulers, her status has been very much influenced by the interaction of foreign cultures and her own. The introduction of Spanish religious beliefs, customs, language and institutions; the democratic program of government by the United States of America; and the aid of many liberal-minded Filipinos themselves - all these have caused sweeping changes in the Filipina, some to her detriment, but on the whole to her everlasting credit.

Up to the present, there are very few works written about the Filipino woman and these works have traced her development and progress only to a limited extent. To supplement this meager information about her, this paper is presented. Facts contained herein have been gleaned from random observations recorded by Spanish chroniclers who went to the Philippines as government officials or as missionaries of the Christian faith at the time of conquest and colonization of the country in the 16th century and, in a large measure, from articles and books written by American officials of the Philippine government and Filipino authors. As an eyewitness of the change from the American rule to the present, I have also made use of my

observations of contemporary events. Besides these, materials generously supplied by the Commission on Elections, the Bureau of Census and Statistics, the Bureau of Private Schools, and the University of the Philippines constitute some of the basic sources of the data for this presentation.

The study of the changing status of the Filipino woman will necessarily take us back to her life in the ancient days before she was ever reached by influences from the Western World, through the long years of Spanish domination, the short period of American rule, and the first years of the infant Philippine Republic; hence, the materials included here follow a chronological approach.

It is hoped that this paper will be sufficient to give the reader a fair knowledge of women in the Philippines and their struggle towards equality with man, freedom, and happiness.

CHAPTER I

THE PRE-SPANISH FILIPINA¹

Practically all manuscripts in regard to the pre-Spanish Filipino woman were written by early Spanish chroniclers. Today it is difficult to find an ancient Filipino writing upon which may be based the study of the Filipina because native records were destroyed by the Spanish conquerors in their mistaken notion that the subject people's conversion to Christianity could be facilitated if these relics of their pagan days were removed. Only a few facts about the training of the pre-Spanish Filipina, the marriage customs of her people, her rights and privileges, and her economic role as seen through the eyes of Spanish observers will be given in this chapter.

THE TRAINING OF THE EARLY FILIPINA

According to the early Spanish chroniclers, the Filipina of ancient times possessed a graceful figure, a pleasant mien, a smooth brown complexion, long black hair knotted on the back of her head, and a dignified carriage. Keen and resolute, she had a clever disposition for anything she undertook. In visiting or in walking through the streets and to places of worship, she moved very sedately and, if she belonged to the nobility, was accompanied by a retinue of slave girls who protected her from the sun and rain with silk

¹ A term popularly used for a Filipino woman.

parasols.

The early chroniclers also remarked that the ancient Filipinos paid close attention to their cleanliness and neatness. They were cleanly and elegant in their persons and dress. They bathed often and took good care of their hair. They washed it regularly with a kind of shampoo made out of the bark of a tree called gogo boiled in water. Then they anointed their heads with oil and other perfumes. Women and children especially were accustomed to anoint their heads for comfort and adornment even if they did not bathe. They were also careful of their teeth which they dyed black and filed at an early age to make them even. They kept their homes clean and neat. At the entrances to their houses, they placed jars of water for washing the feet, especially during the rainy season. A person was considered ill-bred if he were to enter a house without cleaning his feet first.

They had elaborate modes of dressing, men and women alike. The women wore little frocks with multicolored sleeves and wrapped themselves from the waist down to their feet with a white cotton material. The rich ladies were very fond of ornaments. They wore crimson silk clothes and other stuffs woven with gold. They had long gold chains around their necks, gold bracelets called calombigas, thick gold earrings, and gold rings with precious stones.²

The Spaniards found that the early Filipinos had a political

² Antonio R. Marga, Philippine Islands, tr. by Hon. Henry E. J. Stanley (Hakluyt Society; London, M.DCCC.LXVIII), pp. 268-269.

organization, a form of religious worship, a system of measures, songs, and dances. They could read well and had a system of writing, too. Father Pedro Chirino, a Jesuit missionary who wrote one of the earliest and most reliable records regarding the Filipino people in their primitive condition before they had had much contact with the white men, said:

All these islanders are much given to reading and writing, and there is hardly a man, much less a woman, who does not read and write in the letters used in the island of Manila which is entirely different from those of China, Japon, and India.³

Father Chirino further observed that the early Filipinos were polite and well-bred. They uncovered their heads when they met one another. Among them it was discourteous to remain standing while conversing with a person whom they ought to respect. With bare heads, they must be seated on the ground or on their heel bones. They must wait until they were spoken to for it was bad manners to speak ahead of the honored person. Their courtesy was best manifested in their form of address; they never spoke in the first or second person, but always in the third person, and were careful never to omit "my Lord" or "my Lady" as the case might be even when speaking with their equals.

Among them, as it is today, family ties were strong. Parents did their duties to their children from their infancy through their

³ Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, eds., The Philippine Islands (Cleveland, MCMIV), XII, 242.

maturity. Even when a son had already married, he continued to live with his own family in the house of his parents. The children's relationship with their parents was characterized with respect and obedience. Ill-manners shown toward parents and elders were looked upon with universal disapproval and severely punished. Courtesy was an important feature of a child's training and the early Filipinos gauged the quality of one's education by the respect he had for his elders. This attitude continued even after the children's marriage.

The eldest son and the eldest daughter were likewise regarded with deference by their younger brothers and sisters who addressed them in Tagalog⁴ not by their given names but by some title of respect as Kuya or Kuyang and Ate or Ating for the eldest brother and eldest sister respectively. When the parents died, the eldest son and daughter assumed their rights and duties and the younger members, in turn, were under moral obligation to obey and respect them.

The ancient Filipinos put a high price on chastity and modesty. A number of Spanish chroniclers attested to this fact. In a letter to a friend in España (Spain) who asked him about the characteristics of the Filipinos, Fray Gaspar de San Agustin says, referring to the woman:

They are really very modest in their actions and conversation, to such a degree that they have a great horror for obscene words; and if weak nature craves acts, their natural modesty abhors words. The notion that I have formed of them is that they are very honorable and most of all, the married

⁴ One of the principal tribal dialects in the Philippines. Upon it is based the Filipino National Language.

women. Scarcely will one find a Tagalog or a Pampango Indian⁵ woman who will put her person to trade.⁶

Father Ordoñez de Cevallos also observed that the women were generally virgins and had no husband but one, if they were married. Sinibaldo de Mas, another Spanish writer, noted the respect that the Filipino men showed to their womenfolk because of their modesty.⁷

Corroborating these observations, Father Francisco Combes, a Jesuit missionary, said:

The peculiarity of this nation and the thing that gives them some excellence and esteem is that their women are more chaste and modest. They esteem virginity and keep it inviolate, even to advanced age, for the vocation of matrimony.⁸

Having heard of some cases of laxity in morals, some biased chroniclers, however, like Miguel de Loarca and Fray Juan Francisco de San Antonio, put the Filipino women in bad light by making disparaging comments about their reputation. If there were instances of immorality among the early Filipino women, they were exceptions to the general rule as in other countries. Fray San Agustin himself said, still referring to the Filipino women in his letter: "Although beans are boiled, it is not by the kettleful as in other regions." This remark was understood to be an adaptation of an old proverb,

⁵ Spaniards at first referred to the Filipinos as Indians or Indios.

⁶ Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, eds., The Philippine Islands (Cleveland, MCMVI), XL, 253.

⁷ Encarnacion Alzona, The Filipino Woman (Manila, 1934), pp. 8 - 9.

⁸ Blair and Robertson, eds., op. cit., XL, 159-160.

probably interpreted as: "Although sins are committed here, they are not as frequent as in other places."

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS OF THE EARLY FILIPINOS

The betrothal. There were no distinct customs of courtship recorded among the early Filipinos, but they did observe formalities of betrothal. In many instances, the parents matched their children even before these were born, while in others, especially among the chiefs, a go-between was necessary to press the lover's suit. The betrothal was usually solemnized with a feast and an agreement between the contracting parties upon a certain sum of money which was forfeited as fine by whosoever broke the promise of marriage. A breach of promise to marry was taken so seriously that it was punishable not only by fine but also by confiscation of property.⁹

A lance thrust into the staircase of a maiden's house played a prominent role in the betrothal among the nobles. It meant that a nobleman sought the maiden's hand in marriage.

When a nobleman wished to marry, he employed certain freemen who commanded respect in the village. These acted as the go-betweens to negotiate the marriage. One of these love emissaries took the young man's lance from his father and upon reaching the house of the girl's father, he thrust the lance into the staircase. Holding it thus, he and the other members of his party invoked their

⁹ Blair and Robertson, eds., op. cit., Vol. V, p. 159.

gods and their ancestors, asking them to be favorable to the marriage. A conversation between the emissaries and the girl's father ensued in which the qualities of the suitor were extolled by the former. If the girl's father gave his consent, the betrothal took place and the lance passed into the possession of the go-between, or it was redeemed by the young man.

The dowry and other gifts. In the marriage negotiations, the matter of the dowry and other gifts was invariably discussed. The amount varied in accordance with the man's rank and financial circumstances. The dowry was called bigaycaya and was given by the man to the parents of the girl in cash or land or house or other articles of value as a sign of good will or alliance of the two families. It included panhimuyat which was a present to the bride's mother in return for her troubles in bringing up her daughter. It also included the pasoso, a sum given to the chichiwa,¹⁰ if there were any. Besides the dowry, the young man also gave presents in various forms to the relatives of the girl.

The dowry was presented to the girl's parents before the wedding day with all the seriousness and solemnity that they could muster up in the presence of an august gathering of maguinoos,¹¹ relatives, and friends of the lovers.

¹⁰ Wet nurse.

¹¹ The elderly wise men in the village.

The employment of the dowry was not the same in all the villages. In some places, the parents converted it into their own property and later, at their death, divided it equally among their children; hence, the allegation by some writers that the Filipino woman in the early times were sold. But if the man had gained the affection of his parents-in-law, the latter returned the dowry to the couple. If the woman was an orphan at the time of her marriage, she became the sole owner of her dowry.

In other places, according to Fray Juan Francisco de San Antonio, if the parents were generous, they used part of the dowry to defray the expenses incurred in the wedding. If anything was left of it, the remainder was used to furnish the home of the newlyweds.

If the man was too poor to give a dowry, he rendered personal service free to the family of his bride-to-be. He chopped wood for fuel, fetched water from the well, tended the domestic animals, or helped on the farm. In this state, he was called the catipado.¹²

The sum of the dowry was determined by the parents of the girl. Neither the bride nor her parents contributed any fund to the marriage. If, however, a chief had demanded a large dowry of, for instance, 18 or 20 gold taels,¹³ or any amount beyond the means

¹² A young man engaged to be married.

¹³ A tael is equivalent to a peso.

of his son-in-law, he was morally obliged to present his daughter certain gifts called pasonor, i.e., a couple of slaves, a piece of land or any other thing proportional to the dowry. It was considered shameful to require a large dowry without giving a pasonor in return.¹⁴

The wedding celebration.¹⁵ There were variations in marriage ceremonies, occasioned by differences in rank and means, but among the nobility, grandeur and complexity characterized the entire proceedings and the spirit depicted was that of the groom's hardship in securing his bride.

At least three days before the wedding, relatives of the contracting parties assembled to build a singcaban¹⁶ and the palapala.¹⁷

The pagan ceremony and form of marriage started with the supposed kidnaping of the bride who was taken to the house of the groom on the wedding day. This was followed by a galo-galo.¹⁸ The bride and groom were seated in their bridal chamber on the laps of

¹⁴ Blair and Robertson, eds., op. cit., XL, 86-91.

¹⁵ Maria Paz Mendoza-Guazon, The Development and Progress of the Filipino Women (Manila, 1951), pp. 14-15.

¹⁶ A frame made of two pieces of bamboo crossing each other so that when the four ends were fixed in the ground, the frame formed an arch. This was adorned with leaves, flowers, and ribbons, and under it sat the maharlikas or the principal men of the town.

¹⁷ A kind of bower made of bamboo temporarily added to the house to accommodate all visitors to a feast.

¹⁸ Banquet.

certain old women who acted as their god-mothers. These served them food which they partook from the same plate. The pair also drank from the same cup. At the banquet, the groom declared that he was taking the girl beside him as his wife. Thereupon shouts of joy broke out, and the people indulged in singing, dancing, and drinking wine to their hearts' content.

A catalonan¹⁹ then came and showered upon the couple a thousand blessings, wishing among other things that they be well mated, and beget many, many children and grandchildren who would all be rich, brave, and wise.

The blessings were followed by the pag-a-anito.²⁰ This phase of the ceremony involved the sacrifice of an animal which was killed by the catalonan with a javelin thrust at it to the accompaniment of music and dancing. The animal was cut into pieces and eaten with great devotion like that of the Catholic devotee in the performance of the Holy Communion.

The festival did not cease with the wedding ceremony but it continued and lasted three or more days until the revelers became tired of dancing or were too intoxicated to carry on. A paguing katapusan²¹ ordinarily brought the merrymaking to an end. But in some cases, the celebration was by no means over. In a very festive

¹⁹ Priestess.

²⁰ Praying to ancestral spirits.

²¹ Closing feast.

procession the couple were conducted to the house where they were to live while a similar procession took the god-parents to their respective homes. Thus the event was brought to a close.

Should the recently married couple not agree well with each other, or if the harmony in the new home was ruffled by discord, another animal sacrifice was held, and the bridegroom himself, acting as the priest, performed the ceremony. Spear in hand he danced before the animal, made a thousand weird gestures, and suddenly gave the animal a death thrust all the while praying his gods and anitos to bestow peace and harmony upon him and his wife. Trusting that his prayers would be answered, he calmed himself down.

Miguel de Loarca's version of marriage among the nobles is of a more ostentatious ceremony. Here the bride is wont to make her parents-in-law undergo an ordeal before giving herself to their son. Loarca said:

After the marriage is agreed upon - that is to say, after fixing the amount of the dowry which the husband pays to the wife (generally 100 tasels in gold, slaves, and jewels) they bring the wife from her parents. One of the Indians takes her on his shoulders; and on arriving at the foot of the stairway to the groom's house, she affects coyness and says that she will not enter. When many entreaties have proved useless, the father-in-law comes out and promises to give her a slave if she will go up. She mounts the staircase for the slave; but when she reaches the top of the stairway and looks into her father-in-law's house and sees the people assembled within, she again pretends to be bashful and the father-in-law must give another slave. After she had entered, the same thing takes place and he must give her a jewel to make her sit down, another to make her eat, and another before she will drink. While the betrothed pair are drinking together an old man rises and in a loud voice calls all to silence, as he wishes to speak. He says: 'So and so marries so and so, but on the condition that if the man should, through dissolute

conduct, fail to support his wife, she will leave him, and shall not be obliged to return anything of the dowry that he had given to her; and she shall have freedom and permission to marry another man. And, therefore, should the woman betray her husband, he can take away the dowry he gave her, leave her, and marry another woman. Be all of you witness for me to this compact¹.

When the old man has ended his speech, they take a dish filled with clean, uncooked rice, and an old woman comes and joins the hands of the pair and lays them upon the rice. Then holding the hands thus joined, she throws the rice over all those who are present at the banquet. Then the old woman gives a loud shout and all answer her with a similar shout, and the ceremony is completed.²²

Compared to the ritualistic ceremonies of the nobles, marriage among the freemen and the serfs was a much simpler affair without the gala trimmings and ostentatious gatherings which were characteristic of the former. Marriages among these two lower classes in the society of the ancient Filipinos was performed by merely making the bride and groom drink from the same cup, after which they listened to their few guests shout a wish that they might live a long, prosperous, and prolific married life.

Marriage among the slaves was even more of the simplest sort, accomplished without the drinking ceremony. There was no festival; the bride and groom simply said to each other, "Let us marry;" and commenced living as husband and wife. Generally their lords matched them and pronounced them married.

Matrimony in the pre-Spanish times was both monogamous and polygamous. In most regions, a man would ordinarily take only one

²² Blair and Robertson, eds., The Philippine Islands, V, 155-157.

wife; but there were places where a man could take two or more wives or as many as he could support. It is believed that this custom was derived from Mohammedanism which had taken root in Borneo before the Spaniards took possession of the Philippines. From Borneo, the advocates of the doctrine went to the islands to preach it.²³

There was no bar to marriage between relatives; in fact they considered it important to take a wife only within their family, the nearer the relationship, the better, except the first degree of consanguinity for they "abhorred and chastised and vigorously punished incest". Thus while uncles and nieces, aunts and nephews, and cousins could freely marry, parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren could not do so in any case. Although there were cases of marriages between persons belonging to different classes, it was the general practice among the people to marry within their rank.²⁴

DIVORCE AMONG THE EARLY FILIPINOS

The ancient Filipinos, though generally monogamic, did not hold their marriages indissoluble. Their married lives continued

²³ Blair and Robertson, eds., *op. cit.*, XL, pp. 295-296.

²⁴ The four recognized social classes of the pre-Spanish Filipinos were the nobility comprising the chiefs called datu, the freemen called timawas, the serfs called aliping namamahay and the slaves called aliping sagipid.

just as long as there was peace between husband and wife. The woman had as much right as her husband to repudiate her spouse. It is interesting to note that part of the marriage ceremony described in the preceding pages announced the grounds on which the spouses could ask for a divorce.²⁵

If the man was to be blamed and he parted from his wife, he forfeited the dowry. If it were the woman who deserted the conjugal abode to marry another, she was under obligation to return all the dowry and to pay an equal amount as fine. On the other hand if she left her husband on a just cause, she retained an absolute right to her dowry.²⁶

In the case of a divorce after the birth of children, the whole dowry and the fine fell to the children and it was placed under the custody of their grandparents or other responsible relatives.

RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF THE PRE-SPANISH FILIPINA

Native customs dictated that the married woman should pass to the control of her husband who was considered the lord of the family; but, in fairness to her, she was allowed certain rights. For this reason, a man could not regard his wife as a slave but an equal.

²⁵ Supra, p. 12.

²⁶ Blair and Robertson, eds., The Philippine Islands, V, 295.

A woman possessed duties and rights of the house and authority over her children as much as her husband had. According to Father Pedro Chirino, it was the mother's exclusive right to name the child after birth. She shared in the honors of her husband; retained her maiden name, and freely engaged in trade and business. If she so desired, she could sue her husband for divorce on grounds of non-support and cruelty. Her equality with her husband was also recognized in the management of his affairs in which her "voice was definitely a force to reckon with".

An interesting incident in ancient times so often recounted in history books illustrates this beautiful custom of our forefathers which is carried on to this day. We are told that negotiations for the purchase of lowlands in the island of Panay by some Bornean nobles led by Datu Puti were stalled. The reason was: The wife of King Marikudo who owned the land refused to approve the transaction unless she was given a gold necklace like that which the wife of Datu Puti had. The buyers had to accede to the queen's demand or give up the negotiations. This incident not only shows that it was a custom in those days for the woman to exercise equal rights with her husband in the disposition of their property. It also shows that the husband first consulted his wife when about to embark on an important undertaking.

The Filipino wife could acquire property and dispose of whatever property she personally owned at the time of her marriage. She could also inherit half of the conjugal gains of her marriage

partnership with her husband. If she were a legitimate daughter, she was entitled to a share of her parents' property equal to her brother's inheritance.

Native laws also gave the Filipina her legal status in the family and in the barangay.²⁷ She could succeed to the headship of a barangay and she could succeed her husband as head of the family.

Since women were allowed to occupy political positions, it was not surprising therefore to hear of women who ruled in some parts of the country before the Spanish regime. The reign of a certain Queen Sima of the Kingdom of Cotabato in the island of Mindanao has often been cited as an example.

Queen Sima's rule was considered most excellent. In her kingdom the right of a person to his life which he could not be deprived of without due process of law was recognized. But once convicted, he had to bear the full penalty. This the good queen upheld religiously even above her nearest kin. She meted out capital punishment to her own son for violation of a certain law of her kingdom.

Her people were noted for their honesty. Things dropped on the road or elsewhere in their kingdom remained untouched. In 671 A.D. an Arabian monarch wanted to verify the truth of this allegation and so sent an emissary to her court to drop a bag of gold in

²⁷ A political organization of the early Filipinos. It is equivalent to a petty state.

one of the streets of Cotabato.

The bag of gold was still on the spot after two years, so the story goes. On the third year, the law of the land was violated by Queen Sima's son who stepped on the bag of gold. Weighed on the scale of justice, he was found guilty and was sentenced to pay the penalty with his life.

Other rulers would have placed family ties above the law, but to Queen Sima the law must apply to all regardless of birth or social position; and it must be supreme at all costs.

On the day fixed for her son's execution, her own state ministers pleaded for mercy in behalf of the erring prince. As a sovereign, she had power to grant pardons, reprieves, and commutations. Out of consideration to her ministers' official solicitations, she agreed to commute the sentence, but her son's legs which disobeyed the law must be amputated. The ministers again met and reasoned out that a legless heir to the throne was as good as dead. The queen's heart softened at this plea, but she decided stoically that the prince's toes must be cut. The prince courageously bore the verdict of his queen mother. He succeeded to the throne upon his mother's death, with a rich experience in upholding the supremacy of the law.

Princess Urduja was another well-known woman ruler who held sway over a large territory now called Pangasinan in the island of Luzon. With a group of women advisers to assist her, she capably discharged the administrative duties of her kingdom. Renowned for

her bravery, she headed an army of women, waged war against the surrounding territories, and placed them under her rule.

The Filipino women could also become priestesses. It was their duty to offer sacrifices in religious functions, to minister to the sick and dying, to foretell future events, and to officiate at marriages. They commanded great respect among the people by whom their services were very much demanded. According to Eufonio M. Alip, there were more priestesses than priests.

The Filipino men loved and respected their women dearly so much so that they gave the dowry at marriage and when a couple's families quarrelled, the husband usually sided with his wife's relatives even if this act meant trouble with his own brothers and father.²⁸ The wealthy women were carried in chairs and shaded from the scorching heat of the sun.

There is no better proof of this high regard for women than the laws promulgated to mete out punishment for offenses against them. The best known of these early laws was contained in the Code of Kalantiaw.²⁹ This Code was exceptionally considerate to women, protecting them with gallantry quite unusual in the East. Although medieval in character as shown in the nature of the offenses and punishments, the Code, nonetheless recognizes the elevated status of the Filipino women. The following is an English translation of

²⁸ Blair and Robertson, eds., op. cit., V, 117.

²⁹ The Code was enforced from 1433 to 1614 by Kalantiaw, the third chief of Panay Island.

the articles of the Code with regards to women:³⁰

Article 3. Obey ye: No one shall have wives that are too young, nor shall they be more than what he can take care of. He who fulfills not, obeys not, shall be condemned to swim for 3 hours, and for the second time, he shall be scourged with spines to death.

The above provisions of the Code prohibit child marriages and were a deterring factor to polygamy.

Article 7. He who shoots with arrows the aged and the women at night shall die.

Article 8. They shall be slaves for a given time those who steal away the women of the headmen.

Article 11. They shall be burned those who by force or cunning steal away the women of the old men.

Violations against women were punished mercilessly in accordance with the above provisions.

Article 10. It shall be the obligation of the mother to teach her daughters and prepare them for womanhood; men shall not be cruel to their wives, nor should they punish them when they catch them, in flagranti in the act of adultery. He who disobeys this shall be torn to pieces and thrown to the caymans.

This article of the law enjoins the mother, as the teacher of her children, to educate them and to instruct her daughters on feminine hygiene so as to prepare them for their important future roles as wives and mothers. It also protects women from cruel husbands.

WOMEN AND HOME INDUSTRIES

In the economic life of the ancient Filipino community,

³⁰ Eufonio M. Alip, Political and Cultural History of the Philippines, (Manila, 1950), I, 55-57.

women occupied an important role. They carried on household industries as spinning, weaving, needlework, and raising vegetables, hog, and poultry. They wove clothes on very crude native hand-made looms, using thread spun from cotton, pineapple, and abaca. They also wove silk cloth from materials imported from China. They knew the arts of embroidery and lace-making. Since rice mills were still unknown in those days they pounded rice for their family's consumption and helped their husbands in planting and harvesting their crops on their farms.

CHAPTER II

THE FILIPINA DURING THE SPANISH REGIME

The arrival of the Spanish colonizers ushered in a new milestone in the life of the Filipinos. The newcomers cut off the Philippines from her cultural contacts with her Oriental neighbors and drew her within the influence of their Latin civilization. They brought along their Christian faith, their customs, laws, language, and institutions which, in the course of their lengthy rule, they imposed upon the natives with utter disregard of the latter's beliefs and traditions.

THE FILIPINO WOMEN AND THE NEW RELIGION

It was plain from the beginning that the principal aim of Spanish colonization was to lead the heathen people into the Christian fold, hence the truth of the much repeated statement that wherever Spain went she carried the cross in one hand and the sword in the other. The Spaniards converted the Filipinos into Christianity soon after their rule was secured by their military might. The new religion readily found many adherents among the people; it especially appealed to the women of the upper class. Leading the earliest converts was the niece of Chief Tupas, a ruler that wielded great power in the island of Cebu. Her example was immediately followed by other high ranking women.

Some of the converts manifested their devotion and faith by

performing acts of charity such as regularly giving alms to the needy and attending the sick. They also preached the gospel to the people on the streets. Others like Antonia Esguerra and Rosa Prieto of Manila turned their backs to a life of ease and pleasure in favor of a religious life in the Beaterio of Santa Catalina. Still others led by Asuncion Ventura, Ignacia del Espiritu Santo, Cristina Gonzales, Teodora de Jesus and Ana Margarita, who were all members of well-to-do families, joined religious congregations and founded schools and orphanages for girls.¹ Not a few extended physical help to the building, decoration, and maintenance of churches while the rich gave valuable gifts in the form of real estate for the income of the church and precious jewels with which they bedecked the clothing of religious images. Such was the zeal of these women that through their works they were instrumental in bringing more and more of their countrymen into the folds of Christianity. This placed them high in the estimation of the friars who did not fail to recognize their valuable help for the propagation of the Faith.

THE FILIPINA AND SPANISH TRADITIONS AND SOCIAL CUSTOMS

The Spaniards introduced not only the Christian religion but also their customs and traditions. They taught the Filipino woman their mothers' ways and made her the very image of the women they

¹ Encarnacion Alzona, The Filipino Woman, (Manila, 1934), p.24.

left behind in their native Spain.² Hence from childhood, the Filipina was trained to be meek, docile, and obedient to her parents, to go to church regularly, to recite the rosary, never to make a show of her romantic emotions, and to regard all men as the representatives of Evil.

Having been very particular about their women's chastity and modesty as in the days of old, many Filipinos readily assimilated the Spanish social practice of placing their women under all sorts of physical protection. They put heavy bars on the windows of their houses and prohibited wife or daughter to go out to the street or to social functions unattended by a dueña who was supposed to watch every move of her charge and never to let her out of her sight.

Their opinions about a flirt whom they called magaslaw were not complimentary. The extent to which they chastised a flirt and valued honor and prudence is expressed in the following vernacular quotations:

1. "Ang dalagang magaso
Ay parang asin sa salero.
Ang dalagang magaslaw
Ay parang asing mahahanay."

(A girl who is a flirt
Is like salt in the salt-dish.
A girl who is a flirt
Is like salt ready for the meal.)

² In his book entitled Spanish Life in Town and Country, L. Higgin says that the Spanish woman, in whatever rank of society, is devout, naturally kind-hearted, and sympathetic; polite and entirely unaffected; a good mother, sister, daughter.

2. "Ang dalagang nagpopormal
Sa kanyang kalagayan
Hindi pagpapahamakan
Nino mang walang pitagan."

(The girl who behaves
As she should behave
Is respected by all
Even the most daring.)

3. "Ang mahinhing dalaga
Sa kilos ay makikilala."

(A virtuous woman is recognized
by her actions.)³

The Lagda of the Visayans prescribed certain rules of moral conduct for women. Some of these rules, according to Teodoro Kalaw, are as follows:

1. "Be careful always, wherever you may be, as if you have with you a very delicate object, because one's honor is easily stained."
2. "From your childhood, while you have not yet been touched, just like a spring from which no water has yet been taken, accustom yourself to be a fruit not yet in season to be eaten, and be jealous over your purity, so that you are not easily carried away by even the most flexible object."
3. "Do not yield to any man, whoever he may be because he is just like the vine that always entwines itself upon something, or like the boa that always jumps upon its prey."
4. "Do not accept any present; it is just like a bait which you are expected to swallow in order to be caught."
5. "Do not be pleased over words of endearment, because honey, even though sweet, if used to commit sin, leaves bitterness afterwards."

³ Antonio Isidro, Philippine Social Life and Youth (Manila, 1953), pp. 359-360.

6. "Do not go out alone, like the limukon⁴ or the dove of the forest; always go out with your mother, cling to her just as a bat would cling to a tree branch; if you must separate from her, be vigilant always, just like a tikarol⁵ when it alights."
7. "Avoid the company of licentious women, for to follow bad conduct is just as destructive as kogon set on fire."
8. "In the town, do not go to out-of-the-way places in search of something joyous. It is preferable that you return during the day in order to pass the night at home; but if it is not possible because of distance, do not be like the bird that alights on the first branch it comes to; look for a house of good repute."
9. "Your dress should not be too loose as to make you look like the 'Sagnksok' when it is drying itself in the sun; neither should it be so tight and short, as if it had been lopped off; it is uglier to so hold your dress as to show your knees, even when you have to wade through a stream or pass a muddy place."⁶

The Tagalogs' opinion of chastity and modesty is expressed in Urbana at Felisa (Urbana and Felisa) a book authored by Father Modesto de Castro. Some advices regarding these virtues given in the book are as follows:

The mother should bear in mind, that the honor and purity of a lady is like a piece of glass which is easily stained by the slightest breath . . . There is another undesirable custom which every parent should avoid. After the suitor is admitted and due courtesies are given the mother allows the lady and her suitor to talk alone. In such a situation, is not the lady comparable to a doe chased by a dog which cannot stop until she is caught and killed? If the mother will say that she has confidence in the natural virtues of her daughter, I shall answer that she is placing her daughter in

⁴ A bird.

⁵ A bird.

⁶ Isidro, op. cit., pp. 360-361.

the danger of losing her honor and purity. You should teach your daughter to fear God, not to show her teeth in smiles, to be modest and virtuous in order that she may gain the respect of the gentlemen. Do not permit her glances to reveal her lovable nature. Don't allow your daughter to show herself at the window always, like a bunch of grapes on the wayside exposed to the temptation of every passer-by."⁷

Some proverbs also show the people's low regard of immodest women:

1. "Pag bukas ang kaban,
Magkakasala banal man."

(When the trunk is open
Even the saints will be tempted.)

2. "Ang kahoy na babad man sa tubig
Sa apoy huwag ilapit
Kapag nadarang nang init
Sapilitan magdirikit."

(A piece of wood
However soaked in water
If put in the fire
Will dry and in time burn.)

3. "Ang ulam na tinangay ng
Aso ay nalawayan na."

(Meat snatched by a dog
Already is wet with his saliva
No longer fit to eat.)⁸

THE FILIPINA AND EDUCATION⁹

Royal orders issued by the Spanish sovereigns urged the es-

⁷ Ibid., p. 361.

⁸ Ibid., p. 361.

⁹ Antonio Isidro, The Philippine Educational System (Manila, 1947), pp. 7-8.

tablishment of schools in the Philippines to teach the Christian religion and the Castilian language. Complying with these orders parish priests established mission schools. Since the free and trusted association of boys and girls was not allowed, co-education did not exist.

The education of the Filipina during the era did not go beyond rudimentary schooling. Based on the fundamental aim of the Spanish crown to develop moral and religious citizens, it followed the pattern of established Spanish social customs. In accordance with this aim the curriculum centered on Christian doctrine and rules of courtesy. The double standards of morality of the time demanded that women should be educated only for the three C's - the children, the church, and cooking, which was similar to the education of women in Europe confining them to their home duties and the service of the church. In the provinces all the education that the girls received was hardly more than the ability to read the novena¹⁰ and the missal and to pray the rosary. Reading was encouraged by the priests only to enable the girls to read the Doctrina Cristiana,¹¹ the lives of Christ and the saints, and the prayers. But writing, although part of the curriculum, was not given emphasis to prevent intercommunication among the inhabitants of the different towns and provinces. Some parents who were strongly in-

¹⁰ Nine-day prayer.

¹¹ Christian Doctrine.

fluenced by Spanish customs indirectly helped the priests toward this end for they were very much against their daughters' learning to write.¹² It was their opinion that their daughters would correspond secretly with the male sex if they knew how to write. This was considered almost an offense. This attitude of the parents coupled with the prevailing idea that woman's place is in the home contributed to the slow progress of women's education.

The Spanish government in Madrid enacted laws to teach the Spanish language to the natives, but the officials sent to govern the islands did all they could to prevent the people from learning the language and from pursuing higher studies. They feared that the more enlightened the people were, the stronger they would be to rebel against the mother country. Prior to 1863, the only books that could be found in the islands were the catechism, the passion of Christ, novenas, miracle tales of saints, and folklore stories.

The first girl's schools were established in Manila by the friars before the Educational Decree of 1863. These schools were intended for the daughters of the Spaniards but later included Filipina girls. The oldest of these institutions was the Colegio de Sta. Potenciana founded in 1591, later fused with Colegio de Sta.

¹² According to L. Higgin in his Spanish Life in Town and Country, there were fathers of the upper classes in Spanish society in the first half of the 19th century who preferred that their daughters should not learn to read or write, especially the latter, as it only enabled them to read letters clandestinely received from lovers and to reply to them.

Isabel which was founded in 1632. Three other early girls' schools were the Colegios de Sta. Rosa, Sta. Catalina, and La Concordia.

The girls' schools fell under two general types, namely the colegios and the beaterios. The first provided for academic and vocational training of the girls while the second were orphanages or convents where girls and women who wanted seclusion could live. The beaterios outnumbered the colegios.

Primary and secondary education were both given. Besides religion, the girls also learned cross stitch, embroidery, crochet, sewing, reading, writing, and arithmetic. Music and painting were elective subjects and many girls showed proficiency in playing the piano and the harp and in painting.

Commenting on the girls' work in schools, Encarnacion Alzona, an authority on education in the Philippines, said that "The greater part of the girls' time was devoted to religious practices, long prayers, and frequent visits to the chapel which was to be found in every school."¹³

In the colegios, the girls lived a secluded life. They were subjected to various rules and regulations governing their conduct. They were not free to carry on love affairs; neither were they free to receive visitors except their parents and relatives. Every letter addressed to them had to pass through the hands of the head mistress of the school and its recipient must open it in her teacher's pres-

¹³ Alzona, The Filipino Woman, p. 28.

ence. Love letters were burned.

There were girls from the provinces who attended the schools in Manila to learn social manners, but quite often they failed to attain their aim for class distinction between the mestiza,¹⁴ the Spanish girl, and the Filipina was strongly marked. Even after the establishment of public schools in villages and towns by virtue of the Educational Decree of 1863, most girls of the poorer classes remained at home and helped their mothers perform the household chores and take care of their little brothers and sisters. They also worked on the farm to help earn a livelihood for the family. Again behind this parents' utter neglect of their daughters' education was the age-old ideal that a woman should stay at home.

The demand for teachers made it necessary for the superior civil government to order the organization in 1871 of a normal course in the municipal school for girls in Manila. Another school for women primary teachers was opened in 1875 in Nueva Caceres. In 1892 when Spanish rule was almost at its end, a regular training school for women teachers was established in Manila. It was named the Superior Normal School for Women. The Ministry of the Colonies drafted its curriculum and regulations which were approved by the Queen Regent Maria Cristina of Spain. Agustinian nuns who were famous for their ability were placed in charge of this official normal school.

¹⁴ A girl of Spanish and Filipino parentage.

The curriculum of the normal course comprised the following subjects: Religion and ethics, Castilian grammar, reading, arithmetic, geography, history of España and Filipinas, principles of hygiene and domestic economy, music, singing, general principles of education, methods of teaching and their practical application in the girls' model school and work of all kinds suitable for women such as sewing, weaving, embroidery, cutting garments, and ironing.

Graduation from the Superior Normal School for Women Teachers was the highest attainment open to women in the Philippines at the time. Since no other high institutions admitted women, some of the talented ones quenched their thirst for education in this school. Many of our elderly women occupying responsible positions in various public and private offices today were trained as teachers under its roof.

The Filipinos as a whole found woman's education very deficient, but since to speak against the policies of the sovereign ruler invited trouble, there was not much they could do about it. But there were brave ones who, in one way or another, did speak out their minds. Our foremost national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, whose fearless exposures of the social ills of the Spanish rule in his novels subjected him and his family to unjust persecutions, had much to say by way of criticism about the education given to his countrywomen. In a letter he wrote in Tagalog to the young women of Malolos in 1889, he pointed out that they were being misled to believe that religiousness consisted of long periods spent on the knees reciting

long prayers and counting huge rosary beads, donning religious habits, believing false miracles, reading novenas, spending money lavishly for the church, giving fees to the friars for masses of thanksgiving, and kissing the friars' hands.

Dr. Jose Rizal emphasized to these women that they were not getting the right kind of education and therefore advised them to open their eyes to this shortcoming because upon them devolved the all-important duty of bringing up their children well. "The people cannot expect honor, nor prosperity," he warned, "so long as they will educate their children in a wrong way, so long as the woman who guides the child in his first steps is slavish and ignorant. No good water comes from a turbid, bitter spring; no savory fruit comes from an acrid seed."¹⁵

Marcelo H. del Pilar, another patriot and writer, wrote from Barcelona, Spain, in 1899, enjoining his countrywomen to struggle for a better education.¹⁶ Like Rizal, he said that "Virtue does not consist in reciting ejaculatory prayers, beating the chest, and other external forms. The virtue that is most acceptable to the Creator consists in cultivating the mind, which He, in His infinite love, bestowed on man that it may serve him as a torch in the path of life."

¹⁵ Juan M. Ruiz and Josefina D. Constantino, eds., Love, Courtship and Marriage (Manila, 1954), pp. 135-148.

¹⁶ Alzona, The Filipino Woman, pp. 36-37.

The writer further urged the women to improve their minds by studying and to teach what they learned to their needy fellowmen. "An uncultivated mind," he told them, "is like a beacon without light; instead of guiding mariners, it leads them to disaster."

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

Courtship and engagement. Winning a maiden's heart during the Spanish times was a trying ordeal for both the man and the woman. Trained to obey, to keep quiet, and to repress her emotions and imbued with admonitions by the friars and her parents on how to save herself from the Devil, the Filipina eyed the world with no little misgivings and was kept constantly on guard against temptations. Very common advices were to this effect: Men are the Devil incarnate; Men are just like the baleta tree that entwines and smoothers the tree to which it clings; Men can be compared to the boa constrictor which jumps on its prey. Beware of them.

The services of a go-between in courtship, though not entirely ruled out, did not help much for the young woman hardly was allowed to step out without a chaperon. This might be her mother, or father, or spinster aunt, or an elder sister. If anyone of these were not available, her brother or younger sister was assigned to keep her company, much to her discomfort. Even at home, she was guarded when male visitors came around. She was not allowed to hear conversations dealing with love or scandal; her mail was strictly censored and sometimes did not reach her at all for it fell into the

hands of her parents. Under these circumstances the young man would find it difficult to talk with the girl of his dreams. The surest way to talk with her was to visit her with her parents' consent. But during this visit, he did not have as much freedom of speech as he wished to have, and the conversation was about almost anything under the sun, except love. President Manuel Luis Quezon explains this phase of courtship during his younger days at the turn of the century:

When a girl was visited in her home, she was not permitted to sit near the suitor, and someone was always present so that the conversation could not refer to anything so personal as the subject of the call. In my town (Baler), the young men would be asked to sit on a bench - and the prevailing rules of etiquette required that one must not walk straight to the bench, but had to do it step by step, stopping after each step, until the invitation to sit down was repeated three times. Then at last the tortured victim would have the right to sit down. The girl would sit at the farthest point away, the mother or the chaperon sitting with solemn face between them.¹⁷

Needless to say, under this condition, courtship often lasted for years. In those days, there prevailed a belief that the longer the young man spent to win a girl's heart, the better. It meant that she would forever be true to her vows.

Quezon recounted another permissible manner of courting that enabled him to talk with the girl of his dreams - the serenade:

The serenading consisted of standing in front of the girl's house after the family had retired for the evening, and from the street playing melancholy tunes and singing love ditties. Some austere mothers would let the serenaders remain long in the street before inviting them to come up, doubtless in the hope that the intruders would get tired and leave. Usually,

¹⁷ Manuel Luis Quezon, The Good Fight (New York, 1946), pp. 23-24.

however, after the third selection, the lamps were lighted and the chevaliers, invited to come up. Then would follow an impromptu dance which would last depending upon the boldness of the suitor, until two or three o'clock in the morning. The music on such occasion consisted of a flute or a violin and a guitar.¹⁸

If the lover's suit was not acceptable to the parents or to the girl, pretexts were made for the girl not to receive the visitors; but if he had won their favor, the young girl was made to appear in the hall. It was not a custom to shake hands, but should the man offer his hand, the girl did not extend all her fingers for fear that he might be tempted to take her arm and embrace her. Such act would bring dishonor upon her and her family and force her to marry him.

The trials and tribulations of a young man in courtship generally extended through a long period because the new religion brought by the Spaniards regarded marriages performed by the Roman Catholic Church as sacred and indissoluble and since the woman belongs to a weaker sex, it was important that she be guided by her parents in the proper selection of her life-long mate.

The engagement of the two lovers was no less arduous and circumspect. There came the mutual tests and prohibitions to determine the sincerity of each other's affections. Both the girl and her betrothed enumerated do's and don'ts that each expected the other to comply with at all times and at all costs. A few examples are: I don't want you to go to a dance or a party which I will not

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 24.

attend; I don't want to see you talk with that girl/boy; I want you to find a way to meet me tonight; I don't want you to go to the city; Keep from anyone our love relationship. It is evident that these tests are very unreasonable, but lovers used them anyway as they considered that strict compliance to them proved one's undying love.

Usually, the lovers kept their engagement a secret, even from their kins and closest friends. This was especially true on the girl's part. It was not in good taste to be showy of one's affection to the opposite sex. Besides, the girl's innate shyness and modesty kept her from doing so. Girls in those days grew up with the ideal that love was sacred and if the engagement were broken, the jilted girl would be subjected to ridicule and she earned an unsavory reputation of having promised herself to a man who did not marry her.

The girl was always expected to keep her promise to marry her lover, except when there were serious obstacles on the way. If a man stealthily kissed her, she had to marry him whether or not she loved him or was engaged to another simply to avoid scandal that would smear her reputation. This attitude reflected not only the Filipino's deep regard for a woman's honor, but also the Oriental fatalism expressed in the vernacular, Talaga ng Dios (The Will of God).

If the engagement were parental, the young man was free to visit his sweetheart as well as his prospective in-laws. He gave

them discreet gifts now and then and he was treated as a member of the family but this did not mean that his marriage to the maiden was a certainty. He must yet undergo another long ordeal that would test his capability of becoming a good husband, a custom which had its roots in ancient times. When a man had no dowry to give, he rendered free his personal services to the family of the girl. He lodged in the home of his future bride and was expected to make himself generally useful in and about the household. He must be careful not to offend the members of the girl's family, especially the elders; otherwise, the parents would replace him with another suitor.

There were cases, though, in which parental impositions were avoided. In this respect the girl could exercise some freedom. When the betrothed pair could not wait, the young girl presented her sweetheart to the parish priest to whom she declared that she had just eloped with him and that they wanted to be united in holy wedlock. The curate had no choice but to marry the pair, if they were of marriageable ages, even without the consent of their parents. On the contrary, if the man ran away with the girl, he was severely punished and the girl was returned to her parents. Sometimes to avoid being replaced by another suitor, a young man, with his sweetheart's consent, took matrimonial liberties with her. Thus the parents were obliged to consent to their marriage.

The dowry. If the pair decided to marry, the young man's parents or guardians, sometimes accompanied by influential men in town who could not be refused by the girl's parents, went to ask for

her hand in marriage. They usually brought with them cigarettes, buyo,¹⁹ and basi²⁰ for the entertainment of the girl's folks and their own party. After the preliminaries consisting of mutual 'How do you do's' and consultations amidst smoking the cigarettes or chewing the buyo, or drinking the basi, the father or the mother of the girl broached the subject about the dowry. In the Spanish times, the dowry was given for the girl's benefit in contrast to the custom in ancient times when even the mother and the nurse shared a part of it. The dowry could be in the form of house, money, jewels, work animals, or other kinds of property that would assure the girl's parents that their daughter would not be destitute in the future.

M. Paul de Geroniere, a French physician who lived for twenty years in the Philippines during the first half of the nineteenth century and had direct contact with our people, gave a detailed description of how the dowry was elaborately discussed in the talks between the girl's parents and relatives and the young man's envoys.²¹ He said that the speeches were in an oratorical style and the responses were similarly shrouded in mystery. Both the young man's and the girl's advocates were careful not to hurt the feelings of the other party. According to Geroniere, the girl's advocate spoke first. He related the story of a young man and a young woman who

¹⁹ A mixture of betel nut, betel leaf and lime customarily chewed by old folks in the Philippines.

²⁰ Strong native wine made from sugar cane.

²¹ Leopoldo R. Serrano, "When Grandpa Went A-Courting," Philippine Review, May, 1954, pp. 33-34.

were married without any material possession they could call their own. The young woman was very badly off for several years, but finally her hardships ended and she became the mistress of a fine large cottage. She bore a pretty little baby girl not long after this happy turn of her fortune, and on the day she was confined, an angel appeared to her and reminded her of the extreme poverty she had to go through in her married life. She told her that the child was under her protection and, when she grew up, she should be given in marriage to no one but to a man who could erect for her a temple having ten columns composed of ten stones.

The young man's advocates, so the story of Geroniere goes, interpreted the allegory just related thus: That the ten columns and ten stones in each column represented one hundred pesos which the parents wanted as dowry for their daughter. Pleading effectively to have the amount reduced, the suitor's spokesman also spoke in allegorical terms. He related the story of a queen whose kingdom was near the sea. A law which was strictly enforced in her realm provided that all ships casting anchor in the state's harbor must do so only at one hundred fathoms deep. Any one who violated the law would be put to death. It happened that a brave captain of a ship which was suddenly caught by a big storm on the sea was forced to cast anchor in the queen's harbor, although his cable was only eighty fathoms long. He had to act thus to save his ship and crew from sure destruction. The furious queen summoned him to explain why he should not be punished. He humbly obeyed and throwing him-

self at her feet, he said that it was solely from necessity that he infringed the law. He asked her to pardon him.

After hearing the tale, the relatives of the girl consulted each other and soon their advocate announced that the queen was moved to pity and so forgave the remorseful captain.

This announcement sparked a general rejoicing among the assembled people for it meant the dowry was acceptable at the reduced amount of P80.00 (\$40.00). Joyous shouts and laughter rose above the sounds of the guitars and now the future couple who had heretofore waited in an adjoining room made their appearance. The entire gathering spent the rest of the night in merriment and dancing. Before they dispersed, the date of the wedding was set.

After the agreement, the party of the young man went to the registry of the church to give notice to the clerk about the forthcoming marriage. It was the duty of the clerk to find out if there were objections or obstacles that might prevent the marriage. If there were none of these, he notified the parish priest and announced the bans for three successive Sundays in the church. Rich people who could afford to pay for these announcements could be married without much ado.

If the engagement was not parental, that is, the suitor was accepted by the young lady, but not by her parents, the young man sought the help of the authorities to take her from her parents' home and deposit her in the house of the church warden, or fiscal, or justice of the peace until the day of marriage. This act was

permissible provided the girl was of marriageable age which was fourteen years.

Then a petition on stamped paper enumerating the circumstances underlying the incident was forwarded to the parish priest and the gobernadorcillo²² made the girls' father state his reasons for denying his consent to the proposed marriage. If the reasons were not acceptable, the petition was presented to the Governor General with the recommendation of the parish priest and the gobernadorcillo. After that an announcement was published in the official gazette giving notice to the parties concerned that the Governor General had overruled the father's refusal and a license to marry the pair was given to the priest.

Another recourse of the lovers was to elope, in which case, the girl's parents grudgingly gave consent to their marriage.

The wedding day. The family of the man, especially the female members, went to the house of the young woman to prepare for the great occasion. They made pickles, caramels, noodles, preserves, pastries. Since there were no factories to manufacture cigarettes, they also helped in making them and in preparing buyo for chewing by the old folks. Besides, they cleaned and decorated the house with bright colored, home-woven clothes.

The bride's wedding ensemble was always furnished by the

²² A Spanish judge who exercised jurisdiction over a group of municipal judges.

family of the groom. The well-to-do girl wore a white native costume²³ and a white tulle veil, while the less fortunate donned any color.

The actual marriage rites prescribed by the church were very simple and usually took place after the early morning mass. After the religious rites each of the couple tried to get up from his or her kneeling position ahead of the other and stepped on his or her foot. It was believed that the one who succeeded in doing this would be dominant in the marriage partnership.

Rice was thrown over the newly-weds as a symbol of a prosperous married life. Upon arrival in the house, the couple kissed the hands of their parents and elder relatives and received their blessings. Then they knelt to pray before an improvised altar in the sala.²⁴

After the ceremony there was an assembly in which friends and relatives were feasted and entertained. Roast pig was the principal dish at this feast. Sometimes there were roast turkeys or roast mutton and beef cooked ingeniously in various ways a la Spanish style. As if these were not enough, there were also numerous kinds of fish, an abundance of sweets, coffee, chocolate, native and foreign drinks. Each guest was urged to partake of everything on the table. The feast, accompanied by dancing the whole

²³ The native custom is made up of a skirt and a bodice with butterfly-like sleeves.

²⁴ Living room.

day through, was, more often than not, at the expense of the groom's family. Throughout the entire proceedings, no show of affection between the two principals was allowed before the public.

Weddings were not always as pompous as the one just described. Some had early morning weddings so as not to be conspicuous. After a few days, they paid courtesy calls to their relatives and friends who presented them with wedding gifts. It was on the wedding day that the Filipino woman's shyness was prominently played up to the extent that she avoided any word or any move which would subject her to her wedding visitors' gaze.

QUEEN OF THE HOME

If the young Filipina during the Spanish regime was so timid that to be in the limelight was most repulsive to her, the moment she got married, she became a totally different being. Casting off the cloak of bashfulness that characterized her youthful days, she assumed her role as queen of the home.²⁵

The household became her domain. Customs and the law compensated her for her exclusion from the outside world, by giving her great powers within her home. If she married a rich man, she freely organized his home, planned the meals and supervised the cook; she budgeted the expenses, shopped, decided what clothes her husband

²⁵ According to the Spanish chronicler, Pedro Chirino, the ancient Filipina was, as she is today (referring to the Spanish times), the queen of the home and her husband.

and children needed, saw to it that the servants had fed the domestic animals, and acted as the confidante, adviser, and right-hand of her husband in the management of his affairs, be they industrial, commercial, or agricultural in nature. In most families, the accepted arrangement was for the husband and the children to hand over all their earnings to her who was the custodian of the family purse.

Many writers spoke highly of the woman's position in the home.

Speaking of his personal impressions, James Le Roy said:

It is of interest to cite a personal experience while being entertained as a guest in the splendid house of one of the largest estates in an island noted for its large sugar plantations. The host, an unusually robust and vigorous looking half caste with the education and travel which had inclined him to play the bon vivant and equipped him with nearly all the qualities of a good entertainer presided at a table served and supplied in a manner which would not have done discredit to any of the world's capitals of good living. His little daughter, speaking several languages, played the hostess both at the door and at the table. If the gratified or curious guest sought for the mistress of the household, he could only find her, a plain middle-aged woman of pure native stock, in the kitchen supervising the preparations for the serving of the banquet, clad in neat but simple attire and evidently desirous of effacing herself from the notice of the guests. Yet the neighbors could inform him that she was the real manager of this estate of thousands of acres, with its steam sugar mills, its force of privately equipped and uniformed police, and its cane tramway, as well as of the mansion itself, with its force of servants in livery and its European furnishings and plate. The lord and master was good at after-dinner speeches, could display all the features of the estate to good advantage, and conduct all the preliminaries of its bargains; was a first class entertainer in fact; but not a purchase was made, not a sale negotiated, not a labor question solved, without the final effective intervention of the mistress of the place. She was 'the man of the house'. She knew the best wines to serve with which courses and was an adept in the old Spanish courtesies which accompanied the passing of the olive.²⁶

²⁶ James E. Le Roy, Philippine Life in Town and Country (New York and London, 1905), pp. 80-82.

Very well informed about the Philippines and its people, former Governor-General W. Cameron Forbes wrote:

The Christian Filipino woman holds a very different position in the family from that of her sisters in India or in most Oriental countries. She is usually the business manager of the household, keeps the keys, does the providing, receives all cash earned by any member of the family, including the proceeds from the farm produce, and supervises the expenditure.²⁷

Charles B. Eliot also testifies that "The women are in all respects the social equals of the men, and they are more ambitious. As a rule they control the family purse."²⁸

Another author attributed this elevated position of the Filipina to the Church. He declared that "In the Philippines, she occupies a position far better than that held by the women in India, or, indeed, in most other countries of the tropical East, and is certainly a helpmate than a handmaid - an elevation that is due largely to the Roman Catholic Church."²⁹

THE FILIPINA AND THE LAW³⁰

While there are indications that in pre-Spanish times, women

²⁷ W. Cameron Forbes, The Philippine Islands (Boston, 1931), pp. 17-18.

²⁸ Camilo Osias, The Filipino Way of Life (Boston, 1940), p. 110.

²⁹ Fred W. Atkinson, Philippine Islands (Boston, 1905), p. 275.

³⁰ "Legal Rights and Obligations of Women," Talking Things Over with the Growing Filipina, ed. by Pura Santillan-Castrencia (Manila, 1951), pp. 161-190.

played an important part in the political life of the race, they did not, as a rule, do so in the Spanish era. Spanish law which was extended to the Philippines from Spain caused a major setback in the legal status of the Filipino woman for it curtailed her civil and political rights. Under the law, she could not hold any public office except that of a teacher. This meant that she could no longer perform the religious functions of a priestess as in yesteryears, nor could she become a ruler of her people.

She could not sell or dispose of her paraphernal property without first securing her husband's consent; neither could she enter into contracts without his permission. She could not protest when her husband mal-administered their conjugal property and she had no way of preventing him from a similar future act. She had to wait until the marriage was dissolved. If unmarried, she could not leave her home without her parents' approval before she turned twenty-five years old; thus she was classed with infants, minors, and the feeble-minded.

The law barred the woman from engaging in business without the authorization of her husband expressed in a registered public document. The husband could revoke this authorization and could make his revocation public. If he so demanded, the publication of his revocation could be made by proclamation and town criers.

It is thus very apparent that the law upheld the marital authority of the Filipino husband over his wife. This school of thought was the prevailing standard at the time for a really good

father of a family. He was expected not to be oblivious of the fact that he was superior to his wife and she, in return, should subordinate herself to him.

In another discriminatory provision of the law, when a man seduced a twenty-year old girl and caused her pregnancy without marrying her, there was no crime in the act as the girl was over eighteen years of age which was considered the majority age for girls at which time she was held responsible for all her actions. Under the law, no court action could be instituted against the malefactor. Hence, although a grievous wrong had been committed and although the girl and her family suffered great moral damages, there was no redress for them.

Such were the more restrictive phases of the law enforced during the Spanish times which abrogated some of the woman's rights. She was not left completely without rights, however. As a daughter, she was entitled to share equally with her brothers any property left by their parents. As a wife, if her husband died, she became the legal guardian of their children. Furthermore, she shared all her husband's honors; thus, if he was a capitan,³¹ she was addressed as capitana;³² if he was a doctor, she was called a doctora;³³ and

³¹ Captain.

³² Feminine for captain.

³³ Feminine for doctor.

if he was an abogado,³⁴ she was referred to as an abogada.³⁵

There was no liberal divorce law enforced during the period since the passage of one would be inconsistent with canon law which held marriages unbreakable.³⁶ A provision for some kind of divorce was found in Las Siete Partidas. It allowed only relative divorce. Under this law, a petition for legal separation could be filed for adultery on the part of either husband or wife, for the desire of one of the spouses to take holy orders with the permission of the other, or for the fact that one of the parties became a heretic or a Jew.³⁷ If granted, a decree of legal separation entitled the spouses to live separately, but the bonds of matrimony were not severed, in which case, the separated spouses were not free to contract marriages with other parties again. The family institution thus remained secure under Spanish law. But even if there were an absolute divorce in the Philippines, instead of merely a relative divorce, the family would still be intact for family solidarity was maintained in a large measure by the unusual patience and endurance of the Filipina mother whose sense of responsibility to her children is keen. She would willingly shoulder hardships and courageously suffer abuses heaped

³⁴ Attorney at law.

³⁵ Feminine for attorney at law.

³⁶ During the Spanish rule there was no separation of powers between the Church and the State.

³⁷ Arturo M. Tolentino, Commentaries and Jurisprudence on the Civil Code with Special Laws (Manila, 1947), p. 79.

upon her by an erring husband, if only she could preserve the family ties. Again, in this instance, our forefathers owed to the Christian religion the lasting security of their marriage bonds and the solidarity of their family.

Sexual morality was high and the Christian Church was due much credit for this. Since chastity was greatly valued, conception of an unmarried woman rarely occurred. It reflected upon the honor and dignity of the girl's family and quite often the wrong done to her was avenged by her or by the male members of her family. Birth control was not sanctioned and there were few illegitimate children.

Adultery on the woman's part was punishable with the aggrieved husband, in most cases, taking the law in his hands by wounding or killing the illicit lovers. If the Court was convinced that he acted in defense of his honor, he was acquitted.

THE FILIPINA IN THE ECONOMIC SCENE

The restriction imposed by law and custom on women affected most those in the upper strata of society who lived sheltered lives. Those who could not afford to live in ease and comfort were compelled by necessity to keep on with their old aggressive role of the ancient times. They continued to work for a living as equals and helpmates of their menfolk. Comprising the greater bulk of the female population, these working women contributed largely to the economic development of the country.

They worked on handicrafts of commercial value. Weaving was

an important industry they engaged in. They wove different kinds of cloth from fibers of abaca and pineapple and from cotton. Taking into account the crudeness of their native looms which were made of bamboo and wood, it would doubtless surprise one to see the delicate products of their handwork, particularly the piña cloth which experts judged to be the finest in the world. Their embroidered articles revealed unusual skill and artistry. Many of them were used in the churches as altar pieces, surplices, capes and gowns of religious images. From bamboo, buri,³⁸ and pandan,³⁹ they wove hats and made cigar cases, mats, and baskets. They were also very skillful in crocheting seat covers, table cloths, doilies, and petticoats. The domestic system of manufacture existed in those days, hence, in the performance of their industrial activities they did not usually leave the house. They could work even while their children were fast asleep in the evenings.

The Filipina's business acumen was best employed in retail marketing. In Manila and in big provincial towns, many small stores were run by women under their houses; they made good business out of selling many kinds of woven and embroidered cloths. In the public markets, they offered stiff competition to Chinese vendors in the control of the retail business in the islands. Some women engaged in large scale business. Among them, Margarita Ayala stood out

³⁸ Palm leaf.

³⁹ A weed.

prominently, having invested heavily in the mines in Cebu province.

Women had also a hand in the development of agriculture in the country, either as farm administrators or as laborers. A few among the landed classes sometimes managed their own estates by way of helping their husbands, while wives, daughters, and other relatives of farmers worked on the fields, cleaned the land, planted, cultivated, harvested, and generally helped in the various little tasks of a farm hand.

Although they worked hard, the Filipino women were never allowed to hold heavy jobs such as road building, plowing the fields, and cutting and hauling timber. Such was the love and respect men had for their women that they had no heart to make them perform strenuous manual work. It was considered unmanly to do so.

THE FILIPINA AND THE REVOLUTION

In the revolutionary movement to overthrow the Spanish yoke, the Filipino woman proved no less patriotic than her husband, father, and brothers. Shedding off her cloak of timidity, she worked hand in hand with the men, carrying food, money, and ammunitions to them who were staunchly fighting for their country's freedom. It would seem fantastic that the bashful, retiring Filipina who fainted at the slightest sign of bloodshed had the nerve to hold a gun and defy bullets just so she could dress the wounded, feed the hungry, care for the sick, or serve, in some other practical way, the cause of her country.

An outstanding personage in the fight against Spanish domination was Gabriola Silan, wife of the leader of the Ilocano Revolt in the late eighteenth century. Widely known as the "Joan of Arc" of the Philippines, Gabriola accompanied her husband in the battlefields and when he died on May 28, 1763, she stepped into her husband's shoes to lead the rebel forces. The Spanish authorities who were jubilant over the belief that the death of Diego Silan meant a cessation of hostilities did not reckon with the strength and influence of his audacious wife. But this brave woman, fired by the same patriotic spirit that ennobled her husband, solemnly and fearlessly vowed to vindicate the ideals for which he fought and lost his life. With a lion heart and an iron will, she resolved to deliver the people from Spanish tyranny regardless of the grim fate that awaited her if she failed.

She led the Ilocanos to battle and was once victorious over a combined force of Spanish and Filipino soldiers. In the battle for Vigan, the capital of Ilocos Sur, the rebels were repulsed and she fled to Abra, a neighboring province. A Spanish contingent led by Manuel Ignacio de Arza, governor of northern Luzon, engaged her men in a hotly contested battle on the plains of Abra. With the aid of natives, the Spaniards captured her and her surviving followers. She calmly met her death at a public execution in Vigan in October, 1763. Though her life ended tragically, it roused the dormant spirit of nationalism among her countrymen which later found expression in the revolutionary war against Spain in 1898.

Another woman revolutionary leader was Gregoria de Jesus, wife of Andres Bonifacio, founder of the Katipunan.⁴⁰ She was the first Filipina to join this secret society under the name Lakambini. She was not assigned to field combat duties but was given custody of the secrets of the association - its documents, its official seal, its printing press, and its arms and ammunitions. This was a most dangerous task indeed which spelled sure death for her if it were brought to light. But Gregoria de Jesus was not daunted; nothing and nobody could weaken her determination to fight for her country.

At one time, the existence of the Katipunan was discovered and Spanish guardias civiles⁴¹ raided Bonifacio's residence but they failed to secure the evidences that would have given the members away, for Mrs. Bonifacio had quickly removed them shortly before the raid. Though successful on this score, she endangered her personal safety. Under an assumed name, Manuela Gonzaga, she joined the Katipuneros⁴² and cast her lot with them wherever they went. She was always in the thick of the fight. She sallied with her kapatids⁴³ in attacks made against the Spaniards and was among them at the

⁴⁰ A Philippine secret society that spearheaded the revolution against Spain.

⁴¹ Police officers.

⁴² Members of the Katipunan.

⁴³ Vernacular for brothers. The members of the Katipunan addressed each other as kapatid.

First Cry of Balintawak⁴⁴ on August 20, 1896. Gregoria bravely stood by her patriotic husband and ministered to the needs of the sick and wounded. In this role she found complete satisfaction and happiness.

Melchora Aquino, or Tandang Sora, as she was fondly called by the revolutionists, was another prominent figure during the war. She often endangered her life in her efforts to give aid to her countrymen. Keeping a little store as a front, she fed soldiers and cared for the sick and wounded. In spite of her old age and very limited means, she managed to advance the cause of her country.

WOMEN IN THE FIELD OF LETTERS

Although the Spanish authorities did not allow women to enter universities and newspaperwomen were practically unknown, the rigid rules of custom at the time failed to keep women from making names for themselves as master of the pen. The setting sun of the Spanish era saw the rise of a good number of them, foremost among whom were Leona Florentino, Rosa Sevilla de Alvero, Luisa Jalandoni, Magdalena Jalandoni, Florentina Arellano, and Luisa Gonzaga de Leon.

The first Filipino poetess, Leona Florentino, was an author of many outstanding Ilocano and Spanish poems which found their way to the public libraries of Madrid, Paris, and London. She is included in the International Encyclopedia of Women's Works edited in

⁴⁴ The event that marked the official beginning of the revolutionary war against Spain.

1899 by Madame Andzia Wolska.

Luisa Gonzaga de Leon was well known for her translation of Spanish devotional books into Pampango; Marta Jalandoni was a Visayan poetess and playwright; and Magdalena Jalandoni achieved fame for her novel entitled "Ang Tunic sang Isa ca Bulac" (The Thorns of a Flower).

WOMEN AND AMUSEMENTS

During the Spanish times, there were no bars and cabarets and women of gay lives were unknown. The Filipinos, however, had other forms of amusements. They attended public shows which consisted mainly of stage performances known as zarsuela and Moro-moro. These were regular features of annual town festivals and never failed to draw large crowds of men and women and children.

A zarsuela was a musical drama acted by men and women in the vernacular; the Moro-moro was a play in verse form also written in the dialect. It had a plot that invariably dealt with a controversy between Christians and Mohammedans. It ended always in the triumph of the former. The actors and actresses in this play were very conspicuous in their loud costumes and attracted considerable attention by their very unnatural manner of acting on the stage. The zarsuela and the Moro-moro continued to interest the people through the years of American rule. Today, except in very remote places, they are fast fading away as popular entertainments.

In church festivals, women figured very prominently. They managed feasts of patron saints, and religious processions to mark

the end of a nine-day prayer called the novena. In these religious occasions, especially in the processions, women marched solemnly along the streets of the town to music furnished by a band. It was fashionable for them to wear their best clothes and precious jewelry at these gatherings which were also an opportune time to display their piety.

Another socio-religious practice of the period in which women were allowed to participate and amuse themselves was the pabasa. It was held by private individuals in their homes to pay homage to Jesus Christ during Lent. Men and women chanted the passion of the Saviour during the affair. Refreshments were served to the singers as well as to the listeners.

The Spaniards also introduced to the Filipinos many European dances in which both sexes took part. Such well-known native dances as the fandango, curracha, carifosa, lanceros, and rigodon de honor have Spanish origins.

The month of May was dedicated to the Virgin Mary by the Roman Catholic Church. The celebration during the month was called "Flores de Mayo." Women and children placed flowers before the image of the Virgin every afternoon. Each day there was one assigned to take charge of the procession and provide the entertainments that followed soon after the Angelus. She was called the "hermana mayor." In the procession, children, young men and young women carried torches and chanted the rosary in unison at the top of their voices.

The procession started and ended at the house of the hostess of the day. After a short prayer, all those present, except the young women, went under a pergola where the hostess had previously hung fruits, toys, handkerchiefs, and cakes and they jumped to catch any of these things, in the midst of laughter and shouts and cheers from the crowd. When the game was ended, they were served chicken and rice soup or native cakes by the hostess.

A very entertaining sport which was a favorite among young women and young men was a sort of ring game called juego de anillo. From a bamboo arch put up on the public plaza and decorated with multicolored ribbons, flowers, and palm leaves, rings were suspended. Each ring was donated by a lady and a ribbon attached to it bore her name. There were as many ribbons of various colors as there were rings entered into the game. The donors of the rings and other prizes and the prominent men in town, together with their guests, were given places of honor on platforms built along the sides of the plaza. They were shaded from the sun by a roofing of banana leaves and nipa palm leaves.

The young men who participated were expected to catch any of the suspended rings and ribbons. Starting from a point on the main street, they rode fast on horses or bicycles through the bamboo arch and tried to hook a ring with a long thin piece of stick in their hands. Each participant was cheered by clapping of hands from the crowd as he approached the arch to catch a ring. He who succeeded was applauded the more loudly for his skill as he bowed gallantly

before the young lady whose ring he caught and received the prize from her. The presentation of prizes to all successful contestants ended the game.

The juego de prenda (game of pledge) was another favorite game among the adolescents. It was played in social gatherings occasioned by the death of a person. A king or leader and his assistant were selected by the participants who were seated around a table. The chosen king gave each girl participant the name of a flower and to each boy he gave the name of a fruit. After a brief introductory story about a bird he owned, he announced that this pet had escaped and alighted on kamia or rosal (name of a Philippine flower) which he had assigned to a girl. The girl whose flower name was mentioned had to reply promptly, "It is not here, sir." The king would ask her, "Where is it?" She could answer, "It has flown to chico or mango (name of Philippine fruit)." Then the conversation shifted to the newly named participant, following the above pattern of question and answer.

As the question was directed by turns from one fruit or flower to another or back to the king, the conversation progressed at a fast pace. The point of view was to catch a participant committing an error. Considered errors were: Mentioning a flower or fruit not assigned to anyone in the group; hesitation in answering the question; failure to say "Sir" when conversing with the king; and saying "Sir" to one who was not the king.

When one committed any of the enumerated errors, the king

would shout, "Prenda!" which meant that the erring boy or girl must surrender to his assistant a handkerchief, a ring, a fan, a hat, or any other article he had as a pledge. When three or more pledges had been gathered the king meted out the punishments to the owners of the pledged articles by making them wear a crown of weeds, recite a love poem, dedicate a love song to one of the group, or declare love to a post of the house. Penalties are intended to provoke laughter and add merriment in the gathering.

Card games introduced by the Spaniards which provided amusements to the Filipinos were revesino and tre-siete. Panguingue was a card game played for money and was indulged in by Filipino men and women whose gambling spirit was strong.

For other amusements, picnics were held on river banks or near clear springs. Men and women bathed and ate together roasted chicken, fried fish, boiled eggs, bananas, and rice on banana leaves.

CHAPTER III

THE FILIPINA DURING THE AMERICAN PERIOD

"The Philippines are ours, not to exploit, but to develop, to civilize, to educate, to train in self-government," thus, in a nutshell, United States President William McKinley proclaimed on January 20, 1899 his country's liberal program of government in the Philippine Islands - an unprecedented project of foreign administration that was subsequently to spell PROGRESS for the Filipinos along all lines of human endeavor: economics, politics, education, science, arts and letters. Having been born and reared during the American regime, the investigator is positive that no other group of people in the Philippines has been benefitted by the advent of the new administration more than the women.

Under the Spaniards, the sphere of the Filipina was circumscribed by law and customs; whereas, under the tutelage of the Americans who brought new ideas and practices and opened her eyes to "her repression, her wasted talents in the kitchen, her excessive modesty" the Spanish customs were rapidly modified and a tremendous widening of her horizon inevitably ensued. She learned to speak her mind and be independent of character; she assimilated the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity and learned that life has much in store for her. The Filipina, as the new rulers found her at the turn of the century, was "imitative, appreciative, glad to be educated, and ambitious to learn." She enthusiastically responded to

promising new life laid before her by the Americans.

EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL HORIZON

If Christianity is Spain's chief contribution to the development of the Philippines, public education is that of the United States. While it is true that the Spanish government did not neglect the education of women, it can not be denied that it left much to be desired. It restricted women to a life that was stultified intellectually far below the mental level of those who were thirsty for education.

Under the new educational system introduced by the Americans, the schools were made co-educational, admitting the weaker sex as equals of men. Young people of the poor and the rich flocked to the public schools and those who worked in the daytime were accommodated in evening classes. The widespread and intense desire for education which was repressed during the Castilian rule made it imperative to open more public and private schools for the study of English and various academic and vocational courses. Now women could have elementary, high school, and university education alongside with men.

The curriculum in the elementary and high schools, besides the fundamental subjects, included home economics and health education to prepare the girls for their duties in the home and in society. Among the courses offered in colleges and universities, included the following: Agriculture, Chemistry, Commerce, Dentistry, Educa-

tion, Social Welfare, Engineering, Medicine, Fine Arts, Foreign Service, Home Economics, Industrial Technology, Law, Nursing, and Pharmacy.

The University of the Philippines is considered the capstone of public education in the country. Being a co-educational institution, countless women have been receiving the benefits of its advanced instruction in literature, law, philosophy, the sciences and arts, and professional and technical training which the charter of the university provides.

Many schools and colleges of this state university have been founded to meet the demand of the people. The oldest of all the colleges is the College of Medicine and Surgery which opened on December 8, 1910. It was formerly called the Philippine Medical School created by a legislative act on December 1, 1905. The other departments of the university are: College of Agriculture, School of Fine Arts, College of Veterinary Science, College of Liberal Arts, College of Engineering, College of Law, College of Pharmacy, School of Fishery, Conservatory of Music, College of Education, Junior College of Cebu, Junior College of Vigan, and the College of Business Administration.

Evidently as eager to have a thorough education as their menfolk, the women lost no time in seeking admission to the university. They enrolled in every new course started in it as shown in

Table I.¹

In keeping with the policy of co-education, many private institutions followed suit in granting academic degrees to women. Foremost among them were the Liceo de Manila, the National University, the Manila University, the Manila College of Pharmacy and Dentistry, and the Far Eastern University. The Liceo de Manila has earned the distinction of being the first institution to award the degree of bachelor of laws and licentiate in pharmacy to women.

Women education advanced another step when a bill establishing training schools for nurses was approved by the Philippine Commission during the administration of James F. Smith as Governor-General in 1906.

The opening of private boarding schools for girls gave further impetus to women. The first of these was the Instituto de Mujeres founded by graduates from the Assumption Convent and a Filipino clergyman, Father M. Roxas Y. Manio. In 1907 Librada Avelino established the Centro Escolar de Señoritas now the Centro Escolar University, and in 1919, three enterprising Tirona sisters founded the Philippine Women's College, now the Philippine Women's University. These schools aim "to preserve beneath a modern exterior the fundamental womanly virtues and charms which are typical of the Filipina and at the same time to prepare the students for a broader

¹ Maria Paz Mendoza-Guazon, The Development and Progress of the Filipino Women (Manila, 1927), p. 50.

TABLE I
 NUMBER OF FIRST FEMALE GRADUATES OF THE
 UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES

Year Opened	Course	First Women Graduated	Number of Graduates
1907	Medicine	1912	1
1910	Liberal Arts	1913	1
1910	Master of Arts	1917	2
1911	Pharmacy	1915	3
1911	Law	1915	1
1913	Tropical Medicine	1916	1
1913	Education	1917	2
1915	Dentistry	1920	1

and more active role which women now play in Philippine society."²

In addition to the regular courses offering academic degrees, these schools had, as they still do today, provisions for the development of leadership, initiative, sportsmanship, and responsibility. by encouraging physical training, competitive sports, and extra-curricular activities managed by the students. They have promoted spiritual growth and prepared them for active citizenship; and they have put up modern behavior clinics to help the students solve problems of personal adjustment.

Higher education for women was perhaps best summed up by Dr. Francisca Tirona Benitez when she defined in 1939 the basic principles of the Philippine Women's University of which she was one of the founders and has long been the president. She declared:

While an education for useful womanhood implies training in the home, yet the university has at the same time provided for training of women in other fields which their initiative and inherent abilities have led them to invade . . . The university rejects the excesses that go with "modernism" which consists mainly of the aping of ideals and customs that are ill-suited to our historical background and to our character as a people. It accepts the wholesome ideals that the increasing numbers of women everywhere now hold as an essential part of their social and political heritage. It is committed to the principle that the good things are neither wholly in the past, nor in the present, and that it is the duty of the university to bring to women the best that is to be found in the old and in the new.³

Another remarkable step in the educational progress of the

² Joseph Ralston Hayden, The Philippines (New York, 1947), p. 588.

³ Ibid., p. 588.

Filipina was the admission of women to the University of Santo Tomas, the highest Catholic institution of learning in the Philippines today. Established in 1611 by the Dominican friars, it opened its doors to the fair sex only in 1924 and graduated for the first time women pharmacists in 1927. The rest of its departments subsequently opened their doors to women and by 1931, 3,035 women were enrolled in the entire school.⁴

With the new educational opportunities within their reach, women began to pursue higher education and enroll in professional schools. Since teaching was the only public office women could hold during the previous period, it was not surprising therefore that it was the first and most popular profession women aspired to at the start of the new government. As early as 1904, some Filipinas received certificates of insular teachers from the Philippine Normal School, now the Philippine Normal College, which was established to meet the pressing demand for teachers.

Professions other than teaching that appealed most to women were pharmacy and nursing as these could be practised along with a wife's duties. The number of women lawyers and doctors was negligible although there were universities which included law and medicine in their curriculum. This was due to the still popular view that these were man's fields and women should not venture into them.

Inclination to Arts and Letters was not confined to the males

⁴ Alzona, The Filipino Woman, p. 63.

alone. With the opening of conservatories, courses in music attracted girls especially among the well-to-do classes. Painting and sculpture had likewise gained adherents among the young girls and it was no longer unusual to hear of girls enrolled in a dramatics course in preparation for a professional stage career. Writing was no less popular. Courses in creative writing and journalism were invaded by ambitious women along with the rest of the professions.

Verily, the new educational opportunities were behind women's entry into various professions. An interesting and meaningful point in this phase of the woman's movement was the conflict between the woman's demand for higher education and the age-old ideal that a woman's sole concern was to rear her children and keep house for her husband. Whether or not she should be allowed to engage in the professions became a much debated topic. Public opinion on the matter vigorously opposed such bold step, contending that it would undermine the solidarity of the family, femininity, and Filipino traditions.

Though many mothers were uneducated, they wanted their daughters to go to school. Some still believed that girls needed less education than boys, but a majority rejected the idea that a daughter should be trained to become a virtuous wife and mother and nothing more. They wanted their daughters to learn a trade to earn a living; others wanted them to escape the hardships of life by entering the professions.

Notwithstanding the hostility of the conservatives, some

courageous women invaded the professional schools here and the braver ones crossed the seas to study in America. Women pioneers in higher education were Maria Francisco de Villaceran and Natividad Almeda Lopez who were the first to study law, Maria Paz Mendoza Guazon, who was the first woman graduate in medicine and surgery in the University of the Philippines, and Honoria Acosta Sison and Olivia Salamanca who were the first to go abroad to study. All these women defied conventions and broke down the barriers to the different professions. Happily, all proved the ability of the Filipino woman to pursue higher education without losing her dignity and respectability. Three decades after the coming of the Americans, approximately 3,064 women obtained academic degrees.

Among the first women professionals, a number taught in the different universities and other institutions for women. A few branched out into bacteriology, chemistry, and fruit canning. One was appointed Assistant Fiscal, and another, secretary to a member of the Supreme Court. The Philippine Library and Museum and the Library of the Bureau of Science employed many women assistants.

Contrary to the fears of the tradition-bound group of men and women and in spite of the invasion of the professions by women, the Filipino home remained stable. To be a good wife and an exemplary mother was still a woman's ideal. Many professional women made successes of their careers while faithfully and efficiently discharging their household duties. Others were happy to give up their professions in favor of marriage. There were but a few cases,

if at all, where women held on to their careers and turned deaf ears to marriage and home building.

THE FILIPINA AND CLUBWORK⁵

Along with the growing influence of Christianity during the Spanish period, charity kept pace and many women of the privileged class unselfishly devoted their spare time performing deeds of kindness to the poor. They scheduled days during the week for the distribution of alms to beggars who were wont to stay on the front churchyard. Thus the Filipino women began their charitable work and when the Americans came, this field of activity readily found followers among them. With a propensity for organization, the Americans helped to unite their individual efforts and enhanced the growth of social welfare organizations. In clubwork, the Filipina, with no more of the social inhibitions imposed by the Spaniards, was free to venture beyond her domestic sphere and render service to her needy countrymen.

According to Maria Paz Mendoza Guazon, as early as January 6, 1907, some prominent physicians in Manila set up the "La Gota de Leche", the first charitable body which aimed to combat high infant mortality in the islands by distributing pure fresh milk for sick babies and advising mothers and expectant mothers on the care of

⁵ Guazon, The Development and Progress of the Filipino Women, pp. 54-56.

children. The organization still exists today.

Through its activities, the Woman's Club of Manila was very instrumental in promoting the welfare of women in the Philippines. It employed an industrial work teacher for the insane women confined in the San Lazaro Hospital, a teacher for women prisoners at Bilibid, and matrons to look after detailed women in the Luneta Police Station. On June 16, 1913, through the efforts of this club, a day nursery for the children of working mothers was opened in the city. Later it operated two other nurseries. In recognition of its accomplishments the then Governor-General Francis Burton Harrison recommended that it be given P50,000.00 by the government to enable it to enlarge its provincial work.

Aware that women could go a long way in securing the cooperation of the townpeople, the government encouraged the organization of more women's clubs throughout the country. The Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources also asked the Manila Woman's Club to help in a nationwide food production campaign. Club members in cities and towns likewise aided in the Liberty Loan Campaign and the Red Cross Drive. The unrepressed and immediate response of women in the provinces was so heartwarming, that by 1918 more clubs were in operation. These clubs centered their efforts to the reduction of infant mortality, to sanitation, to town improvement, and to the increase of food supply. A number of these clubs sponsored puericulture centers which gave free medical treatment and medicine to women and children.

The advance of local woman's clubs to a national recognition was climaxed in the organization of the National Federation of Woman's Clubs at a convention of all woman organizations throughout the Philippines. It was held in Manila in 1920. The convention marked the growing influence of women in various activities of their national existence. More important than this, it initiated the woman's movement for the grant of woman suffrage, for the establishment of juvenile courts in Manila, and for the complete abolition of cockfights.

Noteworthy was the speech of Mrs. Elizabeth W. Harrison, the First Lady of the Land, who presided at the convention. Stressing the ideals toward which each clubwoman should strive, she said in part:

We ask you then, representatives of the various clubs all over the provinces, to carry this message to the women whom you represent - that every club should stand for at least four definite ideals: Education, Patriotism, Practical Application of Theories, and Cultural and Spiritual Development.

The significance of this convention would indeed be very much underrated if we did not emphasize the ideal of patriotism. Woman's clubs and clubwomen should stand for true patriotism. It means building up of the nation's strength both in the development of natural resources and of the people. Another patriotic duty of the clubwomen is to instill the ideals of honor and truth in her children or in her pupils. You who are teachers and you who are wives can stand for self-reliance and law and responsibility.

Be honorable and self-reliant and meet the responsibilities which you have taken up. Let this convention be significant in this, that we carry the message of practical application of theories away from it. Educational ideals and patriotism are of no account whatever, unless they make for better daily living.

The association together in clubwork should mean much in the life of women. It is an opportunity for an exchange of ideas, of information about books and news of the day, of what women all over the world are doing.

I trust that this convention may also mean to you a closer tie of friendship between all nationalities living in the Philippine Islands and a closer bond of sympathy for all women of the world. A feeling that we are to stand for finer ideals, for greater kindness to man and beast, for purity of life, for a single standard of morality in men and women, and that standard to be the one which has always been held for women. To a stronger effort to alleviate suffering and greater care against it. To less gossip. To more continued effort in keeping our clubs alive and forceful, remembering always that the only way to grow is by exercise. The only way to be more helpful is by doing helpful things, the only way of becoming generous is by giving, the only way of being a clubwoman in the best sense is to forget self in doing for others.⁶

The "Asociacion de Damas Filipinas" founded in 1915 was another organization which aimed at the care of the expectant and nursing mothers of the poor class and of the care of temporarily destitute children. The society managed a Settlement House and sponsored the establishment of the "Liga de Damas Filipinas" on February 11, 1923. This subsidiary organization conducted lectures in factories, theaters, schools, and other public places on Filipinism, hygiene, sanitation, and civics.

Under the Catholic Women's Federation, night schools for women workers and houseboys were established in the city and women prisoners were given free instructions everyday. Members of the federation taught religion and morals to girls. Instruction on sex

⁶ Alejandra Santiago, "Pioneers of Women Movement in the Philippines," The Philippine Review, March, 1920, pp. 223-234.

hygiene, which was tabooed in the Spanish times, was made available to any group of young girls who desired it by the Women's Medical Association, while a branch of the Young Women's Christian Association helped girls develop good moral character.

In 1928, the Philippine Association of University Women was founded in Manila. Like many other women organizations, its aim is to stimulate women of the intellectual class to participate more actively in the discussion and solution of problems affecting the welfare of the nation.

The above organizations of national standing showed the extent of women's participation in clubwork which seemed to have no limit. Through them, the women have kept on justifying their claims for equality with men.

ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE FILIPINA

It must be recalled that under the Spanish regime, it was the women who belonged to the lower classes who had more freedom than those in the upper social classes for they could engage in weaving, hat making, producing cigars and cigarettes, slipper and wooden shoe handicrafts, retail trade, and running variety stores without loss of respectability. When the Americans came, the economic sphere expanded considerably and drew more women, including the rich. In commerce, women were more notably numerous than men especially in the retail trade. In many instances women successfully managed substantial investments in farms and sugar plantations, while others

worked for pay checks as executives of business firms dealing in jewelry, embroidery, rice and other foodstuffs, native hats and shoes, imported merchandise, and Philippine textiles. Still others engaged in the transportation business and made a success of it.

With the growth of a large scale industries women labor became a potential force in the factories in the cities and in large population centers such as those manufacturing embroidered materials, cigars and cigarettes, soap, laces and buttons and buckles for belts. When the flow of men laborers to Hawaii continued unabated in the 1920's and early 1930's many agricultural fields would have been hopelessly abandoned but for the enterprising women who immediately responded to the need for hands to work on them.

One of the most progressive industries in the Philippines today, the movie industry, had its beginnings during the period. At first with misgivings about the reaction of the people, Filipino girls endowed with histrionic talents tried their luck in it, and found the experience not only wholesome but also remunerative. More broadminded than they were before, the people accepted the fact that Filipinas can act and that screen actresses are respectable, too. Before long many young girls found themselves seriously engaged in acting before the cameras and received liberal sums for their efforts.

The educational equipment women acquired also enabled them to venture without hesitation into gainful professions which men once dominated. They competed with the men in the professions of

medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, accounting, foreign service and law. It was no longer uncommon to see both husband and wife going out in the mornings, perhaps to teach or to assume responsible office jobs. The economic stability of the family was thus assured by the help of women. Besides making money of her own, the woman continued to exercise the right over her husband's pay envelope and to hold the family's purse strings.

THE POLITICAL EMANCIPATION OF THE FILIPINA⁷

It has previously been mentioned that the ancient Filipina possessed political rights which entitled her to hold official positions and to rule over her husband's constituents upon his death, if he were chief of a barangay. It has also been told how the introduction of Spanish law by an alien ruler had deprived her of such rights and caused a major setback to her position in public life, though exercising great powers in her home. How she regained her rights and achieved political equality with men will now be traced.

The Filipina's political enfranchisement is another outstanding contribution of the United States to her progress. In recognition of the public equality of the sexes and the tremendous influence of the women in stimulating people's interest in many social and moral reforms, a law was enacted granting women the right to vote

⁷ Pura V. Kalaw, How the Filipina Got the Vote (Manila: Crown Printing, 1952).

and hold public office.

A history of the movement for women suffrage would be incomplete without the names of Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, a zealous champion of woman suffrage, Mrs. Pura V. Kalaw, who started preaching the gospel of the feminists long before 1905, and Francis Burton Harrison, the first Governor-General who recommended for the Filipino woman equal standing with the men before the law.

The fight for woman suffrage was long and arduous. It may be said that it was first advocated by Apolinario Mabini, the Sublime Paralytic, as early as 1898. Mabini's idea, however, did not receive support on account of the unsettled conditions at the time⁸ and of the coming of the Americans.

Four years later, in 1902, Mrs. Pura V. Kalaw took up the cause in earnest. Together with some of her contemporaries, she organized the "Asociacion Feminista Ilonga" in October, 1906. The aim of the society was to enfranchise women.

The first woman suffrage bill presented in 1907 in a session of the First Philippine Assembly was not at all discussed, nevertheless it marked the beginning of the lawmakers' interest in the feminist cause.

The movement received a much needed boost when in 1909 Mrs. Constancia Manahan Poblete published for the first time a woman's magazine to "revindicate the rights of women, not only so-

⁸ The revolutionary war against Spain was being waged.

cially, but politically as well".

Then in 1912 Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt came with Dr. Aletta Jacobs, another leading suffragist from Holland, to organize a committee to work for woman suffrage here. As a result of a meeting convened at the Manila Hotel, the Society for the Advancement of Women was organized. It was later named the Women's Club of Manila.

In his message to the Fourth Philippine Legislature on Oct. 16, 1918 Governor-General Francis Burton Harrison laid emphasis on the progress of feminism in the world and recommended that measures should be adopted to arouse the Filipina's interest in public affairs. There was no better proof than this recommendation of the administration's belief that the Filipino woman was in every way capable of taking part in shaping the political destiny of her country. It was an effective step in drawing her out of some kind of seclusion into which the Spanish standards of morality had forced her.

Subsequently, a public hearing on woman suffrage was announced. A group of women leaders headed by Mrs. Pura V. Kalaw, Mrs. Concepcion F. De Rodriguez, Mrs. Rosa Sevilla de Alvero, and Mrs. Natividad Almeda Lopez appeared at the hearing to plead for the woman's cause. But the opposition to woman suffrage was very formidable and again the legislature did not act on the matter.

Governor Harrison reiterated his desire to give women more participation in the government when the law-making body of the Philippines convened the following year. His wife, Mrs. Elizabeth

W. Harrison, gathered leading suffragettes to discuss ways and means of winning the support of the legislators. Presided over by Mrs. Harrison and with Mrs. Rafael Palma as toastmaster, the meeting was held at Malacañan⁹ on November 7, 1919. The then up and coming leader of the Filipinos, Senate President Manuel Luis Quezon, inspired the suffragettes with a stirring speech and renewed their hope for the passage of a law granting women the right to vote.

A bill presented that year by Senator Pedro Maria Sison was the first measure ever passed by the Upper House. Unfortunately, the Lower House which was predominantly anti-woman suffrage ignored it. The press was also vociferous against it. Again and again Governor Harrison recommended the measure to the Fifth Philippine Legislature at its special session on February 25, 1920 and at its regular session on October 16, 1920, saying emphatically, "Centuries ago the Philippines had been distinguished among Oriental countries for its Christian religion, one of whose merits is its high regard for women; and as the women of the Philippines enjoy all opportunities for education, they have a right to be considered the equals of men in political life."¹⁰

When this staunch supporter of women's political enfranchisement resigned in 1921, his successors continued the struggle from

⁹ The official residence of the chief executive of the Philippines.

¹⁰ Kalaw, How the Filipina Got the Vote, p. 19.

where he left off. In the meanwhile, the suffragettes were pooling their efforts to strengthen their camp. They organized the National Federation of Women's Clubs in 1920,¹¹ in February, 1922, the "Liga Nacional de Damas Filipinas" and in 1928, the Women Citizens League. All these bodies voiced the Filipinas' desire for suffrage.

Again public hearings were held in 1931 and after these, the committee on the Revision of Laws of the House of Representatives endorsed a woman suffrage bill to the House.

It was very apparent from the start that this latest attempt was futile. One of the chief obstacles to the extension of suffrage to the women was their own apathy toward it. It was noted that a great number of women were either not quite ready to exercise it or were still laboring under some kind of misconception developed by Spanish colonialism. Another stumbling block to the suffrage movement was the conservative males' deeply rooted standard of a woman's sphere. These anti-suffragettes invoked the sanctity of the home and the necessity of perpetuating customs which had been observed by the people for many years, nay for centuries. They saw in the suffragette a dangerous rival to overthrow if they were to preserve themselves.

It is not difficult to understand why these men wanted to keep the women in ignorance not only in politics but in other matters as well. Their ideal woman was resigned to her narrow

¹¹ Supra, p. 69.

sphere; she wore herself out working without a murmur; she never argued and discussed; and she looked up to them for support. All these flattered their ego.

But woman suffrage was not entirely without strong advocates, besides its pioneers. Proponents of the movement waged an unrelenting struggle to break down ideological barriers. By far one of the strongest arguments was to enable the women to aid in the solution of social problems and in the enactment of social measures. It would also be of educational value to them; their activity in the political field would be wholesome and advantageous as it would give them more knowledge of the world of life. They would not be mere fence sitters where society and government are concerned and would therefore not remain apathetic to their drawbacks and progress.

Dr. Rafael Palma who was one of the few legislators who believed in woman suffrage ably presented the suffragettes' side when he said:

Female suffrage is a reform demanded by the social conditions of our times, by the high culture of woman and by the high aspirations of all classes of society to organize and work for the interests they have in common. We cannot detain the celestial bodies in their course; neither can we check any of those moral movements that gravitate with irresistible force towards their center of gravitation - Justice.

There is no reason why suffrage should be a privilege of sex, considering that the duties of citizenship rest as heavily upon woman as upon man. To attempt to curtail the activity of woman in public life is tantamount to declaring that a woman must not love her country and must not dedicate any of her time to her duties of citizenship, that she must not feel the affection and devotion which the idea of native land and community awakens in every well born creature.

How are we to inculcate in our children that sacred pledge of the future of the nation, the cult and worship of the native land and liberty if we do not give their mothers that practical education involved in the exercise of suffrage - if we teach that government and politics are strange gods at whose shrines they are forbidden to worship; if they feel upon themselves the stigma of inferiority, of being incapacitated from speaking to their children about the public affairs and the interests of the nation and the State?

If women were at least exempt from complying with the laws! But no, the law binds man and woman alike with the sword of justice, and the burden of taxation rests upon both the masculine and the feminine wealth. Consequently, before the law their duties are the same, but their rights are not.

According to the old idea, woman's sphere of action should not extend beyond the home, beyond her domestic occupations, and she should be nothing but the glory and delight of her husband and children. This is not right. Like man, woman is born and lives in society and she cannot and must not remain indifferent to social distress and suffering.¹²

At the outset, the opposition to woman suffrage had the edge; however, this did not dampen the enthusiasm of suffragettes. From year to year they carried on the fight. They were confident that their perseverance would eventually break down the superior males' old-fashioned beliefs and prejudices. At last they were rewarded: A Woman Suffrage Bill passed by a mellowed legislature was signed by Governor-General Frank Murphy on November 17, 1933. The women's jubilation over the passage of the law was, however, erstwhile, because the framers of the Constitution of the Philippine Commonwealth¹³ by-passed the measure in 1934.

¹² Rafael Palma, "The Women and the Right to Vote," The Philippine Social Science Review, XI (Aug., 1939), pp. 30-32.

¹³ Transition government of the Philippines during the American regime.

Mrs. Kalaw and her fellow-suffragettes, far from being cowed, patiently resumed the fight and finally won a limited victory after a tireless lobbying and campaigning among the constitutional delegates. Although the delegates did not incorporate women's political enfranchisement in the constitution, they provided for its approval if and when a total of not less than 300,000 qualified woman voters voted for it in a national plebiscite. The significant plebiscite held on April 30, 1937 showed that 447,725 registered women voters had approved of suffrage while a conservative group of 44,307 women rejected it. Thus the Filipino woman had earned the right to vote.

EFFECTS OF WOMAN SUFFRAGE

Quick to grasp the opportunity opened to them by the Woman Suffrage Law, suffragettes lost no time in running for public offices. On December 14, 1937, Miss Carmen Planas, then a law student of the University of the Philippines, threw her hat into the political ring and a flood of male and female votes catapulted her to a seat in Manila's Municipal Board and gave her the distinction of being the first Filipino woman to get elected to a public office. Other women quickly followed her example. Mrs. Elisa R. Ochoa became the first woman representative to win a seat in Congress and Mrs. Geronima T. Pecson, the first woman senator. Three other women subsequently elected to Congress are Mrs. Medina Lacson de Leon, Mrs. Remedios Fortich and Mrs. C. Consing all of whom won seats as representatives. These lady politicians have been credited

with excellent work in the law-making body of the Philippines and have proved the Filipino woman's capacity for public life. Senator Geronima T. Pecson, in particular, who was elected in 1947, has been greatly responsible for the enactment of laws for the advancement of teachers and schools and for the solution of grave social problems. To her belongs the honor of transforming the Philippine Normal School to the Philippine Normal College.

Woman suffrage led to the passage of many measures favorable to Filipino womanhood, the most important being the new provisions of the Civil Code which will be discussed in the next chapter. Another measure is the granting of maternity leaves with pay to married women in the government service. Prior to the enactment of the law on June 14, 1941, expectant mothers employed in the government had enjoyed no privileges whatsoever.

Commonwealth Act No. 701 approved on November 1, 1945 appropriated ₱500,000.00 for the protection of mothers in childbirth and the reduction of infant mortality; other measures provided for the establishment of maternity and charity clinics in the municipalities and the establishment of a Maternity and Children's Hospital in Manila. These are but a few of the benefits that women have so far acquired since the grant of suffrage to them.

THE FILIPINA AND WORLD WAR II

The Japanese occupation of the Philippines during World War II hardly left an impression upon the Filipina's way of life. The

reason for this is obvious: Democracy has far greater appeal to her than totalitarianism. She was exposed, it is quite true, to the same kind of suppression to which the Japanese had been subjected for centuries, but the occupation with its attendant trials and tribulations, fears, tragedies and sorrows merely tested her freedom of thought and action and only proved that the Filipina could well rely on herself.

Bent but not Broken, as were all the Filipinos, in those dark years, the Filipina secretly aided the defenders of the democratic world by participating in the guerrilla movement, bolstering the morale of the prisoners of war, and pulling the wool over the enemies' eyes.

Perhaps by way of courting the goodwill of the Filipino people, the Philippine Executive Commission¹⁴ issued Executive Order No. 141 liberalizing the divorce law in the country. It recognized the following causes for divorce:¹⁵

1. Adultery on the part of the wife and concubinage on the part of the husband.
2. Attempt by one spouse against the life of the other.
3. A second or subsequent marriage by either spouse before the former marriage has been dissolved.

¹⁴ Body composed of Filipino leaders set up and controlled by the Japanese Forces in the Philippines. Through this body, the Japanese Military Administration governed the occupied Philippine territory during the early stages of the war.

¹⁵ Official Journal of the Japanese Military Administration (Manila, 1943), XI, pp. 33-38.

4. Loathsome contagious disease.
5. Incurable insanity.
6. Impotence.
7. Intentional or unjustified desertion for one year.
8. Unexplained absence for one year.
9. Repeated bodily violence of such nature that spouses cannot continue living together without endangering the lives of both or of one of them.
10. Slander by deed or gross insult to such an extent as to make further living together impracticable.

While some couples took advantage of the law, a great majority imbued with the ideal of the sanctity and indissolubility of marriage were totally indifferent. Besides, the mere fact that the executive order was a brain-child of the enemy made it repugnant to their moral taste. The law received a natural death when the war ended and the American liberation forces headed by General Douglas MacArthur arrived. Thus the Japanese occupation wrought no change in the Filipina. It neither detracted nor added to her already high status and prestige.

On the other hand the arrival of the liberation forces did alter the Filipina somewhat. Much to the surprise of her elders and the chagrin of Filipino swains, she dared go out with American G.I.'s without a chaperon. It is believed that this change of front grew not only out of her sense of gratitude and hospitality that found expression in her friendliness to the liberators of her country but also out of a publication entitled "29 Grips Against Filipinas"

issued by the American Forces in the Philippines in 1945. The pamphlet complained, among other things, that Filipino social customs were straitlaced and the chaperon system prevented any kind of companionship between man and woman. To the Filipina who is full of pride, this was a challenge. Not wanting to be misunderstood as old-fashioned and uninformed, desirous to show the white foreigner that she was well advanced in civilization and culture and that he will find in her the equal of the women in his homeland, she threw caution and prudence to the four winds and repeatedly had dates with the American G.I. sans a chaperon.

The chaperon system, however, did not fall to pieces quite suddenly from then on. It still persisted but in a modified form. Parents allowed their daughters to step out to parties and dances if they went along with women friends invited to the same affairs. This practice has continued to the present especially in the towns and is found generally agreeable to the women and their men friends. In the high schools, girl students are usually advised to attend school affairs in company with their girl classmates and friends, never alone with boys; or one of the teachers is assigned to pick up the girls in a car or carretela¹⁶ and take them back home after the occasion. Otherwise, their parents will not permit them to attend such gatherings.

¹⁶ A horse-drawn carriage with two wheels.

LOVE, MARRIAGE, AND DIVORCE

Under the Americans the Philippines was no longer a country where the love life of her youth was a closely guarded affair. The parents' role in this regard was gradually fading away. Love was the dominant factor that brought about marriage, no longer the parents. The youths were beginning to feel that the success or failure of their love life rested solely in their hands. Enlightened parents shared their view while the conservative ones still clung to their tradition of meddling in the love affairs of their sons and daughters.

Exposed to the American ideas, the easily impressed youths were quick to imitate what they saw in the movies and to practice what they read in books and periodicals. They acquired a certain amount of freedom developed by the public school system and the impact of modern trends characterized by man-woman equality. Among the educated classes, many girls were in conflict with their parents over their right to choose not only their professions but also their future husbands. Insisting that they were matured enough to take care of themselves, they side-tracked chaperons as often as they could without inviting trouble in the family. They not only possessed ethical ideals and values but also carried these out even in the face of strong opposition from their parents. Most of them no longer realized that they were acting against the rules that dominated the moral lives and behavior of their forebears.

The Filipina discarded the old devices of courtship for she could now meet her men friends almost everywhere without fear of prying eyes and glib tongues - at home and in social clubs, schools, shops, offices, and theatres. She was free to entertain them at parties and talk with them on economic, scientific, social, educational, and political subjects. Indeed, a revolution in her relationship with the opposite sex has occurred.

Despite all these changes, the Filipina girl's behavior in love was not far removed from that of her grandmothers'. Although she was inclined to modern trends, she still allowed herself to be prevailed upon occasionally to act in accordance with the traditions of her people. Side by side with the new, in love, in marriage, as in other spheres, the old pattern persisted. She was most careful not to flaunt her love for all the world to see; such act still showed obvious bad taste. Except in a few modern cases happening in the city, marriages conformed to the traditional formalities observed in such occasions during the Spanish times. The young man's parents or relatives paid a formal call to the girl's parents to propose marriage of the young man and his sweetheart. If the proposal was accepted, the engagement was announced and the date of the wedding was set.

A wedding was most often celebrated in a church, although a civil ceremony was just as binding. As customs demanded, the parents of the bridegroom had to attend to all matters pertaining to the marriage - decorating the house and church, furnishing the bridal

home, preparing for the banquet, and presenting the ensemble of the bride before the nuptials. All expenses were charged against the groom's parents.

The bride was not allowed to try on the wedding attire as this act was believed to bring bad luck. The ensemble consisted of the traditional Filipina dress with a white tulle veil kept in place by orange blossoms, and a bridal bouquet.

On the wedding day, the groom, together with his sponsor, waited for the bride's party in the church. Both parties then walked up to the altar. There might be music or none at all and attendants might or might not be present.

After the ceremony, breakfast was served usually in the bride's residence, after which the bride was taken to her husband's parental home where lunch was served to the man's family and friends. In some regions the entertainment lasted till the evening.

Marriages were still contracted with the idea of unity and indestructibility. The church continued to bind all couples to their marital vows, while customs, traditions, and public opinion looked with disdain upon couples who violated their oaths. Moreover, family discipline still frowned even upon mere legal separation. Most significant of all, the laws themselves, which bore the influence of religious views, did not sanction a liberal divorce.

Prior to 1917, a limited or relative divorce enforced during the Spanish rule continued to exist. By the enactment of Act 2710

in 1917, absolute divorce could be had on two grounds: adultery on the part of the wife and concubinage on that of the husband. Other grounds such as cruelty, desertion, incompatibility, and insanity were not recognized as sufficient causes of divorce.

After a petition for a divorce had been filed in court, the spouses were entitled to live apart from each other and to manage their respective properties. Unless the court appointed an administrator, the husband continued to take charge of the conjugal property. While the divorce proceedings were pending, the court made provisions for the support of the minor children based on the conjugal property.

Only upon the final conviction of a defendant for adultery or concubinage was a divorce decree granted. The decree terminated the community property and dissolved the bonds of matrimony after one year. Within this period the spouses must give their legitimate children the property due them. A reconciliation might stop the proceedings if it was effected before the expiration of one year. If the divorce decree became final the spouses were free to marry again and the minor children remained with the innocent parent after the divorce was granted.

With regards to husband-wife relationship, the tradition-bound group still predominated. This group believed in women's freedom and equality between the sexes, but it appeared that they meant only equal opportunity in education and work. They held on to the old concept that men belong to the stronger sex and therefore

should rule the family. In their estimation, the best adjusted marriages are those where women do not dominate their husbands. A dominant wife was "un-Filipino" and when a woman was referred to as wearing the pants in the family, her husband, as well as she, was ridiculed by his colleagues.

I venture the opinion that this consensus must have perfectly matched the notions of the conservatives and prompted the moralists among our legislators to allow the old Spanish law to influence our laws under the American regime. As discussed previously, Spanish law recognized the undeniable truth that the husband should have an authority over the wife.¹⁷ By virtue of this law, some civil rights of the wife were abrogated. Although she was considered the queen of the home, exercising authority over her children and tremendous influence over her husband, the latter was the "padre de familia"¹⁸ and he would not, for all the world, countenance any infringement of his being the family boss.

Thus, despite the much vaunted freedom of the Filipino woman, she was, in truth, not yet fully emancipated. It remained for the woman of the Republic to seek revision of the discriminatory provisions of the old law and remove the legal shackles that still bound them.

¹⁷ Supra, p. 46.

¹⁸ Head of the family.

CHAPTER IV

THE FILIPINA UNDER THE REPUBLIC

True to the promise of the Government and people of the United States of America, the President of the United States proclaimed Philippine Independence on July 4, 1946. The grant of this independence through a peaceful constitutional process is a brilliant example of colonial administration. Through the United States government's policy of "benevolent assimilation" the Filipinos developed the capacity for self-government and adopted the American way of democratic living. Indications show that this democracy will stay with them not for their benefit alone but for many other peoples in the Orient as well.

As a new member of the brotherhood of free nations, the Philippine Republic has a tremendous duty in its hands - to work for the progress and happiness of the country and the people without the guiding hand of a foreign power. It is aware that, in the accomplishment of this task, it will need the assistance not only of men but also of women who are not ignorant and inexperienced in the rights and duties of good citizens in a democratic country and who are "accustomed to the discipline of organization and the calls for public service." As the previous regime has done, the Republic is giving the people every encouragement for advancement.

RECENT ADVANCES OF THE FILIPINO WOMAN

Improved legal status and property relations. One of the latest achievements of the Filipino woman in her struggle for more freedom is the approval in 1949 of the new Civil Code which came as an effect of her political enfranchisement. In so far as her rights and capacities are concerned, it is a marked improvement upon the old Spanish law which had been in force in the Philippines up to the first years of independence. Besides securing to the women the rights and privileges they have already acquired, the new Code remedies and repeals various provisions of the old Code which discriminated against them.

A provision of the new Civil Code requires any person who wilfully causes loss or injury to another in a manner that is contrary to morals, good customs, or public policy to compensate the latter for damages. Under this provision, an aggrieved girl, irrespective of her age, has the right to sue a man for moral damages which he had caused her.¹ Under the old Code, if she were eighteen years old or above at the time the immoral act was committed against her person, she had no way to make the man answer charges in court. By a mere matter of age, the old Code recognizes no crime in such act.

The husband is given the right to decide on the place of residence for his family, but he cannot force his wife to stay with

¹ Civil Code of the Philippines (Republic Act 386), Article 21.

him should he move to places that are dangerous, unhealthy, or indecent, or if he moves to a foreign land. However, if he is serving the Republic in an official capacity, his wife has no choice but live with him abroad.²

The husband is responsible for the family's support and must meet his expenses first from the conjugal property, next from his own capital, and lastly from his wife's paraphernal property.³

A woman can now safeguard her future against uncertainty by agreeing in a marriage settlement with her mate that there shall be a complete separation of property. Thus, unlike under the old Code, today she can administer her own property and dispose of it in any way she desires even without her husband's consent.⁴

All leases of a wife's property, regardless of the length of term, cannot be officially registered by the husband without her authority. This limits the husband's opportunity to meddle with her paraphernal property.⁵

If it is so stipulated in the marriage settlement or if the husband expresses in a public document, the wife may administer the conjugal property and her husband's estate. If, however, the husband acts as the administrator and fraudulently mismanages the conjugal

² Ibid., Article 110.

³ Ibid., Article 111.

⁴ Ibid., Article 140.

⁵ Ibid., Article 1647.

property, the wife has the right to prevail upon the courts for a separation of property, or for administration by herself, or for a receivership. The old Code did not give her this right.⁶

Without her husband's consent, a married woman may guarantee an obligation if, by so doing, she shall not bind the conjugal property. This provision gives more liberty to her in dealing with her own property and it facilitates her business transactions without prejudice to the conjugal partnership.⁷

Under the new Code, a married woman can be a testatrix in her own right and dispose of all her separate property as well as her share of the conjugal property in any manner she decides on.⁸

The wife who discovers that her husband has alienated their conjugal property without her previous knowledge may, within ten years from the date the property was disposed of, appeal to the courts to annul any contract entered into by her husband which is detrimental to her interest in said property. Should she fail to act accordingly within the ten-year period, she or her heirs may recover the property or demand its value after the dissolution of the marriage.⁹

A surviving spouse is entitled to one half of the estate as

⁶ Ibid., Article 167.

⁷ Ibid., Article 2049.

⁸ Ibid., Article 802.

⁹ Ibid., Article 173.

his or her share of the conjugal property left by the deceased; and in case the deceased's brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces survive with the widow or widower, the latter shall inherit one-half of his property and the other half will go to his brothers, sister, nephews and nieces.¹⁰ To illustrate this provision which amends an article in the old Code:

A married couple are able to accumulate \$50,000.00 during their life together. When the husband dies, the wife is entitled to \$37,500.00 (\$25,000.00 as her share of the conjugal property plus \$12,500.00 from her husband's share of the partnership) while the deceased's brothers, sisters, nephews, and nieces get only \$12,500.00. Adversely, under the old Code, when the husband dies, his wife can claim only \$25,000.00 of the conjugal property, while the other \$25,000.00 goes to his kins.

A provision of the new Code gives the wife freedom to exercise any profession or occupation or to engage in business except when her husband has sufficient income to maintain the social standing of their family and when he has serious and valid grounds for his objection. In the event the spouses cannot arrive at an agreement on this matter, they must consult their parents and grandparents as well as the family council, if there is any. This step is in accordance with the Filipino ideal of close family ties. If it fails to solve their problem, the court may decide for them in

¹⁰ Ibid., Article 1001.

the best interest of the family.¹¹

Under the old Code, parental authority was exercised by the father exclusively and in his default by the mother. Now under the new Code, both jointly exercise parental authority.¹²

The new Civil Code has provision only for legal separation,¹³ thus, it virtually nullifies Act 2710 which provides for an absolute divorce. Under the present Code, a petition for legal separation may be filed for adultery on the part of the wife, concubinage on the part of the husband, and an attempt by either spouse on the life of the other. The Code, however, enjoins the Court to grant a decree of legal separation only after it is convinced that reconciliation between the estranged spouses is impossible.

More working rights and privileges. Women workers received a new deal in the enactment of the Women and Child Labor Law that took effect on April 15, 1952. Provisions of this law prohibit the employment of women in any shop, factory, commercial or industrial establishment, or other place of labor to perform work which requires the employee to stand always while working, or which involves the lifting of heavy objects, or to work between ten o'clock at night and six o'clock in the morning of the following day. The employer

¹¹ Ibid., Article 117.

¹² Ibid., Article 311.

¹³ Ibid., Article 97.

is not allowed to discriminate against any woman with respect to terms and conditions on account of her sex. Even in the matter of wages, under the law, women have acquired the right to be paid the same salary given to a man for the same job.¹⁴

Maternity protection is also provided by the law for married women employees on the family way. They are granted vacation with pay for six weeks prior to the expected date and another eight weeks after the date of delivery or miscarriage at the rate of not less than 60% of their regular or average weekly wages. Nursing mothers, on the other hand, are allowed at least one-half hour twice a day during working hours to nurse their children.¹⁵

Employers are bound by the law to establish an adequate nursery managed by a registered nurse or a qualified midwife near the place of work when there are at least fifteen nursing mothers in their employ. Furthermore, they cannot discharge a woman employee for the purpose of preventing her from enjoying the benefits of the law; neither can they discharge her while on leave on account of pregnancy or confinement.¹⁶

Since the enactment of the above law, women labor and efficiency have contributed largely to the economic progress of the country. Table II on pages 100 - 101 shows the women's active role

¹⁴ Woman and Child Labor Law (Republic Act 679), Section 7.

¹⁵ Ibid., Section 8.

¹⁶ Ibid., Section 9.

in the projection of labor throughout the length and breadth of the archipelago.¹⁷

As indicated in said Table, out of the country's population of 21,440,200 as of July 1, 1954, 8,276,000 comprise the total number of workers. Of this number, 3,313,000 are females constituting 41³/₁₀₀ of the total labor force. This percentage assumes increasing significance when one realizes that in the years before the American occupation, only women in the lower classes had great freedom to work.

Greater interest in politics and government. Since the effectivity of the Woman Suffrage Law in 1937, it has been observed that a number of women merely suffered themselves to be persuaded and led to the polls to exercise their political right. Political leaders and campaigners were kept busy before and during the election days making the rounds of houses and urging the women to cast their votes. Apparently, much pressure was exerted before the women consented to go to the polling places. This was especially true among women in the rural areas.

Times have changed, however, and nowadays more and more women are going to the polls, joining political bandwagons, and becoming standard bearers of political parties for elective posts. Whether as mere voters or as candidates, women in politics work

¹⁷ Data furnished by the Bureau of Census and Statistics, Manila, Philippines.

TABLE II

PROJECTION OF LABOR FORCE¹⁸ TEN YEARS OLD AND OVER FOR THE PHILIPPINES
 BY INDUSTRY DIVISION AND BY SEX AND NUMBER OF PERSONS DEPENDENT¹⁹
 1954

Industry Division	Number of Workers			Percentage of Distribution			Number of Persons Dependent ²⁰
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
I. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting ...	3,400,000	2,499,000	5,899,000	68.57	75.33	71.26	15,278,000
A. Agriculture and Livestock	3,107,000	2,489,000	5,596,000	62.67	75.04	67.59	14,491,000
B. Forestry	14,000	1,000	15,000	.28	.02	.17	37,000
C. Fishing	277,000	9,000	286,000	5.59	.27	3.48	746,000
D. Hunting	2,000	-	2,000	.03	-	.02	4,000
II. Non-Agricultural Under- takings	1,558,000	819,000	2,377,000	31.43	24.67	28.74	6,162
A. Mining and Quarrying	21,000	-	21,000	.43	.01	.25	56,000
B. Manufacturing	296,000	252,000	548,000	5.97	7.60	6.62	1,419,000
C. Construction	161,000	-	161,000	3.24	-	1.95	418,000
D. Transportation and Communication and Public Utilities...	160,000	2,000	162,000	3.22	.07	1.97	422,000
E. Commerce	243,000	159,000	402,000	4.90	5.03	4.97	1,066,000

TABLE II (Continued)

PROJECTION OF LABOR FORCE¹⁸ TEN YEARS OLD AND OVER FOR THE PHILIPPINES
BY INDUSTRY DIVISION AND BY SEX AND NUMBER OF PERSONS DEPENDENT¹⁹
1954

Industry Division	Number of Workers			Percentage of Distribution			Number of Persons Dependent ²⁰
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
F. Services	581,000	381,000	962,000	11.72	11.47	11.62	2,491,000
1. Government	231,000	16,000	297,000	5.67	.49	3.61	774,000
2. Personal	176,000	281,000	457,000	3.55	8.47	5.51	1,181,000
3. Professional	111,000	82,000	193,000	2.23	2.45	2.32	497,000
4. Recreation	13,000	2,000	15,000	.27	.06	.18	39,000
5. Others	96,000	15,000	111,000	1.95	.44	1.35	290,000
Total (Philippines) ...	4,958,000	3,318,000	8,276,000	100	100	100	

Total population -
July 1, 1954: 21,440,200

Total labor
force: 8,276,000

Percentage of labor force to
total population: 38.6%

¹⁸ Labor force refers to the economically active population, that is, the total number of employed persons, including employers, persons working on their own account, salaried employees and wage earners, unpaid family workers, armed forces (and number of unemployed persons).

¹⁹ Data furnished by the Bureau of Census and Statistics, Manila.

²⁰ The number of dependents was calculated on the basis of the ratio 2.59 of total labor force to total population.

toward a common end: An honest and efficient government.

The data in Table III prove the increasing interest of the women in the exercise of their political right. The figures show that there are more women elected to the lower branches of the government than those elected to the higher offices such as those of senators, representatives, and members of provincial boards. No woman governor has yet been elected.

Even in the Philippine Civil Service which is open to women, although women holding government offices are almost as numerous as the men, the higher posts are more often than not given to the men. Women occupy only the subordinate ones. The Department of Education is, for example, one branch of the government in which women predominate numerically, but a majority of them are mere classroom teachers. The Secretary of Education who is head of the department, the Undersecretary of Education, the directors of the Bureau of Public Schools and the Bureau of Private Schools, and the Division Superintendents of Schools are all men.

This state of affairs cannot be attributed to women's disinterestedness in politics and government, for, as the said table indicates, the number of female voters has increased since the elections in 1947. Neither should it be interpreted as the lack of competent women with excellent qualifications who can hold high government posts as well as men. The reason lies in the still unuprooted ideal that man is superior to woman. The Filipino man's sense of superiority, which was developed to a marked degree by

TABLE III
TABULATED ELECTION RESULTS²¹
PHILIPPINES

	:November 11, 1947:	November 8, 1949:	November 13, 1951:	November 10, 1953
	: Local	: National	: Local	: National
	: and National	: Elections	: and National	: Elections
No. of Registered Voters	:4,320,671	:5,231,224	:4,754,307	:5,603,231
No. of Voters Who Voted	:3,265,022(75.56%)	:3,700,778(70.74%)	:4,391,109(92.36%)	:4,326,706(77.21%)
No. of Female Voters Who Registered.	:1,599,364	:1,940,218	:1,905,571	:2,277,793
No. of Female Voters Who Voted	:1,233,818(77.14%)	:1,324,435(68.26%)	:1,770,302(92.90%)	:1,765,347(77.51%)
No. of Male Registered Voters	:2,634,164	:3,195,596	:2,848,736	:3,325,438
No. of Male Voters Who Voted	:2,030,605(77.08%)	:2,255,482(70.58%)	:2,620,807(91.99%)	:2,561,359(77.02%)
No. of Senators	: 8	: 8	: 9	: 8
No. of Female Senators	: 1	: -	: -	: -
No. of Representatives	: -	: 100	: 3	: 102
No. of Female Representatives	: -	: 1	: -	: 1
No. of Governors	: 45	: -	: 46	: -
No. of Lt. Governors	: 1	: -	: 2	: -
No. of Members of Provincial Board..	: 100	: -	: 102	: -
No. of Female Members of Provincial	: -	: -	: -	: -
Board	: 2	: -	: -	: -
No. of Municipal Mayors	: 952	: -	: 1,078	: 1
No. of Female Municipal Mayors	: 6	: -	: 11	: -
No. of Municipal Vice-Mayors	: 952	: -	: 1,077	: -
No. of Female Vice-Mayors	: 23	: -	: 22	: -
No. of Municipal Councilors	: 6,010	: -	: 6,801	: -
No. of Female Municipal Councilors..	: 274	: -	: 333	: -
No. of City Mayors	: -	: -	: 3	: -
No. of City Vice-Mayors	: -	: -	: 3	: -
No. of City Councilors	: 61	: -	: 118	: -
No. of City Female Councilors	: 3	: -	: 3	: -

²¹ Data furnished by the Commission on Elections, Manila.

Spanish law and customs makes him feel humiliated to be a woman executive's mere subordinate. Another deterring factor is the Filipino woman's shyness in applying for office jobs. They still lack the aggressiveness of the male office job-seekers, in spite of their outstanding qualifications.

Women's political organizations are another indication of the growing interest of women in the machinery of their government. Outstanding are two recently founded: The League of Women Voters organized by Mrs. Pura V. Kalaw and the National Political Party of Women headed by Attorney Josefina R. Phodaca.

Progress in education. The great number of students seeking enrollment in schools immediately after the war was almost fantastic. Boys and girls of all school ages seemed to have come from every corner of the country. It looked as though the successful termination of the war had suddenly whipped up a renewed hope in them and a desire for more education. This interest is explained by the fact that the government opened up as many schools as it could possibly finance and parents willingly contributed their share of the financial burden. Thus sprang many more parent-teacher organizations throughout the country which were added to the few existing ones before 1941.

Prior to the war, elementary schools for intermediate grades were found only in towns; today both the primary and intermediate schools are also found in centralized barrios. Public secondary

schools were established only in the capital town of each province before the war, and boys and girls from nearby and remote towns journeyed to this place and set up temporary living quarters for the duration of the school term; today centers of big populations in each province have a public secondary school and one or two or three private schools having elementary, secondary and collegiate departments.

A significant aspect of Philippine education today is the renaissance of Philippine music and dances. To Dr. Jorge C. Bocobo, a distinguished patriot and cultural leader, the Filipinos owe the revival of the people's interest in their native music and dances. As president of the State University from 1934 to 1939 and later as Secretary of Public Instruction, he urged everybody and all schools to help revive and popularize Philippine folk songs and folk dances. Finally, a book entitled Philippine National Dances written by Mrs. Francisca R. Tolentino was published after a most painstaking research which took the author to remote towns and barrios all over the country. She was aided by old men and old women who remembered the dances and songs of long ago and reenacted them to her. Young boys and girls did not know these then.

With the advent of Philippine independence, this cultural renaissance assumed national proportions and today, the young folks are taught their native music and dances in all schools. Mass folk dancing and community singing of native songs are now important features of school festivals.

Philippine independence has also inspired leaders of the country to include in the school curriculum a study of the Filipino National Language. It is now one of the subjects required for completion of the elementary and secondary courses and of courses for teachers. In connection with the study of this subject, besides its grammar and composition, the students take up Philippine history and folk stories, biographies and anecdotes of national heroes, and Filipino traditions and customs.

Training of coeds in Manila schools for military duty is perhaps the most progressive innovation in women education today. Women college students are joining the Women's Auxiliary for Civilian Defense (WAC) which is designed as an emergency measure in the event there arises a need for more soldiers in the Armed Forces of the Republic. The girls are supposed to take over the work of the rear echelons of the army in place of soldiers who may be needed in the front.

Through the initiative of the Lyceum of Manila, a recently established co-educational law school, the first platoon of uniformed coeds has been organized. For three hours a week on Saturdays and Sundays, these girls go through a rigorous training which includes correspondence, army rules and regulations, nursing, evacuation of the sick and wounded, marksmanship and judo, and drill. Other schools which have also started setting up their own units are the University of the Philippines, the National University, and the Philippine Normal College.

Since higher education and the professions are open to women, it is no longer a novelty to see a good number of Filipina doctors of philosophy, physicians, dentists, chemists, lawyers, pharmacists, public accountants, engineers, architects, journalists, teachers, and nurses. Their number is expected to increase as the different colleges and universities are turning out more graduates every year. Table IV shows the great number of women enrolled in various courses offered by private professional schools in Manila and the provinces during the academic year 1954-55.²²

During the last four school years, the University of the Philippines has contributed a good number of women graduates to the professional field as shown in Table V on page 109.²³

Enhanced social welfare work. The truth of the contention of woman suffrage leaders that they are capable of helping solve many social ills continues to be proved by their incessant activity along this line. Women of the Republic have added to the long list of social welfare organizations formed during the American regime. Among the most recent and active ones are the following:

The Women's Auxiliary to the Philippine Medical Association is composed of wives of men in the medical profession. They are actively engaged in the efforts of their husbands to promote health and health education in the country.

²² Data furnished by the Bureau of Private Schools, Manila.

²³ Data furnished by the Registrar of the University of the Philippines.

TABLE IV
COLLEGIATE ENROLLMENT BY COURSES
MANILA AND PROVINCES
1954-1955

Courses	Female Students :		Total
	Manila	Provinces	
I. Four-Year Courses	:	:	:
Agriculture	:	12 :	12
Architecture	125 :	14 :	139
Chemistry	374 :	93 :	467
Commerce	5,433 :	3,685 :	9,118
Dentistry	749 :	153 :	902
Economics, Finance and Accounting	24 :	:	24
Education	10,238 :	14,485 :	24,723
Engineering	422 :	103 :	525
Fine Arts	51 :	:	51
Foreign Service	42 :	:	42
Home Economics	942 :	785 :	1,727
Industrial Technology	2 :	:	2
Philosophy and Letters	210 :	12 :	222
Law	546 :	225 :	771
Liberal Arts	2,880 :	3,011 :	5,891
Music	1,239 :	830 :	2,069
Nursing	1,476 :	510 :	1,986
Nutrition	59 :	:	59
Optometry	293 :	:	293
Pharmacy	3,142 :	1,365 :	4,507
Physics	:	2 :	2
Social Service	1 :	:	1
Theology	:	27 :	27
Zoology	:	7 :	7
II. Five-Year Course	:	:	:
Medicine	2,094 :	42 :	2,136
III. Graduate Courses	:	:	:
Arts and Sciences	155 :	21 :	176
Chemistry	4 :	:	4
Education	409 :	348 :	757
Home Economics	4 :	:	4
Law	9 :	:	9
Literature	7 :	2 :	9
Nursing	103 :	:	103
Pharmacy	5 :	:	5
Philosophy	13 :	:	13
Total	31,343 :	25,732 :	57,075

TABLE V

NUMBER OF GRADUATES
UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES

Courses	1952		1953		1954		1955	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Bachelor of Music	1	6	-	8	-	10	1	12
Bachelor of Fine Arts	5	3	7	-	14	2	1	4
Bachelor of Nursing	1	5	-	5	-	2	-	2
Bachelor of Science in Nursing	-	16	-	27	-	25	-	21
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration	14	14	20	16	17	18	24	21
Bachelor of Pedagogy	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Bachelor of Science in Education	1	218	7	200	8	189	3	138
Bachelor of Science in Home Economics	-	21	-	33	-	30	-	51
Bachelor of Physical Education	-	2	-	8	1	7	3	7
Bachelor of Science in Forestry	12	-	14	-	7	-	9	-
Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy	-	64	1	61	-	44	1	46
Bachelor of Science in Geodetic Engineering	8	-	5	-	8	-	12	-
Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering	16	1	21	-	29	1	23	1
Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering	16	-	15	-	19	-	15	-
Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering	21	-	37	-	28	-	36	-
Bachelor of Science in Mining Engineering	4	-	-	-	1	-	3	-
Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering	-	-	-	-	3	-	3	-
Bachelor of Industrial Management	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Bachelor of Arts	42	52	61	74	72	80	136	106
Bachelor of Science	15	19	14	11	15	30	19	13
Bachelor of Science in Chemistry	9	16	4	11	5	15	4	16
Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service	5	11	8	10	3	5	2	10
Bachelor of Science in Library Science	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	1
Bachelor of Science in Hygiene	-	-	3	3	1	6	2	-
Bachelor of Science in Industrial Chemistry	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

TABLE V (Continued)

NUMBER OF GRADUATES
UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES

Courses	1952		1953		1954		1955	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Bachelor of Philosophy	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bachelor of Science in Fishery	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bachelor of Science in Agriculture	49	-	71	10	83	5	147	7
Bachelor of Science in Sugar Technology	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bachelor of Science in Home Technology	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14
Certificate in Agricultural Education	4	-	6	-	5	-	4	-
Doctor of Dental Medicine	12	27	7	20	8	18	2	7
Doctor of Veterinary Medicine	4	-	6	-	11	-	10	-
Bachelor of Science in Industrial Pharmacy	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
Master of Public Administration	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	7
Master of Industrial Management	-	-	2	-	12	1	7	-
Master of Education	1	7	2	10	2	8	1	5
Master of Arts	4	7	7	11	9	13	26	17
Master of Science	2	3	3	2	5	3	8	4
Bachelor of Laws	65	9	96	10	80	15	96	15
Master of Laws	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
Doctor of Medicine	57	24	67	16	65	20	57	21
Certificate in Public Hygiene	17	2	21	5	24	5	30	6
Doctor of Philosophy	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-

The Free Legal Aid Clinic of the Women Lawyers' Association of the Philippines offers its services to all individuals, associations, and agencies in need of legal aid. It has particularly been helpful in the present drive against current sex crimes prevalent in the cities.

Not to be outdone in the performance of work for the needy, wives of top officials of the national government organized a unit of the Red Cross Volunteer Corps Special Services. No less than the First Lady of the land herself, Mrs. Ramon Magsaysay, heads the organization whose membership includes wives of cabinet members, of members of Congress, of Supreme Court judges, of the Army and Navy top officers, and of the bureau directors. Best known as the Ladies in Blue, they sew hospital linen, prepare surgical dressings for hospitals, charitable organizations, and the Red Cross and relief clothing for victims of disasters. They also darn and patch gowns, pajamas, and bed linen for military hospitals.

Ladies in Gray is another unit of the Philippine National Red Cross whose duty is to help soldiers make their illness in military hospitals bearable. They visit the patients in their wards to distribute Red Cross gifts and flowers, they read to the patients who are unable to do so, they serve refreshments to the patients and their visitors, they hold entertainment and programs and game tournaments for the patients, and do a hundred other little things that generally make sick soldiers cheerful and hopeful of recovery.

The Women's Welfare Movement has a membership of 80,000

throughout the Philippines. Upon the organization rests the task of uplifting the social and economic status of indigent individuals who lead a hand-to-mouth existence. It also promotes cottage industries to help housewives increase their earning capacity. Three major projects of the association at present are: The formation of cooperatives which will purchase prime commodities at wholesale prices and resell them to the housewives at cost; establishment of healthful supplies of drinking water in the rural areas; and education of the barrio folks in healthful ways of living, as the proper waste disposal, the sanitary preparation of food, cleanliness in homes and surroundings and proper care of the sick.

THE ROLE OF THE FILIPINO WOMAN IN THE REPUBLIC

Philippine political independence finds the Filipino woman prepared to assume a leading role in the development and progress of the Republic. The educational opportunities, rights and privileges granted her during the American regime are now serving her well in the performance of that role. With a new personality that is commanding more and more of man's love and respect, she has been fitted for the larger duties which the new status of her country has placed upon her shoulders.

Excellent chances have been within her reach to obtain as much education as her brothers; her rights and freedom at home and outside it have been secured to her; the removal of discriminatory provisions from the Civil Code has established a single standard of

morality for her and the male sex; she is duly given protection in the industries and professions; she has talent for literature, music, and the other arts; the franchise is finally hers to help men run the government more efficiently; her sense of responsibility, her innate friendliness and kindness of heart, her spirit of self-abnegation, and her docile nature have given her a wealth of experience in works of charity. More important than all these, she continues to hold her exalted position as "the very heart and soul of the social world" which she has been occupying since ancient times. Today one comes across the Filipina almost anywhere doing her honest share in the great and noble task of building a strong, independent nation.

Her activities are not confined within her country alone. Aware that the progress of a nation is best secured in a peaceful and friendly world, she is extending her horizons beyond the geographical boundaries of the Philippines to promote peace and goodwill among all races. As an official representative of the government, as a leader of women organizations, or as a private citizen traveling abroad, she brings the Filipinos closer to the hearts of other peoples. In each case she shows broad knowledge, precision, tact, discernment, sound psychology, and industry.

To form a fair picture of the Filipina under the Republic, it may be helpful, even at the risk of some repetition, to have a bird's eye-view of the work of some of those who are now very much involved in the affairs of the nation, either in groups or in their

capacities as private individuals and public servants. The list is by no means complete; in it are included only the most representative of their respective lines.

Maria Lanzar-Carpic is the highest in rank among the twelve Filipinos in the United Nations Secretariat. She is a professional officer in the Trusteeship Division of the Department of Trusteeship and Information from Non-Self Governing Territories. She holds the distinction of being the first Barbour Scholar from the Philippines in the University of Michigan where she obtained her doctorate in Philosophy. Prior to her assignment in the UN Secretariat, she headed the Political Science Department of the University of the Philippines.

Encarnacion Alzona is a scholar, an author, a historian, and an educator par excellence. She has represented the Philippines in four UNESCO conferences where fearlessly she stood firm on various important UNESCO problems. Of her capability in these conferences, Prime Minister Proceso Sebastian of Rome who had the privilege of working with her in three of these gatherings said: "Dr. Alzona has acquitted herself creditably in all these UNESCO conferences, she has done a splendid work for the Philippines in educational, cultural, and scientific matters and she deserves our commendation." Encarnacion Alzona is an authority on education and women in the Philippines.

Helen Z. Benitez is perhaps the most widely traveled female educator of the Philippines today. In 1953, she represented the

country at various international councils: The conference of the International Federation of University Women in London, the conference of the International Congress of University Instruction in Pedagogic Sciences in Ghent, Belgium, and the UNESCO conference on Public Education. She holds a membership in the permanent committee of the International Federation of Home Economics at Edinburgh, Scotland. In recognition of her excellent work as an ambassador of goodwill for the Philippines abroad and as an initiator of modern educational trends in the country, she was awarded a citation as Educator of the Year (1954) by the Weekly Woman's Magazine. She is at present the vice-president of the Philippine Women's University and dean of its College of Home Economics.

Trinidad Fernandez-Legarda, former president of the National Federation of Women's Clubs and now member of its board of directors, is a charming clubwoman, an effective writer and speaker, an art patron, and an indefatigable social worker as well as a devoted wife and mother. As president of the National Federation of Women's Clubs, she toured the United States soon after World War II and informed American audiences about what had happened to her country and people during the Japanese occupation from her rich store of war experiences, and was rewarded by her listeners' readiness to help in the rehabilitation of the Philippines. Presently, she is devoting her time to urging more young women to extend voluntary services in hospitals and in other social-welfare institutions in need of help.

Francisca Tirona-Benitez is one of the founders of the Philip-

pine Women's College and under her leadership, the school has advanced steadily to be the Philippine Women's University which is the first and only Philippine university exclusively for women. She holds responsible posts in various women's organizations in the country and is the only woman member of the Fulbright Board of the United States Educational Foundation in the Philippines. Coming from a family of educators, she is the president of the Philippine Women's University and an outstanding exponent of progressive education, leadership, useful womanhood, and ideal motherhood.

Pacita Madrigal-Warns, organizer of the Women's Magsaysay for President Movement which was later turned into the Women's Welfare Movement, is the lone lady in the cabinet of the President of the Philippines. In the short period that she has held the portfolio of Social Welfare Administratrix, she has gone to look into the rat crisis in Cotabato, the Kamlon operations in Jolo, the destruction made by an earthquake in Sorsogon, and the Taruc surrender in Arayat. In all of these missions, she has proved that a woman of the Philippine Republic can serve her people and government well, perhaps even better than men.

Princess Tarhata Kiram, mistress of a 4,000 hectare mechanized farm in Jolo island, is a member of a royal family in Moroland. In spite of a foreign education she obtained years ago in an American college, she has consistently remained a Mora²⁴ and used her training

²⁴ Woman follower of Islam living in the southern part of the Philippines.

and experience to be a hard worker on her farm. By her example, she teaches her farmhands the dignity of labor.

Corazon Juliano-Agrava holds the official distinction of being the first Filipina to be appointed judge of the Court of First Instance. A brilliant woman lawyer, a prominent social and civic worker, she is well known in professional circles and enjoys a reputation for her devotion to the public good. She is not only an able lawyer but also a writer, an educator, a dramatist, and a forceful public speaker. She was sent as a delegate to the Pacific Conference of World Students' Christian Federation held at Oakland, California, and was elected secretary of the Philippine Delegation to the Pan Pacific Relations Conference at Yosemite, California. She is best known for organizing the now famous Women Lawyers' Circle (WILOCI) and was its president for six consecutive years.

Josefina R. Phodaca, president of the Women Lawyers' Association of the Philippines and the National Political Party of Women, is a very energetic lady politician, tireless social worker, and fearless crusader against vice. Under the auspices of the Young Women's Christian Association where she gained experience in social work, she took active part in the drive against illiteracy and started kindergarten schools for Manila's underprivileged children. Elected councilor of the municipal board of Manila, she is the first woman to lead the Manila police in a raid against vice in the city. Today, she stands as "a symbol of active Filipino Womanhood whose goal is unselfish public service, whose aspiration in

life is the enlightenment of the masses, and whose ultimate aim in politics is to set up the standard for a clean, decent and peaceful way of expressing the voice of the people." In recognition of her achievements in politics, she was selected Politician of the Year in 1951.

Emma Benitez-Araneta represents the Filipino woman on the stage. Despite her varied social functions, being a member of Manila's elite, and her manifold duties as wife and mother, she still finds time to display her histrionic ability in stage plays as well as in radio sketches. She does not only act, but she also patronizes the arts. With a flair for acting, she thinks the theatre is "a valuable agent of art and is necessary for the cultural development of a people." She is considered one of the most talented actresses on the Filipino stage today.

Edith Tagle-Marcelo, vice-president of a chain of industrial firms bearing her husband's name, is one of the Philippines foremost, if not the foremost, female business executives at present. She and her husband head a four million peso steel plant manufacturing wire fencing materials, nails, and construction steel, a flourishing cleanser business, and the production of fertilizers. Plans are also afoot to put up a huge rubber tire factory to help solve the problem of tire shortage in the Philippines. Besides understanding and supervising the procedures of manufacturing their products, she also takes charge of the importation of raw materials and the problems of dollar exchange in behalf of their business firms.

Carmen Guerrero-Nakpil is the choice of the Weekly Women's Magazine as the Writer of the Year 1954. A columnist for a weekly magazine and a metropolitan daily, she writes without mincing words about the "foibles and the inanities of government bigwigs and social butterflies." Her critical articles about the concert stage have been outstanding for their common sense. Her forceful ideas, biting comments and deft observations have earned for her the honor of one of the Philippine's best in the field of letters under the Republic.

Purita Kalaw-Ledesma is doing a big job of promoting art in the Philippines. She is one of the organizers of the Art Association of the Philippines and has held positions in it as vice-president and president successively. She is also an active member of the Philippine Art Gallery. In both organizations, her aims are to render service to artists and art lovers, to help elevate the standard of art in the country and to bring about more arts consciousness among her countrymen.

Nena del Rosario, a young pianist, is doing more than her share in selling the Philippines abroad with her musical genius and precocity. The virtuosity and brilliance of her piano-playing has brought her the accolade of the musical world, both in her country and abroad, and made her the "best and most outstanding soloist the New Haven Symphony Orchestra has had in its 19-year career." She has been chosen Musician of the Year 1954.

Esperanza V. Siochi is an outstanding female architect. Her

designs have won enviable distinctions. As a licensed architect, she helped her father in his construction business and took over the management when he died.

Nenita Arce-Bustamante, an account executive, is typical of the working girl in the Philippines. After the war, with the business boom in full blast, she became account executive in the A. B. Isip Enterprises. She next became part owner as well as account executive of the Lars Promotions, another high pressure advertising firm, and in 1951 she became an account executive of the ACE Advertising Agency.

Leticia Jhocson-Paguia is the first woman to be elected president of the University Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP). She has sports in her blood and is fondly called "Mammy" by sports writers and her students in athletics in the National University where she holds the positions of secretary of the College of Commerce, physical education director, and professor of accounting and finance.

Mariquit J. Lopez is noted for her humanitarian deeds. She is one of the founders and staunch supporters of the Iloilo Boys' Town which is the first of its kind in the Philippines. Her impressive activities in social work include chairmanship of the special activities division of the United Nations Appeal for Children, membership in the boards of directors of the Philippine National Red Cross, the Community Chest, and the Philippine Tuberculosis Society.

Virginia Yaptinchay, chief of the Import and Export Control Division of the Central Bank, has time and again exhibited her profound knowledge of economics and finance. On her rests the responsibility of keeping the dollar reserves of the country stable.

Natividad Almada Lopez is the first woman judge of the Municipal Court of the City of Manila. For the last two decades she has held her position efficiently and fulfilled her promise to spread social justice to all. An early leader of the feminist movement, she is ever ready to work for the welfare of the Filipino woman. She is among the highest officers of many women's organizations and is the moving spirit behind the "La Gota de Leche," one of the earliest charitable institutions founded in the Philippines.

Geronima T. Pecson, a former school teacher, is the first woman elected senator in the Congress of the Philippines. As a legislator, she has been noted for her zealous efforts towards the restoration of the seventh grade in the elementary school curriculum and for the betterment of the working conditions of teachers. She is also outstanding for ably representing the Philippines in conferences of the UNESCO abroad.

In their various pivotal posts, these women and many others like them are vigorously pushing towards making the young Republic a freer, more peaceful, and a happier place to live in. They are effectively drawing their country into the brotherhood of nations; they are living proofs that Filipino women can do as well as men and that equality of the sexes is in the Philippines to stay. They

are typical of the ideal Filipino woman of today who is a far cry from the Filipina of the past generations. In the words of Dr. Rafael Palma:

The ideal woman of today, being the product of a new environment and a new era, must necessarily be different from the woman of yesterday. Mystic, romantic, dreamer, ignorant of the ways of the world and of life, the woman of yesterday was beloved for her modesty, prudence, and shyness; for her humility and unquestionable obedience to the man; for her devotion to the care of her husband and her children.

The ideal woman of today is no less adorable because she has acquired new elements of character to replace old ones. She is still religious without being mystical; practical without being less idealistic; frank and loyal in her affections without being less romantic. She is trained and educated in that she will not fall an easy prey to the wiles and dangers of life which, in her former candor and experience, she ignored. She is less shy and retiring but not less appreciative of the charms of modesty, honor, and chastity because she is too wise to shun any of these womanly virtues.

She does not shun nor avoid contact with the world and society because such contact may stain her modesty and purity. In fact, she strives to do her part as a unit of society by helping to improve social conditions and to minimize public misfortunes.

She leads her own life without being harassed, as in the past, by using her charms and her guiles solely with the object of winning a husband who can give her a name and social position. She does not consider marriage as the ultimate goal of her life, but as a fountain of good wherein she can grasp life in its fullness and feel the ennobling exactions and sacrifices of motherhood. She is less docile and obedient to the man, and considers him her equal; but she is not, on this account less faithful, loyal, lovable and humble so long as she finds in man the same reciprocal fidelity, love, and respect that he exacts from her.²⁵

²⁵ P. C. Amorante, "Portrait of a Filipino Mother," Weekly Woman's Magazine, June 20, 1952, p. 46.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

No mention in the earliest chronicles nor in the later ones with regards to the pre-Spanish period ever made reference to the Oriental's theory of woman's inferiority to man as applied to the Filipina. Instead, it had been pointed out that the early Filipinos had a culture of their own which they could be proud of; that woman exercised great freedom and participated actively in the social, economic, and political affairs of her community not for her personal interests alone but for the common good as well; and that native laws gave her ample protection. All these establish the fact that the Filipino woman was loved and highly respected in ancient times and that she was far from being oppressed and held in shameful bondage by the men.

Spanish culture so influenced the life of the Filipinos that toward the end of the Spanish regime it was difficult to draw a line between the native ways and those introduced by the Latin rulers of the Western world. The impact of Christianity and Spanish social customs and law upon the Filipina's training did more than any other factor to suppress her aggressive and freedom-loving nature. While they developed in the Filipina the Christian virtues of meekness, patience, and docility, they also turned her into an individual devoid of initiative and determination, unable to cope with the pitfalls of a heartless world and unqualified to share in

the political life of her people. But although her general position and influence in public life cannot be described as of an advanced order, one would readily get an impression from the account of her varied activities in the Spanish times that she did not live a life of degradation nor of seclusion in the strictest sense of the words. If as a public official she could not serve her people, she found an outlet for her energetic and kindly nature in religious and charitable works; if politically she was a nonentity, such unfortunate situation was more than offset by her high position in her family and in society.

The Filipino woman of the American era was different from that of the Spanish times. Through a policy often described as "benevolent assimilation", American ideas and practices left lasting impressions upon her life and transformed her into a new being. With more social, economic, and political freedom than she had ever exercised before, she attained the enviable position of being almost an equal of man. Graduating from a partly sheltered life dictated by Spanish customs and law, she started to manifest keen interest in national and international problems. At first glance, she had become Westernized. But, as a matter of fact, she still retained the Eastern influences of her Malayan-Chinese ancestors. Under these circumstances, she was torn between adhering to her grandmother's notions of propriety colored by the conservatism and fatalism of her forebears and following the new standards introduced by the Americans.

Most of the traits of the Filipina during the American regime showed strongly the strains of the East and West. To her native culture had been added, through commercial and political intercourse, the cultures of Indonesia, India, Siam, China, Spain, and the United States. As a result of these various interactions, different strains in mongrel contradictions were reflected in her thoughts and actions.

At this point, a moot question arises: Will the Filipina be completely Westernized?

I share the belief that the Filipino woman is committed to Western culture. Her development and progress will always keep up with the standards of the West. Strong indications have led me toward this assertion. Firstly, except among the non-Christian tribes, there is not now much impediment in the form of deeply rooted traditions and customs to the advance of Western civilization. Filipino beliefs, ideals, and institutions are fast disintegrating before the onslaught of twentieth century ideas and practices flowing without restraint from the West through the schools, movies, theatres, books, periodicals, and modern systems of transportation and communication.

Secondly, the Filipina's propensity for Western styles of dressing and modes of living, her eagerness to learn and be educated, her zeal to participate in public affairs -- all these show that she is not impervious to the influences of the Western world.

Thirdly, her firm resistance against the indoctrination of

the Japanese way of life, even if this attitude entailed extreme sacrifices, and her joyous acceptance of things American are sure signs that no amount of pressure can now shake off the hold of Western culture that has been intricately woven with the warp and woof of her existence.

Lastly, the Filipino woman's determination to assert herself in various walks of life, to demand and maintain equal rights with man, is growing formidable everyday, so much so that, for her, there is no turning back to the days of old when she was denied some amount of freedom.

The demands of her role under an independent Philippines has given the Filipina a renewed sense of values in so far as her native culture is concerned. She is reminded that she is an Oriental and should love and respect the customs and traditions, the folk stories, songs, and dances of her race; that she should feel proud of them, instead of being apologetic; that she must get rid of a colonial mentality of aping the ruler, a pattern of thought which was developed in her by long years of foreign domination. On the other hand, the Filipina under the Republic also realizes that she is living in a new era and in a complicated environment which are entirely different from those in which her ancestors lived; hence, it is inevitable that her transition must keep on, if she should at all survive.

There seems to be no point in trying to conserve one's native culture in its pure state. There is no way of preventing changes in the cultural makeup of a country as long as contact with other

peoples of the world continues. Besides, in a large measure, the changes that have taken place in Philippine manhood and womanhood have been generally for the better. Those who have not been indifferent to innovations are today better prepared to live in this complex world than those who have been clinging tenaciously to the old order of things. If one were to weigh the material, spiritual, and moral advances which the Filipina has achieved, one shall be compelled to the conclusion that most, if not all, of them are propitious, not only from the "point of view of individual efficiency and happiness, but also from the point of view of national solidarity and progress."

Today, a bright and promising future of the Philippine Republic is assured by the presence of hardworking and progressive women in diverse gainful occupations. They work on the fields, in schools, factories, shops, hospitals, offices, laboratories, and in the homes. By their diligence, they are helping to strengthen the social and economic structure of their country.

There is, however, a felt need for more women's participation in the political life of the nation. Despite their growing interest in politics, the voice of women in governmental functions is weak for men are still dominant in high elective and appointive posts. This lag is attributed to the age-old concept of man's superiority to woman. Having been politically enfranchised, it now devolves upon the Filipina to exercise effectively her right and remove men's doubts of her ability to hold responsible posts in the

higher departments of the government.

In the present stage of the Filipino woman's development, it is hoped that, while in the process of assimilating more new elements of character in her march forward, she will never lose her modesty, her generous nature, her quiet but staunch spirit of self-sacrifice, and her loyalty and devotion to her family. Then, perhaps in a few more generations, out of the different cultural strains that now characterize her, there will emerge a clear-cut personality which is a product of the harmonious blending of the best facets of her Eastern heritage and of what the West has given her.

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