

Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints

Volume 17 | Number 4

Article 1

12-31-1969

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Recommended Citation

McLennan, Marshall S. (1969) "Land and Tenancy in the Central Luzon Plain," *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints*: Vol. 17: No. 4, Article 1.

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philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

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Philippine Studies vol. 17, no. 4 (1969): 651–682

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Fri June 30 13:30:20 2008

Land and Tenancy in the Central Luzon Plain*

MARSHALL S. MCLENNAN

A traditional concern of the geographer is the relationship between man and his environment. One approach toward analyzing this relationship is to examine how men organize their activities to exploit the environmental resources. Most such studies have focused upon human economic organization, an approach that has proved extremely rewarding.

The ecological perspective now so favored by many social scientists has provided fresh avenues for research and has revealed some limitations to traditional approaches. Just as

* Research for this paper was made possible by an assistantship funded by the Center for Southeast Asian Studies of the Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley. My research is part of an interdisciplinary project under the direction of Dr. James N. Anderson, Department of Anthropology, which seeks to analyze the fundamental features of economic and social process in the provinces of Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija and Tarlac. Fieldwork was preceded by many hours of cross-fertilizing discussion within the project group. Because of the close working relationship among us, it is impossible for me to claim that the ideas expressed in this paper are exclusively my own. Dr. Anderson, Fr. Nicholas P. Cushner, S.J., and Evett D. Hester were kind enough to read the original manuscript and offer helpful suggestions. Nevertheless any errors of fact or opinion are the responsibility of myself alone. I also wish to thank the Philippine Womens Club of Los Angeles for a supplementary grant of funds and the Maritime Company of the Philippines for a generous travel grant.

anthropologists have realized that analyzing man and his cultural institutions within an ecosystem framework requires that greater attention be paid to the physical environment, more and more geographers are coming to realize that applying the ecological perspective on the study of man-environment relationships demands that a closer look be taken at social organization as a contributive factor to the ways man exploits his environment.

One form of economic activity that has received considerable attention from the geographer is agriculture, and the traditional concept that he has used in its study is the "region".¹ A number of attempts have been made to classify agricultural regions by their characteristics as agricultural systems. The emphasis in most macrogeographical research has been given to defining the characteristic by which agricultural regions may be identified, and analysis of the integrative functioning of these characteristics has been relegated to micro-studies of individual regions. A handful of anthropologists was the first to contribute significantly to the study of agriculture by utilizing socio-ecological concepts and substituting the concept of the "system" for the "region".² For geographers who have followed this conceptual shift, a useful new insight is that an environment embraces not only what is physical but also what is social. Put in a way pertinent to this paper, landlord

¹ For a comprehensive review of the geographical study of world agricultural regions see David Grigg, "The Agricultural Regions of the World: Review and Reflections", *Geographical Review*, 45 (April 1969), 95-132.

² See Eric R. Wolf, *Peasants* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1966), and the sources cited therein. An important source describing shifting cultivation and wet rice agriculture as ecosystems is Clifford Geertz, *Agricultural Involvement: The Processes of Ecological Change in Indonesia* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1963); see also Harold C. Conklin, *Hanunoo Agriculture: A Report on an Integral System of Shifting Cultivation in the Philippines*, FAO Forestry Development Paper No. 12 (Rome, 1957). An exception to my statement that anthropologists were quicker than geographers to utilize ecological concepts in the analysis of agricultural systems is Karl J. Pelzer, *Pioneer Settlement in the Asiatic Tropics* (New York, 1945), whose monograph is devoted to the study of agricultural land use in the Philippines and Indonesia.

and peasant are as much a part of each other's environment as the soil that yields the crops they both depend upon.

This paper represents an exploratory analysis of the origin and development of tenancy patterns in the rice-growing regions of the Central Luzon Plain. It is an outgrowth of a larger study, currently nearing completion, devoted to tracing the sequence of agricultural development in Nueva Ecija from its first occupancy by lowland Christian Filipinos up until the present, examining the processes that influenced the man-environment relationships during the course of this development.

The Philippine rice hacienda, as a system of resource and labor exploitation, first came into being on the friar estates located in the environs of Manila Bay late in the eighteenth century. Stimulated by expanding commercial trade in rice and sugar many of the monastic orders began to lease pasture and idle land to agricultural entrepreneurs for cultivation. Many of these lessees (*inquilinos*) turned the task of cultivation over to sharecroppers (*kasamas*), paid the fixed annual rent called *canon* to the land-owners, and reaped a middleman's profit.³

Whether or not large private holdings began to make use of the *inquilinato* system contemporaneously with the monastic orders is not known at the present stage of research. That private estates had come into existence by the late eighteenth century, however, is clear. The Jesuits were expelled from the Philippines in 1767 by Charles III of Spain and their estates reverted to the Crown. Initially the former Jesuit estates were leased out by the Crown but by 1803 several had passed into private hands.⁴ The Hacienda de Maysilo was sold to a mestizo, and

³ Joaquin Martinez de Zuñiga, *Estadismo de las Islas Filipinas*, I, (Madrid, 1893), pp. 47-48. For an English translation of the key passages, see H. de la Costa, S.J., *Readings in Philippine History* (Manila, 1965), pp. 127-128.

⁴ Copies of documents from the Philippine National Archives pertaining to the disposition of Jesuit lands in the possession of Fr. Nicholas Cushner, S.J., Ateneo de Manila.

a Navarrese, Don Pedro Galarraga, the Marques de Villamediana, purchased the Hacienda de Piedad.⁵ Moreover, as early as the mid-eighteenth century Juan Delgado reports the presence of cattle ranches in Bulacan.⁶

It is obvious from reading Martinez de Zuñiga that these early private estates were primarily devoted to livestock ranching. Because of labor scarcity only limited areas of high population density on the coasts and along rivers were devoted to rice cultivation. Nothing is said about the owner-cultivator tenancy relationship on these private holdings, and it is possible that they, like the religious estates, were beginning to use the *inquilinato* system.

Although the friar estates gave birth late in the eighteenth century to the methods of tenancy organization utilized by modern-day haciendas, other forms of landlordism have roots going back to pre-Hispanic times. The indigenous pattern of land tenure was typified by usufruct occupancy of land by individual families of the village community (*barangay*). At the head of the *barangay* was a chieftain (*datu*) whose wealth and prestige were determined by how many dependents he could call upon to cultivate *barangay* lands.

Broadly speaking, such was the pattern throughout the Malay culture realm. Villagers were expected to render certain public services to the community or the headman, these duties originally being a burden upon the land rather than the individual. Community projects might include cultivation of communal land, trail making or irrigation construction and repair. Common tasks performed for the chief included cultivating his land, providing him with fuel, repairing his house and caring for his animals. These services might fall upon all or only a portion of the village community.

⁵ Martinez de Zuñiga, I, pp. 331-332, 338.

⁶ Juan Delgado, *Historia Sacro-Profana, Politica y Natural de las Islas del Poniente Llamadas Filipinas* (Manila, 1892), p. 34. Although not published until 1892, this work was written between 1751 and 1754.

⁷ Victor Clark, "Labor Conditions in the Philippines", *Labor Bulletin* (U.S. Bureau of Labor), 10 (1905), pp. 772-773.

In pre-Hispanic Philippine society there were four social classes. The chieftains or *datu*s, the *maharlika*s or nobles, the *timaguas* or freemen, and a dependent class (*alipin*) that the Spaniards misleadingly called slaves.⁸ According to J. L. Phelan, the indigenous system of labor organization had more in common with debt peonage and sharecropping than with the European conception of chattel slavery.⁹ *Datu* and *maharlika* wealth and prestige were based upon the amount of rice their dependents could obtain in share-harvesting the village fields each year.¹⁰

Early in the Spanish period the missionaries worked toward the abolition of debt peonage and sharecropping, but the Dutch War (1609-1618) forced them to abandon this policy. The long-term effort to achieve economic Hispanization had to be sacrificed to the immediate necessity to mobilize the human and material resources of the Islands to fend off the Dutch.¹¹

Under the Spanish, the indigenous elite maintained their position of socio-economic supremacy. The Spanish referred to this elite as *casique*, a word of Haitian origin introduced by the Spanish throughout their empire, meaning chieftain or local magnate.¹² The Spanish assigned the *cacique* the tasks of gathering taxes, organizing conscript labor gangs and administering justice at the local level. Village headmen were assigned the title of *cabeza de barangay*. As tax collectors they found opportunities to collect tribute in excess of the legal tax demands. Larkin suggests that modern debt peonage began in the seventeenth century with the tribute arrange-

⁸ John A. Larkin, *The Evolution of Pampangan Society: A Case Study of Social and Economic Change in the Rural Philippines*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University (1960). The author reports that Pampangan society had only three classes, pp. 29-31.

⁹ John Leddy Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines* (Madison, 1967), p. 20. See pages 20-22 for an elaboration concerning types or categories of dependent populations.

¹⁰ Larkin, p. 54.

¹¹ Phelan, p. 13.

¹² James A. LeRoy, *Philippine Life in Town and Country* (paperback edition, Manila, 1968), p. 98.

ment. Villagers who were unable to meet their taxes had to borrow rice to pay. The ones most capable of loaning rice were the *cacique* and high interest rates insured that borrowers remained in debt for years.¹³

The Spaniards introduced one significant innovation to the institutions concerning land relationships — the notion of legal title to land. The traditional Filipino concept of land ownership was that the *barangay* had rights to a certain territory and that individual families had usufruct rights to specific parcels of land so long as they occupied and used the land. Once the institution of private ownership of lands previously held in usufruct was introduced by the Spanish government, the *cacique* soon began to encroach upon the communal lands of the *barangay* as well as to lay *de facto* claim to the lands of those who became indebted to them. These trends accelerated throughout the seventeenth century.¹⁴

With this development debt peonage conceived as an arrangement between *barangay* chief and dependents shifted to become an arrangement between landlord and tenants, a shift that emphasized the economic rather than the political role of the *cacique*. This change in the conceptual basis of the control of land and labor in no way diminished the traditional status of the *datu* class. Rather it consolidated their power over the community by basing their claim to the land on supravillage (Spanish) authority.

This conceptual shift in the claim of the *cacique* to power was by no means sudden, and probably for the most part the transformation went unobserved by the peasantry. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century the *cacique* turned to making and extending claims of personal ownership to village lands, although communal lands have survived to the present day.¹⁵ That the distinction between political and economic

¹³ Larkin, p. 56; Phelan p. 115.

¹⁴ Phelan, p. 117.

¹⁵ The Spanish census of 1887 reveals that not only towns but barrios often possessed communal pasture lands. Philippine National Archives, "Reforma Municipal y Provincial, Provincia de Pangasinan, 1887", *Centro de Estadística, Pangasinan*.

authority was never clearly distinct is underlined by Clark, who states that the association of political authority with economic privileges in Philippine society predates the colonial period.¹⁶ Today's idea that ownership of land carries with it a certain quasi-political authority over the occupants is merely the inverse of traditional Philippine socio-economic custom.

Traditionally the prestige and power of the *datus* and *maharlikas* were measured by the extent of their control of labor, not land. Even with the introduction of the notion of private ownership of land this goal remained the central aim of the *cacique* and only today with the introduction of mechanized farming is the control of land beginning to become a value independent from the control of labor. During the eighteenth century and possibly earlier, the *cacique* began to realize that the ownership of land could be used as a means to attract closely-controlled labor. The institutionalization of a landlord-tenant relationship was achieved by an arrangement called *kasamajan*, a Tagalog word meaning partnership. The owner provided a landless peasant with land, the latter carried out the cultivation of the land, and both shared the harvest. Usually this system included a loan from the landowner to the tenant (*kasama*) at such an usurious rate of interest as to preclude the latter's ever extracting himself from the arrangement.¹⁷

Phelan succinctly summarizes the types of land rights recognized by Spanish law. These divide into two basic categories of tenure, preconquest and postconquest. Preconquest usufruct rights to land became titles in *fee simple* and the owners could alienate such property. Also recognized were village communal lands. These lands tended over the years to be absorbed as the private property of the *datus* although com-

¹⁶ Clark, p. 775.

¹⁷ Phelan, pp. 115-116. See also Delgado, p. 358. In 1784 Jose Basco y Vargas, the governor-general of the Philippines, attempted to prohibit the *kasamajan* system. "Appendix: Agriculture in Filipinas", Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898* (Cleveland, 1903), vol. 51, pp. 31-32 (hereinafter cited as *B & R*).

munal lands, as previously noted survive even today. All lands not occupied either individually or communally at the time of conquest belonged to the royal domain. These royal lands were called *realengas*. Subsequently parts of the *realengas* were assigned to *indios* who settled in or adjacent to the multitude of new communities founded by the Crown's representatives.¹⁸ These lands were held not in *fee simple*, but in *fee tail*. Such lands could be transmitted to legitimate heirs, but could not be sold without the consent of the *fiscal* of the *Audiencia*. Title to lands held in *fee tail* ostensibly reverted to the crown after failure to cultivate the land for a specified period of time.¹⁹

The tenure situation in the Philippines is compared by Phelan with the pattern in Mexico. In the latter colony there emerged a form of direct exploitation of the native population characterized by Spanish-owned latifundia and Indian debt peonage. In contrast the Philippine situation at the end of the seventeenth century was one of indirect exploitation involving smaller holdings owned by a native upper class who were made responsible for delivering labor and commodities to the Spanish authorities.²⁰

The least explored period of Philippine socio-economic history is the eighteenth century, and it is sometime during this period that new trends important to the future development of land tenure and social structure emerged. It is during the eighteenth century that the Chinese mestizos began their rise to economic power. It is clear that by 1800 the Philippines was beginning to feel the impact of a commercial revolution based on the export of such crops as sugar, tobacco, and indigo. Moreover at an even earlier date the consumption needs of

¹⁸ *Indios* is the term by which the Spaniards referred to the indigenes. The word *Filipino* meant an Island-born Spaniard, as distinct from Iberian-born Spaniards, who were called *peninsulares*.

¹⁹ According to Montero y Vidal, "Events in Filipinas, 1801-1840", *B & R*, vol. 51, p. 118, the period of time was two years. Basco y Vargas, *op. cit.*, p. 298, however, states that the time interval was three years.

²⁰ Phelan, p. 119.

Manila were supporting a very lucrative internal trade. Despite the so-called monopoly of domestic trade allocated to the provincial governors, Chinese mestizos gained control of the trade routes that linked Manila with the Central Luzon Plain.²¹ Mestizos and some *indios* in the towns of Tambobong (now Malabon), Polo, Ovando, Meycawayan and Bocaue became rich by hoarding supplies until scarcity forced prices up in Manila.²² It was the stimulus of this commercial activity that encouraged the monastic orders to lease lands to the *inquilinos*. The Augustinian friar, Father Martinez de Zuñiga, makes clear that it was the same Chinese mestizo class that dominated the leasing of church lands and arranged for *indio kasamas* to sharecrop the land.²³

Many mestizos and some of the traditional *cacique* were also investing wealth derived from commerce and *inquilino* activities in the purchase of land. As previously mentioned, most native lands were held in *fee tail* and could not legally be sold, or they were held merely by right of occupation and the cultivator possessed no papers of any sort to establish his claim. Legal or not, it was such lands that the mestizos acquired through a money-lending device called *pacto de retroventa*.

In the *pacto de retroventa* arrangement the moneylender secured the protection of his loan by taking immediate control of the land. For the duration of the loan period the peasant usually remained in actual possession of the land, but in the role of sharecropper for his creditor. Seldom able to repay the loan

²¹ Edgar Wickberg, "The Chinese Mestizo in Philippine History", *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 5 (March 1964), p. 755. See Larkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-88 for an excellent analysis of the socio-economic rise of the Chinese mestizos in Pampanga. See also the comments in Thomas R. McHale and Mary C. McHale, *Early American-Philippine Trade: The Journal of Nathaniel Bowditch in Manila, 1796*, Yale University, Southeast Asian Studies Monograph Series No. 2, 1962. Numerous commentators continued to remark on this phenomenon throughout the nineteenth century.

²² Martinez de Zuñiga, I, pp. 296-297, 340, 349.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-48. See also Wickberg, "The Chinese Mestizo...", p. 74; and de la Costa, pp. 127-128.

at the appointed time, the peasant relinquished claim to the land for a debt that usually represented only a third to one half the true value of the land.²⁴ That there was ample opportunity for mestizos to acquire land in this manner is attested to by Father Martinez de Zuñiga.

“Not only does the native give no thought to increasing his property, but all he is interested in is by some means or other to get hold of the cash to spend on celebrations. A baptism, a funeral, an anniversary, a wedding, and even less important occasions are sufficient excuse for him to make merry with his neighbors. But there’s no money. What does he do? He cannot sell his land because the law forbids it. So he goes to a mestizo for the money. The mestizo gives it to him, but on condition that he mortgage his land by the contract known as *sanglang-bili* [*pacto de retroventa*] that is, a sale with the option to repurchase. . . , the option to repurchase lapsing, the contract becomes a straight sale and the mestizo acquires full ownership of the land. It is in this way that the mestizos are gradually getting into their hands all the land in the Philippines.”²⁵

This new development in the eighteenth century, the acquisition of land by the *pacto de retroventa* arrangement, is important for several reasons.

1. The acquisition of land paved the way for the social acceptance of the mestizos by the *cacique* and finally the supplanting of most of the traditional elite by the former group in those areas most characterized by commercial activities and cash cropping.²⁶

²⁴ Fedor Jagor, “Travels in the Philippines”, in *B & R*, vol. 52, p. 305.

²⁵ de la Costa’s translation pp. 126-127. For the original passage and further details see Martinez de Zuñiga, I, p. 365.

²⁶ By studying *gobnadorcillo* lists for various towns in Pampanga Larkin establishes that after 1820 only a few traditional elite families survived the commercial revolution of agriculture in Pampanga, whereas Chinese mestizo families became dominant; Larkin, pp. 117-119. My own examination of the 1896 census summaries for Nueva Ecija enabled me to identify Chinese mestizo family names and determine that mestizos

2. It vastly extended landlordism in the form of the *kasamajan* system. Again, tenancy and commercialization of the economy together intensified and spread out from the Manila Bay core area.²⁷

3. Because the acquiring of various small holdings depended on moneylending opportunities, it resulted in a pattern of land ownership best characterized by the term "scattered-holdings".²⁸

During the nineteenth century considerable intermarriage between Chinese mestizos and *cacique* occurred. Since the term *cacique* originally connoted chieftain it seems inappropriate to apply it to the new social amalgam. Another term frequently used to designate the Philippine elite seems more appropriate, the word *principalia*.²⁹ Despite intermarriage it nevertheless remains questionable as to whether the two classes truly integrated. Due to economic aggressiveness in commerce and the acquisition of land, it seems more likely that the mestizos actually displaced most of the traditional elite. The oft-mentioned continuity between the pre-Hispanic *datus* and the present-day *principalia* appears to be more tenuous than commonly assumed. I suspect that when research on this question shall have been carried out, it will be found that many of the

from Pampanga and Bulacan played a key role in opening southern and central Nueva Ecija to agricultural development; Philippine National Archives, *Estadisticos*, Pt. 1 and Pt. 2, Nueva Ecija.

²⁷ A similar accordance of rising tenancy and commercialization of the economy occurred in Japan. See Thomas C. Smith, *Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan* (New York, 1966).

²⁸ I use here Hugo Miller's term for a pattern of landholding characterized by the ownership by one person of scattered parcels of land; *Economic Conditions in the Philippines*, rev. ed. (Boston, 1920), p. 239. I prefer it to "fragmented holdings" because the latter term has so often been used apropos the fragmentation of land-holdings due to inheritance. While the resulting patterns of distribution are much the same, the genetic processes are different.

²⁹ Spanish-mestizos were part of the new social amalgam, but were never very numerous in the provinces because during much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries until 1768 Spaniards other than priests and government administrators were prohibited from living in the provinces and so mestizo-Spanish progeny were few.

old *datu* families were absorbed not by the mestizo class but by the indigenous peasantry.³⁰

The prestige traditionally associated with a life style characterized by conspicuous consumption, when coupled with the failure of most of the *cacique* to emulate the mestizos' participation in commerce as a means to acquiring and maintaining wealth, leads me to surmise that many *cacique* families were gradually forced to dispose of their lands to meet credit obligations. The failure of the *cacique* was their inability as a class to make a successful adaptation from a subsistence to a commercial economy.

One factor that seems to have enabled the new *principalia* to cope with the growing commercialization of the economy was the expansion of their resource base. The old *cacique* families were limited in power and in the scope of their activities to the specific town or barrio that each dominated. Late in the eighteenth century the newly emerging *principalia* of Pampanga and Bulacan began to form a web of family alliances through marriage that linked the elite of several towns. "By 1820 the *principalia* formed a provincial elite connected by ties of marriage, business and common interest. They hardly bore any resemblance in occupation, or race, to the old *datu*s, but they did maintain a servant-master relationship with the peasantry that harked back to an earlier day."³¹ This amalgam of old and new values laid the foundations for today's lowland Philippine cultural patterns.

³⁰ This was definitely the case in Pampanga; see footnote no. 26. Dr. Dante Simbulan of the Dept. of Political Science at Ateneo de Manila has related to me that his research concerning Filipino elites indicates that although considerable intermarriages between mestizos and the traditional elite occurred, families of the latter group survive as distinct entities primarily as local gentry, whereas the provincial and especially the national elite are predominantly mestizo. He further points out that in penetrating levels of national power the mestizo families seem able to draw upon more resources than the traditional elite who are able to tap only local resources.

³¹ Larkin, p. 86; see again Dr. Simbulan's comments in the preceding footnote.

As early as 1768 the Spanish government passed laws against the use of *pacto de retroventa*, specifically against its use by Chinese and Chinese mestizos, but to no avail.³² It is not improbable therefore that mestizo land acquisitions had begun at least as early as the mid-eighteenth century.

This raises an interesting question that again underlines the deficiency of research pertaining to the eighteenth-century-Philippines. Following Wickberg's seminal work, it has been recognized that after the majority of the Chinese were expelled from the Philippines between 1764-1766 for cooperating with the British during the occupation of Manila, the Chinese mestizos were presented with a singular opportunity to step into the commercial vacuum thus created at the very time an export economy was emerging.³³ For some eighty years, until the return of large numbers of Chinese in the mid-nineteenth century, Chinese mestizos dominated retail and wholesale trade. Until the expulsion of the Chinese, their mestizo brethren reportedly existed as a socially and economically neutral sector of the colonial community, an unassimilated minority group unable to compete successfully in the commercial arena with the Chinese.³⁴ However, since the mestizos were acquiring land through moneylending prior to the expulsion of the Chinese, they must have begun to enjoy some measure of economic success as a class before the onset of the Seven Years' War that led to the British occupation of Manila in 1762 and the subsequent departure of the Chinese.

Until the events of the eighteenth century have been more thoroughly explored we can only speculate that domestic commerce was the source of the mestizo wealth employed for moneylending. Yet why else would Chinese and Chinese mestizos wish to acquire land except to gain control of its produce for commercial purposes? Neither group was at this

³² Wickberg, "The Chinese Mestizo . . .", p. 77.

³³ Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898* (New Haven, 1965).

³⁴ Robert R. Reed, "Hispanic Urbanism in the Philippines: A Study of the Impact of Church & State", *Journal of East Asiatic Studies*, 11 (March 1967), 158-159.

time part of the *cacique*, and land acquisition would not have immediately gained them the social standing enjoyed by the traditional elite. They would not, therefore, have shared the prestige-oriented motives of the *cacique* for owning land. I am forced to the tentative conclusion that some forty years before Manila was opened to foreign shipping and at least seventy years before foreign merchants began to subsidize export crops, domestic commerce was sufficiently vigorous as to make landholding and the control of *kasamas* a profitable venture. A profitable commerce would have been necessary both to generate the capital and to whet the appetite for land acquisition.

Pacto de retroventa acquisitions have continued from the eighteenth century to the present.³⁵ The governor-general Jose Basco y Vargas in 1784 delivered a decree in the village of Arayat, Pampanga, declaring:

Besides this I have in the same manner heard of the unjust and vile bargains which the usurers make in regard to the cultivated lands, and even the trees which the farmers cultivate in their gardens, and their houses, binding them with the agreement of *retrovendendi*... exacting from him who is bound—sometimes for years, and sometimes forever—the produce and the ownership (of those possessions) for a small amount which the lender has furnished. They also exact a premium for the money which they lend...³⁶

I have already cited a quotation written by Zuñiga twenty year later.³⁷ Throughout his two volumes there are numerous references to Chinese mestizo participation in commerce and their acquisition of land through moneylending. Wickberg notes that in reading Zuñiga a clear picture of rising mestizo economic power in Central Luzon is evident.³⁸

³⁵ For a discussion of the practice in Pangasinan today see James N. Anderson, "Land & Society in a Pangasinan Community", in Socorro C. Espirito & Chester L. Hunt, *Social Foundations of Community Development. Readings on the Philippines* (Manila, 1964), pp. 174-175; also see Agaton P. Pal, "Barrio Institution & Economic Change", *Philippine Sociological Review*, 7 (January-April 1959) for a contemporary example in Negros Oriental.

³⁶ *B & R*, vol. 52, p. 295.

³⁷ See footnote no. 25.

³⁸ Wickberg, "The Chinese Mestizo...", p. 76.

Forty years later Mallat, a visiting Frenchman, reported that next to the religious orders the Chinese mestizos are the largest landholders of Central Luzon.³⁹ Wickberg reports that by about 1850 mestizos were pushing both their commercial and agricultural activities farther north in Luzon and that in Nueva Ecija they had become as numerous as in Bataan, Batangas and Ilocos Sur.⁴⁰ Likewise in 1866 Jagor declared that considerable portions of the lands of Pampanga, Bataan, Manila, Laguna and Batangas and other provinces have, within a few years, changed owners by means of the *pacto de retroventa* procedure. It is the "cunning and thrifty mestizos who usually acquire their (*indio*) landed possessions. . . ."⁴¹

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were a period of transition for tenure patterns. The scattered holding type of landholding characterized by the *kasamajan* tenancy relationship became firmly rooted in the Philippines during the eighteenth century. It was a direct descendant of pre-Hispanic debt peonage relationships adapted to the Spanish-introduced notion of private ownership of land. As an instrument of resource and labor exploitation it was equally adaptable to subsistence and pre-mechanized commercial agriculture. It was, moreover, the instrument by which the Chinese mestizos were able to penetrate and overturn the subsistence-oriented *cacique*. The mestizos first gained control of important commercial outlets, and then by acquiring land by means of *pacto de retroventa* and utilizing *kasamas* for cultivation of the land, they solidified control of cash produce and influenced prices. This process began in the densely settled littorals of Manila Bay and the Laguna de Bay. As an instrument of resource exploitation in the subsequent northward spread of population into the interior of the Central Luzon Plain, the *kasamajan* system seems not to have played as significant a role as the *inquilinato* system during the pioneer stages of settlement.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 81 .

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁴¹ *B & R*, vol. 52, p. 304.

The *inquilinato* system, born on the friar estates in the eighteenth century, was an innovation in Philippine society and was an alternative response to the growing commercialization of the economy. Land was leased by an *inquilino* for a fixed rent. Usually the *inquilino* immediately turned the land over to a *kasama* to cultivate for shares. From its inception the *inquilinato* system had a significantly greater economic-rational emphasis. It was a means of freeing the landowner from much of the paternal relationship traditionally expected of him in Philippine society. While the monastic orders had intended that their *inquilinos* would be the cultivators, the *inquilinos*, by putting *kasamas* on the land, restored to some degree a paternal relationship to the cultivator although the tracts leased were frequently so large and occupied by so many *kasamas* that the paternal role of the *inquilino* was considerably diluted, particularly when the *inquilino* did not live on the land. Many did not, the leased lands merely being a source of produce for their commercial activities. It was here on the friar lands that the hacienda system was born and it is not surprising, therefore, that the earliest tenant discontent appeared on the friar estates.

As stated earlier, a few private estates, utilized primarily as livestock ranches, existed before the end of the eighteenth century, some of which were former Jesuit estates that had passed into private hands. As far as the Central Luzon Plain is concerned these appear to have been limited to Bulacan, and were on the periphery of the more densely settled coastal region. Early in the nineteenth century Idefonso de Aragon refers to a private estate in Pampanga, the Hacienda de Cavanpavit.⁴²

The nineteenth century saw the proliferation of private haciendas as the result of the appearance of two new forms of land acquisition that had great significance for the emergence of today's pattern of land ownership in the Central Luzon Plain.

⁴²Idefonso de Aragon, *Descripcion Geografica y Topographica de las Islas de Luzon o Nuevo Castilla* (part 4, Manila, 1819), p. 2.

The first to become common was the purchase of *realengas* lands. This means of land acquisition began in the eighteenth century after the removal of restrictions upon Spanish residence in the provinces. A royal order of February 4, 1862 decreed a standard payment of ₱50 per *quinon* (1 *quinon* = 2.8 hectares) to the Real Hacienda.⁴³ Supposedly any individual was limited to a purchase not exceeding 200 *quinones*, but one observer reported in 1881 that there were 232,500 *quinones* of land on Luzon in haciendas established on land formerly part of the royal domain, and he stated that most of the area was acquired by usurping land adjacent to the areas actually purchased without respect to the occupants of cleared land who lacked written titles.⁴⁴

I suspect that the figure above includes land obtained by the second means, a royal grant. These massive tracts were granted to individual Spaniards and appear never to have been many in number. Together with the lands purchased from the royal domain they formed the cornerstone of the hacienda system. The aggregate landholdings of individual Chinese mestizos on the other hand, while sometimes amounting to several hundred hectares, were composed of unconsolidated parcels scattered over wide areas.

Just when the crown began to grant estates to individual Spaniards is not yet clear. Comyn mentions the existence of possibly a dozen Spanish proprietors in 1810.⁴⁵ Their estates may well have been purchases rather than grants. However acquired, the Spanish estates filled the *indios* with apprehension. Comyn informs us that no sooner are clearings started for this purpose than the *indio* "resolves to play off all the artifices his malice can suggest, and to give rise to as many impediments as he can, in order to thwart and prevent the quiet

⁴³ Gregorio Sancianco y Goson. *El Progreso de Filipinas. Estudios Economicos, Administrativos y Politicos* (Madrid, 1881), p. 55.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

⁴⁵ Tomas de Comyn, *State of the Philippine Islands* (the William Walton translation, London, 1821), p. 39.

possession, to which, in point of right, the new planter thinks he is entitled."⁴⁶

Throughout the nineteenth century methods of land use on the haciendas of the Central Plain were extensive because of the sparse populations and corresponding shortage of labor prevalent in the interior. Comyn states that the hacienda owners were compelled to divide their land into rice plantations because it was the form of agriculture to which the natives were most inclined, and to devote a considerable portion of them to the grazing of horned cattle.⁴⁷ He goes on to say that the real body of farming proprietors consists of the principal mestizos and natives and that "all the other natives" lead a marginal agricultural existence on small strips of land around their houses or at the edges of the various settlements.⁴⁸

Royal grants and large purchases from the public domain were necessarily located on the frontiers of settlement in the Central Plains which accounts for the distribution of today's large haciendas in Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, eastern Pangasinan, and northern and western Pampanga.⁴⁹ In Nueva Ecija several large haciendas, some with an extension of more than 6000 hectares, became the primary suppliers of cattle for the Manila market, shipping the livestock down the Pampanga River to Manila Bay.⁵⁰ In 1877 Nueva Ecija, with a reputation for the quality of its cattle, was reported to have 76,254 head of livestock, mostly cattle and horses.⁵¹

Sections of the Nueva Ecija haciendas were devoted to wet rice cultivation. In 1884 the Spanish-owned Hacienda Bakal in the present-day municipality of Talavera was linked to an older communal irrigation system fed by streams debouch-

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁴⁹ Large estates in the immediate area of Manila originated as friar estates.

⁵⁰ Ramon Gonzalez Fernandez, *Anuario Filipino Para 1877* (Manila 1877), p. 408; J. F. del Pan, *Las Islas Filipinas, Progresos en 70 Anos* (Manila, 1878), p. 237.

⁵¹ Gonzalez Fernandez, p. 408.

ing onto the Central Plain from the Caraballo Sur mountains northwest of San Jose.⁵²

In 1876 Cavada Mendez de Vigo mentioned various rural haciendas belonging to peninsular Spaniards in the Nueva Ecija pueblos of Aliaga, Cabanatuan, Rosales (now part of Pangasinan), and Santor, as well as the Sabani Estate some 14 kilometers southeast of Bongabon in the present-day municipality of Gabaldon. The latter estate was reported to exceed 6,000 hectares of which some 4,000 were under cultivation.⁵³ About 1,000 hectares were forest and Cavada describes the remaining 1,000 hectares of pasture as "abundant, permanent and extraordinary."⁵⁴

With the termination of the tobacco monopoly in 1881 smaller haciendas devoted to somewhat more intensive agriculture than the ranches to the north became prominent in Nueva Ecija south of the Pampanga River. The 1886 *Guía Oficial de Filipinas* reports that the plains of Nueva Ecija form fertile terrain where rice, tobacco and sugar cane are abundantly produced, and on a minor scale maize and coffee. Agriculture and ranching constitute the major wealth of Nueva Ecija with hacenderos and ranchers of much note, among them the peninsular Spaniard Doña Sagrario Borbolla, who possesses magnificent cattle ranches and extensive haciendas that are worked with care.⁵⁵

Another source alleges that in the days before the Ilocano pioneers engulfed the area, the present-day poblacion of Que-

⁵² Percy A. Hill, "The Muñoz Communal Irrigation system", *The Student Farmer*, 2 (August 1919), p. 12.

⁵³ Don Manuel Ramirez y Carbajal reportedly purchased the Sabani estate from the Crown in 1857 for ₱1 per *quinon*. In the 1870's he attempted to claim 11,000 hectares as falling within the jurisdiction of the hacienda but only some 5,000 hectares were recognized. Philippine National Archives, "Expediente Concerning the Determination of Boundaries of the Finca of Don Manuel Ramirez, known as Valle del Sabani," and related documents *Ereccion de Pueblo*, Nueva Ecija, Tomo I.

⁵⁴ Agustin de la Cavada, Mendez de Vigo, *Historia Geografica, Geologica y Estadistica de Filipinas*, I (Manila, 1876), p. 73.

⁵⁵ *Guía Oficial de Filipinas*, 1886 (Manila, 1885), p. 806.

zon, Nueva Ecija, was but an insignificant barrio of Aliaga and was called *Toro* because one Joaquin Samson maintained large herds of cattle there on a wide plain of *pampa* and *cogon*.⁵⁶ Likewise, a Spaniard, Don Maninang, is reputed to have had a ranch with cattle, horse and goats in barrio Amanperez, Villasis, Pangasinan, and the town of Rosales, Pangasinan, had its origin in 1827 as a cattle ranch of Don Nicolas Ibañez, a *principalia* of Tayug.⁵⁷

Today's Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac originated around 1880 as a royal grant to the Tabacalera Company. It embraced territory in the pueblos of Tarlac, La Paz, Concepcion and Capas.⁵⁸

The largest hacienda of all to emerge in the late nineteenth century was the Hacienda Esperanza. It encompassed territory in four provinces — Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac and Mountain Province. Isabela II extended a royal grant to a Spaniard in 1863, and subsequently, about 1877-1878, the estate was purchased by Don Francisco Gonzales.⁵⁸ Later division among heirs and the sale of portions of the estate brought about the fragmentation of the Hacienda Esperanza into several daughter haciendas.

Another large estate, the Hacienda Porvenir, owned by the Lichauco family, was allegedly established in 1884 in eastern Pangasinan.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ *Historical and Cultural Data of Quezon, Nueva Ecija, and Its Barrios*, Bureau of Public Schools, Division of Nueva Ecija (Quezon, Nueva Ecija, 1953), p. 4.

⁵⁷ *Historical Data of Pangasinan*, Bureau of Public Schools, Division of Pangasinan, folio 449, Villasis section; Fr. Felix de Huerta, *Estado Geografico, Topografico, Estadistico, Historico-Religioso de la Santa y Apostolica Provincia de S. Gregorio Magno de Religiosos Manores Descalzos de la Regular y Mas Estrecha Observancia de N.S.P.S. Francisco Filipinas*, (Manila, 1885), p. 112.

⁵⁸ *Historical Data of Tarlac*, Bureau of Public Schools, Division, of Tarlac, folio 436, Tarlac section.

⁵⁹ *Historical Data of Pangasinan*, folio 448, Rosales section.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, folio 449, Tayug section.

Mention is made of three private haciendas belonging respectively to Don Manuel Ramirez, Don Evaristo Romero, and the aforementioned Don Francisco Gonzales in a *Memoria* by Governor Ricardo Monet of Nueva Ecija in 1892.⁶¹ Ramirez is linked to the Hacienda Savani (Sabani), and Romero's hacienda is at Valle, a barrio in present-day Talavera. Six smaller haciendas of unstated ownership are reported dedicated to the cultivation of sugar cane, most of them extracting the juice by means of primitive steam-driven mills. According to Monet these mills produced a deficient product. A few of the haciendas, however, possessed small centrifugal mills capable of producing sugar that was relatively white and free of molasses. Only a small part of this sugar production found its way into the commerce with Manila, the bulk serving the consumption needs of the pueblos immediate to the haciendas. These smaller cane-growing haciendas were located in the southernmost Nueva Ecija *poblaciones* and in Cabanatuan.⁶² They were probably purchases rather than grants from the royal domain.

Before the end of the century fragments of the large haciendas had been sold to numerous individuals, mostly Chinese mestizos, or divided among heirs whose mothers were mestizo or Filipino, so that smaller Chinese and Spanish mestizo-owned haciendas consisting of 100 to 500 hectares each became more numerous than before. Some mestizo families, over a period of two or three generations, acquired a number of sizable parcels of land from the original haciendas, so that their aggregate holdings equalled those of the large haciendas. Early in the American period peninsular Spaniards ceased to be a factor in

⁶¹ Ricardo Monet, *Memoria de la Provincia de Nueva Ecija* (San Isidro, October 27, 1892), document in *Memorias* Section, Philippine National Archives, Nueva Ecija folio.

⁶² *Historical Data of Nueva Ecija*, Bureau of Public Schools, Division of Nueva Ecija, folios 433, Gapan Section, and 434 Cabanatuan Section; Joaquin Rajal y Larre, "Memoria de la Provincia de Nueva Ecija, en Filipinas", *Boletin de la Sociedad Geografica de Madrid*, 27 (1889), pp. 293, 298-299. The original report upon which the latter article is based is located in the *Memorias* Section of the Philippine National Archives, Nueva Ecija folio.

the patterns of ownership in the Central Plain.⁶³ A few Americans replaced the Spaniards as landlords, but by the turn of the century Chinese and Spanish mestizos almost entirely dominated hacienda ownership.

In summary, there were three primary means of land acquisition during the nineteenth century that contributed to the spread of landlordism in the Central Plain and elsewhere in the Philippines. They were royal grants, purchase of *realengas*, and *pacto de retroventa* procedures. The first two resulted in a pattern of large blocks of consolidated landholdings, only small areas of which were at first put to crop cultivation, the balance remaining idle or being devoted to raising livestock. This pattern was most common in Tarlac, Nueva Ecija, and eastern Pangasinan. Smaller haciendas served as buffers between the larger interior estates and the more densely settled areas toward the littorals. The lands acquired through *pacto de retroventa* resulted in a pattern consisting of unconsolidated holdings of numerous small parcels of land devoted to the cultivation of rice, sugar cane, tobacco, indigo and various other crops. The latter pattern was common throughout much of Pampanga and Bulacan, central Pangasinan, and later in the nineteenth century, in southern and central Nueva Ecija. The one pattern was most associated with the agricultural frontier in the interior of the Central Luzon Plain, the other with the longer settled areas where a flourishing market economy was generating capital for land acquisition. The "scattered holdings" were held mostly by Chinese mestizos and some traditional elite. Initially the haciendas were held by Spaniards but by the end of the century most had passed into the hands of Chinese and Spanish mestizos either through purchase or marriage. The reopening of the country to unlimited Chinese immigration around the middle of the century ended the Chinese mestizo dominance of domestic trade, and, driven out of retail activities, the latter group accelerated its investment of capital in land.⁶⁴

⁶³ The Spanish-owned Tabacalera Company's Hacienda Luisita was an exception, being sold to the Cojuangcos only after the Second World War.

⁶⁴ Wickberg, "The Chinese Mestizo . . .", pp. 90-91; Larkin, pp. 120-122. By means of the *sari-sari* store the Chinese proved that owner-

A fourth type of land acquisition also existed throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century in the Central Luzon Plain. Pioneers were moving into the forest to clear the land. These subsistence farmers claimed the land by the traditional right of usufruct and not until the homestead laws were enacted early in the twentieth century did many acquire written title to their land. Most of these small holdings were doomed to be swallowed and digested by the haciendas or lost by way of the *pacto de retroventa* contract. Suffice to say that they failed to establish a lasting pattern of landholding except in those areas pioneered by homesteaders after the Public Land Law of 1903, such as in northeastern Nueva Ecija and the marginal foothill areas along the fringes of the Central Plain. Instead their great impact was felt in the clearing of the interior forest in the 100-year period between 1820 and 1920.

To complete the story of land acquisition in the Central Luzon Plain there remains only to call attention to two periods of concerted landgrabbing. Late in the nineteenth century the Spanish government attempted to provide an easy means of registering land and obtaining title, all without cost. It was hoped this would rectify the plight of the peasantry, most of whom possessed no title to the land they occupied, and who were frequently dispossessed by the *principalia*. Unfortunately the legislation had the opposite effect. The *principalia* used the opportunity of registering their land to claim extensive areas occupied by their smallholder neighbors. Illiterate and ignorant of the processes of the law, the peasants were helpless to protect themselves.

The second period of blatant landgrabbing began in 1913 when the new American government initiated cadastral surveys as part of their policy of encouraging homesteading. Procedural delays and public corruption worked to the detriment of many homesteaders. They were powerless before the fact that most lawmakers and national leaders were landed *principalia*. F. Sionil Jose poignantly describes the fate of the peasant.

ship of land was not essential to control the distribution of produce. It could be more efficiently controlled merely by establishing credit obligations among the producers.

I've seen old men weep, the tears streaming down their ancient, care-worn faces, when they found out the government was not for them. Once in the not so distant past, they migrated down from the barren mountains of Ilocos, hoping to find land in eastern Pangasinan. They found the land; they felled trees, burned the cogon, and on this new land they raised their families. But they didn't know what markers and torrens titles were; to them, to their neighbors, the only markers that identified their farms were the mounds, the old trees which they spared, the turn of a creek, a clump of bamboo, an old dike—these were the markers which they and their neighbors respected. But some learned men who knew that the cadastral surveys could bring them new wealth ignored these landmarks. In the survey plans which they submitted, they gobbled up the farms of the settlers and when the titles were ready, the old landmarks—the trees, the mounds, the creeks—were abolished and the immigrants found themselves tenants.⁶⁵

In other cases pioneers unknowingly settled on undeveloped grants. It was sometimes decades before hacenderos could fully organize their estates and turn them to the production of commercial crops. In the early years obtaining labor for the development of haciendas was a major problem. It paid a hacendero to remain silent while settlers moved onto the land and cleared the forest. Only when the pioneers had made a substantial investment of labor in the land were they notified that they were squatting on hacienda land, and advised that they remain by paying a small annual rent.

In fairness it must be pointed out that hacendero policy was not always so calculated. Sometimes apathy prevented them from exerting their claim for decades, and it might only be after the land was sold that the new owners implemented the rights of the grant.

We shall now return to the problem facing the haciendas of obtaining a labor supply. In the late eighteenth century and during much of the following century the haciendas resolved the shortage of labor by utilizing the grasslands, which were created and extended by the use of fire for pasture, and the forests for selective cutting of construction woods. More intensive forms of land use requiring greater quantities

⁶⁵ F. Sionil Jose, "The Philippine Agrarian Problem", *Comment*, vol. 9 (1959), pp. 102-103.

of labor, except around the immediate hacienda settlement, had to await the development of a denser population and even more important, railroad transportation for the cheap shipment of bulk surpluses from the interior.

In the frontier areas the lure of free land for the taking precluded hacenderos from importing and preserving a stable supply of labor. Writing in 1866 Jagor complains that the hacendero can easily find laborers only by advancing them food, cattle and money, but the *indios* pay little attention to fulfilling their contracts and the legal means at the planter's disposal are as burdensome and ruinous as the abandonment of his rights.⁶⁶ Twelve years later del Pan reiterates the trouble haciendas have with workers who want advanced pay and who frequently disappear when employed, whether owing or not.⁶⁷

The heyday of livestock ranching in the interior of the Central Plain came to a sudden end during the decade of the 1880's. In Pangasinan this was due in part to Ilocano settlers filling up the land. But it was a series of rinderpest and hoof and mouth disease epidemics that decimated herds of cattle, carabao and horses everywhere in the islands.⁶⁸ Not only were the ranches affected, but also the pioneer smallholders, whose numbers had gradually been increasing in the interior of the Central Plain. Many lost their draft animals and were reduced to beggary. Along the Peñaranda River in Nueva Ecija some turned to panning gold, but the options for most were narrower. Large numbers turned to brigandage, joining

⁶⁶ Jagor, *B & R*, vol. 52, p. 302. While Jagor was undoubtedly familiar with these conditions at first hand, his comments concerning the problems of labor supply and other aspects of land tenure conditions in the Philippines follow almost verbatim an article published in the *Diario de Manila* during December 1856. Interestingly, 63 years later Percy Hill, an American planter in Nueva Ecija, stumbled across this article and published a translation. See his "As It Was in Days of Old", *The Student Farmer*, vol. 2 (November 1919), pp. 2-3.

⁶⁷ del Pan, p. 237.

⁶⁸ By 1902, 90% of the carabao population was reported wiped out. *Reports of the Philippine Commission, 1902* (Bureau of Insular Affairs, U.S. War Department, 1902-3), p. 296.

the *tulisanes* who ever frequented the frontier areas. Others sold their land for what they could get or borrowed money by *pacto de retroventa* and ultimately lost their land.

Hacenderos were quick to sense the potential labor supply. They utilized two devices to attract tenants to clear land and settle on their haciendas.

The first lure was to offer a cash advance called *bugnos*. The tenant was not required to repay the advance until such time as he desired to leave the hacienda. Advances usually ranged between ₱100 to ₱1,000, although one present-day hacendero informed me that his family paid as much as ₱2,000 on rare occasions.⁶⁹ By the 1920's the bargaining position of the haciendas had improved considerably and Percy Hill, an American planter in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, reported that *bugnos* payments varied from ₱15 to ₱70.⁷⁰

The second arrangement was to offer the potential tenant a leasehold tenancy (the *inquilinato* system) whereby the *inquilino* paid a fixed annual rent in cash, kind or both, called *canon*. The bait was to promise the *inquilino* free or nominal rent for one or more years, while he was clearing the land. This represented a modification of the *inquilinato* system as practiced on the friar estates. On the frontier the *inquilino* became the cultivator, whereas on the friar estates he was the functional equivalent of the hacendero — a middleman landlord.

Although many of the local peasantry responded to one device or another, still more labor was needed to convert the forest and grasslands to crops, and so the haciendas recruited on the Ilocos coast, in Pangasinan, Tarlac and Bulacan.⁷¹ Except for Tagalogs from Bulacan most tenants so

⁶⁹ For references to payment of *bugnos*, see Evett D. Hester, Pablo Mabbun, et al, "Some Economic & Social Aspects of Philippine Rice Tenancies", *Philippine Agriculturalist*, 12 (February 1924), p. 396; Anonymous, "Developing a Rice Plantation", *American Chamber of Commerce Journal*, 10 (June 1930), p. 5.

⁷⁰ Hester & Mabbun, *op. cit.*

⁷¹ "Developing a Rice Plantation", p. 4.

recruited were Ilocanos. The *canon* was so nominal late in the nineteenth century that many pioneers, when informed they were squatting on hacienda-owned lands, complied with the demands for rent rather than resist or move away.⁷²

The two types of landholding patterns — haciendas and scattered holdings — extant in the Central Plain at the end of the nineteenth century were also distinguished by their distinct tenancy arrangements. The peasant who entered into a *pacto de retroventa* contract usually remained on his land as the cultivator, sharecropping until his debt came due. If he failed to redeem his field either he remained on the land as a *kasama* or the new owner replaced him with another sharecropper. On the other hand, the *canon* arrangement offered by the haciendas led directly to the lessee or *inquilinato* system.

The correspondence between types of tenancy and patterns of landholding is born out by census statistics. The census of 1903 indicates that there were 2,215 cash tenants or *inquilinos* and only 290 share tenants or *kasamas* in Nueva Ecija, whereas in Pangasinan there were 2,036 *inquilinos* and 16,461 *kasamas*. Since the 1903 census does not break down these statistics by municipality we can only speculate that the majority of the lessees in Pangasinan were located on the haciendas in the east of the province. The main migrational thrust into Nueva Ecija occurred between 1900 and 1920. As labor became more plentiful the haciendas first began to raise the *canon* and then to switch to the *kasama* system. The census of 1918 reveals the transition in Nueva Ecija — 2,796 *inquilinos* and 1,798 *kasamas*. By 1939 the transition was complete, Nueva Ecija then having 50,831 share tenants and only 867 cash tenants.

As an example, the change from leasehold to share tenancy occurred in the municipality of Nampicuan in 1926. At the turn of the century, Hacienda No. 3 of the Hacienda Esperanza, which included the Nampicuan area, had been sold to the Santos-Ongsiako-Lim Corporation of Manila, headed by Marcelo de

⁷² *History and Cultural Life of the Municipality of Nampicuan, Nueva Ecija*, Bureau of Public Schools, Division of Nueva Ecija (Nampicuan 1953), p. 57.

los Santos. The hacienda was administered by an overseer (*katiwala*) under the *inquilinato* system until 1926 at which time the hacienda was divided between the heirs into eleven smaller haciendas. Originally the *canon* had been nominal, but gradually, over the years, the rent was raised to 15 cavans of palay per hectare. With the division of the hacienda among the heirs, the *canon* was discontinued and the cultivators became share tenants. This change met much resistance on the part of the peasants, many of whom, despite having previously accepted the paying of *canon* as a necessary evil, still considered the land as theirs. Peasant violence met with hacendero repression and many departed for the Cagayan Valley to seek new lands for their own. The hacenderos imported new tenants, many of them Tagalogs.⁷³

To entice the peasants into some sort of tenancy arrangement was one thing. To ensure that they remained on the hacienda's land was another. One answer was to shackle the tenants with debts. I have already mentioned the cash advance or *bugnos* as one means whereby the peasant was enticed into a life of debt peonage. These advances to new tenants continued even after the haciendas had reorganized their tenants as *kasamas*.

There were other ways to ensnare the tenant with debt. For the subsistence-oriented tenant income arrives all at once with the harvest, just when prices for palay are lowest. His needs are pressing. He has no withholding power and so he sells his crop when he can realize the least for it. In order to live until the next harvest he begins to borrow from his landlord against his share of the next harvest, a form of loan called *taklanan*. After the crop has been planted further loans called *terkiaan* or *takipan* are based on higher rates of interest ranging from 50 to 100 per cent.⁷⁴ Sometimes the

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 57-60.

⁷⁴ Evett D. Hester, Pablo Mabbun, *et. al.*, "Some Economic & Social Aspects of Philippine Rice Tenancies", *Philippine Agriculturalist*, 12 (February 1924), p. 396. See also Walter Robb, "Cabanatuan: Rocky Ford", in *Filipinos: Pre-War Philippines Essays*, rev. ed. (1963), pp. 98-99, 101-102.

wife of the hacendero would operate a store on the hacienda and tenants would be obliged to buy all their needs at this store for abnormally high prices. Called the *kantina* system, this practice was particularly common on the sugar estates of Pampanga and Tarlac. There is an extensive literature on tenancy arrangements in the Central Luzon Plain, and so I shall not re-travel well worn paths here.⁷⁵

Debts, however, are insufficient to keep tenants in the land in a pioneer area unless they feel a strong moral obligation to honor those debts. I have previously mentioned the difficulties experienced by haciendas in the middle of the nineteenth century in obtaining and retaining labor. By the time livestock diseases put an end to ranching and drove many peasants onto the haciendas as tenants, many of the haciendas had already passed into the hands of Chinese mestizos, who were now fully integrated into Filipino society as the native elite.⁷⁶ They recognized their paternal responsibilities to their tenants and offered traditional relationships to *inquilino* and *kasama* alike. While the mechanisms by which *principalia* and peasantry solidified their traditional alliance in a frontier situation during the late nineteenth century need investigation, for the purposes of this paper I think it is sufficient to suggest that where native elite became the hacen-

⁷⁵ For the reader who wishes to pursue tenancy relationships and the role of credit the following sources are suggested as a sampling as well as those in the previous footnote: Armando M. Dalisay, "Types of Tenancy Contracts on Rice Farms in Nueva Ecija", *Philippine Agriculturalist*, 26 (July 1937); G. W. Healy, "Usury in the Philippines Today", *Philippine Studies*, 3 (June 1955), pp. 136-156; Percy A. Hill & Kilmer O. Moe, *The Rice Industry* (Muñoz, 1920); Karl J. Pelzer, *Pioneer Settlement in the Asiatic Tropics* (New York, 1945); and Jose E. Velmonte, "Farm Tenancy Problems of Rice Production in the Philippines", *Labor Bulletin*, 1 (October 1938), also published in *National Research Council of the Philippines Bulletin*, No. 17 (1938), pp. 128-132. For a less technical more emotional treatment, see Mariano D. Manawis, "The Life of the Nueva Ecija Peasant", *Philippine Magazine*, 31 (January 1934), pp. 12, 42, republished in *Journal of East Asiatic Studies*, 4 (April 1955), pp. 279-281.

⁷⁶ They now considered themselves Tagalogs, Pampangans or Pangasinanes, and were likewise so considered by the pure *indios*.

deros, traditional bonds with their dependents provided the moral force to keep large numbers from disappearing.

There is some evidence to suggest that credit mechanisms differ between tenants on scattered holdings and those on haciendas. James Anderson, in a paper concerning a Pangasinan community, finds a difference in the system of credit and debt under the "traditional tenancy system" as exemplified by most of Pangasinan and the "absentee system" found in areas of extreme and insecure tenancy like Nueva Ecija and Pampanga. He reports that tenants in Manaoag, in central Pangasinan, try to avoid borrowing from their landlords, some stating that they would be ashamed to do so. They turn to relatives or other persons in the community with a regular cash income such as pensioners, salaried employees or small businessmen. When they do turn to their landlords it is just before the harvest and they are charged no interest.

Anderson says:

In the former [traditional tenancy system], a tenant is allowed to enjoy some measure of self-respect and a place in an on-going social system. In the latter [absentee system], he is not. On the haciendas and plantations, agriculture is geared more strictly to economic considerations with relatively little of the social and economic security provided under the traditional tenancy system.⁷⁷

Anderson's two categories, the "traditional tenancy system" and the "absentee system", although stressing land tenure in the context of its social impact rather than characterizing the pattern of landholding, essentially conform to the forms of landholding I have called, in this paper, "scattered holdings" and "haciendas". I might only note that the absentee landlord is notably a creature of the postwar period and is, perhaps, less typical of Nueva Ecija than Pampanga.⁷⁸ Never-

⁷⁷ Anderson, pp. 184-185.

⁷⁸ David Reeves Sturtevant, *Philippine Social Structure and Its Relation to Agrarian Unrest*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University (1958), states that absentee landlordism developed in the American period as hacenderos moved to Manila or the provincial capital to go into politics and to enjoy the amenities of social life with their peers, p. 82.

theless the growing depersonalized atmosphere of the haciendas in the twentieth century cannot be denied, and even long before World War II most hacenderos used overseers to manage the daily routines of their haciendas.

The latest development in the history of land tenure in the Central Plain is the attempt at land reform. This is an ongoing development and so a full analysis of the outcome of land reform is premature. Personal observations in Nueva Ecija lead me to believe, however, that one outcome of the land reform program is already discernible. Owners of rice-lands of all sizes are increasingly turning to mechanized farming and the use of hired labor. Landlords are seeking ways to free their land of tenants so as to effect this transformation.

Several large hacenderos have turned to unused swamp lands or uplands within their estates and invested in agricultural machinery, expensive drainage systems, deep wells, irrigation dams, canals and laterals. Using hired labor and the new improved 120-day varieties developed at the International Rice Research Institute at Los Baños, they are beginning to realize sizable profits from year-round rice cultivation. In some cases five crops are harvested in two years. Smaller landlords are buying their tenants' rights in the land and likewise mechanizing. While land reform legislation offers tenants considerable protection, it also defines their responsibilities. Some tenants, emboldened by the land reform program, ignore these obligations and enable landlords to legally remove them from the land. Reportedly others are unjustly accused of failure to meet their obligations as tenants or of criminal acts in an endeavor to seek their expulsion from the land.

In the late eighteenth century the Philippines underwent a revolution in labor organization. The *kasamajan* system of tenancy that was beginning to become a feature of subsistence agriculture was transformed into an instrument of resource and labor exploitation by Chinese mestizos to meet the challenge presented by a newly emergent market economy. Similarly the *inquilinato* tenancy system represented a response

to commercial opportunities, and subsequently in the nineteenth century it proved an immanently suitable instrument by which *principalia* claimed new land on agricultural frontiers in the interior.

Increasingly during the first half of the twentieth century strains appeared in the operation of the traditional means of labor exploitation. Today another revolution in labor organization is under way. The *kasamajon* and *inquilinato* systems have outlived their usefulness. If the trend towards mechanized farming that I observed in Nueva Ecija continues, and I see no reason why it will not, the provinces characterized by rice tenancy farming... are about to experience the Philippine equivalent of an enclosure movement. A number of tenants may become owners of their own land, but large numbers appear doomed to be pushed off the land by one means or another. In view of the slow pace of land reform many tenants will undoubtedly succumb to the temptation to sell their rights to their landlords. Such an outcome, the economic rationalization of rice farming, is of great potential economic benefit to the Philippines, but the social repercussions of a displaced peasantry are fraught with explosive consequences.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ The opportunity for an enterprising scholar to undertake a comprehensive study of the origin and development of the hacienda system as adapted to different regions and crops in the Philippines lies right here in Manila. The Philippine National Archives contains thousands of documents which once examined should reveal the history of the haciendas in rich detail. Especially pertinent are the *Terrenos* section which covers nineteenth century land titles and litigation, the *Protocolos* section which enumerates land transactions, *Informaciones Provisorias*, which pertain to land grants resolved through third persons, and the *Estadisticas*, which contains the 1896 census tabulation of landholdings.