

Foreword



In the urgent task of reconstructing our knowledge of contemporary Philippine society and culture, invariably the models in use are those of other societies and cultures. Yet those models are structures built of native stuff — native to those societies and cultures. Underlying those structures are a solid foundation of discovery and fact pertaining to the prehistories of those societies and cultures.

Unfortunately the work of the prehistorian, or more accurately the archaeologist in the Philippines, has not been properly appreciated, and consequently, support for it is meager. Too often his work is mistakenly identified with that of the antiquarian or the collector of rarities. Consequently, our understanding of the prehistory of the Philippines is in terms of bits and patches of information. The linkage with contemporary society and culture, or with Southeast Asian societies and cultures in general, has hardly begun.

There exists, therefore, a huge credibility gap in Philippine Social Sciences; it is a gap between the validity, and the sincerity, of present-day analyses of native institutions and behavior, and the realities of these phenomena. The gap is due to our gap of knowledge regarding the unwritten periods of our history. This gap can only be filled by more scholarly efforts in this area. The archaeologist and the anthropologist must extend our knowledge farther back in time, not only hundreds but thousands of years back, in order to give historians the correct historical perspectives — correct, that is, in terms of the experiences and the thinking of our ancestors.

Indeed, it is well known that much historical writing about the Philippines is inspired by alien perceptions and biases. Reading about our past is like taking an indoctrination course in a foreign ideology. This is not to say that the writers knew what they were doing, but the effect on Filipinos was there in any case. Filipinos tended to unquestioningly accept their biases and assumptions.

Hence the need to start anew, thence the effort to winnow over the facts and interpretations that have been thrown at us, and ultimately a re-writing of our past and present, and inevitably our future. The benefits for Filipinos are obvious, not only in terms of their cultural identity and national goals, but in terms of their search for solutions to problems of the present, and the understanding that must precede action in the achieving of their goals.

President Ferdinand Marcos summarized this need as follows:

We must not only recover but build and reinforce the self-identity and cultural pride of our people. This does not concern alone the appreciation of indigenous cultures, but the essential recasting of our outlooks, so that at every moment in our lives, we look as individuals to national realities and experiences.

This work is the beginning of the process of recovery. In it the author, Professor F. Landa Jocano, presents well-thought-out views regarding the peopling of the archipelago, the cultural affinities of the natives of the Philippines, and the development of early society and culture among them. He proposes alternative ways of looking at ourselves, and documents his propositions with archeological evidences. It is in fact a pioneering attempt to bring together scattered facts about the prehistory of the Philippines, and to project them against a new framework of analysis.

Evidently a work of this kind will provoke more issues and questions than resolve them. Much more extensive empirical work will have to be done to fill the gaps in our knowledge as indicated by the tentative framework put forward. If the presentation of facts and their hypothesized interpretation can have the effect of charting the course of scholarship toward more definitive directions of consequence to the building of the Philippine nation, then something worthwhile would have been accomplished. That is one of the primary objectives of this work.

R. SANTOS CUYUGAN

Chancellor

Philippine Center for Advanced Studies



1

Undoubtedly, the study of prehistory is one of the fundamental preconditions for achieving a better understanding of the development of Philippine society and culture. While explicitly accepted in theory, this is often neglected in practice. In fact, only few systematic attempts have been made to study Philippine society and culture in the perspective of prehistory. One has to search for materials scattered in journals and in unpublished reports of the archaeologists and other scholars in order to acquire an overview of the nature of Filipino prehistoric culture. Often these publications and reports are not easily accessible to non-specialists and students. Thus, I hope that by putting available essential materials on prehistory in a single volume, I shall be able to provide students and laymen alike with basic information about, as well as a new perspective of, ancient Philippines.

2

The materials included in this volume have been gathered patiently over a period of almost two decades, from 1955 to 1974. However, the analytical framework of the present study was not developed until I became associated with the National Museum of the Philippines, from 1958 to 1967. Like my colleagues who are now active in prehistoric research, especially Fred Evangelista, Avelino Legaspi and Jesus Peralta, I was introduced to the fascinating study of the past through the National Museum and in close collaboration with Robert B. Fox, or Bob, as we all fondly called him. Most of us learned from Bob the rudiments of anthropological research, although Fred Evangelista had his first experience in archaeology with Prof. Wilhelm Solheim II.

During those years that we were together, at the National Museum, we constituted a team of field workers who were always out in the countryside, either digging graveyards or studying living groups of people. In the office, we were a group of workers who were incessantly at intellectual odds with each other. One of us would always take the opposite view if only to play the devil's advocate. Discussions, often characterized by heated arguments, would begin at the office and end — often in a "truce" — at a nearby coffee shop; for always, the same disagreements would emerge when similar discussions recur.

Of course there were (and still are) certain views which we all accepted as the guiding principles of our intellectual endeavors and upheld in common as the tenets of scholarship. These were: first, to search for empirical evidence before giving support to, or advancing objections against, any existing theory about Filipino prehistory and contemporary society; second, to ask questions if no empirical materials are readily available on some aspects of prehistory in order to emphasize the need for further research; third, to exercise an extremely critical attitude toward empirical evidences before accepting them as factual attributes of a cultural development; and, fourth, to develop hypotheses that can be tested rather than to arrive immediately at conclusions concerning the data on hand.

In later years, when I joined the University of the Philippines, I shifted my interest to contemporary problems. I devoted most of my research activities to peasant adaptation. However, as I became deeply involved in this research, especially when I joined the Philippine Center for Advanced Studies, I discovered that the inner dimensions of modern problems can be easily grasped and better understood if these were examined against the experiences of the past. It also became clearer and more convincing to me, as I proceeded with my work, that what we think of our culture and how we regard ourselves as a people affect our collective attitudes, aspirations and behavior as a group.

This viewpoint becomes even more important if seen in the light of an emerging national consciousness and the search for a national identity. This growing self-awareness of the people of the need for cultural identity has addressed itself to a basic question: "What is Filipino?" That this has been asked by many of us shows that somehow we are beginning to look for something more intellectually satisfying than what we know at present; to search for a heritage we can document with pride. Several factors contributed to our lack of pride in our cultural heritage. The most crucial is the advent of Western colonization. The strategy for change which Western

colonizers imposed upon local conditions and scholarship has obscured much of the dynamism of the indigenous culture and has almost succeeded in transforming the society into a cultural variant of the West.

3

Indeed, there are reasons to deplore the tragic turn of events brought about by colonization. But at the same time, there are also reasons for optimism that, eventually, the Filipino will return and become rooted to his cultural grounds. For if his responses to external influences are closely examined, his resiliency to many communal and institutional changes is impressive; it has enabled him, in fact, to survive the harshness of colonial experiences.

It cannot be denied that the Filipino borrowed cultural traits from other people whom he came in contact with. But it is equally true that he did not borrow *en toto*. He was (and still is) highly selective in his borrowings. He modified what he had chosen from foreign traditions to suit his own way of thinking, believing and doing things. Thus, while he outwardly shows the influence of the West in his behavior, he remains oriental in his world view. That is why many foreign scholars find "the Philippines and its people . . . a paradox." They noted that although Filipinos were born Asians in an Asian landscape, "they have matured within a Western matrix."

4

The task I have taken in this book is to attempt to unravel this paradox and to characterize as closely as possible our identity as a people long before our contact with the Westerners. Admittedly, this is a difficult task. Nevertheless, it is a realistic and challenging one. It is primarily the knowledge of the past which will enable us to understand better the roots of our national culture and to appreciate properly the dynamics of our contemporary society. For it is not so much, I believe, that we have borrowed from the West ideas and ways of life which have caused the paradox in our cultural orientation. Rather, it is the continuous neglect of, if not the suppression from the learning process in schools and at home of what are legitimately our own tradition, which contributes to our tacit acceptance of the idea that "we have no cultural roots to speak of." It is, therefore, in going back to prehistory that we can learn more and understand better the major elements of this social transformation. Through this route, we may be able to see, however kaleidoscopic the view may be, the emergence

of Filipino heritage and thereby pass this on to the next generation. It is hoped that the data presented in this book can give us another perspective and rectify some of our misconceptions about ourselves as a people.

Perhaps I may not achieve this ambitious objective here. But at least a start in the rethinking of our beginnings have been made. It is for the future students to complete the picture, to correct the errors as they acquire better data, and to restructure the perspective of this work if it has fallen short of their scholarly expectations. I have honestly pursued this study, through the years, not only as an academic undertaking but also as an obligation to citizenship — to being a Filipino!

F. LANDA JOCANO

Institute of Philippine Studies
Philippine Center for Advanced Studies
University of the Philippines Systems
Diliman, Quezon City
May, 1974