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Ilocano Sage: Life-Centered Education by Camilo Osias

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Portuguese travellers, predecessors of Magellan. Prior to 1512, Magellan had already distinguished himself as a skillful navigator, a brave fighting-man and a daring explorer. He also distinguished himself for his facility at making enemies of the wrong people at Court. In fact, the stature of the man is enhanced by his conduct before his private enemies no less than by his battling of ocean-currents, hunger and thirst, tropical storms and hostile ships. Charles McKew Parr has done justice to his subject, thus fulfilling a wish expressed by one of Magellan's companions on the voyage to Cebu, that "the fame of so noble a Captain will not be effaced in our time."

EDGAR A. MARTIN

ILOCANO SAGE

LIFE-CENTERED EDUCATION. By Camilo Osias. Printed by Bustamante Press, Manila. 1954. Pp. x-219. ₱5.00.

This is a deceptively simple book. Its theme is that the center around which the whole educational process should revolve is neither the child nor the subject-matter but life: "life individual, life social, life national, life international" (p. 3). Throughout the work, "life" is given a preponderantly nationalist interpretation. Life is the Filipino way of life, and since education must be life-centered, "all education" must be directed by "a clear vision of (1) a free and independent Philippines, (2) the Philippines for the Filipinos, (3) a democratic Nation cooperating with the family of nations, (4) a common country with a high destiny and (5) a united people with a noble mission" (p. 57; cf. p. 142). With this presupposition, it is natural that when there is question of defining the objectives of education, appeal is made to the Constitution of the Philippines: "all schools shall aim to develop moral character, personal discipline, civic conscience, and vocational efficiency, and to teach the duties of citizenship" (Art. XIV, Sec. 5). Appropriately enough, the Constitution is reprinted in full as an Appendix.

In Chapter XIII, on Character Education, the development of moral character is identified with the development of the distinctively Filipino virtues, of those "traits and characteristics possessed in a superlative degree by Filipinos." These

are: filial piety, hard work, thrift, faith, self-reliance, self-direction, honesty, loyalty, bravery, fortitude, discipline, patriotism, neighborliness, and self-sacrifice (p. 112). This nationalism however, must be balanced by internationalism, by the *tayo* (We-inclusive) concept which Mr. Osias developed in a previous work, *The Filipino Way of Life*, as a system of what he calls pluralized philosophy. From the interplay of these "twin principles for orientation" (Chapter XV), independence and interdependence, nationalism and internationalism, there emerges the complete Filipino citizen, living the Filipino way of life in its fulness through the assiduous practice of the superlative Filipino virtues.

With engaging informality, the author threads these formidable abstractions into a series of artless assertions that, in any other context, would sound like platitudes; but to which he is able to impart a fugitive quality of mellow wisdom, such as that which attaches to the *obiter dicta* of the village sage. It would be a great mistake to read this book as though it were a treatise on education. It is not. The content of the concepts used—life, education, democracy, freedom, character—are not critically examined. They are assumed, and it is further assumed that the reader understands them exactly as the author does. It is one of the most touching examples of unquestioning faith that this reviewer has seen in a long time.

The paragraph of the "Preface" (pp. vi-vii) which explains the title of the book is typical. "The main thesis is that life is central and that it is the business of education to enrich and elevate life—life of the individual in its integrity, life of society whole. The contention is that what is important to life is what chiefly concerns education and conversely whatever does not touch or affect life is of little or no consequence to education." In the face of such massive affirmations, it would sound like mere carping to inquire what life is, what is meant by "central," and whether there is anything that does not touch or affect life at so transcendental a level as the life of the individual in its integrity, the life of society whole. Moreover, the book does not provide the answers. Apparently, there was no intention that it should.

H. DE LA COSTA