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Colonial Manila: The Context of Hispanic Urbanism and Process of Morphogenesis

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Book Reviews

COLONIAL MANILA: THE CONTEXT OF HISPANIC URBANISM AND PROCESS OF MORPHOGENESIS. By Robert R. Reed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978, xiv, 129 pages.

The focus of this monograph is the rapid rise of Spanish Manila to its position as primate city in the first fifty years after its foundation. Unlike other Asian countries, the Philippines possessed no cities at the coming of the Spaniards. Only in Manila had there emerged supra-barangay settlements, which Reed estimates to have had no more than 2,000 inhabitants. Though this decentralized character of Philippine society did facilitate the conquest, the existence of so many widely scattered independent barangay was a major obstacle to the Spanish program of Christianization and Hispanization. The Spanish solution to this problem was the *reduccion* policy, an effort to bring the Filipinos together into towns centered around the church. Though the subsistence nature of the Philippine agricultural economy prevented more than partial success in this endeavor, the *cabeceras* organized by the missionaries were by the end of the Spanish regime to reach more than a thousand, of which twenty contained between 5,000 and 10,000 inhabitants and several regional capitals more than 20,000 each.

Though the *reduccion* policy was of limited success, and that only over a considerable time, the Spanish colonial policy of establishing a "large, well-garrisoned, and multi-functional capital city" was much more successful. After failures to establish such a capital in Cebu and Panay, where the subsistence agriculture proved insufficient to sustain a non-productive community of Spaniards, the Spanish city of Manila proved to be a great success. Among the factors favorable to it were the existence of wet-rice cultivation nearby, and particularly the development of the galleon trade, which became the center of Manila's existence.

The rest of the monograph deals with the formation of Manila as primate city. Renaissance ideals of city building are shown to have been influential, particularly as exemplified in the detailed royal instructions of 1573 on the laying out of cities in the Indies. The morphology of Spanish Manila in turn

became a model for the provincial cabeceras which grew up in the course of time. Reed traces the evolution of Intramuros from a palisaded town of nipa and bamboo to the fortified city of stone buildings which had come into existence by the end of the sixteenth century. Alongside this Spanish city, and increasingly integrated with it, were the *arrabales* or suburban towns of Extramuros, inhabited by Filipinos, Chinese, Japanese, and mestizos, in which the primate city exercised its Hispanizing and urbanizing influence.

Though the monograph is based on standard secondary sources and the known accounts of Blair and Robertson, it has marshalled the familiar factual data for a study of the beginnings of Hispanic Philippines from the point of view of the process and forms of urbanization. Well grounded in all the relevant bibliography, Reed has succeeded in giving a new dimension to the early years of Spanish settlement. This careful study of Manila's rise will be of interest not only to geographers but to historians and others as well.

John N. Schumacher, S.J.

TRADITIONAL ETHOS AND ASIAN MODERNIZATION: INDONESIA AND THE PHILIPPINES. Research Series on Asian Modernization, No. II. Prepared by the Society for the Study of Asian Ethos. Nagoya, Japan: School of Medicine, Fujitaguken University, 1976. 70 pages.

In 1974, an interdisciplinary team of six Japanese scholars visited two South-east Asian countries to examine how traditional beliefs and practices thrive as societies modernize. Three of these scholars went to Indonesia and conducted their study in two villages of Central Java and Bali. The other three went to the Philippines and pursued their inquiry in Victorias, Tarlac, and Davao City. Earlier, the researchers undertook a related investigation in Malaysia and Sri Lanka. Soon, as the foreword indicates, they will go to Korea and Taiwan to gather similar data.

This monograph presents the results of the Indonesian and Philippine study. The first three essays deal with Indonesia, specifically the characteristics of the Javanese family, the religious situation, and selected agricultural practices. The last three focus on the Philippines and pay attention to the characteristics of the social structure, forms of community cooperation, and assorted religious practices. All the articles are brief, descriptive pieces which provide many informative details; but save one, these articles break no new paths. In this one article, titled "The Barrio Community as a Cooperative Entity in Central Luzon," the author, Kimitoshi Murakami, systematically argues that because Filipinos do not hold common lands, they have developed other sources of material and mutual cooperation. Chief of these sources are kinship (*magkamag-anak* and *magkasam-bahay*), neighboring (*magkapit-bahay*), and group religious worship. Murakami also observes the