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Kasaysayan: The Story of the Filipino People

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versial stock option, which is supposed to be the method by which Hacienda Luisita managed to evade distribution. For Reyes, these other modes are workable for as long as credit access is guaranteed and these will genuinely empower the farmer-beneficiaries.

These examples can certainly give one a flavor of the rather lucid, coherent yet essentially pragmatic approach that the proposals all convey. If the essays are found wanting, it is that for the reader who want to embark on an advocacy for these proposals, one would wish for a more detailed policy proposal. For example, to push forth Reyes's multimodal approach, one would like to know which particular provisions in the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law and Implementing Rules and Regulations need to be revised and how. In Leonor Briones and Nepomuceno Malaluan's tax proposals, one would like to know the precise adjustments needed in the so-called fair market valuation of property in the assessment of property taxes for these tax measures to yield more revenue and discourage land as a speculative investment. One would like to know what legal provisions or program finetuning need to be focused on to encourage more membership in the Social Security System, as proposed by Eduardo Gonzalez.

In many ways, the pressing need for many NGOs, POs and other advocacy groups are more detailed policy proposals which they can provide legislators and government decision-makers to consider enacting. The book provides excellent rationale, analyses and directions but may not be the very documents that can be useful for lobbying.

Nonetheless, the essays are a necessary read for anyone who would now want the masses to get a greater share of the fruits of liberalization. The proposals are based on solid historical analysis and research and are products of unassailable argument and logic. They are truly pragmatic and workable.

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Kasaysayan: The Story of the Filipino People. 10 vols. Asia Publishing Co. Ltd., 1998.

The need for a comprehensive history of the Philippines is finally met with the publication of *Kasaysayan*, a joint venture of A-Z Direct Marketing of the Philippines and the Reader's Digest. This ten-volume work delivers what its title promises: a narrative—and on the whole, a meaningful one—of the Filipino people. Each volume focuses on a period of Philippine history, and comes with a reference list, an index, and short essays intermittently interspersed among the major entries (to "lend a more personal and often poignant touch to every volume").

The first two volumes, written by Raymundo Punongbayan, Prescillano Zamora, Perry Ong, Fr. Gabriel Casal, Eusebio Dizon, Wilfredo Ronquillo, and Cecilo Salcedo, are on the formation of the Philippine archipelago and the prehistorical Filipinos, respectively. As such, they are more archeological and geological than historical in the popular sense. The essays read like entries in any other encyclopedia on such arcania (to some people, at least) as topography, evolution, tectonics, mineralogy, deforestation, and paleontology, with the Philippines as the "specimen." The writers, to their credit, attempt to Filipinize the discussion. For example, they compare the earth to an avocado, the crust, mantle, and core corresponding to the fruit's skin, flesh, and seed. Then, we find this description of the continents: "One can then imagine the continents as iceberg of granite floating in a denser medium of oceanic basalt, like *bancas* floating in water" (p. 30). Local myths and legends about the islands are also recounted, enlivening what might otherwise be a dreary technical text.

It is in volume three that the *kasaysayan* or story begins. Three volumes are devoted to the Spanish colonial period; one to the American colonial period; another to the Japanese occupation; and two more volumes to the post-liberation Philippines. Volume ten contains a glossary of the technical and local terms used in the other nine volumes and a comprehensive chronology—in itself a feat of scholarship—beginning with the conjectured formation of the earth to the EDSA event of 1986. In these volumes we see once again, but certainly no longer "through a glass darkly," the precolonial peoples' medley of mores and manners; the enterprise and pluck of foreign missionaries and explorers eager to capture the islands for cross or crown, and the equally fervent spirit of Filipino reformers and revolutionists to liberate these; the "epistemic restructuring"—at times systematic, at other times accidental, always challenged and ultimately transformed by the native sensibility—wrought by centuries of colonization; the terrors of the Marcos years and the brief euphoria at EDSA.

As books, the set has everything that people have come to expect from the Reader's Digest: illustrations that are as telling as the texts themselves, binding as handsome as it is firm, sedulous scholarship forged in impeccable but also accessible English prose. An especial attraction is the pictures not found in any other history book, such as covers of the *Shin Seki* (the Japanese-controlled magazine of the war years), rare prints and photographs of the country found in European periodicals, paintings by Filipino masters, and excerpts from incunabula, official letters and documents (centuries-old, written in flowing calligraphic script, illuminated with colorful figures, borders, and patterns)—all culled from various libraries in the Philippines, Europe and the United States. Thus, the set has the charming quaintness of an archive without the attendant dust or the gloom.

As history, the set deserves study, even as it aids scholars in *their* study of history. As history is no longer the neutral inquiry that it once was be-

lieved to be, historiography itself can be as interesting as the traditional "stuff" of history—the places, dates, names, events, and quotations that luxuriate in most history books. In the case of *Kasaysayan*, what is immediately striking is the diversity of the writers. Jose Arcilla, S.J., Maria Serena Diokno, Ramon Villegas, Milagros Guerrero, John Schumacher, S.J., Ricardo Jose, Alexander Magno, Henry Totanes—these cover practically the entire ideological spectrum. Add to the list the contributors of the short essays and the editors, among them, Doreen G. Fernandez, Ambeth Ocampo, N.V.M. Gonzalez, Bienvenido Lumbera, Nicanor G. Tiongson, Reynaldo Iletto, Resil Mojares, Luis Teodoro, Damiana Eugenio, Fernando Zialcita, Antoon Postma, Teresita Ang See, Virgilio Almario, Rosario Cruz-Lucero, Gemino Abad, Cristina Pantoja-Hidalgo, Ma. Luisa Aguilar-Cariño, Monina Allerey Mercado, Sheila Coronel, Rodrigo Paras-Perez III, Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc, Lorenzo Tan, and Jessica Zafra, and one gets many histories—and as many biases.

It would not be difficult to imagine a debate among them, and among the readers of the set, over this seemingly harmless statement, for example, following a summary of the legend of the Chocolate Hills: "Fortunately, there are more realistic explanations for the making of mountains and mountain ranges" (Vol. I, p. 67). Or the following from the third volume:

Their [the natives'] religious practices often demanded propitiatory sacrifices of their products. In a few cases, they killed people sacrificially to win the gods' favor. . . . When the missionaries showed them the cross with Jesus nailed to it, they naturally asked for an explanation. This was the opportunity to explain the meaning of the love of the Christian God, who died for his people / instead of demanding death. (pp. 97-98)

Certainly this, from the ninth volume, apropos of the "snap elections" of February 1986: "If it was any consolation for Marcos, one element in his strategic calculation did happen: the powerful but hopelessly predictable Communist Party of the Philippines called for a boycott of the elections" (p. 98).

Some more progressive and "postmodern" historiographers might question the very division of *Kasaysayan* into "periods." Is history as linear as it appears to be? Whose categories of meaning (of *saysay*) do we follow? Whose interests do we protect when we do? But then, majority of readers may not be ready for—or may not yet be willing to accept—the tenets of postmodern historiography. In addition, the very diversity of the writers creates a space, however little, for opposing voices, for different narratives. For example, we read not only the popular account of the revolution, whose centennial is the occasion for the publication of the set, as an *ilustrado* event (in a sense, a distant offspring of European enlightenment), but also the alternative interpretation that it was as much, in the words of the nationalist historian Teodoro Agoncillo, a "revolt of the masses." Perhaps, it should come as no surprise that the executive editor of *Kasaysayan* is a fictionist, Jose Dalisay, Jr.

The numerous inset essays, or sidebars, are another outlet for alternative histories, for things which we would otherwise forget: the flavors of precolonial cuisine, landscaping under the colonial masters, the native concept of beauty, the modes of leisure in Old Manila, the role of the Chinese merchant in the colonial economy, the lives of history's mysterious mistresses, the role of women in the revolution, the little-known myths and legends of different ethnic groups, even a recipe for *paella* at the turn of the century. Written as they are by people of widely different backgrounds and persuasions, the essays are a melange of styles and subjects that range from the scientific to the personal, the dramatic to the trifling. It is these little narratives of the Ambeth Ocampo variety that remind us that history can be as personal and intimate as it is grand and inexorable. For some readers, in fact, these short essays are more inviting than the major articles.

All in all, *Kasaysayan* is itself an historical and historic event. Along with the 55-volume Blair and Robertson, the *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art*, and the *Filipino Heritage*, it deserves a place in the shelf of any respectable Philippine library. Like its predecessors, and until such time as a radically different version of history and history writing emerges (which certainly would make mention of the set), it is bound to be well-thumbed, oft-quoted, and (in Philippine libraries at least) much photocopied.

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Los Vascos y America: La Política Religiosa del Alaves Simon de Anda y Salazar en Filipinas. By Marta Maria Manchado Lopez. Bilbao: Fundacion BBV, 1997. 125 pages.

Simon de Anda y Salazar is known in Philippine history as the deputy governor who slipped through the British cordon in 1762. He saved that year's *situado*, or million-peso subsidy from Mexico, from falling into British hands, and established a resistance government in Bulacan that kept the British from occupying more than the city and the Cavite shipyard. His guerrilla units also wreaked havoc on their patrols. As a reward, he was appointed governor-general of the Philippines from 1770-76.

He was an intransigent regalist, and as the top colonial official in the Philippines, he fought to keep the privileges of the Patronato real intact, and had no qualms expelling any and all friars who refused to accept his ruling, especially on episcopal visitation.

This happened in 1771, when he imposed episcopal visitation on the Augustinians in Pampanga. As in previous years, the friars refused. They threatened to abandon their parishes and missions, rather than submit to