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Knowledge Plus Affection Equals Insight: The Philippines: A Young Republic on the Move

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KNOWLEDGE PLUS AFFECTION EQUALS INSIGHT

THE PHILIPPINES: A YOUNG REPUBLIC ON THE MOVE.

By Albert Ravenholt. Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1962. 204 pp.

During his years as Philippine correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News* and as a member of the American University Field Staff, Albert Ravenholt has become well acquainted with Philippine life and made many friends. Both his knowledge and his affection come through in this book.

It is his hope, he states in his introduction, to convey the perspective from which Filipinos view the little matters of daily life and the affairs of the world; an awareness of this perspective will help the non-Filipino to enjoy, understand, and work creatively with the Filipino.

Ravenholt also asks some specific questions whose answers have implications for the world's developing, newly independent republics: (1) What forces have shaped the Filipino so that in less than two decades as an independent nation the Philippines "has evolved a pattern of self-government that is relatively stable, that is responsive to the need for change and yet at the same time safeguards human rights?" and (2) What effect might this progressive attitude have on Asian neighbors struggling with similar problems of growth?

Ravenholt suggests answers by presenting a comprehensive description of the Philippines: its geography and people, its history from prehistoric migrations through Spanish and American rule to the present, its economy, social organization, religion, arts, politics, and education, and finally its prospects for the future. In his brief discussion of these topics the author has managed to include most of the relevant facts. What is especially gratifying is that he does so in an interesting, easily read manner.

Among the many admirably written sections, the one on religion deserves special mention here, for it should give the over-complacent Roman Catholic Filipino cause for reflection. Ravenholt points to the numerous folk elements that traditionally dominate Philippine Catholicism, often to the detriment of the main body of Catholic doctrine and practice. He adds:

It is one of the tragedies of this only predominantly Christian nation of the Orient that the alteration now under way in the role of religion in Filipino life has come not so much through more enlightened understanding of the Scriptures, but as a consequence of the impact of modern science, education, and technology. Instead of the Filipino building a total scheme of life around a new concept of his relationship to God, he often has tended to compartmentize religion. (p. 137)

While Ravenholt goes on to cite some of the more progressive church-sponsored programs aimed at adapting the society to a 20th-century environment, the reader cannot help remembering the sobering picture of secularism presented earlier.

Here and there in the book, one comes across distracting errors which could have been avoided had specialists been consulted. The Ibanag are placed in the Bicol Peninsula of southeast Luzon (p. 15) instead of in the Cagayan River Valley, some 300 miles to the north. The author uses the vague cover term, "Mangyan," for the mountain peoples of central Mindoro when they are in reality distinct ethnic groups. He would have done well to explain "Mangyan" as he did the analogous term "Igorot" used in reference to the mountain peoples of northern Luzon (p. 13). The Badjaw of southern Sulu (locally called Pala-u) are listed among the "Muslim Moros" (p. 16) when religion is one of the major distinctions setting the pagan Badjaw apart from the neighboring Muslim Taosug and Samal. The term "Muslim Moro" is itself tautological: a "Moro" is a Muslim Filipino.

The student of Philippine prehistory will recognize that Ravenholt has accepted H. Otley Beyer's tentative reconstruction and chronology of the Philippines before Magellan. It might have been good to stress the conjectural nature of these estimates (as Dr. Beyer himself does in his scholarly writings), if only out of consideration for those of us whose task it is to test and perhaps modify the grand scheme that Beyer has given us.

Ravenholt speaks of the linguistic fragmentation in the Philippines as if it results mainly or even exclusively from the arrival of "successive waves of migrants" (p. 31). Present evidence indicates, on the contrary, that most of the language differences found in the Philippines today are the temporary end-products of changes that have taken place within the Philippines during the past one thousand years or so. In speaking of the pre-Spanish system of writing, the author refers to it as "alphabetical" (p. 155), thereby repeating a common error. What was used (and is still used in parts of Mindoro and Palawan) is a *syllabary*, in which each symbol signifies both a consonant sound and a following vowel.

The author's failure to consult reliable sources has led to further inaccuracies. The Philippine Independent (Aglipayan) Church does not number among its members "roughly one out of every ten Filipinos" (p. 140). Census figures show that in 1948 its percentage of the Philippine population was 7.6; in 1960, 5.2—roughly one out of every 20. Further, that the Iglesia ni Kristo "approximates in membership the Philippine Independent Church" (p. 141) is hardly tenable; the 1948 and 1960 census figures were 0.5 and 1.0 per

cent, respectively. The total membership of the Iglesia ni Kristo in 1960 was 270,104, a far cry from the three million repeatedly quoted in the public press and apparently accepted by Ravenholt. His figures for the Roman Catholic Church are taken from the "most recent Catholic Directory" (p. 139) which, to judge from the totals given by the author, was the 1961 edition, reporting the Philippine situation as of the end of 1960. The quoted Catholic population figure of "slightly more than 20,000,000" was actually an underestimate, since the Philippine Census for 1960 gives 22,686,096 (83.8 per cent) as the official total.

The sociologist aware of more recent research on the Filipino family will regret the unqualified repetition of the usual stereotypes about the overwhelming closeness of extended family ties in the Philippines. While kinship is undoubtedly important, there is strong evidence to show that binding social relationships are not limited to blood relatives and compadres. A more accurate model is the alliance system, which encompasses kinship as only *one* of the influential factors in the individual's selection of his close associates. The author himself implies this when he speaks of frequent reshuffles in political leadership alliances, without attributing these shifts solely to kinship.

There are other inaccuracies of less consequence. The Filipino reader, at least, will know that by the "National Integration Commission" (p. 15) is meant the Commission on National Integration, or CNI; that the "Tao Suug" (p. 16) are the Taosug; and that "San Isidro de Labrador" (p. 137) is San Isidro Labrador.

When one considers these small errors and the other misstatements mentioned above, he realizes that Ravenholt makes the right kind of mistakes, the kind that is easily pointed out and corrected. Filipinos and others well acquainted with the Philippines will give little weight to these errors as over against the author's skillful handling of emotion-laden local issues. In this he shows a rare sensitivity to Filipino feelings.

When Ravenholt criticizes and passes judgment on events and personalities, he does so from inside, as it were, with the tone of one who is himself involved. The Filipino resident, whose daily newspaper keeps him well informed of the problems of Philippine political and economic growth, may even feel that the author is *too* kind in his comments, and a little too rough on American policy.

In any event, a pro-Filipino bias is not a bad thing in a book of this kind, for it may generate in the newcomer for whom it was written a starting point for better understanding.

By presenting the broad picture in so favorable a light, the author does a service to all Filipinos, and particularly to the critical Filipino. In his impatience at their cautious approach to the changes demanded by economic development, this Filipino tends to lose sight of the overall achievements of his countrymen. Perhaps he will gather new courage through the perspective provided by Ravenholt. For when placed on the spectrum of newly independent republics, and even a few older ones, the Philippines is clearly a nation on the move.

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THE YOUNG SCIENTISTS

SCIENCE IN OUR SURROUNDINGS, BOOK TWO, with EXPERIMENT AND DEMONSTRATION MANUAL. By Fe San Juan. Baguio City: Catholic School Press, 1961. 528 pp. and 175 pp.

This book is the author's second attempt at the difficult but necessary task of adapting science teaching to Philippine situations and conditions. It is an appropriate follow-up to her first endeavor (see *Philippine Studies*, April 1961) and aims at serving as a text of the general science course for second-year students in Philippine high schools. That there is a need for such a text hardly needs mention.

Like the author's first work, this book also deals with such basic science subjects as biology, chemistry, physics, geology and astronomy. However, whereas the first book, which was prepared for first-year high-school students, deals mainly with fundamental concepts about science, this book puts emphasis on the benefits derived from science. A review of the basic scientific concepts taken up in Book One and additional information on scientific principles are given in this text for the purpose of explaining to the students the theories behind scientific achievements.

The author's hope is that by acquainting students at this stage with the contributions of science to mankind, their interest in a scientific career will be aroused. The book contains much interesting material to arouse their enthusiasm.

Like the author's earlier text, this one is divided into units, which in turn are subdivided into chapters. There are all in all thirty-four chapters grouped under twelve units. Review questions and suggested student's activities follow each chapter. The different sets of review ques-