

Chapter Three

New States and Reorientations, 1368–1764

TRANSFORMATIONS IN COMMERCE AND RELIGION

The first emperor of China's Ming dynasty (1368–1644) declared a new policy in 1368: Maritime trade would henceforth be a government monopoly. Only countries recognized as tribute-paying vassals would be permitted to trade with China, and private trade would no longer be allowed. This new definition of the tribute trade refocused Southeast Asian polities both economically and politically. The Chinese emperor welcomed tribute missions bringing goods, information, and affirmations of loyalty; Southeast Asian polities with the organizational and financial resources took advantage of the opportunity. These included at least twenty-two places in the Philippines: For example, "Luzon" sent missions in 1372, 1405, and 1410, and the rising southern port of Sulu sent six missions between 1370 and 1424. Some rulers traveled to China to pay fealty in person, and when one Sulu ruler died at the Chinese court, he was given a respectful funeral attended by the emperor. Official Chinese ships paid return visits to recognize their vassals—Admiral Zheng He's seven expeditions from 1405 to 1443 included one or two visits to Sulu. The number of Ming ceramics found in Philippine archaeological sites and shipwrecks confirm the high level of trade in the Ming period.

These parameters for the tribute trade lasted only about a century before Chinese emperors abandoned state trading. But it was long enough to stimulate the development of powerful port-states throughout the region. On the mainland, Ayutthaya (in Thailand), Champa (southern Vietnam), and Cambodia and, in island Southeast Asia, Brunei, Java, and Melaka all benefited from Chinese engagement. Melaka was established about 1400 by a prince in exile from Srivijaya. On the west coast of the Malay Peninsula facing the strait

that came to bear its name, Melaka (Malacca) was in a position to control maritime trade between India and China. The Ming trade edict offered the first rulers of this new port-state a timely opportunity, and they made several personal appearances at the Chinese capital to secure the emperor's backing.

The port-state polities that grew during the Ming tribute trade were urban and cosmopolitan. Their populations reached 100,000 or more, comprised of the diverse groups who traded in the region—Chinese and Southeast Asians, Indians, Arabs, Turks, and Armenians. After the Chinese emperors lost interest in the southern trade, these port-states continued to dominate the region as political, commercial, and cultural centers until the end of the sixteenth century. They played a particularly important role in the diffusion of Islam as a faith and political system.

At this juncture—with the Philippine archipelago on the brink of historic reorientations in religion and governance—it is worth considering again its place in Southeast Asia. To some people, the conversion of most of the population to Hispanic Catholicism over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries confirms a sense of cultural apartness; some Filipinos even see it as diversion from an “authentic” identity. When viewed from a wider lens, however, we see that the whole region was undergoing tremendous change at this time, much of which served to differentiate one area from another. Anthony Reid, a historian who has written extensively on early modern Southeast Asia, argues that religious change often occurs during upheavals and disruptions of the old order that highlight inadequacies in the old belief system: “The period 1550–1650 was such a period of dislocation in Southeast Asia as a whole . . . one that stimulated a remarkable period of conversion toward both Sunni Islam and Catholic Christianity.”¹ For the Philippine and eastern Indonesian archipelagos, which became targets of commercial and territorial conquest and competing missionary pressure, this period certainly represented a disruption of the old order. In this sense, the Philippines was well within the regional mainstream of religious change. And like religions already practiced in Southeast Asia, Islam and Christianity closely linked spirituality to governance.

Islam

Islam had first entered Southeast Asia in the thirteenth century through Indian and Arab traders and missionaries who converted port rulers on the coasts of Sumatra and Java. By the fourteenth century, the Mongol-ruled Yuan dynasty of China had conquered Muslim regions as far west as Baghdad, facilitating the flow of Muslim scholars, preachers, and traders into East and Southeast Asia. The Ming tribute trade beginning in 1368 brought even

more traffic, including Chinese Muslim merchants and Arab and Indian missionaries. The first important commercial center in Southeast Asia to convert to Islam was Melaka, heir to Hindu-Buddhist Srivijaya's geographical reach and cultural pull. Srivijaya's court style—based on loyalty to the ruler, hierarchy, marriage alliances, and the proceeds of thriving trade—did not disappear with Melaka's conversion, but was gradually imbued with Islamic traits, beliefs, and practices. The court language of Malay, widely used throughout the maritime region, began to be written in Arabic script, and the Arabic language itself replaced Sanskrit as the source of new terminologies of governance. As Melaka's power and commercial success grew, so did the moral, military, and commercial momentum of the new faith among port rulers seeking advantage against rivals.

A Muslim ruler found that Islam helped him build and centralize political power, which rested on three bases: material reward, coercion, and spiritual power. Conversion strengthened a datu's commercial advantages through favored access to growing Muslim trade networks. Greater wealth led to more armed troops and slaves, which in turn increased the ability to collect tribute and make alliances. The third element of power was more complicated. Certain aspects of Islam—equality of all believers before God, the importance of religious officials, a body of learning external to the realm—challenged older forms of spiritual power. The Muslim ruler was not divine, but “God's shadow on earth” and defender of the faith. Yet a royal ruler—a *sultan*—was imbued with a charge of spiritual power (*daulat*) that had clear antecedents in pre-Islamic culture. So the surrounding religious experts, rather than competing with his spiritual power, worked in its service to “overrule” local spirits and local datus alike. The faith also lent the ruler moral justification for conquering rivals and final authority in appointing religious officials and adjudicating disputes.

Sultans commissioned royal genealogies and claimed the right to bequeath power to their heirs, a significant institutionalization of political power. Subordinate datus benefited too, with higher status and titles—especially those in charge of the palace and the port. The datu class as a whole took advantage of greater social stratification by distinguishing itself as “nobility.” This “sanctified inequality” justified exaction of tribute from commoners and made datuship hereditary in fact as well as in name.²

Sulu, the island group near northeast Borneo, was home to the first sultanate and supra-barangay state in the Philippine archipelago. Sulu appeared in Chinese records beginning in 1349 and sent several tribute missions during the early Ming dynasty. According to historian Cesar Majul, Sulu was visited by Chinese Muslim traders and Arab missionaries who began to spread the faith in the late fourteenth century. Paduka Batara, the Sulu ruler who died



Figure 3.1. The Mosque at Tawi-Tawi: Said to be the first in the Philippines (courtesy of the Philippine National Historical Institute)

in China, left two sons to be raised among Chinese Muslims. But Sulu did not have a Muslim ruler until about 1450, when Rajah Baginda (a Minangkabau prince) and Sayyid Abu Bakr (*sayyid* signifies descent from the Prophet Muhammad) fled Sumatra after its defeat by non-Muslim Javanese. Baginda arrived in Sulu with a group of wealthy merchants and married locally, but lacked the spiritual credentials to become more than a paramount datu. Abu Bakr, with his prestigious lineage, had the necessary stature. He allied with Baginda by marrying his daughter and became Sultan Sharif ul-Hashim.

Majul tells us that Abu Bakr introduced “not Islam as such but Islam as a form of state religion with its attendant political and social institutions” modeled on those of Melaka.³ The sultanate spread its religion and authority from the port of Jolo to the interior of Sulu and neighboring islands, claiming ownership of land and rights over all subject peoples. Authority was established through missionary activity and the creation of political districts. Each district was administered by a *panglima*, an official one rank lower than a *datu*, who collected taxes, adjudicated disputes, organized conscripted labor, and announced royal decrees. A later observer confirmed the centralization of Muslim polities, noting that laws were enacted by “the greatest chief, whom all the rest obeyed.”⁴ Sulu’s diverse population was incorporated into the authority of the sultanate through the assignment of *panglima* posts to leading

members of each resident community, including the Chinese, Tausug, and Sama-Bajaw ethnic groups.⁵ The Tausug were the dominant local group, with whom the new rulers intermarried; their language began to borrow heavily from Malay and to be written in the Arabic script.

As rulers converted to Islam, their subjects followed. Contemporary Arab and European observers noted, however, how little their lifestyles changed with conversion, sometimes entailing only abstention from eating pork. Ignorance of the Koran, arbitrary application of Islamic law, and marriage with nonbelievers frequently persisted. This is an example of localization—Islam being incorporated gradually into existing beliefs and practices, as it continues to be today. Groups that did not accept Islam were proselytized, but generally not forcibly converted as long as they accepted the political authority of the sultanate. Nevertheless, they were clearly set apart from the community, and were henceforth treated differently from Muslims (see box 3.1).

The important new division between believers and nonbelievers—those inside and those outside the community—is reflected in the practice of slavery. Among Muslims, who were considered equal before God, slaves were no longer taken except in debt bondage; chattel slaves who accepted Islam were usually freed. Henceforth, non-Muslims became the targets of slave-raiding expeditions, allowing the perpetuation of a trade/slave/plunder economy. The insider-outsider division had an important effect *within* the community as well. Thomas McKenna discusses the “amalgam of armed force, material remuneration, and cultural commitment” that maintained the social order in Muslim Mindanao. According to McKenna: “The presence of disdained aliens may have worked to sustain the stratification system largely through its psychological effect on subordinates, who were inclined to draw the most meaningful social dividing line below rather than above themselves and identify with insider Muslims as opposed to outsider pagans and Christians.”⁶

Christianity

Only decades before traveling to the Philippines, Spanish Catholics had ended almost eight hundred years of Muslim political rule over much of the Iberian Peninsula (711–1492) and expelled Spanish and North African Muslims and Jews from their realm. In all their endeavors, Spanish religious zeal—the spirit of *reconquista*—was particularly acute. But the Spanish were also driven by the desire for wealth and profit, something they had in common with Muslim traders in Southeast Asia. Despite the protests of missionaries on board, the five Spanish expeditions to the Philippines in the sixteenth century frequently traded in commodities and slaves with Muslims. Without this trade, they would not have survived.

Box 3.1. Conversion Stories**Sulu**

"The hill people were still unconverted. The coast people said, 'Let's fight the hill people and convert them to Islam.' But Abubakar would not allow it, and instead told the people to pound rice and make cakes and clothing. Then the coast people marched inland to a place now called Pahayan. Abubakar sent word to the head man that he was an Arabian who could be spoken to by writing on paper. The head man, called in those days 'Tomoai,' said that he did not want to see him for he did not want to change the customs of his ancestors. So Abubakar approached and threw cakes and clothing into the houses of the [hill people]. The children ate the cakes, but the older people thought them poison and gave them to the dogs. The dogs were not killed and the children went out to the camp of Abubakar where they were treated kindly. The two tribes came to an understanding. That night Abubakar slept in the house of the chief. The chief had a dream that he was living in a large house with beautiful decorations. Abubakar interpreted the dream saying that the house was the new religion and the decorations its benefits. The news spread and after much difficulty the people were converted."

—Haji Buto, "Traditions, Customs, and Commerce of the Sulu Moros," *Mindanao Herald*, February 3, 1909, quoted in Cesar Adib Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 2d ed. (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press), 57–58

Mindanao

"Sherif Kabungsuwan sailed from Mecca with many [ships] filled with warriors and their women and children.

"After many months of travel and much fighting on both sea and land, he arrived and disembarked with part of his people at Malabang. Others of his people went on eastward to Parang-Parang, and others again went still further, to the lower Rio Grande, where they built the town of Cotabato. So were the people of Kabungsuwan divided; but he was still the ruler over all.

"After a time . . . [he found that] many of the people [in Cotabato] had ceased to regard the teachings of the Koran and had fallen into evil ways. . . . Kabungsuwan with a portion of his warriors went from Malabang to Cotabato and . . . assembled together all the people. Those of them who had done evilly and disregarded the teachings of the Koran and would not swear to repent, live in the fear of God and obey the Koran thenceforth, he drove out of the town into the hills, with their wives and children.

"These wicked ones who were thus cast out were the beginnings of the tribes of the Tirurais and Manobos, who live to the east of Cotabato in the country into which their evil forefathers were driven. And even to this day they worship not God; neither do they obey the teachings of the Koran. . . . But the people of Kabungsuwan, who regarded the teachings of the Koran and lived in fear of God, prospered and increased, and we Moros of today are their descendants."

—Samuel Lyon, "A Moro Fundamentalist: Some Teachings of Oudin, a Mahomedan Priest of Mindanao," *Asia*, February 1927, quoted in Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 66–67

The object of the Spaniards, as of the Portuguese before them and the Dutch soon to follow, was to capture and monopolize the highly profitable spice trade that stretched from a group of islands called the Moluccas (now Maluku in eastern Indonesia) to European markets. Europe was rebuilding its population and prosperity after the disastrous, plague-ridden fourteenth century and experiencing a rising demand for exotic Eastern goods that sharply spiked from 1550 to 1620.⁷ The extremely high price of spices made them among the first items of conspicuous consumption in early modern Europe. Pepper, cloves, nutmeg, and cinnamon were the fashion of the day on the tables of the rich, where "prepared foods were virtually buried under spices" and they were "passed around on a gold or silver tray—the spice platter—during the meal or just after it."⁸

Before Europeans entered the trade directly, these spices were collected from local producers by Southeast Asian traders and delivered to the Muslim entrepôts of Melaka and Aceh on the Strait of Malacca. Through the Indian Ocean, around the Indian subcontinent, and through the Persian Gulf, they were carried on Indian, Arab, or Turkish ships. Across the desert at the Mediterranean ports, the Egyptian ruler took his cut. Finally, Venetian sailors completed the last leg of the journey, bringing the now highly expensive product to European ports. Wresting this trade from Muslim control was a dream first realized—though briefly, incompletely, and quite destructively—by the Portuguese. In 1499, they began capturing seaports along the route and destroying their Muslim rivals to monopolize the trade through superior military power. In 1511, they captured Melaka, forcing the sultanate into exile.

The goal in this navigational race—by this time the Spanish were involved—was direct access to the primary producers of Maluku. Competition between the two Catholic powers was mediated by the pope, who drew a line of demarcation based on incomplete geographic knowledge and added the condition that conquered lands had to be Christianized. It was in this context that the Spanish crown, sponsoring the Italian Christopher Columbus, sought a better route, stumbled on the Western Hemisphere, and built an empire based in Mexico that enriched Spain with silver. In 1520, Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese sailor who defected to the Spanish king, sailed from Spain across the Atlantic, around South America, and over the Pacific to chart the western route to Maluku, "discovering" the Philippines along the way. In fact, Magellan may have heard about the archipelago when he was previously in Melaka, where a community of non-Muslim "Luzones," who had been loyal to the exiled sultan, still lived. A powerful indication of how cosmopolitan a world it was that the Europeans were entering was that Magellan's expedition had little trouble finding interpreters (usually slaves) who spoke languages ranging from Spanish and Arabic to Malay and Tagalog.⁹

Magellan landed in the central Philippines in 1521. He and the Visayans immediately began to trade and exchange gifts. From the Spanish side came hats, knives, mirrors, combs, bells, and ivory. The Visayans brought fish, poultry, palm wine, bananas and coconuts, ginger, and gold. One of the first *datus* encountered by the expedition was the “king” of Butuan, who “was very grandly decked out” and ate off gold dishes.¹⁰ He and Magellan became “brothers.” Magellan demonstrated his military power by firing mortars and displaying a fully armed and armored soldier.

After a few weeks of friendly meetings, eating, and drinking, the Spaniards held Easter Mass in the settlement. Two *datus* joined in the worship, kissing the cross but not making an offering nor taking communion. Before the expedition moved on, Magellan’s men erected a cross on the highest summit “for their benefit.” If they followed his admonition to “adore it” every morning, he said, nothing would harm them. In this first encounter, the Spanish clearly associated religious belief with military prowess in a way that was locally comprehensible.

This association continued when the expedition landed on Cebu Island, which Magellan had been told in Butuan was the largest settlement with the most trade. As a manufacturing center producing iron weaponry, copper and gold jewelry, cloth, and boats, Cebu depended on trade for its food and had been trading in foreign goods since at least the thirteenth century. So when Magellan arrived in 1521, Rajah Humabon welcomed him as a matter of course and tried to collect tribute from him, as he had from a recently departed Siamese vessel. Magellan refused, asserting the superiority of his own king and again demonstrating his weaponry. Upon this display of power and the whispered (but erroneous) information from a Muslim trader that these were the same people who had conquered Melaka, the rajah offered to pay tribute to Magellan’s king. Magellan responded that he sought not tribute, but trade and conversion to his religion.

Magellan made it clear that his only enemies would be “those who hate our faith,” while those who became Christian of their own free will “would be better regarded and treated than the others.” He added that as a Christian, Rajah Humabon could more easily defeat his enemies. Thereupon the rajah and his subordinate chiefs expressed interest in learning about the religion. In the next week, about eight hundred people in Cebu and some surrounding islands were baptized, taught to adore the cross daily on their knees, and asked to burn their *diwatas*. Not many were willing to take the last step. Adopting a new faith was within their cultural experience—especially with a powerful foreign missionary in their midst—but giving up access to local divinities was not. Magellan eventually convinced some by healing a sick man, and he began the process of localization when he baptized Humabon’s “queen” and

gave her a carved wooden child Jesus to take the place of her “idols.” Known as the Santo Niño, the baby Jesus image was later widely adopted by Filipino Christians. Historian Zeus Salazar traces this to “the early identification of the Christian image in Cebu (1521–1565) as the representation (*likha*) of an *an-ito* (divinity) connected with the sun, the sea and agriculture.”¹¹

Magellan also tried to reorient the existing power structure toward Spain by having all the *datus* pledge loyalty to Rajah Humabon and Humabon himself to the king of Spain. But not all were prepared to follow Humabon into alliance with the newly arrived power. One village on the neighboring island of Mactan was burned for refusing to convert and Mactan’s powerful chief, Lapulapu, took this opportunity to move against Cebu’s rajah, who was probably his brother-in-law. On his own initiative, Magellan went into battle to punish the disobedient vassal of the one whom he had declared paramount. Recklessly, he refused Humabon’s offer of reinforcements, aiming to show the power of the vastly outnumbered Christians against the assembled forces of Lapulapu. The result was a rout in which Magellan himself was killed and his body never recovered. Having failed to see the divine backing in warfare that Magellan had promised, Humabon hastily tried to recover his position by turning on the Spanish survivors. The Santo Niño was hidden away by the Visayans, and the survivors of the expedition spent several months haplessly searching for Maluku—seizing and ransoming those who crossed their path—before sailing back to Spain to complete the first circumnavigation of the globe.

Conquest and Division

Over the next fifty years, Spain sent four more expeditions, including one that first used the name “Felipinas” (after King Philip II) for some of the islands. These culminated in the expedition of Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, which returned to seize Cebu in 1565 and after three years succeeded in converting the rajahs of the Visayas to Christianity. He was aided by his recovery of the Santo Niño (which had acquired divine status in connection with Magellan’s unavenged death), key defections to his side, and the interest of local traders in doing business with the silver-rich Spaniards. According to historian William Henry Scott, “All these sellers swore allegiance to the Spanish Crown: the tribute which was required for doing business with customers who paid in hard specie and offered military protection.” This was, in other words, “no more than an ordinary example of . . . interisland politics.”¹²

Legazpi’s position in the Visayas was tenuous, however. He faced food shortages and attacks from the Portuguese. Another problem became apparent when “seven or eight Luzon natives came to see the Spaniards and asked

for permission to come there and trade. . . . The[ir] ships were laden with . . . iron, tin, ceramics, scarves, light wool cloth, glossy and fine tafettas and other Chinese goods, spices and other miscellaneous things.”¹³ Legazpi reported to the viceroy of Mexico that Maynilad (Manila) on the northern island of Luzon would be a superior base because of its direct access to the China trade, which did not come to Cebu. In 1571, the fledgling state followed the trade as Legazpi mounted a military expedition to the north.

Maynilad in the sixteenth century was an emerging center within the orbit of Brunei, a sultanate on the north coast of Borneo that was a powerful rival of Sulu. Chinese sources tell us that at its height Brunei had a fleet of more than one hundred war vessels; its ruler traveled with an entourage of five hundred armed men and in a raid on Sulu acquired two large pearls and the daughter of the ruler in marriage.¹⁴ Brunei’s power extended east from the island of Borneo to the Sulu archipelago and north to Palawan and into Luzon. Maynilad’s rulers were Brunei aristocrats intermarried with Tagalog elites. The Maynilad ruling class was bilingual in Malay and Tagalog, and the latter was rapidly absorbing Malay vocabulary in the fields of commerce, material culture, and religion. Unlike the Visayans, who seem not to have had writing when the Spaniards arrived, many Tagalogs were literate in their local script. But unlike the Tausugs in Sulu and Malays in Melaka and Brunei, their language was not yet written in the Arabic script. They were observed to have only rudimentary knowledge of Islam, which was not widespread in the area.

The ruler of Maynilad was the son of a Luzon datu and grandson of a Brunei king; Brunei Malays also ruled Tondo and other settlements around Manila Bay. In the absence of strongly centralized authority, however, they were unable to mount an effective defense against the Spanish. One datu who signed a treaty with Legazpi told him, “There is no king and no sole authority in this land; but everyone holds his own view and opinion, and does as he prefers.”¹⁵ With the help of six hundred Visayan troops, Legazpi conquered Maynilad and surrounding settlements and renamed it Manila.

With Legazpi’s victory in 1571, the Spanish establishment of Manila set out to redefine the archipelago internally and resituate it in relation to the Asian trade. The enormity of the endeavor cannot be overstated. Like their Muslim rivals, the Spanish sought to replace “pagan” beliefs with a religion of the book. Moreover, they tried to bring all the islands under a single political and religious authority for the first time. This process was neither unopposed nor completely successful. Among the islands Spain claimed were Maluku and Mindanao. For a period in the seventeenth century, when the Spanish and Portuguese crowns were united, Spain did control Maluku, but the Dutch eventually proved stronger. Mindanao remained beyond Spain’s

control until almost the end of its three-hundred-year colonial tenure and was never administered internally. Maluku is now part of Indonesia and Mindanao is a (contested) part of the Philippines. It could have been otherwise; the geobody we now call “the Philippines” was not yet determined.

The extension of Spanish rule through lowland Luzon and the Visayas took many decades of combined military and missionary action. Like other colonial powers, the Spanish did not have much manpower and relied on a combination of local alliances and superior firepower. Inducements offered to datu to accept the new authority included gifts, housing, medical treatment, protection from soldiers, and the ritual and pageantry of Catholic practice. If this failed, settlements were razed and conquered populations controlled by militias. But the primary agents of *conquista espiritual* (spiritual conquest) were Spanish friars—Augustinian, Franciscan, Jesuit, Dominican, and Augustinian Recollect missionaries. Because Spain’s “right” to the Philippines had been granted by the pope on condition of Christianizing its inhabitants, these religious orders were official agents of the colonial state assigned to different parts of the archipelago.

The mission to convert was inseparable from the goal of political pacification. Missionary friars became parish priests, learning local languages and living among their converts in an effort to “translate” Christianity into local cultures and stamp out worship of local spirits. Under their leadership, everyday life was framed and regulated by church teachings and guidelines. The friar was everywhere—mobilizing people for state and church work, cajoling their support through sermons, and punishing the sins they revealed in confession. For the friar, religion was a tool of both liberation and subordination. Imbued with a deep sense of righteousness and moral ascendancy, the friar hoped the conversion of the “heathens” would bring about their salvation. At the same time, the threat of eternal damnation helped ensure loyalty to the church and colonial state.

As acculturation to Christianity progressed, important continuities and underlying patterns persisted, as they did in Islamized areas. Converts adopted Christian teachings and rituals creatively, blending them with pre-Spanish norms and practices to create a “folk Catholicism” unique to the Philippines.¹⁶ Typical examples were the adoption of Catholic icons to correspond to the waning power of specific anito and diwata and the worship of revered ancestors along with the new Catholic saints (who were seen, reasonably enough, as revered ancestors of the Spanish). Filomeno Aguilar argues that local animism and Hispanic Catholicism of the time were fundamentally alike: “The *indio* [native] and the Spaniard shared an intrinsically similar worldview founded upon a solid belief in a nonmaterial yet palpable reality . . . populated by spirit-beings with power to affect and even determine

worldly affairs. With that spiritual realm humans communicated through words and actions performed by individuals possessing specialized sacral knowledge, hence the mediating role of priests and shamans [baylan]."¹⁷ This similarity greatly aided in the conquest of the Philippines: Just as *datu* power had an important spiritual component, so would the power of the colonial state rely heavily on spiritual conquest.

Another important component of *conquista espiritual* was hostility to Islam, which complemented the Muslim distinction between believers and non-believers. Because Muslims were highly resistant to missionary efforts, Spaniards saw them as qualitatively different from the "heathens" they were Christianizing. The Spanish referred to the new Christians of Luzon and the Visayas, who would eventually comprise the majority population of the Philippines, as *indios* or *naturales* (natives). They called the Muslims "Moros" after the hated Moors of Islamic Spain, and they described Islam as a noxious weed that "had taken root in [Brunei] before we took possession of the Philippines; and from that island they had come to preach it in Manila, where they had begun to teach it publicly when our people arrived and tore it up by the roots."¹⁸ Once Manila was secure, the Spanish sent military expeditions against Brunei, cutting its political and economic links with the archipelago.

The proximity of Spanish power caused Brunei to go into decline, concentrated anti-Spanish Muslims in Sulu, and encouraged the spread of Islam in the south.¹⁹ This created a lasting new division within the territory that would become the Philippines and undercut the Spanish attempt to rule the entire archipelago. Earlier divisions of language and local polity now became religious-political, with the rival states oriented to different universal centers, legal systems, and moral codes. Language and naming was especially sensitive to the localization process, as seen in the titles earlier adopted from Malay-Sanskrit. Now, in an era of mass conversion, the names of ordinary individuals became markers of identity tied to a larger Catholic or Muslim world: Baptized Christians took Hispanic Christian names, while converts to Islam adopted Arabic Muslim names.

From this time on, Christian communities feared Moro slave raids (as well as attacks from mountain communities who resisted Christian conversion). Disarmed and forbidden to retaliate, Christians quickly forgot that they themselves had recently engaged in such raids; they and the Spanish alike condemned Moro "barbarians." Meanwhile, Islam spread through southern Mindanao from the port city of Cotabato, and Muslim political practice continued in the usual way: "When they find themselves beset by the troops from Filipinas, they make an alliance and help one another."²⁰

SPANISH RULE: SOCIAL, SPATIAL, AND SPIRITUAL REDEFINITION

Reducción and Friar Power

From thirteen missionary friars in 1576, the population of Spanish "religious" (members of missionary orders) in the islands grew to 269 by 1594. This was still insufficient to control and Christianize perhaps 750,000 people living in scattered, independent settlements. *Conquista espiritual* was therefore accompanied by resettlement. In a process called *reducción*, barangays were coaxed or coerced into towns (*cabeceras*) organized around a newly built church with resident friar. *Reducción* was a long process, as whole barangays fled to the mountains to avoid conquest or families slipped away after the soldiers left the area. Most reluctant converts were gradually brought into *visitas*, small outlying settlements equipped with a chapel to receive a visiting friar. *Reducción* eventually achieved the remapping of Philippine settlement patterns into today's *cabeceras* (district capitals), *poblaciones* (towns), *barrios* or barangays (villages), and *sitios* (hamlets). The object of *reducción* was to bring all *indios* into Christian communities *bajo de la campana* (under the church bells) and to accurately count the population in order to collect the tribute—the combined goals of church and state carried out under friar supervision.

The new political and spiritual order was reflected spatially in town planning. Even when sited on an older settlement, the *cabecera* departed from "organic" indigenous organization—houses arranged linearly along a river or next to kin—to follow "rational" lines derived from classical Western theory. These included open spaces, a nearby body of water, and an orderly grid in which the rank of persons and institutions was clearly visible. There was some variation between coastal and inland towns, and not all achieved the ideal, but in the basic plan, a quadrilateral *plaza mayor* (open square) housed the church and *convento* (friar's residence), civic buildings, and homes of prominent Spaniards and *indios*.²¹ The church was the most impressive building and a visible representation of Spanish power. It was the first to be constructed of stone—built with tribute and unpaid labor—and towered above native and civic structures. In coastal towns, the church faced the sea, where its bell tower, an adjacent structure, served also as a watchtower against Muslim raids. In commercial towns, including Manila, certain sections were fortified against invasion, a new manifestation of the insider-outsider dynamic seen in precolonial and Islamized communities. Inside the walls (an area called "Intramuros" in Manila) resided Spaniards, leading *indios*, and important institutions of church and state. Outside lived non-Christians, common

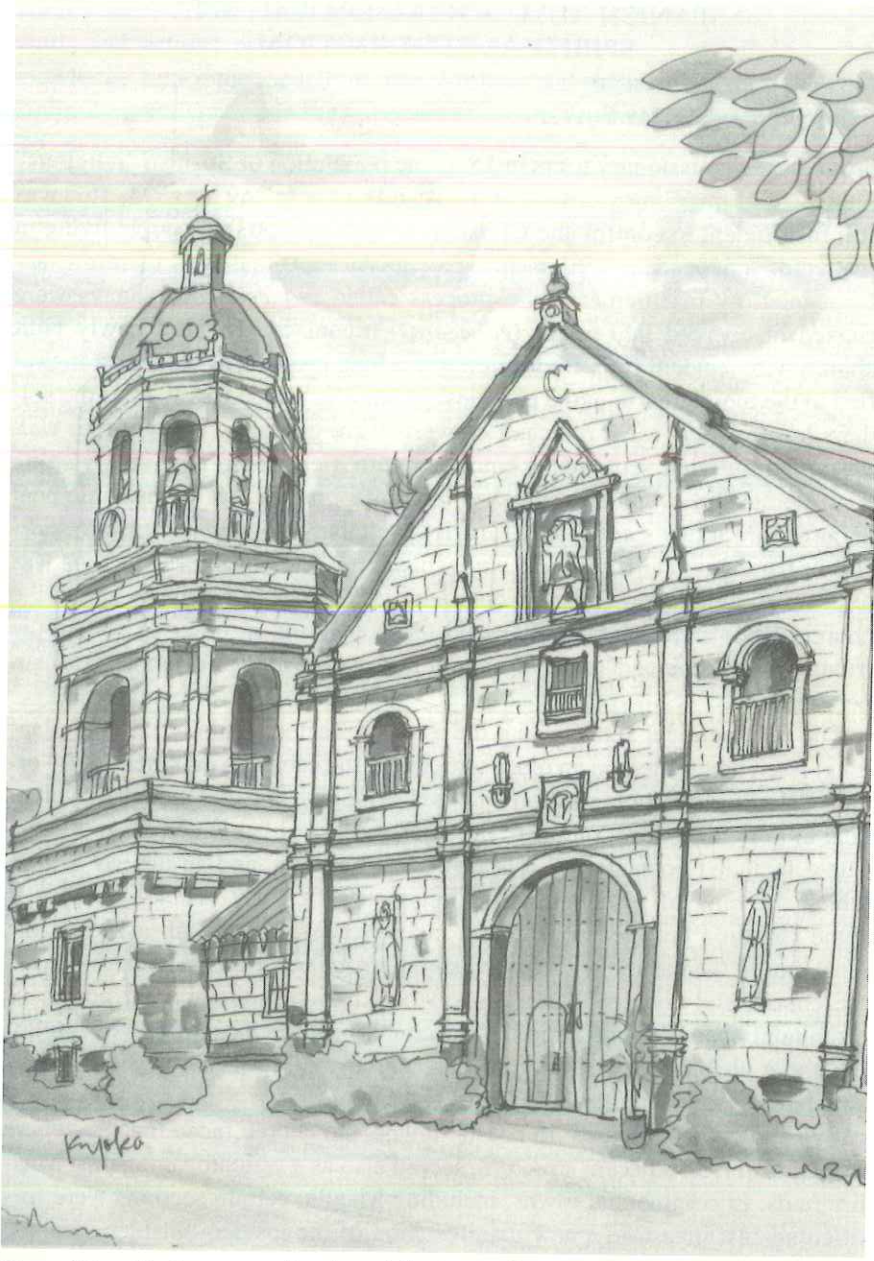


Figure 3.2. Contemporary drawing of the Argao church, Cebu Province (Kiyoko Yamaguchi)

indios, dispossessed *datus* at odds with the new order, and Chinese and other foreign communities. (See box 3.2.)

Throughout lowland Luzon and the Visayas, the structure of administrative authority that evolved after pacification reflected two fundamental conditions of the conquest period. First was a pressing need to mobilize labor and collect tributes, a major source of revenue for the early colonial state. The second condition was a shortage of civilian officials in this far-flung outpost of empire. In contrast, there was a relative abundance of soldiers serving in the conquest and the Muslim and Dutch wars of the following years who expected material reward. To solve both problems, King Philip II granted *encomiendas*, the administrative right to collect tribute and draft labor from among the inhabitants of a defined geographical area, along with the responsibility to protect them and provide religious instruction. One *encomienda* might cover a portion of a *población* or the whole town. From the late sixteenth century, the tribute was set at ten reales per adult male (eight reales equaled one Mexican peso), of which two went to the state and eight to the *encomendero*; two reales of his share were owed to the church in fulfillment of his religious responsibilities.

Friar and *encomendero*—the two representatives of the Spanish state—quickly became rivals as friars began to report abuse in the collection of tribute. Because the uprooted and resettled *barangays* had little surplus and no access to currency, tribute was paid “in kind”—local produce such as unhulled rice, “salt, chickens, eggs, venison, other game meat, swine, and native liquor or wine.”²² *Encomenderos* arbitrarily assigned low value to the tribute products and sold them at higher market prices in Manila; they used underweight scales to cheat tribute-payers; their soldiers brutally exacted payment even when crops failed; and they accepted the substitution of labor for payment, a kind of debt slavery. The first bishop of Manila was outspoken in his letters to the king, declaring that *encomenderos* hurt the cause of Christ through their brutality and greed. In the long run, the *encomendero* was no match for the friar—largely because until the mid-eighteenth century colonial law prohibited nonofficial, nonclerical Spaniards from residing outside the cities, to prevent the abuses that decimated local populations in Spanish America. Based in Manila, *encomenderos* turned their attention to overseas trade, and as they and their heirs died or left the Philippines, the *encomiendas* were allowed to revert to royal authority. By 1700, the *encomienda* system was largely replaced by administrative provinces, each headed by an *alcalde mayor* (provincial governor).

What was the effect of the new order on the political economy, evolving class structure, and gender regime of indigenous Philippine societies? *Datus* survived, but *datu* power as such was severely attenuated and transformed.

Box 3.2. Colonial Manila

"From a small Muslim community of only 2,000 Filipinos and a handful of Chinese sojourners, Manila in several generations became a flourishing multiracial city of more than 40,000 inhabitants. . . . During the early period of commercial florescence and rapid urban growth in the decades immediately before and after 1600, the Spanish quarter of Manila was metamorphosed from a mere cluster of impermanent and highly flammable *caña y nipa* [bamboo and palm thatch] structures into a carefully planned and walled city [Intramuros] of substantial stone, brick, and tile buildings fashioned in Western architectural style. Among the most distinctive morphological elements of the Philippine colonial capital were its grid form, a monumental Catholic cathedral, many stately public buildings, a nuclear *plaza mayor*, several smaller squares, five large monastic complexes, and about 600 handsome two-story houses occupied by Spaniards and their dependents. Additionally, the authorities replaced the flimsy wooden palisades of precolonial Manila with massive walls of stone and brick which encircled the entire district of Intramuros. These were further supplemented by a deep moat and a strong fort located at the point where the Pasig River entered Manila Bay. Before the end of the sixteenth century, Intramuros through its morphology served to confirm and emblemize the power and permanence of Hispanic colonialism.

"Even as wealth derived from international commerce made possible the infrastructural improvements and architectural embellishments of the Spanish quarter, so did the galleon trade generate forces which contributed to the development of Manila's extramural area and to the ethnic and occupational differentiation of the *arrabales* [embryonic suburbs]. Throughout the period of unrestricted commercial exchange, Manila was visited by a myriad of foreign merchants and seamen, most of whom moved on to other Asian ports following a sojourn of several months in the Philippines. But two groups—the Japanese and the Chinese—remained in sufficient numbers during the year to warrant separate residential quarters amidst the growing population of urbanized Filipinos. A sizable body of Japanese, which had reached 3,000 by the 1620s, lived immediately southeast of Intramuros in the suburb of Dilao and for several decades maintained their own unique culture. By far the largest alien community consisted of the Chinese, who through their labors as traders, sailors, and artisans made possible the galleon trade. From a tiny band of forty persons who lived in pre-Hispanic Manila, the Sangley [Chinese] population grew to more than 20,000 people by 1600 and, despite continuing racial conflict and periodic massacres, fluctuated between 5,000 and 30,000 individuals throughout the seventeenth century. Not only was Chinese labor and organizational skill essential to efficient commercial operations, but they also dominated almost all crafts and services within the Spanish colonial capital. Because of their great numbers, the Spaniards as early as 1581 inaugurated a policy of residential segregation by assigning the Sangleys to a large extramural quarter—the Parian. In addition to this district, which was carefully situated beneath the guns of Intramuros, a substantial Chinese area later developed north of the Pasig in Binondo. Through countless informal relationships and religiously sanctioned marriages between Sangley immigrants and Filipinas, Binondo in time became the home of a large community of Christianized and Hispanicized Chinese *mestizos* [offspring of indio-Chinese unions]. These three *arrabales*, whose inhabitants preserved for several generations many elements of culture from their respective

homelands, were thus fashioned by Spanish authorities late in the sixteenth century in order to guarantee the effective supervision of potentially rebellious alien Asians whose labor and skills proved essential to the developing urban economy."

—Robert Reed, *Colonial Manila: The Context of Hispanic Urbanism and Process of Morphogenesis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 68–69

When the Spanish put an end to raiding and bondage, the datu had no way to reward his *timawa* and *maharlika* and no need for their military service. Further, the requirement for everyone to engage in agricultural production resulted in social leveling, leaving the warrior class with little to distinguish itself from commoners.²³ Datus, on the other hand, played an important role in *reducción* and this helped them retain status. Datus who brought their people voluntarily into *cabeceras* were rewarded with positions in the new state as a *gobernadorcillo* ("little governor") or a lower-ranked *cabeza de barangay* (village head). Constituting a new class called the *principalia*, ex-datus and their descendants lived prominently on or near the *plaza mayor*. They became responsible for collecting and remitting tributes and other contributions to the *encomendero* and church, and in return, they and their eldest sons were exempt from tribute and labor service. Although they were not entitled to keep a share of the tribute, their position allowed them to engage in various tactics of enrichment, such as demanding excess payment and reviving debt slavery.

The *principalia* also took advantage of confusion over the Spanish concept of land ownership to expand their landholdings and rebuild their economic power. The first governors of the Philippines made small land grants—in the name of the king—to individual Spaniards who raised cattle from China to satisfy the colonists' appetite for meat. Eventually these *haciendas* (landed estates) would be devoted to agricultural production, but first the owners needed to enlarge them. In the precolonial Philippines, it was only the product of the land, not the land itself, that could be owned and sold. But the *principalia*, encountering the new land tenure concept, found it easy to claim as "private property" land earlier cultivated by their *barangays*, under the pretext that it was land granted to them by the Spanish monarchy.²⁴ Despite Spanish policy not to dispossess *indios*, officials often looked the other way when their local allies sold common land to *hacienda* owners. Even the religious orders, forbidden to engage in commercial or land transactions, soon began to accumulate property to convert to agricultural production. The *principalia* solidified ties with the orders by selling or donating land to so-called friar estates. As the nationalist historian Renato Constantino noted, accommodation with the Spanish "provided these chiefs with opportunities to further entrench themselves in positions

of dominance within the native community . . . accelerat[ing] the process of stratification which had already begun operating in pre-conquest society.”²⁵

Yet, despite the reemergence of the *datu* class as *principalia* under Spanish rule, the basis of their status was quite altered—firmly hereditary, yet stripped of spiritual prowess and subordinated to the friars. In his historical study of political economy and culture in Negros, Aguilar argues that “the colonial state transformed the preconquest elites into a fixed institution characterized by hereditary succession but bereft of their preconquest prestige and magic. . . . [S]eparated from personal accomplishment and extraordinary feats as a sign of favor from the spirits, [their position] was thoroughly corrupted.” Essentially, the *cabeza* was “a mere tribute gatherer” who answered to the friar and depended on his protection from the arbitrary demands and not infrequent cruelty of the *encomendero*’s soldiers and the *alcalde mayor*. Having forfeited his spiritual authority to the friar, he had no means of controlling followers who rejected the new order.²⁶ (See box 3.3.)

For the *baylan* and *catalonan*—female ritual specialists of animist practice—the introduction of Christianity by male Spanish priests brought a more catastrophic loss of power and status. Such women had earned respect, authority, and their livelihood by conducting public ceremonies, making *diwata* and an-

Box 3.3. Friar Power

“Organized as political families, the native elite continually had to court the local friar to earn his favor, which they did by providing services and monetary contributions to the local church. In return, they enjoyed prominent roles in Catholic ceremonies and rituals. It also became easy for them to obtain from the priest a favorable letter of reference, required by the central government at Manila in the appointment of town magistrates. The friar became the native elite’s protector against the felt abuses of civilian administrators. The markers of colonial prestige and protection, which the elite constantly had to seek and augment, seemed like signs of approval from the dominant power realm personified by the friar. . . .

“At the same time, because the colonial state retained the preconquest chiefship, at least in its outward form, as a means of indirect rule, native elites were compelled to contrive a system of affirmation of their continuing legitimacy as local leaders. One mechanism was the largesse that flowed through their sponsorship of the feast of the town’s patron saint, a shift in the flow of resources given that . . . the *datu*’s control of the surplus had been eroded and taken over by the friar. Not predisposed to recognizing their leadership, however, were the rebel segments of indigenous society. The latter, who contested colonial authority using their otherworldly prowess, could easily terrorize the native elites who, though nominally Catholics, were awed and frightened by magic [even in] the late nineteenth century.”

—Filomeno V. Aguilar Jr., *Clash of Spirits: The History of Power and Sugar Planter Hegemony on a Visayan Island* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1998), 58

ito, treating the sick and dying, and attending women in childbirth. All these activities came under attack by friars in what Carolyn Brewer terms “holy confrontation.” Beginning with the arrival of Magellan, the friars relentlessly pursued the destruction—and sometimes desecration—of *anito* in their effort to displace the old religion and its practitioners. Brewer refutes the conventional picture of peaceful transition from indigenous religion to Catholicism by highlighting the violence of this process. When *anito* and other ritual instruments were broken, dragged through villages, burned, or defecated upon by young boys, as encouraged by parish priests, it had the effect of “depowering, dishonoring and defiling the religion of the ancestors.”²⁷

Baylan were similarly pushed out of the business of midwifery, healing, preparing bodies for burial, and performing mourning rituals, although they did not give up without a fight. Some attempted to incorporate Catholic prayer and images into their ritual, but the friars rejected syncretism when it did not submit to their own authority. In one instance, a group of baylan convinced the local population to come to them secretly without directly challenging the friar’s healing power. This compromise was successful for a time, for people didn’t see the old spirits and the Christian spirits as mutually exclusive, as did the missionary priest. Two years passed before someone in the village informed the friar, at which point he forced the “worthless band of women” to convert and the whole community to bring their *anito*, including images of their ancestors, to be destroyed.²⁸

The friars rooted out, humiliated, punished, and exiled the baylan not only to discredit and eliminate competitors but also to reorder gender relations to conform to Hispanic Catholic norms. New models of nothing less than male and female personhood were being taught, imposed if necessary. For women, their new model entailed greater modesty and humility, celibacy outside of marriage and fidelity within, and subordination to male authority—husband, priest, and god. New religious roles were devised for spiritually inclined women in “tertiaries or confraternities” that worked under the authority of the orders to instruct others in the “demeanor of ‘good’ Christian women.”²⁹ There was no room for compromise with autonomous women who did not accept the mediation of the male priest to approach divinity.

Spirit ritualism nevertheless lived on in “folk Catholicism,” which mixed elements of the two belief systems. The icon of this fusion is the *anting-anting*, an amulet or potion said to give special powers to its possessor, who was now frequently male, “in imitation of the Spanish friarship.”³⁰ Reynaldo Ileto describes how *anting-anting* were obtained:

[One] way . . . was to go to the cemetery on midnight on Holy Wednesday or Thursday and place bowls of food, a glass of wine and two lighted candles on a

tomb. Before the candles burned out, the food and drink would have been consumed by spirits who would leave a white stone in one of the empty vessels. A struggle for possession of this anting-anting would then ensue between the aspirant and earth-spirit called *lamang lupa*. Only extraordinarily brave or daring men used this method; these were the ones, it is said, who usually became rebel or bandit chiefs.³¹

Mixing the religion of the powerful friar—signified by holy days, wine, and candles—with anito of the indigenous spirits—the white stone and *lamang lupa* (literally, land spirit)—is an example of localization in communities struggling with Spanish domination. (See box 3.4.)

Reshaping the Economy to Pay for Colonization

Uprooting and resettling hundreds of thousands of people constituted a major socioeconomic rupture with the past in a relatively short time. “By the 1590s,” Spanish historian Luis Alonso says, “the breakup of the indigenous economy of the barangays was completed.”³² Effects included population decline, the abandonment of cleared and cultivated fields, and the disruption of

Box 3.4. Millenarian Revolts

“Between 1620 and 1820, discord emanated from a variety of sources. Some outbreaks were stimulated by economic policies. Others were generated by inept local administration. Regardless of their secular origin, however, many militant movements took on sacred characteristics. . . . [P]opular redeemers usually claimed miraculous powers. They won and retained supporters by portraying themselves as prophets or deities in regular communication with a ‘supernatural pseudo-community.’ They also expanded the ranks of their adherents through apocalyptic pronouncements linked to assurances of collective vulnerability. Sooner or later, leaders and followers alike experienced delusions of limitless power. At that juncture, they frequently attacked available symbols—usually clerical—of Spanish authority. Village violence in turn provoked metropolitan vengeance. Sorely outnumbered Spaniards, in fact, tended to overreact to challenges from scattered segments of the population. The repetitious pattern—religious insurgency followed by Spanish repression—produced a series of miniature Armageddons in Luzon and the Visayas. Iberian churchmen and administrators, however, never grasped the significance of the rhythmic phenomena. More importantly, they refused to accept the upheavals as manifestations of profound cultural stress or deep-seated social tension. Instead, they regarded them as outlandish examples of provincial perversity. Devotees of native messiahs, moreover, were dismissed as naïve and superstitious ‘fanaticos’ deserving neither curiosity nor compassion.”

—David R. Sturtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines, 1840–1940* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1976), 81–82

interisland trade. Yet the new state, as described above, was determined to collect tributes, now owed to the Spanish king in compensation for the conquest, conversion, and rule of the Philippines. More practically speaking, the influx into the cities of foreign soldiers, missionaries, officials, and traders put greater demand on food production. Resettlement therefore included a new land-tenure and land-use system.

Each family was assigned a lot for a house in town and a parcel of land for cultivation on the outskirts. Several elements of the new system differed from past practice. First, although it was not apparent to the cultivators, they had no customary rights (as before) or legal rights to the land they were assigned and passed down to their children, for it all belonged to the king of Spain. The importance of this fundamental principle will be discussed in the next chapter. Second, socioreligious control and increased agricultural production demanded a sedentary population—indios were henceforth forbidden to leave town without the friar’s permission. This introduced an element of European feudalism that had not been present in the mobile preconquest societies of the archipelago. Cultivators tied to land they did not own lost the ability to trade with other communities and could not easily evade onerous taxation.

The third and fourth changes were designed to increase food production through more intensive land use. In addition to cultivating their fields, indios were required to raise chickens and pigs and plant fruit trees on their household plots, a pattern still visible today. The productivity of the fields themselves was increased through technology—a Chinese plow pulled by a domesticated *carabao* (water buffalo). Training in the new techniques was done by the friars. Dissemination took many decades, but slowly raised the productivity of the land. The recovery of agriculture also allowed the production of goods once traded and now offered for tribute:

mats, jars and pottery, various cloths from plain homespun cotton for sheets and blankets to table cloths and elaborate embroidered altar cloth; coconut oil for lighting, wax from the forest for church candles; abaca fiber and rope for rigging and tackle for ships, *brea* (pitch) and coconut husk or coir for caulking; and the famed Ilocos *mantas*, heavy cotton sailcloth for the trading boats, [for] the craft in the wars against the Muslims, and for the galleons in the Manila–Acapulco trade.³³

Several other types of taxation were imposed to support Spanish colonization, trade, and conversion efforts. Until about 1650, Spain engaged in frequent wars with Muslims and with the Dutch. To finance these wars or simply to enrich encomenderos, the state periodically requisitioned food and other goods at lower-than-market prices. Indios called the system *vandala* (feeling vandalized), for these purchases were often not paid for.

In 1572, a monopoly trade between Spanish America, the Philippines, and China was institutionalized that made the fortune of Spanish individuals and institutions. The “galleon trade” was named for the huge ships that carried cargo on the dangerous but highly lucrative voyages. Europe had insatiable demand for Chinese silk and other Asian luxury goods; Spain had the Mexican silver necessary to buy them. Manila became the transshipment point for this trade, and Spanish residents were awarded a cargo quota on the ships. The Philippine state government was somewhat disadvantaged in obtaining revenue from this trade because the Mexican viceroys controlled the galleons, prevented other New World traders from sailing to Manila, and collected customs duties in Acapulco on incoming Chinese merchandise and outgoing Mexican silver. Manila’s share of this revenue was supposed to be remitted on the following galleon, but was chronically late and incomplete.

Indigenous trade with China was largely shut out of the galleon trade. Local goods from Luzon, Butuan, Cebu, or Sulu could only be smuggled aboard in small quantities. A more serious hardship was the forced labor that went into building the huge ships. Such labor was mobilized by the *cabeza de barangay* through the *polos y servicios*, the compulsory forty days labor per year owed by tribute payers to the state. *Servicio* was performed by men and women and consisted largely of domestic service in churches and conventos. The *polo* was hard labor performed by men—constructing government buildings and churches, rowing and fighting in military expeditions, and the dreaded *cortes de madera*, cutting and hauling trees and building galleons and warships (see box 3.5). The forty-day limit was frequently ignored for *cortes* duty, causing agricultural disruption back home and threatening the ability to pay the following year’s tribute. Men worked for rations under inhumane conditions; there were frequent deaths and uprisings. As a Spanish observer wrote to the king in 1619, “The shipbuilding carried on in these islands on your Majesty’s account is the total ruin and death of these natives.”³⁴

Finally, there were religious contributions. The church automatically received two reales per tribute (that is, per family) per year, but the friar, in a position of ultimate authority locally, solicited contributions in kind and in service throughout the year. Fees—once paid to *baylan* for rituals—were now paid to the local church for baptisms, marriages, and funerals.

In sum, residents of the Philippines paid for their own colonization and religious instruction, as well as subsidizing Spain’s wars and its China trade. The economic foundations of the state—tribute, *vandala*, *polos*, and church contributions—weighed heavily on the population. By draining surplus from peasant production, these exactions and the loss of trade removed any incentive to improve agriculture. They also produced uprisings and

Box 3.5. Construction of the Galleons

“Though probably not so large as the legend created by the tales of English raiders made them, . . . [s]ome of the great galleons used against the Dutch and the Portuguese were of over 2000 tons. . . . The galleons had the high forecastle and poop characteristic of their class. The apparent topheaviness of ships whose ends stood so high out of the water was partly offset by their unusual breadth of beam. Their half-moon appearance was thus very different from the straighter lines of their predecessors [*sic*], the oared galleass of the Mediterranean, and of their successors, the frigates. It was their unwieldy and lumbering aspect that led Thomas Carlyle to call the heavy coach in which Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette [*sic*] attempted to flee from France an ‘Acapulco Ship.’ . . .

“Most of the galleons of the line were built in the yards at Cavite on the Bay of Manila, where a great force of Chinese and Malay [*indio*] workmen carried on the work of construction and repairs. However, many were built in other parts of the northern islands, where there were found together the three requisites of a safe port and a plentiful supply of good timber and of native labor. . . .

“The hard woods of the islands were very well adapted for shipbuilding. Casimiro Díaz considered them ‘the best that can be found in the universe,’ and added ‘if it were not for the great strength of the galleons and the quality of their timbers that so dangerous voyage could not be performed.’ The framework was often made of teak. . . . For the ribs and knees, the keel and rudder, and inside work the hard Philippine *molave* was generally employed. The sheathing outside the ribs was usually of *lanang*, a wood of great toughness, but of such peculiar nature that small cannon balls remained embedded in it, while larger shot rebounded from a hull made of this timber. Excellent courage for the rigging was obtained from the *abaca* or Manila hemp. Sail cloth was produced in the province of Ilocos, while the metal necessary was mostly bought from China, Japan, Macao, or even from India and worked up by Chinese smiths. . . .

“The labor of cutting the timber in the mountains and transporting it to the coast was performed by great gangs of natives. While the more skilled work of construction was performed by Chinese carpenters, the islanders were used in large numbers for the rough work in the yards. These Filipinos were generally impressed under a sort of *corvé* or *repartimiento* system, and their condition probably represented the most oppressive phase of the Spanish domination in the islands. Sometimes the natives were drafted as punishment for some local sedition or insurrection, while their harsh treatment by Spanish or Moro foremen was in itself a source of riots and more serious commotions. . . . Writing in 1676, Fernández Navarrete tells of the suffering of the natives from ‘the infernal fury of some Spaniards,’ and three years later the king ordered Governor Vargas to see that the native workmen were treated with ‘benignity.’”

—William Lytle Schurz, *The Manila Galleon*
(Manila: Historical Conservation Society, 1985), 162–64

flight from cabeceras throughout Spanish-controlled territory. Most uprisings were abortive or short lived—a friar learned of the plan in confession, inter-barangay rivalry hampered cooperation, or the Spanish crushed it with soldiers (often from Pampanga, a province near Manila that became prosperous under Spanish rule). But underlying conditions were a constant provocation.

From 1565 to 1591, conquest, forced labor, excessive tributes, the shift to sedentary agriculture, military campaigns, famine, and epidemics led to rapid population decline. The first census of 1591 counted only 166,903 tribute payers (heads of household) from an estimated preconquest population of 750,000. The population stabilized and grew again by the end of the century, but another decline in the 1600s was caused by forced military service, food shortages, and disease. Certain areas of Luzon experienced a 40 percent drop from 1591 to 1655.³⁵ From the mid-1600s, the population began to recover again and by 1766, there were 200,000 tribute payers, or roughly 800,000 Christians living under Spanish control. Furthermore, this number did not represent the total population of the islands, but only those living in the lowland areas of Luzon, the bigger of the Visayan islands, and northern Mindanao.

The Chinese: Essential Outsiders

We have discussed Chinese–Philippine political and economic contact in the several centuries preceding the Spanish conquest, and there is evidence of at least temporary Chinese residence in port towns. The Spanish chose Manila for their capital precisely because the presence of 150 Chinese there raised hopes of trade and missionary access to China. Yet almost from the start, the two groups fell into an ambivalent relationship characterized by mutual profit, suspicion, and intermittent violence. The silver brought in on the galleon attracted a quick influx of Chinese merchants importing all the things the colonists desired—sugar, butter, flour, and walnuts; oranges, chestnuts, plums, and pears; silk woven into satin, brocade, and damask; salt pork, ham, and especially beef.³⁶ Many artisans and laborers—mostly from the southern Chinese province of Fujian—also came to Manila, and within a few years they numbered in the thousands, far higher than the Spanish population. The Spanish became suspicious of the influence of hard-to-convert Chinese on the indios, however, and thought of them in the same terms as the economically active and culturally different Moors and Jews back home, on whom they had imposed policies of “segregation, hispanization, and expulsion.” Then, in 1574, the Chinese pirate Limahong attacked Manila and some resident Chinese fought alongside him; others attacked friars, churches, and Spanish res-

idents. When it was over, “relations between the Chinese and the Spaniards fell into a pattern of distrust and latent hostility.” Both necessary and seemingly so different, the Chinese, stereotyped as *sangleys* (from “traveling merchant”), became “a despised cultural minority.”³⁷

The China trade obviously could not be halted, for the sake of both everyday needs and the investments of Spanish officials and religious orders. And Chinese settlers proved just as important to the internal working of the colony. Their experience trading with river and harbor ports, the destruction of indigenous interisland trade, and the Spanish focus on the galleon trade encouraged the Chinese to fill a niche in the economy. Moving through the country by permit, they become wholesalers, distributors, and shopkeepers keeping Manila provisioned. In this capacity they had good relations with *alcaldes mayores* and lay administrators of friar estates. Yet the Spanish felt wary and insecure. Their response was to extract maximum resources and labor from the Chinese, discourage them from settling in the colony, and control and segregate Chinese settlers from Christianized indios. These were policies based on Spain’s own weaknesses, and they contributed to cycles of exploitation, revolt, massacre, and expulsion, followed by repopulation and the rebuilding of tension.

In 1581, Chinese traders were forced to live in the *Parián*, a restricted quarter built outside the fortified walls of Manila. Here officials could more easily collect taxes and restrict trade. Chinese who settled were required to pay a yearly license fee, tribute, and house tax totaling eighty-one reales (compared to the indios’ ten), render unpaid labor, and pay occasional arbitrary taxes. Theirs was the highest level of taxation in the colony, but it was the arbitrary demands that caused Chinese hostility to flow back to the Spanish. In 1593, when four hundred Chinese were forcibly drafted to row vessels in a military expedition against Maluku, they mutinied and killed the governor of the colony. In the aftermath, half the Chinese population was deported and the rest placed under guard.³⁸ Other revolts occurred when the mutual suspicions of Spaniards and Chinese were provoked. In 1603, the Spanish began to fortify Manila against a phantom Chinese invasion; residents of the *Parián*, fearing a preemptive massacre, rose in revolt, and the Spanish killed nearly the whole community of twenty thousand. Sixty years later, Spanish fear of the Chinese warlord Koxinga ended in a tragic replay.

Frequent expulsions during the first two centuries of Spanish rule—usually following revolts—determined the size and composition of the Chinese population, not actually reducing it to the mandated six thousand, but usually holding it close to twenty thousand.³⁹ In 1589, all Chinese except farmers, carpenters, and mechanics were expelled. Those who remained generally converted to Christianity with the encouragement of the Spanish, who hoped

it would make them loyal and open up China to missionary efforts. But since Catholic Chinese enjoyed more freedom to move about the colony, the Spanish came to see their conversion as a business tactic. The Chinese were also encouraged to become farmers, especially to provide labor on the royal and friar haciendas that supplied the tables of Manila. Again, the result was not the compliance the Spanish hoped for. A wave of agrarian resistance began in 1639 when Chinese tenants of a royal hacienda protested the death of some three hundred of their number clearing land for cultivation under grueling conditions.

More significant than conversion was the tendency of domiciled Chinese to marry *indias* (female *indios*) in the absence of Chinese women. Salazar notes:

Chinese revolts in the 17th century . . . tended not only towards the expulsion of the Chinese but likewise their more rapid absorption into the native population. Escapees from Spanish repression were generally accepted into Filipino families in Laguna and Batangas, if they had not already been in close contact with them beforehand. In any case, the [adoptions of Chinese kinship terms into Tagalog] point to very early intermarriages among Chinese and Filipinos.⁴⁰

Thus an unintended effect of Spanish policy was to increase the integration of Chinese into *indio* society. Although intermarriage alone did not assimilate the Chinese, it produced offspring who comprised a new social category—*mestizos*. When their number was small, *mestizos* tended to identify with the Chinese. When their numbers grew larger (especially during periods of Chinese expulsion), they became distinct communities, self-governing and loyal to the Spanish state.⁴¹ Meanwhile, the continuing pattern of suspicion and expulsion reinforced the status of Chinese as “essential outsiders”⁴² in the Philippines.

ORIGINS OF THE WEAK STATE

Balance of Power in the Clerical-Secular State

Order was maintained in the colonial Philippines by the interdependence of secular and clerical state officials, who together administered body and soul. But it was neither a cooperative nor equal division—the secular state was weak in personnel, its power did not flow evenly through the territory it claimed, and it remained extremely dependent upon the friars for its most basic functions.

Part of the reason for this weakness was the shortage of lay Spaniards willing to serve in the new colony. Those in top positions were royal appointees

who expected to reap a fortune, but soldiers and petty bureaucrats were quite reluctant. From 1624 to 1634, for example, only sixty nonclerical Spaniards were present in the whole country outside Manila and Cebu. In 1677, the crown offered a full pardon to criminals in Spanish America who would enlist for service in the Philippines. There were few takers. We have also noted that nonofficial, nonclerical Spaniards were banned from residence in the countryside. Combined, these factors created in effect two Philippine worlds: cosmopolitan Manila—home to *indio* artisans, Chinese and other foreign traders, secular and religious officials, and private Spanish residents—and the vast linguistically and geographically segmented countryside. In the latter, the local friar acting as parish priest was frequently the only Spaniard *indios* ever saw. He spoke their language, heard their confessions, enforced collection of the tribute, and provided some protection from excessive taxation. In much of the Philippines, the friars *were* the state.

Theoretically, the governor of the colony held tremendous executive, legislative, and judicial power. As captain-general, he commanded the armed forces; as crown representative, he controlled the assignment of priests to *indio* parishes. But the religious orders whose personnel filled these positions simply refused to submit to his authority. Their power in local areas was based on intimate knowledge and influence, and they were also members of international religious organizations financially and administratively independent of the secular state in Manila and even Madrid. When occasionally a governor tried to enforce his authority, the orders' threat to desert the parishes en masse exposed the state's dependence and ended the attempt. The religious also successfully resisted “visitation”—inspection by bishops answerable to Rome via Madrid—thus avoiding correction of friar abuses such as overcharging for weddings, baptisms, and funerals, demanding excessive contributions and menial labor from parishioners, engaging in moneymaking activities, and violating clerical celibacy. Yet another indication of friar power was the expansion of haciendas. Politically, friar estates were not towns and had no secular authority in residence. They were managed by lay administrators of the order in a setting in which church and local government were fully meshed.

Friar power in the countryside was reflected in church influence in Manila, where buildings of the religious orders occupied a third of Intramuros. Officials complained that friars were haughty and demanded extreme deference from all laypersons, including the governor himself. On the other hand, the many useful functions they performed for the state—from maintaining order and guaranteeing tributes to acting as policy advisers and foreign envoys—relieved state officials of the need to develop these capacities, allowing them to concentrate on galleon profits. Throughout this period, the secular state remained weak and underdeveloped in administrative structure.

Territorial Stalemate

In its first two hundred years in the Philippines, Spain claimed formal possession of the whole archipelago, but lacked full administrative and military control. This was due to factors arising from both Spanish and Philippine sources. On the one hand, Spain focused its military resources on the defense of Manila, coastal areas, and the galleon trade. On the other hand, two indigenous reactions to Spanish colonialism helped determine the reach of the state: upland retreat from colonial intrusion and rival state building in the south.

The policy of *reducción* reflected the importance of settling the population in controllable, Christianized zones near rivers and coasts. Its corollary was the role of the mountains and the deep countryside, where unrepentant *baylan* were banished and reluctant Christians fled to re-create the order and meaning of preconquest life or simply to escape taxation. In addition to these *remontados* (those who return to the mountains) were preconquest mountain settlements in the Gran Cordillera of northern Luzon and the interiors of other islands. Together they were able to resist missionaries and tribute collectors into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries because the terrain gave them a tactical edge, while lowland revolts and external threats commanded the state's scarce military resources. (See box 3.6.)

The longevity of the Cordillera's independence was not due to indigenous political organization, however; disunity and recurring friction remained the

Box 3.6. Remontados

"In these forests and hills live many people of different tribes mixed together, Christians and pagans. Some are there because they are attracted to the mountains from which they came. Others are fugitives from justice. Many likewise go there to live at their ease and be free from paying tribute and from the fulfillment of the other obligations laid on them. Finally many are there because it is the territory where they were born as pagans. Living mixed together like this with pagans intermarrying with Christians, they mix together a thousand superstitions with the law of Jesus Christ. The result is a monster, more fierce and difficult to overcome than that famous one with which Hercules fought. For the apostates, being entirely corrupted, are the most difficult to reduce to settled life again, and they by their corruption, their persuasion, and their evil customs, pervert to a great extent the simplicity of the pagans."

—Antonio Mozo, *Noticia histórico-natural de los gloriosos triumphos y felices adelantamientos conseguidos en el presente siglo por los religiosos del orden de N.P.S. Agustín en las misiones que tienen a su cargo en las Islas Philipinas* (Madrid, 1763), 117–19, in John N. Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 2d ed. (Quezon City: Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University, 1987), 190

rule among the mountain communities. "Pagan" *barangays* resisted not only Spanish religious and economic impositions but also the increased social stratification that accompanied state formation, retaining a *datu*-led social structure in defiance of political developments in the lowlands. Contact was never completely severed between coastal and upland populations, despite friars' attempts to insulate the Christian populations. But as political and cultural differences widened, animosity became manifest in pagan raids on lowland towns, the need for a "defensive perimeter along the Christian frontier,"⁴³ and the development of Christian cultural distain similar to that felt toward Muslims. But precisely because the mountains lay outside Christian control, they could also serve as a refuge and base of resistance for people pressed too hard by the church and state. The term *remontado* even today "embraces people on the run from Spanish friars, Spanish taxes, Japanese concentration camps, American suppression of peasant rebellions, lowland crop failures, local vendettas and the modern Philippine Constabulary."⁴⁴

In the Muslim zone, Spanish attacks on Brunei in the late sixteenth century eliminated Bornean influence from Luzon, and early seventeenth-century battles pushed Mindanao Muslims out of the Visayas. Thereafter, prioritizing the galleon trade and resettling *barangays* under church supervision severed economic links between the Muslim south and the rest of the archipelago outside Manila. In their effort to defeat the sultanates politically, convert the Moros to Christianity, and claim full control over the archipelago, the Spanish launched intermittent military assaults on Muslim areas in 1578–1596, the 1630s–1650s, 1718–1762, and the second half of the nineteenth century. In these wars, both the sultanates and the Spanish used devastating tactics, burning villages and taking prisoners. But the results were inconclusive—in the 1640s Spain signed peace treaties with the strongest sultanates, Sulu and Maguindanao, recognizing their *de facto* independence. At other times, Spain simply abandoned its forts—in 1663 to defend Manila against the Chinese warlord Koxinga and in 1762 when the British attacked Manila. Each time the Spanish established a fort (principally at Zamboanga) and a zone of military control, the Jesuits began missionary activity. But they had little success among the Muslims, and when the forts were abandoned, most converts shrugged off Christianity.

Because the Spanish never fully controlled Mindanao and Sulu, Muslim state building proceeded. Thomas McKenna explains that this process cannot be understood in isolation from ongoing economic and military engagements with Spain and other European powers in the region, especially the Dutch.⁴⁵ As Spain consolidated its control over lowland Luzon and the Visayas, the Sulu sultanate developed commercial and political ties with the wider Muslim world of insular Southeast Asia. On the island of Mindanao, Spanish pressure

and Sulu's strength to the west accelerated the Islamization of the Pulangi River basin and southern Mindanao. There the Maguindanao sultanate, based at the port of Cotabato, competed with the upriver Buayan sultanate for dominance of Mindanao. The slave economy continued to operate in the sultanates and slaves constituted the most important source of a sultan's wealth. They were both a sign and a means of access to resources outside his own community. They supported the maintenance of armed forces that, along with spiritual legitimacy, helped him collect tribute from his datu allies. And they supplied him with rice for subsistence and interisland trade. Forest products for the China trade—tobacco, rattan, beeswax, and hardwoods—came from uphill “client” groups, outside Maguindanao society but under its control.

The strength of the Maguindanao sultanate peaked during the long reign of Sultan Kudarat (c.1619–1671). The Muslim rituals of daily prayer, circumcision, abstention from pork, and fasting during Ramadan were observed more evenly, schools taught the Koran, and the Arabic script was adopted. Kudarat also engaged in international politics: He sought an alliance with the Dutch trading company VOC and sold it rice and slaves; he tried to play the Dutch off against the Spanish; he allied with Sulu to conduct joint raids on the Visayas; and he fought, signed treaties, and traded with the Spanish themselves. By the late 1700s, however, Spanish blockades cut off Cotabato from direct participation in international trade. Thereafter, Sulu became the strongest sultanate in the Philippines, and on Mindanao Island, the upriver Buayan asserted dominance over Maguindanao.

The sultanates existed as rival states to the one based in Manila—they represented spiritual and political independence from Spain. As maritime states, Maguindanao and Sulu pursued their own commerce and diplomacy. But as McKenna argues, intersultanate rivalry was just as important as hostility to the Spanish. And most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was marked by stalemate with Manila, as the Spanish lacked the ability to take over the south and the sultanates prioritized trade and the economic benefits of slave raids undertaken by Muslim client groups.⁴⁶ As the sultans' territory was encroached upon and, conversely, they came to rely on Philippine towns for slave labor, the south was drawn into the conceptual and geographical entity called “the Philippines.” Yet like those areas outside the walled forts, beyond the church bells, and in the mountains, the Muslim south represented a space *inside* the territory claimed by the Spanish that was *outside* the control of the state.

The British Occupation

The Philippines was of limited importance to the Spanish empire, whose center remained its American possessions. While Spain's ambition to control the

spice trade was an initial reason for retaining the Philippines, its navy lacked the ability to operate in so distant a region and the Dutch won control of Maluku. What kept the Spaniards in the Philippines was the value of Manila as a staging post for religious missions, especially to China and Japan, and as a transshipment point for the galleon trade. As a strategic outpost, however, the Philippines remained a liability, open to attack by rival European powers and slave raiders.

Spain's growing military weakness was matched by its economic position. Lacking valuable southern Philippine commodities (for example, pearls) or attractive manufactures (such as those the British produced) to exchange for Chinese goods, the Spanish watched silver drain from their empire. They tried to protect their position by banning other Europeans from participating in the galleon trade, but such mercantilist policies were losing ground to the “free trade” philosophy of British traders. The British also wanted access to China, specifically to Chinese tea, without spending their own hard currency. To accomplish this, they inserted themselves into existing networks, trading arms to Sulu to obtain marine and forest products China wanted. They also intruded on the galleon trade, buying Mexican silver with Indian textiles through Asian middlemen and loading their own goods onto the Acapulco-bound galleon. Manila's administrative weakness became apparent as state officials accepted bribes to permit this illicit trade.

Some members of the English East India Company and the British military sought to do away with even this slight impediment, and in 1762 an opportunity was afforded by the Seven Years War to attack and occupy Manila. Although the British force was small, the Spanish offered no real resistance and the occupation lasted until a 1764 negotiated withdrawal.⁴⁷ British control never reached much past Manila, but the circumstances of the assault and occupation offer an opportunity to assess state and social cohesion. Militarily, defenses were wholly inadequate and the weakness of the clerical-secular state was in full view. The Philippines' governor-general had died in office, and until his successor arrived—the colony had been waiting three years already—the archbishop of Manila was the legal civil and military commander. Receiving prior warning of the attack, Archbishop Rojo made no preparations; worse, he agreed neither to surrender nor to take military action. The city was therefore subject to looting and violence.

But the British were surprised that the indios did not desert the city as their troops prepared to take Intramuros. Instead of watching the natives panic along with the Spanish, the British came under attack by a unit of 1,900 Pampangans, forces loyal to the state who were accustomed to putting down revolts (see box 3.7). Only after the Pampangans were defeated did the indios flee the city. On the other hand, many indio revolts occurred throughout the

Box 3.7. The Defense of Manila

"Had their Skill or Weapons been equal to their Strength and Ferocity, it might have cost us dear. Although Armed chiefly with Bows, Arrows, and Lances, they advanced up to the very muzzles of our Pieces, repeated their Assaults, and died like wild Beasts, Gnawing the Bayonets."

—Journal of Colonel William Draper, quoted in Nicholas Tracy, *Manila Ransomed: The British Assault on Manila in the Seven Years War* (Exeter, Devon, England: University of Exeter Press, 1995), 47

colony during the occupation against the authority of *alcaldes mayores* and parish friars. When the Pampanga-based Spanish government-in-exile ordered a preemptive massacre of the Chinese of Manila, most of whom were Catholic, this population sent an armed force of five thousand against the Spanish. In the aftermath, the last expulsion order (in 1766) reduced the numbers of Chinese once again. But the next century would bring many more foreigners into the Philippines as the colony's economic engagement with the world underwent a great transformation.

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