BAYBAYIN: REVIVAL OF FADED CHARACTERS

by:
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In retrospection of the distant yesteryears, the Pearl of the Orient Seas has once embraced with its tightest the soul of our country’s native language known as Baybayin. But eras after another, the Filipino ancient script has been gradually facing its frontier as the generation of today deemed to be a foreigner in its own homeland; for they barely know how to write and read in Baybayin

Studying Baybayin can be of prodigious benefit not just to students but also to Filipino in general, because it serves as a portal that can bring forth new discoveries that will narrate how rich Filipino culture is.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court ruled last October 2018 that Filipino and Panitikan are no longer considered in the core subjects in College. But, there are still Filipinos who are ignited with the passion to revive and instill to the students the significance of Filipino subject in academe.

The Commission on Higher Education might have removed Filipino as core subject in College, but the Department of Education on the other hand included Baybayin as topic subject in the curriculum of Senior High Schools; and Bataan National High School (BNHS) is one of the schools in the Province of Bataan that supports the education of Baybayin.

Identity of the Ancient Script

Often mistaken as alibata which is Arabic in origin, the pre-Hispanic script Baybayin literally means “baybay” or “to spell” in Tagalog. Baybayin comprises of 14 characters that have the
sound of an “a” in Filipino, fur of them are vowels, while the remaining are consonant-vowel combinations. In order to change to vowel sound from “a” to “e” and “i”, a marking on the top of the vowel must be written. Meanwhile, to change the vowel sound to “o” and “u”, the mark must be written at the bottom of the letter. And putting a cross mark on the bottom of the letter indicates that the vowel “a” was removed.

According to some students of BNHS Senior High, paving the road towards knowing Baybayin deeper have brought them to a realization leading to more discoveries regarding its origin and the culture of Philippines. Upon studying it, they have also realized how important the culture and legacy that our ancestors have worked hard just to preserve it.

Education about Baybayin is not solely about learning how to write and decipher its characters but understanding its depth will also help us to reconnect loosen Filipino roots.

**Baybayin as National Writing System**

The present resurgence of Baybayin in academe, art, social media and even on the daily is of great help in defeating the stigma of Filipino culture’s loss. To further strengthen the battle in fortifying the revival of Baybayin, House Bill 1022 was approved by House Committee on Basic Education and Culture that seeks to make Baybayin as the National Writing System of the country and the tool for cultural and economic development to create a sense of pride and respect to Filipino cultural history, origin and identity. The bill also says that street signage, public facilities, buildings, hospitals, fire and police stations, community centers, and government halls, labels of locally-produced food products, banners of newspapers and other print publications should be interpreted to Baybayin.

However, many Filipinos on social media has met on a consensus that the government should first introduce the Baybayin in the education system so that there will be a smooth transition if Baybayin will be used.

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Just a mere retrospection would never revive something that is vibrant only in memory that is why every effort in preserving Baybayin counts. And including it in the academic endeavor of students is already a big hand in rewriting Baybayin that was once seemed faded.

References: