COLONIAL PHILIPPINES

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Many of us knew what colonialism means. In basic understanding and definition, colonialism means to be controlled, oppressed, or governed over.

In 1521, a Spanish expedition led by Ferdinand Magellan found the archipelagic islands that will latter be known as the Philippines. Contrary to what the Spaniards made people believe, the Malayan settlers that inhabited the Philippines islands are civilized and educated. They have a form of Tribe government which was run by a Chief called Datu. Pre-Spanish Filipinos also has a community established, and unlike in many parts of the world, women were regarded as equal to men. Filipino tribes value their women for they appreciate the part they play in giving and nurturing life. Most of the population are also literate, they go some sort of class where they learn from village elders about their religion, their history and most of the population are literate. The native Filipinos follow an alphabet known as Baybayin which was derived from old Indian writings.

Magellan however did not make it back to Spain for he died during a confrontation with native Filipinos is Cebu islands. The real acquisition happened in Miguel Lopez de Legazpi used the tactic of friendship to approach the Filipinos. The initial agenda of Spain in the Philippines is spread their religion, Roman Catholic. He then established the first Spanish town in Cebu, after that thousands of Catholic missionaries flocked the Philippines; they built schools and churches in an aim to advance the educational, cultural, and architectural prowess of the native Filipinos. The Filipinos embraced the religion that the Friars brought, willingly. That is why in context, it is not the swords of Spanish colonialist that conquered the Filipinos, but the cross of Catholic Church.
But as time went by, the Catholic Church deemed that the beliefs of the natives and their culture are hindrance to the enlightenment of the people. It is also during these times that they purged evidences of pre-Spanish written literatures, manuals, and scripts. They were so adept in erasing traces of the native culture that only spoken literature and folk tales remained.

When all was renewed and the papers where blank, the missionaries began to invoke what they believe was true literature and knowledge. From then on, they ruled and governed the islands using religion. But things went south when the encomienda system was established.

Encomienda system is a sort of reward system implored by the King of Spain. For the royalty and service to the Crown the King granted pieces of land, including the people in it and all its resources to the colonizers. This led to corruption and maltreatment to people. The Lords demoralized and abused the people and exploited the resources to the limit. And even after the system was abolished by the end of 18th century, Corrupt Spanish officials still continued to abuse the people. Filipinos were subjected to force labor and slavery. Poverty became a common sight and beggars begone to increase in number.

For three hundred pus years, the Spaniards ruled over the archipelago with such poor conditions. But as the time came that Filipinos began to question their rights, to see the maltreatment, and that was when revolts and guerillas start to fight for autonomy.

We have eventually managed to be free from Spain but the evidence of their presence within our land was still evident today. From our culture, our Fiestas and celebrations, to the holidays we uphold. The reminiscence of their language is also still deeply imprinted. Whether we like it or not the Spanish colonialism was a huge facet of our culture and history, our faith and religion. Maybe it will fade over time, but we can
only see and hope that whatever happens in the future will be better than that of yesterday.

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