

# Introduction

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This issue of *Asian Studies* is one of a series of retrospective issues featuring the best articles published in the journal over the last five decades. The papers reprinted here, written during the late 1960s and the 1970s, are some of the landmark and path-breaking works on Philippine history and society. Several threads tie them together; first, all were written by foreigners (mainly American) who had done fieldwork in the Philippines or had gone over previously unexamined archival documents – or both. Secondly, some were preliminary works that culminated in doctoral dissertations, while others were initial studies that explored different perspectives on various periods, personas, or places in Philippine history. Most importantly, they broke away from the then-standard approaches to Philippine historiography, which focused on decision makers, political events, governors-generals, and the elite. Instead, they sought to look at history from below and give life to the “silent masses.” Delving into archives, conducting interviews, and engaging in fieldwork, they brought to the fore the lives and views of peasants, rebels, Igorots, Muslims, and World War II guerrillas. This style of historical research is now part of mainstream thought, but it wasn’t so when these articles were first published. They broke new ground back then, opening up fresh historical vistas and pioneering novel research methodologies.

This was before the age of computers, the Internet, digitized archives, and ubiquitous photocopiers. Notes had to be taken by hand, and interviews required bulky equipment. Despite relying on older technology, these articles remain relevant as ever; they feature interviews of individuals who experienced firsthand some of the events they speak about. The papers thus preserve what are now virtually irretrievable sources of information, many of which are no longer open to direct scrutiny; for instance, most of Benedict Kerkvliet’s Huk informants are now gone, as are some of then-available resources, including captured Huk documents and guerilla newspapers. The first-generation Igorots whom William Henry Scott interviewed have now passed away. Of course, other materials have appeared since, but they do not render these papers obsolete. Quite the contrary; many of the newer primary sources verify the conclusions of these articles.

A few of these papers (mostly done by the authors when they were graduate students) benefitted from reviews and discussions because of their

publication in *Asian Studies*. Some became chapters of dissertations and/or were published as books, which are now standard references in their respective fields. This was the case with Kerkvliet's paper; Sturtevant's went directly to his 1976 book on Philippine uprisings. Many of the other authors became specialists in the topics they wrote about in the journal: Michael Onorato on Governor-General Wood; John Lent on Philippine mass media; and William Henry Scott on the history of the Filipino residents of the Mountain Province.

The articles in this issue cover various locales and span a substantial part of Philippine history from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1960s. The topics include the so-called "popular uprisings," one in the 1840s and another in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century; the Central Luzon peasants in the mid-twentieth century; the Muslim elite in Cotabato, covering the Spanish, American and Japanese colonial periods; guerrilla presses during the Japanese occupation period; and Governor-General Leonard Wood.

The first article, written by David Sweet, provides an in-depth analysis of the Cofradia de San Jose of Apolinario de la Cruz (Hermano Pule) and the Tayabas Rebellion of 1841. He used the limited available sources to study the economic and geographic conditions in Tayabas at that time. Digging into the varied and obviously biased Spanish sources, he explains why people joined the cofradia and why they chose to fight when the Spaniards became suspicious and took steps to stamp out the potentially threatening movement. He also analyzes the failure of its leaders, which led to the movement's defeat. Although the author concedes that the paper is a draft, it is complete and valuable by itself. It serves a model for the study of Philippine peasant movements under colonial rule, showing how the use of various and seemingly unrelated sources provides glimpses into the lives and thoughts of the heretofore-undocumented Filipino peasants.

David Sturtevant's paper on the Guardia de Honor deals with another peasant movement, which had a religious orientation like the Cofradia de San Jose, but took on a different character. Unlike Hermano Pule's movement, the Guardia de Honor did not align itself with the Filipino revolutionaries and was thus branded as bandits and troublemakers, both by the Philippine republic and by the American military. Sturtevant also makes use of limited archival sources to understand the motives of the movement's members. He particularly focuses on the folk-religious nature of the Guardia de Honor and discusses how it escaped American scrutiny while engaging in seemingly unlawful activities. The paper is a preliminary report and does not provide deep analysis, but it does look at its subject in a way that does not fit into the standard molds of Philippine historiography. Moreover, Sturtevant gives an outsider's perspective by writing a narrative that makes for an interesting comparison with Sweet's analysis of the Cofradia. Later, he developed this article to become a chapter in his now classic work on Philippine secular movements.<sup>1</sup>

The third article, written by Jeremy Beckett, explores the history of Maguindanao datus from the late Spanish period to the American and Japanese occupation and beyond. Then a graduate student from the University of Sydney, Beckett discusses the dynamics of Muslim leadership in the province of Cotabato in the southern Philippines. He explains why the datu system remained in force throughout the colonial period. Aside from archival and published materials, Beckett extracted fresh and important insights from personal interviews with Maguindanao datus and scholars. He became a specialist on Muslim ruling families and contributed a chapter on this topic in Alfred McCoy's acclaimed book, *An Anarchy of Families*.<sup>2</sup> In retrospect, it is interesting to note that one of the ruling families he mentions is the Ampatuan clan, made infamous by the "Maguindanao Massacre" in November 2009.

Michael Onorato's paper on Leonard Wood presents an unconventional view of the American governor-general of the Philippines. Eschewing hasty generalizations, Onorato carefully analyzes archives to show a more "human" side of Wood, in contrast to his image as an unreachable politician. Furthermore, Onorato disproves the many misconceptions about the governor-general, who, for instance, had been thought to be anti-Filipino. The article, however, shows that Wood – at least in his first year – maintained friendly ties with Manuel L. Quezon and Sergio Osmeña. Focusing on Wood's first term from 1921 to 1922, Onorato discusses Wood's relationships with Filipino politicians; the orders he received from Washington; and his efforts to carry these out without ruffling any feathers. The paper reveals that Wood was not entirely successful in carrying out instructions, bending instead to practical considerations that Washington did not know of. Later on, Onorato would write on other aspects of Wood's administration and the American regime in the Philippines.

The Huks in Central Luzon are the subject of Benedict J. Kerkvliet's paper.<sup>3</sup> He interviewed many former Huks during his fieldwork in Talavera, Nueva Ecija, a province north of Manila. He also had rare access to Huk documents, which at the time were held by the Philippine Constabulary (precursor to today's Philippine National Police), but have since been unfortunately lost. Using these resources – interviews and important primary documents – Kerkvliet helped pioneer history-from-below-research on the Philippines. In his article, he analyzes the reasons for peasant unrest in Central Luzon, looking into the geographic and economic conditions of the time, as well as the political developments during the American, Commonwealth and Japanese periods. Kerkvliet also provides deep insights into the Filipino peasants' lives and motivations. His paper sets a standard for research on Philippine social history.

The sixth paper is John Lent's preliminary study on the Philippine guerrilla press during World War II. In the mid-1960s, when Lent was a graduate student, he went to the Philippines to interview and interact with several Filipino journalists and radio professionals. His article highlights the courage of Filipino guerrillas who published and circulated uncensored news, and paid for their lives by doing so. Using interviews and (then extant) guerrilla newspapers, Lent extracts key information on the underground press. He later wrote histories of Philippine newspapers and media, as well as other articles on Asian media. His contribution to *Asian Studies* serves as an introduction to a topic that has not been fully explored.

The last article, by William Henry Scott, deals with Igorot miners during the 1960s. An anthropological study, it provides important narratives about the impact of the mining industry on the lives of the local people, who were uprooted and resettled in new environments. Scott probes deeply into the economic, behavioral, and even spiritual effects of this new life: what changed and what beliefs remained. This study is extremely relevant today, especially when mines, both legal and illegal, have sprouted all over the country and whose impact on miners' lives has not been studied sufficiently. Scott's interest on the mountain peoples of Luzon led him to write more about their resistance to American incursions and their indigenous Filipino culture before and during the Spanish colonial rule.

The collection of papers in this issue of *Asian Studies* set fresh standards on research methodologies and opened up new areas in the study of Philippine history and society. Unparalleled and still classic references in their fields, these papers inspired a generation of scholars. It is hoped that veteran academics can look back at these work and the historical context(s) in which they were written, perhaps with the benefit of hindsight; and that younger scholars can use these articles as a guide, if not inspiration, for their own research on Philippine history and society.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>David R. Sturtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines, 1840-1940* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976).

<sup>2</sup>Alfred W. McCoy (ed.), *An Anarchy of Families: State and Family in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1995).

<sup>3</sup>The Huks are members of Hukbalahap, *Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon* (literally, People's Army Against the Japanese). After the Second World War, they adopted a new name, Hukbong Mapagpalayang Bayan (literally, People's Liberation Army).