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| **Chapter Title** | **Philippine Heroes and Heroines – Part I** |
| **Articles** | **The Filipino: A Proud Heritage** |
|  | **Introductory Notes on Philippine Heroes and Heroines** |
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| **Inspiration** | **Little Angel Gabby** |

**The Filipino: A Proud Heritage**

**Historical records and socio-anthropological studies have shown that a few large kingdoms and many small, highly independent barangays (communities) with self-sufficient economies thrived along the coastal areas of the Old Philippine archipelago. That was the situation when the Spaniards, who were led by Ferdinand Magellan on a discovery voyage for the East Indies, found the islands in 1521 and began the colonization of the archipelago. From the start of the colonization, the natives resisted but they were overwhelmed by superior Spanish forces.**

**Spanish colonization continued and, no doubt, there were some good elements in it. However, as the years and centuries went by, corruption, greed, neglect, abuse and racial inequality became the norms of the day. Approximately 100 native revolts, which were often spontaneous and fragmentary, occurred throughout the Spanish colonial period which lasted for more than 350 years. The most notable native uprising was the revolt of the Boholanos led by Francisco Dagohoy. The resistance started in 1744 and it had grass-root level support. It was finally crushed in 1829 by the superior arms of the Spanish military.**

**The revolts continued, and by the second half of the 19th century, natives from various groups and islands began to realize the common denominator of their struggles. It was during this period, too, when a new socio-economic class emerged: the clase illustrada. It was the former exclusive class of the creoles or Espanoles-Filipinos, Spaniards born in the Philippines who have developed a loyalty to the Philippines yet remained Spanish-oriented by virtue of their Hispanized culture and background. The class expanded to include the Spanish mestizos, Chinese mestizos and urbanized natives, and the term "Filipino" was appropriated by these new members. It was from the rank of the illustrados that the articulators of the people's struggle emerged.**

**The articulators were the propagandists of the people's struggle and their work for socio-political reforms in the Philippines came to be known as the Propaganda Movement. Among the well-known members of the movement were Jose Ma. Panganiban (linguist and essayist), Marcelo H. del Pilar (writer) and Graciano Lopez Jaena (writer and orator). At the age of 17, Lopez Jaena wrote a satirical article entitled "Fray Botod" which depicted the greed and vices of Spanish priests in the Philippines. The manuscript made him popular with the people. Later, in 1895, he founded the La Solidaridad, which was the official newspaper of the Propaganda Movement in Spain, a country in a state of transition. One of the contributors to the newspaper was Dr. Jose Rizal, a highly educated and multi-talented man. He was a poet and a writer, an eye surgeon, a sportsman and a linguist, and he was the most influential person among the Filipino reformists.**

**His novel, "Noli Me Tangere" ("Touch Me Not"), which was published in Berlin, Germany on March 21, 1887, was a pointedly critical socio-political analysis of Philippine society under Spanish colonial administration. The book caused an uproar in the Philippines, and it made him an enemy of the Spanish friars and colonial administrators.**

**The last time Rizal returned to the Philippines after working abroad was in 1892. On July 3, he organized the Liga Filipina in Manila. One of the founders of the organization was Andres Bonifacio, who was to become the "Father of the Philippine Revolution." The aims of the Liga were the following:**

1. **Unite the whole archipelago into one compact, vigorous and homogenous body;**
2. **Mutual protection in every want and necessity;**
3. **Defense against all violence and injustice;**
4. **Encouragement of instruction, agriculture and commerce; and**
5. **Study and application of reforms**

**Three days later, Rizal was arrested by Spanish authorities and, then, deported to Dapitan in Mindanao where he remained for four years. Bonifacio organized a secret society called Kataastaasan Kagalanggalangang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan ("Highest and Most Respectable Society of the Sons of the People") or the Katipunan on the day Rizal was arrested. Yet, he continued to work hard for the Liga. Later, he and his compatriots realized that armed revolution was the only way to establish a democratic and independent Philippine state. By 1896, the Katipunan or KKK had gained many members. Unfortunately, the society was betrayed by a newspaper worker named Teodoro Patino to Spanish authorities.**

**On August 23, 1896, Bonifacio and his katipunero (revolutionaries) gathered at a yard of the son of Melchora Aquino. Aquino, or "Tandang Sora" ("Old Sora") as she was known, was an old woman who provided food, shelter and assistance to the katipunero. At the yard, Bonifacio and his compatriots decided to start the revolution. They declared their intention to fight and shouted: "Long live the Philippines!" This was the "Cry of Pugadlawin" ("Cry of Balintawak"), an event which marked the beginning of the downfall of Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines and the creation of the Filipino nation.**

**During the early days of the revolution, Rizal was on his way to Spain to get further instructions concerning his work in Cuba as a volunteer medical doctor. His exile in Dapitan ended when the Spanish administration accepted Rizal's offer to use his medical skill in Cuba, which was a colony of Spain in a state of war. It was on this trip that Rizal was, once again, arrested. He was sent back to Manila and imprisoned. In a military court, Spanish officials accused Rizal of leading the Philippine revolution. The trial lasted only for a few weeks, and the court's decision was a death penalty sentence for Rizal. On December 30, 1896, Rizal was executed by firing squad in Bagumbayan field.**

**His death added more fuel to the burning desire of the katipunero and the people to liberate their country from Spanish colonial rule. The revolution continued, and at this point in Philippine history, the native population considered themselves as Filipinos with a country of their own: the Philippines. The term "Filipino" was no longer the exclusive name for the Espanoles-Filipinos, Spaniards born in the Philippines. It was no longer the exclusive property of a group of people with wealth, education and Hispanized culture. It was a name which had been cleansed of its racial bias and elitism by the blood of the natives. For Andres Bonifacio, the katipunero and the inhabitants of the Philippines, the term "Filipino" meant racial equality, human dignity and love of country in its purest form.**

**Introductory Notes on Philippine Heroes and Heroines**

**Agoncillo, Marcela (1860-1946)**

* **"Maker of the Philippine Flag"**
* **She was one the three women who made (hand-woven) the first, original Philippine flag.**

**Aguinaldo, Emilio (1869-1964)**

* **"First President of the Philippines"**
* **He was the revolutionary who proclaimed the independence of the Philippines from Spain on June 12, 1898 in Kawit, Cavite.**

**Arellano, Deodato (1844-1896?)**

* **"Founding Member of the Katipunan"**
* **He was the first president of the Katipunan, a revolutionary society whose goal was to establish a free and democratic Philippines during the Spanish colonial era.**

**Aquino, Melchora (1812-1919)**

* **"Mother of the Katipunan"**
* **She was affectionately called "Tandang Sora" ('Old Sora"). This old woman gave food, shelter and other assistance to the Filipino revolutionaries who were fighting to overthrow the Spanish colonial government in the Philippines during the mid-1890.**

**Bonifacio, Andres (1863-1897)**

* **"Father of the Philippine Revolution of 1896"**
* **He was the founder of the revolutionary society called the Katipunan that led the uprising against the Spanish colonial administration in the Philippines in 1896.**

**Dagohoy, Francisco (Dates Unknown)**

* **"Leader of the Longest Filipino Revolt during the Spanish Colonial Period"**
* **He was the native Filipino who started the rebellion against Spanish rule in Bohol. It was the longest rebellion, which began in 1744 and lasted until 1829.**

**del Pilar, Gregorio (1875-1899)**

* **"Hero of Tirad Pass"**
* **One of the youngest generals in the Philippine revolutionary forces, Gregorio del Pilar is best remembered for his heroism at Tirad Pass where he and his 60 fellowmen fought the advancing American forces who were in hot pursuit of Emilio Aguinaldo. General del Pilar and his men were killed in what is known in Philippine history as the "Battle of Tirad Pass."**

**del Pilar, Marcelo H. (1850-1896)**

* **"Political Analyst of the Propaganda Movement"**
* **He was the founder of the Diarong Tagalog, a nationalistic newspaper which exposed the evils committed by the Spanish government in the Philippines. He was one reformist who used ordinary places where ordinary Filipinos gathered as venues for expressing his nationalistic sentiments and this made him popular with the people. When he went to Spain in 1888, he became the "political analyst" of the Filipino colony in that country.**

**Jacinto, Emilio (1875-1899)**

* **"Brains of the Katipunan"**
* **He was only 18 years old when he joined the Katipunan in 1893, becoming the youngest member of the revolutionary society. He wrote the "Kartilla" or the primer of the Katipunan which became the ideals or teachings of the society to which the members adhered strictly.**

**Jaena, Graciano Lopez (1856-1896)**

* **"Greatest Orator of the Propaganda Movement"**
* **He was one of the prominent members of the reformist movement. He established the "La Solidaridad," which was the official newspaper of the Filipino reformists based in Spain.**

**Katipunero (Revolutionaries)**

* **"Sons of the People"**
* **They were the male members of the revolutionary society called Katipunan that led the revolt against the Spanish colonial administration in the Philippines in 1896. Although they lacked the war machinery to win a revolution, they were able to sustain the armed struggle because they had the courage and determination and because they held the conviction that a free Philippines was worth fighting for. Philippine independence was won from Spain in 1898 but it was lost again a few years later to American imperialist forces.**

**Lapu-Lapu (1491-1542)**

* **"First National Hero of the Philippines"**
* **He was the Muslim chieftain of Mactan who killed Ferdinand Magellan in the "Battle of Mactan." Magellan was the Portuguese explorer who led a Spanish government-backed expedition to the East Indies which found its way to the Philippines in 1521. Magellan's expedition was the first known circumnavigation of the world.**

**Mabini, Apolinario (1864-1903)**

* **"The Sublime Paralytic"**
* **A highly intelligent man who suffered from leg paralysis, Mabini was the most trusted adviser of Emilio Aguinaldo.**

**Rizal, Jose (1861-1896)**

* **"Pride of the Malay Race"**
* **A sportsman, scientist, linguist and man of letters, Jose Rizal was the leading figure of the "Propaganda Movement" which espoused Philippine nationalism and advocated reforms during the second half of the 19th century when the Philippines was under Spanish colonial rule.**
* **Today, Rizal is considered as the national hero of the Philippines. Monuments honoring this great Filipino have been erected not only in the Philippines but also in China, Spain and the United States.**

**Women of the Katipunan**

* **They were the wives and daughters of the katipunero (revolutionaries). Although they were few in numbers, they were trusted members of the Katipunan. Like their male counterparts, they recruited new members but they were not part of the "fighting force" of the revolutionary society. They served as record-keepers, and they served as a front whenever the katipunero held a secret meeting in a particular house. In order not to arouse the suspicion of the Spanish civil guard, the women sang and danced in the sala in full view of the passerby while the clandestine meeting was held. Among the well-known women in the Katipunan were Josefa and Trinidad Rizal, Gregoria de Jesus, Benita Rodriguez and Simeona de Remigio.**