

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3648



Introduced by Honorable Deogracias Victor "DV" B. Savellano

EXPLANATORY NOTE

About 30 years after Christopher Columbus had arrived in the Americas in 1492, a Portuguese explorer by the name of Ferdinand Magellan led a fleet of five ships out of Seville, Spain in 1519 in an attempt to find a western sea route to the so called Spice Islands. He discovered the Strait of Magellan and became the first European to cross the Pacific Ocean. Magellan landed on March 16, 1521 on the island of Homonhon, part of an archipelago, to be christened later as the Philippine Islands in honor of King Philip II of Spain.

In an attempt to subdue Datu Lapu-Lapu on the island of Mactan, Magellan was killed in battle by the natives. Although Magellan wasn't able to return home, his few remaining men completed the expedition by returning to Spain via the Indian and Atlantic Ocean marking it as the first recorded circumnavigation of the globe.

Magellan's landing in the Philippines signified the onset of a new era wherein other Europeans would follow Magellan's route, coming to the Far East via the Pacific Ocean. It was to commence a modern age, about almost at the same time of the Renaissance which was emerging when trade, exchanges of culture and colonization from distant nations prospered.

It was a time of cultural confrontation and assimilation; conquest and colonization; subjugation and resistance — when much of the future political, social and cultural landscape of the Far East was just being formed. Magellan's voyage was part of the prototypical and massive foray by a European power into overseas imperialism.

The Spanish landing also introduced Christianity that would greatly influence the culture of the people, making it their premier faith to become the only Christian dominated nation in the whole of Asia. In fact, the International Eucharistic Congress is already planning to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Catholicism in the Philippines in 2021.

For the native islanders or Indios, later on termed Filipinos, the Spanish onslaught was an unmitigated disaster, exacerbated by the brutal mistreatment they suffered at the hands of the conquistadors if not the friars. These Castilians like the ancient Romans before them were solely interested in immediate profit and willing to carry out any requisite social and economic dislocation in the attainment of this goal.


Using the cross and the sword alternately to subdue the Indios, dominion over the archipelago lasted for more than 300 years until the once scattered but resilient local tribes finally

found a singular identity that would unite them towards revolution and independence from Spain in 1898.

As we pay homage to the Quincentennial commemoration of first recorded circumnavigation of the earth and Magellan's arrival in the Philippines let us also reflect on the impact of Magellan's landing at Homonhon and how it had accelerated the interaction among the countries. Magellan's voyage had not only laid down the probable destiny of our people in the centuries that followed after 1521 but also as to the rest of Southeast Asia and even Australia.

Research and preparation for the Quincentennial should not be limited to the events after 1521 but also to the period prior to the said date. Only a complete reflection on our history can guide us towards a more analytical resolution *vis-a-vis* the factual episodes and its profound consequences that has brought us to where we are as a people today and our affiliation with the world community of nations.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill creating a Commission for the Preparation of the Quincentennial Celebration of the First Circumnavigation of the Globe, the Introduction of Christianity in the Philippine Island and Magellan's Landing in Homonhon on March 19, 1521.



DEOGRACIAS VICTOR "DV" B. SAVELLANO

Republic of the Philippines
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SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session
3648
HOUSE BILL NO. _____

Introduced by Honorable Deogracias Victor "DV" B. Savellano

AN ACT

PROVIDING FOR THE CREATION OF THE QUINCENTENNIAL COMMISSION TO COMMEMORATE THE FIRST CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF THE GLOBE, THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY AS A RELIGION IN THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS AND MAGELLAN'S LANDING IN HOMONHON ON MARCH 19, 1521, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. There shall be established, the Quincentennial Commission to commemorate the first circumnavigation of the globe, the introduction of Christianity as a religion in the Philippine Islands and Magellan's landing on March 19, 1521.

SECTION 2. The Commission shall be headed by a Chairman who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines and shall be composed of the following members:

- (a) Chairman;
- (b) Chairman of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, Vice Chairman;
- (c) Chairman of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Member;
- (d) Executive Director of the National Archives of the Philippines, Member;
- (e) Executive Director of the National Library of the Philippines, Member;
- (f) Secretary of the Department of Tourism, Member;
- (g) Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Member;
- (h) Secretary of Education, Member;
- (i) Chairman of the Commission on Higher Education, Member;
- (j) Director of the Philippine Information Agency, Member;
- (k) Two (2) members from the Academe who shall both be appointed by the President of the Philippines;
- (l) Two (2) members from the Philippine Historical Association who shall both be appointed by the President of the Philippines; and
- (m) Two (2) members each from the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Philippines.

SECTION 3. The Commission shall take charge of the nationwide preparations for the Quincentennial celebration of the landing in the Philippine Islands, on March 19, 1521 by the Ferdinand Magellan Expedition and the first circumnavigation of the world. The Commission shall perform the following functions;

- (a) To undertake the overall study, conceptualization and implementation of programs and projects on the utilization of culture, arts, literature and media vehicles for history, economic endeavors and reflections on the impact of the Magellan expedition's circumnavigation of the world;
- (b) To act as the principal coordinator for all the activities related to awareness and celebrations of the Quincentennial;
- (c) To serve as the clearing house for the preparation and dissemination of all information about the plans and events for the Quincentennial celebrations;
- (d) To constitute working groups which shall undertake the implementation of programs;
- (e) To prioritize the refurbishment of historical sites and structures nationwide; and
- (f) To call upon any government agency of instrumentality and corporation, and to invite private individuals and even foreign governments to assist in the performance of its tasks.

SECTION 4. The Commission shall have a Secretariat to provide technical and administrative support. The Secretariat shall be headed by an Executive Director who shall be designated by the President of the Philippines upon recommendation of the Chairman of the Commission. The appointment of the Executive Director and all the secretariat staff shall terminate upon completion of the programs and activities of the Commission.

SECTION 5. The amount of Two Hundred Fifty Million Pesos (P250,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated for the initial budget necessary for the effective implementation of this Act. Thereafter, such other amount as may be necessary for the continuing programs and activities of the Commission shall be incorporated in the yearly appropriations of the Office of the President under the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 6. The Commission shall be an ad hoc body and its existence shall terminate upon the completion of all activities related to the Quincentennial Celebrations.

SECTION 7. The Commission shall prepare, for approval of the President of the Philippines, a Comprehensive Plan for the Quincentennial Celebrations within six (6) months from the approval of this act.

SECTION 8. All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SECTION 9. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days upon publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,