

## EARLY TIME RECKONING IN THE PHILIPPINES

JUAN FRANCISCO DE SAN ANTONIO who lived 20 years in the Philippines and wrote one of the best chronicles on the islands about the middle of the 18th century, made the following remarks regarding the early system of reckoning time in or around Manila:

" It is not known whether these natives divided the time into hours, days, weeks, months or years, or made any other division of time. As this was necessary to them for the reckoning of their commerce, trade and contracts (in which they all engaged), they used for reckoning their times of payment, and for other transactions and business of their government, for the hours, the state of the sun in the sky, the crowing of the cock, and the laying time of the hens, and several other enigmas which are still employed in the Tagalog speech.

To keep account of the changing of the seasons, they knew when it was winter or summer by the trees, and their leaves and fruit. They knew of the division into months or years by moons. Consequently, in order to designate the date of payment, they said 'in so many moons, in so many harvests, or in so many fruitings of such and such a tree.' These were the methods employed in their trading and government.

The days were reckoned by the name of the sun, namely arab. Thus the Tagalog now reckon ysang arao - one day; dalauang arao - two days; and so on until they have the difference of weeks, which they call by the name Domingo, saying so many Domingos.

The night is called gab-i; and the day arao -from the name of the sun. The months were named and reckoned by the name of the moon, namely, bouan in Tagalog. Thus did they divide the seasons after their own manner, and in their own speech. Only there are no terms to indicate the hours of the clock (in their speech); and now the Castilian names of hours are Tagalized in order to indicate the hours of time. They call the clock horasan, that is, the thing in which one sees the hours; whether in its place or in the instrument made for it.

They expressed the year, in their old speech by the word taon. It is metaphorical, for it really means- the assembling of many, and that they have joined together months to make one year. They had a word to signify seasons and climates, namely panahon. But they never knew the word -time (tiempo), in its general sense, and there is no proper Tagalog word for it; but they used the Spanish word only, corrupted after their manner, for they make it tiyempo."