

THE CHINESE IN ILOILO: 1581-1900

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ILOILO is one place in the Philippines where Chinese influence has been profound and dates back to ancient times. Long before the coming of the Spaniards Iloilo already had trade relations with China. In the early period, probably from the tenth to the twelfth century, the Chinese traded from the decks of their vessels, or in safer places, from some recognized trading stations along the shore.¹ However, after the twelfth century, some Chinese merchants began to settle at the chief ports of the Philippines to handle the trading activities. One of those early Chinese settlements was located in Iloilo.

The Chinese brought iron bars, procelain and pottery, silk and woven cloths, beads and other forms of cheap jewelry, bronze gongs, small bells and various other articles. They bartered these with the natives for raw cotton, abaca and other fibers, hardwoods, rattan, nito, gums, resins, beeswax, edible nuts, placer gold, fancy corals,

mother-of-pearl shells and some other products of the islands.²

The large quantities of Sung, Yuan and Ming porcelain wares that have been recovered in several archaeological sites in Iloilo attest to the big volume of trade that the Chinese had with the province in those early days. And the Chinese did not only come to trade. Many of them came to stay. By the time the Spaniards arrived in Iloilo in the sixteenth century the Chinese colony was quite large. A proof of this is that shortly after the Spaniards had founded Arevalo in 1581, Fray Juan de Medina reported:

There are more than one hundred Chinese married to native women in this town, and their number is increasing daily so that I think they will end by peopling the country.³

During the early part of the Spanish Period, the Chinese engaged in buying and selling. They also provided such essential services as barbering, cooking, shoemaking and tailoring to the small Spanish

¹H. Otley Beyer, "Philippine Pre-Historic Contacts with Foreigners." In Shubert S.C. Liao, *Chinese Participation in Philippine Culture and Economy* (Manila, 1964), p.8.

²*Ibid.*, p. 9.

³Fray Juan de Medina, O.S.A., "History of the Augustinian Order in the Philippines." In Emma Blair and James A. Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1492-1898* (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark & Co., 1903-1909), v. 23, p. 216. Hereafter cited as Blair and Robertson.

community in Arevalo (then the capital of the *alcaldia* of Panay) as well as to the Ilonggos in the town and the neighboring places. It was the Chinese who introduced the use of wooden shoes (*bakya*), umbrellas (*payong*), and slippers (*chinelas*) to the Filipinos.⁴ In 1609, Antonio de Morga made this statement about the Chinese in the Philippines:

They are excellent workmen and skillful in all arts and trades. It is true that the colony cannot exist without the Chinese as they are the workers in all trades and business and are very industrious and work for small wages.⁵

Yet, although their services were needed, the Chinese were harshly treated by the Spaniards. Apprehensive at the growing number and influence of the Chinese, and for purposes of raising revenues through taxation, the Spanish authorities decided to concentrate the Chinese at certain places where they could be easier observed and their activities closely monitored.

The place designated for the Chinese quarter and market was called *parian*.⁶ In Iloilo the place chosen for the Chinese *parian* was Molo. We could not ascertain when the *parian* in Molo was established but the one in Manila was set up by

Governor-General Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa in 1581, the same year when he founded Arevalo.⁷ It is interesting to note that until today many people in Iloilo still refer to Molo as "Parian."

A legend says that Molo got its name because the Chinese could not pronounce the word "Moro." The legend runs this way: In the olden times Moros (Moslems) from Mindanao frequently raided the coastal towns of Iloilo. In Molo, the Chinese assigned watchmen on the seashore to warn the people of the approach of the Moros. Whenever Moro *vintas* appeared in Panay Gulf the Chinese *bang-tai* on watch immediately ran around the town excitedly shouting "Molo! Molo!" Because of this, the people named the place Molo. Incidentally, the Ilonggo word *bantay* (sentinel, guard, watchman) is derived from the Chinese word *bang-tai* which has the same meaning. And there are hundreds of Chinese words that have been incorporated into the Ilonggo dialect.

The Chinese in Iloilo, like those in Manila and other places in the Philippines, were subjected to heavy taxation. In 1581 Governor-General Ronquillo de Peñalosa collected a tariff of 3% of the value of Chinese goods brought into the country.⁸ In 1616 the tariff was

⁴Gregorio F. Zalde, "Impact of Asia's Great Traditions on the Philippines," *Historical Bulletin*, XI (March 1967) 58-59.

⁵Antonio de Morga, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, anotada por Jose Rizal (Paris: Garnier Hermanos, 1890), p. 349.

⁶*Parian* is a Mexican term meaning market.

⁷Antonio de Morga, *Historical Events in the Philippines*, annotated by Jose Rizal (Manila: Jose Rizal National Centennial Commission, 1962), p. 17. Ronquillo named Arevalo after his native place in Spain. The original name of the town was La Villa Rica de Arevalo. At present the official name is Arevalo but people call it Villa.

⁸Blair and Robertson, v. 5, p. 239.

doubled to 6%. In addition to this, the Chinese paid an annual tribute, a tax on permission to stay in the islands, a license tax to do business or engage in some work, and a residence tax. In 1970 the King ordered a head tax (*cedula de capitacion*). This particular tax was of three kinds. While the Indios (Filipinos) paid only P1.50 a year, the Chinese *mestizos* were required to pay P3.00 and the Chinese P6.00.⁹

The Chinese evaded some of these exactions by embracing Christianity. Any Chinese who became a Christian was exempted from paying the tribute for ten years.¹⁰ In addition to the taxes levied on them, the Chinese underwent other kinds of persecution, including wholesale massacres, as what happened in 1603 when on a "flimsy pretext" the Spaniards killed some 25,000 Chinese in Manila. After the massacre, however, the Spaniards found out that "there were no more barbers, tailors, cooks, shoemakers, farmers and herders,"¹¹ and so they again encouraged the Chinese to come to the Philippines. It should be pointed out, at this point, that throughout the Spanish Period, the Chinese had always far outnumbered

the Spaniards in the Philippines and so the latter were often fearful that the Chinese might revolt or aid the Filipinos to revolt.

The Spaniards did not like the Chinese but they could not do without them. The Chinese were a good source of revenue; they brought merchandise from China; they exported Philippine products and performed many necessary services. Then came the British invasion and capture of Manila in 1762 which proved that the much vaunted military might of Spain was not unbeatable after all. The Spaniards became afraid that their defeat from the British might embolden the Chinese to revolt. In 1766, the Spanish government decided to expel the Chinese from the Philippines. The third biggest number of the Chinese who were thrown out of the country came from Iloilo.¹²

But not all the Chinese were expelled. Some 5,000 of them were allowed to remain. The Spaniards thought that this number was enough to carry out functions in trade and the crafts which they deemed essential, but not big enough to pose a threat to the government or the Spanish community.¹³

⁹Carl C. Plehn, "Taxation in the Philippines," *Political Science Quarterly*, XVI (1901) 659-696. Also Blair and Robertson, v. 50, p. 65.

¹⁰Blair and Robertson, v. 22, p. 158.

¹¹John Crawford, *A Descriptive Dictionary of the Indian Islands and Adjacent Archipelago* (London: Bradbury & Sons, 1856), pp. 98, 350. Also Antonio S. Tan, *The Chinese in the Philippines, 1898-1935: A Study of Their Awakening* (Quezon City: R.P. Garcia, 1972), p. 24.

¹²Alfonso Felix, Jr. (ed.), *The Chinese in the Philippines, 1770-1898* (Manila: Solidaridad Publishing Co., 1969), v. 2, p. 22.

¹³Philip Ginsberg, "The Chinese in the Philippine Revolution," *Asian Studies*, III (April 1970) 143-159.

The Chinese Mestizos

From pre-Spanish time to the eighteenth century hundreds of Chinese had settled in Molo. They embraced the Christian faith and intermarried with Ilonggos, and in some cases, with Spaniards and Spanish *mestizos*. Their descendants, in time, spread out to Arevalo, Oton, Jaro, Iloilo and other nearby towns. These progenies of mixed Chinese-Ilonggo, Chinese-Spanish, or Chinese-Ilonggo, Spanish blood were called *mestizos-Chinos* or *mestizos-Sangleyes* by the Spaniards and *mestizo-Insik* by the Ilonggos. They inherited the craftsmanship, business acumen and skills of their Chinese forebears and they soon gained importance in trade and industry. By the time the Chinese expulsion came in 1766, the Chinese *mestizos* of Iloilo were more than ready to take over the functions of the Chinese in the arts and trades. Their wealth and social standing also enabled them to join the *principalia*, the local ruling class.

Nicholas Loney, the first British vice consul and merchant in Iloilo (1856-1869), made the following impression of the Chinese *mestizos*:

The Yloilo *mestizos*, especially those of Chinese origin, are a remarkable commercial, industrial and speculative race, in-

creasing yearly in social and political importance.¹⁴

One example of a Spaniard who married a Chinese *mestiza* and prospered was Don Joaquin Ortiz from Andalucia, Spain. He came to Iloilo around 1835. Assisted by his wife, he engaged in trading, particularly in tobacco. The couple were able to accumulate a large capital so that in 1856 they built a second warehouse and ordered the construction of a 300-ton vessel to be employed in trading with Manila and even with Singapore.¹⁵

When Governor-General Narciso Claveria decreed in 1849 that all Filipinos should bear family names (for purposes of taxation and law enforcement) the Chinese *mestizos* in Iloilo hispanized their Chinese names and made these their family names. For example, Loc Sing became Locsin. Many prominent Ilonggo families today can trace their ancestry to those early Chinese *mestizos*. To mention several of them, aside from Locsin, there are the families Yulo, Yusay, Lacson, Layson, Ganzon, Tinsay, Consing, Quimsing, Conlu, Sian, Tiongco, Guanco, Pison, Ditching, Sitchon, and Dingcong.

A Spanish document states that in 1799 there were 975 *mestizos* in Iloilo but it is possible that the actual number was higher.¹⁶ Certainly, the Chinese *mestizos* were

¹⁴Nicholas Loney, "Report to John William Farren," dated at Iloilo, 10 July 1861. Found in the Public Records Office, London (PRO FO 72/1017).

¹⁵Nicholas Loney, "Letter to his sister Nanny," dated at Jaro, 22 November 1856. In *A Britisher in the Philippines* (Manila: The National Library, 1964), p. 61.

¹⁶Manuel Buzeta and Felipe Bravo, *Diccionario Geografico, Estadistico y Historico de las Islas Filipinas* Madrid: J.C. de la Peña, 1850-1851), v. 1, p. 105.

numerous enough to make the Spanish authorities recognize their significance as taxpayers. In 1800, for instance, Joaquin Martinez de Zuñiga wrote that "there were 29,723 native and Chinese *mestizo* taxpayers in Iloilo."¹⁷ It must be pointed out that the Chinese *mestizos* paid double the head tax paid by Filipino taxpayers because it was believed that the *mestizos* had higher earnings.

Some Chinese, in order to be identified as Filipinos, adopted Ilonggo family names at their baptism as Christians. Some children of Chinese fathers and Ilonggo mothers also carried the surnames of their mothers. The *Guia de Forasteros* of 1856 gave the number of Chinese *mestizo* taxpayers in Molo at 1,085 out of a total of 4,143 taxpayers in the town. There were 114 Chinese *mestizo* taxpayers in Arevalo, 78 in Mandurriao, 56 in Jaro, 18 in Iloilo and nine in Oton.¹⁸ Since people at that time started paying taxes at age 25, the actual number of Chinese *mestizos* in Molo and the surrounding towns was therefore higher than the figures listed by the *Guia de Forasteros*.

More Chinese Immigration

It did not take a long time before the Spanish authorities realized that more Chinese workers were needed, especially in agriculture. In 1804, the government decreed that Chinese who would devote themselves to agricultural pursuits were allowed to live in the Philippines.¹⁹

Many Chinese farmers came to Iloilo. They introduced the planting of the *meng* bean (mongo), *mani* (peanut) and some varieties of rice and vegetables. They brought better breeds of livestock and work animals as well as introduced better methods of production. The Chinese were the first builders of the muscovado sugar mills in Iloilo.²⁰ They built wooden cane crushers run by carabao or oxen and used large Chinese vats (*kawa*) for boiling the sugarcane juice.

In 1834, the year Manila was declared open to international commerce, the Spanish government allowed the Chinese to embark on any branch of industry provided they secured a license from the government.²¹ In Iloilo, one industrial innovation made by the Chinese was the production of salt

¹⁷ Joaquin Martinez de Zuñiga, *Status of the Philippines in 1800*, tr. by Fr. Isacio Rodriguez (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1975), p. 455.

¹⁸ *Guia Oficial de Forasteros de las Islas Filipinas* (Manila: Imprinta de los Amigos del Pais, 1856), p. 198.

¹⁹ Liao, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

²⁰ John T. Omohundro, *Chinese Merchant Families in Iloilo: Commerce and Kin in a Central Philippine City* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press and Athens, Ohio: The Ohio University Press, 1981), p. 2.

²¹ Liao, *loc. cit.*

with the use of brick-floored evaporating ponds.²² Before that the Ilonggos manufactured salt by evaporating sea water in bamboo poles cut into halves.

In 1850 Governor-General Urbistondo announced a special regulation for farm immigration from China exclusively to help in food production. The number of farm laborers that a Chinese farmer could engage depended on his annual income. Chinese farmers with an annual income of (P1,500) to 2,000 could hire 200 farm immigrants and farmers who earned over P2,400 a year could engage 400 Chinese laborers.²³

The response from China was strong and thousands of Chinese immigrants came. By 1880 it was estimated that there were around 100,000 Chinese in the Philippines. It so happened that in the middle of the nineteenth century when the Philippines entered a period of economic transformation, China was undergoing economic, social and political crises. There was rapid population growth and great scarcity of arable land. To make things worse, two armed upheavals occurred, bringing untold havoc upon the people. These were the Opium War of 1839-1842 and the Taiping Rebellion in 1851-1864. The Taiping Rebellion caused the death

of some 20 to 30 million people and the destruction of billions of dollars worth of property.²⁴ In the midst of these difficulties, countless thousands of Chinese left their homeland for other countries. Hundreds of them reached Iloilo.

The Chinese and the Iloilo Textile Industry

The Chinese and the Chinese *mestizos* in Iloilo were active in the textile industry. It must be noted that for centuries Iloilo was a textile center of the Philippines. Ilonggo women were expert weavers, producing large quantities of textile from cotton, abaca, pineapple fibers and from silk. The woven *sinamay*, *jusi*, *nipis* and *guinaras (madrinaque)* were sold in Manila and other provinces. A considerable quantity was also exported to China, Europe and America. In 1854, around \$400,000 worth of textile was shipped to Manila and about \$40,000 worth was sold in other places.²⁵ The amount exported to Europe, through Manila, was estimated to be valued at \$20,000. Except for silk which was imported from China, the other raw materials in the weaving industry were produced locally or obtained from the neighboring provinces.

²²Omhundro, *loc. cit.*

²³*Manchu East Asian Bureau for Economic Studies*, v. 3, p. 39, cited in Liao, *loc. cit.*

²⁴Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *Strangers at the Gate: Social Disorders in South China, 1839-1861* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), pp. 87-108, 117-131.

²⁵Loney to Farren, 12 April 1857, PRO FO 72/927.

The Chinese and Chinese *mestizos* in Iloilo figured prominently in the shipping and trading of textile. Loney reported that when he arrived in Iloilo in 1856, commerce was principally done by the *mestizo* traders of Molo and Jaro who, "on completing their purchases of locally woven manufactures, embarked with them in numbers of six, ten, fifteen and sometimes twenty, in the coasting vessels leaving for Manila."²⁶ On the return trip to Iloilo, they brought silk and other commodities from Manila. In 1855 the *mestizo* traders brought some \$400,000 worth of silk and about \$450,000 worth of other goods to Iloilo. Many of the *mestizos* also owned sailing vessels that plied between Iloilo, Negros, Cebu, Albay, Manila and other places as far south as Jolo.²⁷

After the opening of the port of Iloilo to international trade in 1855 more Chinese merchants came, especially after the signing of the Treaty of Tientsien in 1858 between Spain and China. The treaty allowed Chinese merchant ships to come to the Philippines without limitation as to their number and to be treated as those of the most-favored nations. In 1860 the Chinese *parians* were abolished by Governor-General Ramon Solano and the Chinese became more free

in conducting business in the Philippines.²⁸

As a result of these developments, China became a major market for the products of Iloilo, especially sugar. From 1859 when the first direct exportation of sugar from the port of Iloilo was made, to 1862, all the sugar shipments were sent to Australia. In 1863, however, due to the coming of more Chinese merchant ships, the biggest export of sugar from Iloilo was sent to China, as shown in the following figures: Great Britain — 588 tons, Australia — 3,419 tons, and China — 6,640 tons.²⁹

The coming of more Chinese traders to Iloilo and the establishment of the Chinese *cabecilla* system beginning around 1850 caused a major shift in the business activities of the Chinese *mestizo* group in the province. A *cabecilla* system consisted of the head merchant in Manila and his agents in the provinces. The Chinese headmen and their agents could supply the raw materials and purchase the finished products of the textile industry better than the Chinese *mestizo* traders could do. Finding themselves at the losing end of the competition with the Chinese *cabecillas* in the textile business, the *mestizos* shifted their interest to sugar whose production was receiving strong impetus

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸Jose Montero y Vidal, *Historia General de Filipinas* (Madrid: M. Tello, 1887-1895), tomo 3, p. 296.

²⁹Robustiano Echaus, *Apuntes de la Isla de Negros* (Manila: Litografia de Chofre y Comp., 1894), p. 8.

because of the opening of the port to foreign commerce and the high demand for sugar in the world market.

The Chinese were left in virtual control of the textile industry which, contrary to the assertion of some writers, did not decline with the rise of the sugar industry. Textile weaving in Iloilo continued to grow so that by 1883 the textile export was estimated at around \$1 million. At that time there were around 45,000 weaving looms in Iloilo, producing "fine textile of silk, piña and cotton well liked within and outside the country for exquisite beauty."³⁰

The textile industry was no longer very profitable to the Ilonggo and *mestizo* businessmen but it was good business for the Chinese. And because the Chinese controlled the industry, they could dictate the cost of materials which they supplied, and the price of the finished woven cloths which they themselves bought. The result was that the Ilonggo weavers, the real producers of wealth, gained minimal income from their labor.

Up to the early part of the 20th century the textile industry of Iloilo was still thriving. An Ameri-

can writer, John Bancroft Devins, who visited the market of Oton one day in 1901 reported:

The Chinamen are there, as well as elsewhere, in great numbers. They furnish the cotton and the silk from which the cloth is woven, and they buy the cloth to sell in the markets throughout the island.³¹

Devins also noticed how the weavers had to work very hard because the Chinese controlled the textile business. He continued to say, "Seemingly every house we passed on the ride (from Iloilo to Oton) had a loom. As the cloth is sold cheaply, it is necessary to keep the hand loom busy to make a living."³²

The Chinese and the Sugar Industry

Discouraged by the declining profitability of textile and attracted by the bright prospects of sugar, the Chinese *mestizos* of Iloilo put their capital in large-scale sugarcane planting, milling and sugar trading. In 1861 Loney reported:

A good number of Iloilo *mestizos* have also invested in large tracts of fertile and well-situated lands on the coast of Negros.³³

³⁰Jose Montero y Vidal, *El Archipelago Filipino* (Madrid: Imprinta y Fundacion de Manuel Tello, 1886), p. 23.

³¹John Bancroft Devins, *An American Observer in the Philippines, or Life in Our New Possessions* (Boston, New York and Chicago: American Tract Society, 1905), p. 278.

³²*Ibid.*

³³Loney to Farren, 10 July 1861, PRO FO 72/1017.

The *mestizo* families who moved to Negros from Iloilo were usually accompanied by their poor relatives and neighbors who worked in the *haciendas* either as tenants (*agsadores*) or farm-hands. In most cases, the migrating families did not give up their landholdings in Iloilo. They even maintained their old houses where their children lived while attending school in Iloilo and where the families stayed during special occasions like the town fiesta or the *semana santa* (holy week).

One Chinese *mestizo* from Iloilo who went to Negros and made good was Teodoro Yulo of Molo. He moved his family to Negros in 1870. He started by acquiring *haciendas* Concepcion, San Gregorio, San Carlos and Carmen in Binalbagan. Within several years he bought *haciendas* Ipil, Tagda, Pilar, Socorro, Linao and Bagacay in Hinigaran. Eventually Teodoro Yulo had a total of 75 sugarcane plantations. Like many other big *hacenderos*, he sent his children to college.³⁴ Two of his sons became provincial governors of Iloilo and one son became senator from Negros Occidental.

The contribution of the Chinese *mestizos* to the rapid development of the sugar industry could hardly be overestimated. As a group, they enjoyed an advantage over the

Ilonggo planters and businessmen in that they had bigger capital, better business skills and wider business contacts. By the 1880's Panay and Negros had become the premier sugar-producing region of the Philippines and the port of Iloilo assumed its position as the No. 1 exporter of sugar. In 1885 Iloilo's sugar export was 109,609 tons as compared to Manila's 65,678 tons.³⁵

The Chinese who came to Iloilo after the opening of the port to foreign commerce did not confine themselves to trading. Some of them went into farming and manufacturing. At first the Chinese, like other foreigners, were not allowed to own land. They circumvented this legal impediment by putting their interests in the names of their Filipino wives or of their Filipino partners some of whom were actually dummies. When the law prohibiting foreign ownership of land was later abolished, many Chinese invested their capital in land for sugarcane or abaca. After the abolition of the government monopoly on liquor, the Chinese also put up distilleries for rum and wine in Iloilo.³⁶

It was not so easy for the Chinese to prosper in business in Iloilo. They had to compete with other foreign merchants who generally had bigger capital — British, Americans, Swiss, German,

³⁴ Francisco Varona, "Negros — Its History and People," *The Manila Chronicle* Western Visayas Section), 16 June 1965.

³⁵ John Foreman, *The Philippine Islands* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), p. 295.

³⁶ Edgar Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1965), p. 104.

French — and also with Spaniards, Ilonggos and *mestizos*. Many Chinese started in business very humbly: for example, as itinerant vendors peddling their wares from town to town. Through hard work and thrift, they saved enough money to start a *sari-sari* (*tianggi*) store and from there some of them were able to build business houses of considerable size. The Chinese also helped one another. It was for the purpose of mutual protection and of promoting their common interest that they organized the Kuantong Hui Kua (Cantonese Association) in 1870.³⁷ In 1878 the Iloilo Chinese petitioned for and obtained the right to elect their own officials who would serve as liaison officers with the Spanish colonial bureaucracy.³⁸

Because the port was in Iloilo, business naturally shifted from Molo to the capital town. After the termination of the *parian* in line with the liberalization of government commercial policy, the Chinese in Molo gradually moved

their business firms to Iloilo to be near the docks. The transfer was especially hastened by a big fire that razed Molo on 3 July 1877.³⁹

Iloilo and Jaro Became Cities

By 1886 there were 1,154 Chinese in Iloilo, not counting the Chinese *mestizos* who were more numerous, and they contributed plenty to the income of the government. In industrial tax alone, 18 Chinese paid the first class tax of \$100 each, 72 paid the second class tax of \$60, 138 paid the third class tax of \$30, and 26 paid the fourth class tax of \$12.40. But more than contributing to the government coffers, the Chinese helped push the growth of Iloilo so that in 1890 it was elevated to the status of a city by the Queen Regent of Spain.⁴¹ The following year, 1891, Jaro was likewise made a city.⁴² Iloilo was the only province to have two cities during the Spanish Period, thanks partly to its large Chinese and Chinese *mestizo* residents.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 179

³⁸Omohundro, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

³⁹P.R. Verzosa (ed.), *Iloilo Handbook for 1934* (Iloilo: Iloilo Tourist Bureau, 1934), p. 31.

⁴⁰*Report of the Philippine Commission* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), v. 2, p. 441.

⁴¹Wenceslao E. Retana, *Mando de General Weyler en Filipinas* (Madrid: Vda. de M.M. de los Rios, 1896), p. 271. The Royal Decree creating the city government of Iloilo was issued on 7 June 1889, but the government was inaugurated by Weyler on 7 February 1890.

⁴²Decreto del Gobierno General de 7 de Marzo de 1891. In Miguel Rodriguez Berriz, *Diccionario de la Administracion de Filipinas, Anuario de 1891* (Manila: Establecimiento Tipografico de J. Marty, 1891), v. 9, p. 152. Also in *Gaceta de Manila*, 23 Marzo 1891.

About 90% of the Chinese who came to Iloilo in the second half of the nineteenth century were Fukienese, of whom about 50% were from Chin-Kang (Chin-Chiang) county, Fukien. They carried such surnames as Tan, Uy, Sy, Ang, Chua, Go, Lim, Yu and Yap.⁴³ These family names still predominate among the Iloilo Chinese today.

Some Chinese made Iloilo the base of their operations that covered other cities of the country. A case in point was Francisco Yap Tico who had a combined commission agency and hemp-sugar exporting firm in Iloilo in the 1890's. By the turn of the century he had established branches in Manila and Cebu.⁴⁴

One area where the Chinese also made good was financing or money lending. For instance, Lim Ponso was loaning money to sugarcane planters and *lorcha* operators in the 1890's. Within a dozen years he became one of the big sugar exporters in Iloilo.⁴⁵

The first bank to open a branch

in Iloilo was the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation in 1883.⁴⁶ It was followed by the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China, the National Bank of China, and the Banco Español Filipino.⁴⁷ But even with four banks in operation the financial needs of the farmers, millers and traders could not be met due to the rapid growth of the sugar industry. Many Chinese took advantage of the situation by giving cash advances to sugarcane planters. And not only cash. The Chinese also supplied the draft animals, farm implements and supplies needed by the planters, on condition that they would sell their sugar to the Chinese. The supplies of food items and farm necessities usually took the form of credit at the Chinese stores. The Chinese, *mestizos* and Ilonggos who operated under this kind of financing scheme became known as "the monopolizers."⁴⁸

In 1893, three years after Iloilo had become a city, it had 2,010 Chinese residents, the biggest outside Manila.⁴⁹ The following year the number dropped to 1,896, pro-

⁴³Wickberg, *op. cit.*, p. 172; Omohundro, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁴⁴Walter Robb, "The Chinese in the Philippines," *Asia* (1921), p. 962, quoted in Wickberg, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

⁴⁵Document No. 125, *Protocolos de los Instrumentos Publicos*, 1895, for the province of Iloilo. National Archives, Manila.

⁴⁶Maurice Collis Wayfoong, *The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation* (London: Faber & Faber, Ltd., 1965), p. 101.

⁴⁷*Report of the Philippine Commission* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), v. 4, p. 88.

⁴⁸Varona, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁹Wickberg, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

bably because some Chinese moved to Negros; but in 1898 the number rose to 1,958.⁵⁰

The *Padrones de Chinos* of Iloilo in 1894 stated that most of the Cantonese in the city were cooks and shoemakers.⁵¹ In the field of culinary art the Chinese certainly made lasting contributions. We only have to mention the famous Pancit Molo and La Paz Batchoy to appreciate the rich Chinese legacy in food preparation. Many dishes that Ilonggo housekeepers prepare today are of Chinese origin: chupsuey, lumpia, bihon, sutanghon, mami, siopao, etc.

The Philippine Revolution and the Filipino-American War that followed it dislocated business in Iloilo for about three years but the Chinese stayed on. Many leaders of the Revolution in Iloilo were descendants of the early Chinese. With the coming of peace and the new regime under the Americans, the Chinese continued to play an expanding role in the economy of Iloilo.

Concluding Statement

The Chinese first came to Iloilo centuries ago. Some just came to trade but over the years a large number had settled down, weathering initial prejudice, and at times open hostilities from the Ilonggos, as well as official persecution from the government. The descendants of those who married in Iloilo were assimilated by Ilonggo society so that after two or three generations they no longer considered themselves as Chinese but as Ilonggos, and were fully accepted as such. They were no longer derogatively called "Insik."

Whether the early Chinese came to Iloilo just for business or lived here permanently, they contributed immensely to Ilonggo life and culture. Many of their descendants became leaders in the various fields of human endeavor. Indeed, Chinese influence in Iloilo has been deep and pervasive. Today it can be seen in many an Ilonggo's fair skin, in the crops he plants, the tools he uses, the foods he eats, the games he plays, the customs he observes, and in a myriad other ways.

⁵⁰*Guia Oficial de Filipinas para el ano 1894* (Manila: 1894), p. 730.

⁵¹Wickberg, *op. cit.*, p. 111.