PHILIPPINE ARCHITECTURE

The history and culture of the Philippines are reflected in its architectural heritage, in the dwellings of its various peoples, in mosques and churches, and in buildings that have risen in response to the demands of progress and the aspirations of a people. Houses and monuments from Batanes to Tawi-Tawi do not only represent different cultures and periods in Philippine history; they also constitute the Filipino's creative response to the problems posed by the geography and climate of the archipelago.

The 7,100 islands of the Philippines appear to be a mountain range that is half submerged. More than half of the land is mountainous and hilly. With their headwaters in the mountains, rivers flow down to the plains and out to the sea. For its relatively small area of 300,000 square kilometers, the country has an extensive coastline of 17,500 kilometers. On this fragmented territory and rugged terrain, on mountain, plain, riverbank, and seacoast, the people have made their home.

With its southernmost islands about four degrees from the equator, and its northern and central islands in the path of typhoons, the Philippines is subject to the worst of tropical heat, humidity, and rain. A long dry season can bring drought, rains can cause floods, and high winds can ruin houses. Several times a year the land is rocked by earthquakes.

As the climate dictates the need for shelter, the land provides the materials for it: wood from the forests, bamboo from groves, leaves from the fields, stone from rivers and quarries, and clay from the earth itself.

Setting, climate, and available materials are among the factors that give shelter its form and character.

The Ethnic Tradition

The earliest shelters of human beings were probably not built by them. They simply found these shelters or found themselves in them. It was nature which fashioned hollows on cliffs and mountainsides that offered protection from heat, rain, and wind. In Angono, Rizal, evidence of ancient cave dwellers exists in carved figures on cave walls, the earliest known Philippine mural. The Tabon Cave in Palawan yielded the earliest-known remains of human beings in the Philippines.

Meanwhile, the food gatherers, the fishers, or the hunters, who moved from one place to another in their search for food and game, needed a portable shelter. Thus they fashioned the lean-to from a frame made of tree branches and twigs, using leaves and fronds for sidings. A screen resting on the ground and held up at an angle by one or several poles, the lean-to is both roof and wall, protecting dwellers from rain and the heat of the sun.

The floor can be the ground itself or a bed of leaves or a platform slightly above the ground. The lean-to is light enough to be carried to another site. However, the dweller can simply abandon it and build another. A pair of lean-tos can be joined together to form a tentlike shelter or a double-slope roof, which, in effect, is the beginning of a house.

Kaingin or swidden farming led to a relatively settled life. After making a clearing in the forest, the swidden farmer could cultivate it for two years, let it lie fallow, then return to it a few years later. Although dwellings became larger and were better built, they were neither permanent nor durable because sometimes the swidden farmer had to move on.

With the development of wet-rice culture, farmers became rooted to the land. Although braces of the kaingin lifestyle persisted in the makeshift character of various dwellings, houses were built to last. The Mangyan of Mindoro, who are swidden farmers, have two types of houses—the single-family dwelling and the communal house. Although the communal house is occupied by several families, its interior is not divided by partitions. The area for each family is defined by a mat on the floor.

When a Mangyan house is built on a slope, the entrance faces the rise. The steep roof is of cogon grass, the sidings, of tree bark, and the floor, of logs and saplings. The house appears to have no windows. However, it has a narrow strip of opening between roof and wall.

For added protection from floods, wild animals, and enemies, houses were built on trees, anywhere from 2 to 20 meters above the ground. Such houses have been found among the Ilongot, Tinguian, and Gaddang in northern Luzon, and among the Mandaya, Manobo, Tiruray, and Bukidnon in Mindanao. One type of tree house nestles on the branches of a tree. Another type rests partly on a tall tree stump and partly on a cluster of tall stilts.

The people of the Cordilleras in northern Luzon are swidden farmers. But some, particularly the Ifugao, Bontoc, and Kalinga, are known for their rice terraces. With massive, towering walls and a skillfully devised irrigation system, the rice terraces are a wonder of primitive engineering. The terrace builders constructed sturdy dwellings remarkable for both simplicity and ingenuity.

The one-room Ifugao house, known as *fale*, is a little marvel of construction. Outside, the Ifugao house seems to be nothing more than a pyramid resting on four posts. The interior space—enclosed by slanting walls, sloping roof, and ceiling formed by the loft—appears nearly spherical. The dark, windowless chamber suggests a womb.

Four wooden posts rest on a pavement and support two wooden girders which, in turn, support three wooden transverse joists. On the posts are wooden discs that

prevent rats from entering the house. The ladder is drawn up at night or is hung across the front when the occupants are away. The floor joists, floor sills, vertical studs, and horizontal beams at about head level form a cage that rests on the posts and girders. Floor boards are fitted between the joists. Wooden sidings slant outward and rise to waist height to form the lower half of the wall. The upper half of the wall is formed by the inner side of the roof.

Boards flanking the front and rear doors rise to the beams. The rafters of the roof rest on the beams and extend downward close to floor level. The roof frame is sheathed with reedlike *runo*, then covered with thatch. At an inner corner of the house is the fireplace. At the level of the beam is a storage loft with a floor of runo stalks. The wooden parts of this house are joined by rabbeting and by mortise and tenon. Other parts are fastened by lashing. Since nails are not used, the house can easily be dismantled, carried to a new site, and reassembled.

The solitary room is the sleeping room, kitchen, dining room, storeroom, and shrine for rituals. Only the husband and wife and youngest child or children in infancy live in this house. Upon reaching the age of reason, sons and daughters sleep in separate communal dormitories. Next to this house stands its twin, a granary with the same design as the house.

In Mayaoyao the Ifugao house is distinguished by its classic simplicity. Its roof is high and steep. Low stone walls and a pavement form the setting of this house. With the smooth, fine-grained hardwood posts, rat guards are not necessary. The elevated living space in the fale becomes a granary in the Bontoc house, as the living quarters move down to ground level. A low wall encloses the ground floor. The fourpost-two-girder-three-joist structure of the Ifugao is also used in the Bontoc house. The Sagada house resembles the Bontoc house but is fully covered. It is a wooden box with a steep thatch roof as a lid. With the granary within, the Sagada house is a "house within a house." The Kankanay house is still another variation of the Ifugao prototype. The roof is higher and wider, thereby providing a spacious loft above the living space. On the ground level wooden planks are laid to provide additional livable space. The Ibaloy house has a larger room, a flaring roof, and a small porch. Some of the Kalinga live in octagonal houses. The central portion of the octagonal house rests on a four-post-two-girder-and-three-joist structure. Beyond this frame eight posts are added to form the eight sides of the house. Wooden laths resting on joists support the runo floor, which can be rolled up like a mat and taken to the river for washing.

Boat forms appear to have inspired the Isneg house. The bamboo roof suggests an inverted boat, and wooden floor joists have the profile of a boat. The Isneg house has two sets of posts: the inner set supporting the floor and the outer set supporting the roof. As in the Kalinga house, the floor can be rolled up. The walls are vertical boards set into grooves that are cut into beams at floor and roof-eaves level. A window is created by simply taking out a few boards. All the wall boards can be removed to make the house a roofed platform for village celebrations. The Isneg

house is the largest among the Cordillera houses, since the entire family, and even married offspring, could live in it.

It is not known when and how Cordillera houses developed into their present forms. However, these house forms developed in isolation and were untouched by Western influence, for the Spanish colonizers did not succeed in bringing the region and its people under their rule.

On hilltops and rolling land, the Tboli of southern Cotabato in Mindanao build large one-room houses on stilts. The roof is of dried grass, the walls, of woven bamboo, and the posts, of whole bamboo and, occasionally, tree stumps. The central portion of the floor is slightly lower than the areas around it. The side sections are for working or resting. At one end is the entrance and the fireplace, and at the other is the place of honor for the head of the house. The interior of the Tboli house is one example of a characteristic feature of Philippine houses-space surrounded by space.

Islam was established in Sulu in the 14th century and in Mindanao in the 15th century. The combination of a strong, organized religion and a high degree of political organization enabled the Muslim people of Mindanao to resist Spain's attempts to bring them under her dominion.

The Tausug of Sulu, one of the Muslim peoples of the Philippines, are known as seafarers, but they build their houses on land, away from the shore. A site is considered lucky if it is flat and dry or if it gently slopes westward—towards Mecca. The traditional Tausug house rests on nine posts, each signifying a part of the body—the neck, navel, groin, left and right sides of the shoulders, ribs, and hips. Basically a one-room house, the Tausug dwelling includes a porch and a separate kitchen. A distinguishing feature of the house is an elaborately carved wooden finial, called *tajuk pasung*, placed at one or both ends of the roof ridge.

The Sama and the Badjao are people of the sea. The sea is their source of livelihood, the link to other people, and the place for celebration. It is also home. The Sama build their houses on stilts over the water, along the shore or farther out, grouped together in villages, and connected by bridges and catwalks. Unlike the Sama house, the Badjao landhouse stands alone on an expanse of water and is reached only by boat. It is not joined by bridges or catwalks to the shore or to other houses. It is an island made by humans.

Among the Muslim Filipinos, there arose two institutions which did not develop among the other ethnic peoples, namely, a specific place for worship and the lordly residence of the ruler. The earliest mosque in the Philippines is said to have been built in 1380 in Simunul Island, Tawi-Tawi. Mosques in the Philippines follow the traditional Middle East design which includes an onion-shaped dome and minarets. However, some mosques are closer to indigenous architecture, with a multitiered roof resembling that of a pagoda.

The Muslim chief resides in the *torogan*, a huge, stately, towering house, with a single large room. Although "torogan" simply means a place for sleeping, the house is more than a residence. It is also used for official meetings, social gatherings, and religious rituals. Only the chief—the sultan or datu—is entitled to own and live in a torogan. The soaring, flaring roof, like a ceremonial umbrella, is a proclamation of exalted status. The massive posts serve as solid supports and signify established power. To protect the house from earthquakes, the oversized posts rest on stones. With this device, the house sways with the tremor, playfully surviving it. Posts may be plain and bulky or may be carved to look like clay pots or outsized chess pieces. The most arresting feature of the torogan is the set of protruding beam-ends, called *panolong*. Flaring out from the facade, intricately carved, and stunningly colored, the panolong resemble the boat prows and make the splendid torogan appear to float like a royal barge.

For all the variety of design and construction, Cordillera, Mindanao, and Sulu houses are basically one-room dwellings covered by steep roofs and raised on stilts. They are all related to the *bahay kubo* (nipa hut) which in its simplicity is regarded as a prototype. Largely of bamboo and thatch, and with parts woven, fitted or tied together, the bahay kubo might be described as less of a building and more of a basket. While posts, beams, and joists are assembled, the roof is put together separately and later fitted on top like the lid of a basket. The bamboo floor, with its slats set slightly apart, is like the bottom of a basket and makes for incomparable ventilation. With air coming in through windows and floor and the crevices in thatch and bamboo walls, the bahay kubo is a house that breathes.

Houses take an entirely different form in the Batanes, the northernmost islands of the archipelago. With the frequency of high winds and strong rain, the Batanes house is built to hug the ground. Thick stone walls and a thick grass roof withstand the severest storm. The roof is supported by posts encased in the stone walls. Stone and mortar construction was introduced in the Batanes islands during the Spanish regime.

The Spanish Colonial Tradition

With cross and sword, Spain extended her empire to the Philippines in the 16th century. The Spanish colonizers settled in Cebu in 1565. Since Miguel Lopez de Legazpi had been instructed to establish more settlements and since sources of food in Cebu were inadequate, the Spaniards moved northward to Luzon, which was more extensive in area and more fertile. In 1571 the Spaniards conquered Manila. Strategically located on the shore of a bay and at the mouth of a river, Manila was eminently suitable for defense, administration, and trade.

The Spaniards occupied the fort that had been abandoned by Raja Soliman, ruler of Manila. In time, the wooden palisades gave way to fortifications of stone and a Spanish city took shape, following the prescriptions issued by King Philip II in 1573. The city was provided with a principal plaza and secondary plazas. Streets

were laid out in a gridiron pattern. Around the main plaza rose the cathedral, government buildings, and the houses of ranking persons. Manila became the capital of the colony and the model for town development. It was the geographic center of the colony, for the cross on the dome of the cathedral was the point from which distances were measured. With the influx of colonial officials, friars, missionaries, and traders, Manila became the center of political, religious, and economic power.

In the early years of their settlement in Manila, the Spaniards built churches and houses of wood and bamboo, but these were destroyed by fire. It became necessary to scout around for fireproof material. With the discovery of volcanic tuff quarries in San Pedro, Makati, in the 1580s, the Spaniards began to construct dwellings, churches, and fortifications in stone. Antonio Sedeño, a Jesuit priest and engineer, trained local workmen in the art of building with stone. Probably the oldest existing stone building in the Philippines is the San Agustin Church which has survived all earthquakes from the 17th century to the present. It is said to rest on an inverted vault foundation that makes it float, so to speak, during earthquakes. In general, Spanish construction in the Philippines—fortresses, churches, and civic buildings—faithfully followed European models, especially when projects were closely supervised by Spaniards.

To facilitate the work of Church and State, specifically the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the colony, towns were established and the scattered population was brought together in compact communities or *reducciones*. Missions and parishes were founded and churches were built.

The church was built at the center of the town by the town plaza. It had its own plaza surrounded by a catenated or swayback wall. Shrines called *capillas posas* stood at each corner of the churchyard or around the church site. Adjacent to the church was the convento, the residence of the parish priest. The church of the colonial era is generally rectangular or cruciform in plan. Its walls are high and thick and are supported by buttresses. Windows are usually small. Its large size and massive construction made the church a suitable place of refuge for the townspeople during pirate raids or natural calamities. Bell towers served as watchtowers.

Churches were made of adobe (volcanic tuff) stone, coral stone, or brick. In some churches brick and adobe were combined. A wall could consist of alternate courses of brick and adobe, or blocks of brick and adobe in a checkerboard pattern. In the Tumauini Church, bricks were molded with ornaments on them and were numbered to guide the bricklayers in assembling them. Cementing bricks and/or stone together was a mortar prepared from various recipes, and using different combinations of ingredients, like lime, crushed coral, crushed shells, molasses, sugar cane juice, goat's blood, carabao milk, egg shells, and egg white.

The Philippine colonial church may be described as a plain stone box with a decorated front. The rear and side walls are plain. However, a side portal, which repeats decorative motifs of the facade, breaks the monotony. The facade often has a

monopoly of exterior ornament. Columns and cornices traverse the front wall vertically and horizontally. Niches, blind arches, blind balustrades, and low relief carvings give depth, texture, and a certain cheerfulness to vast, solid expanses of wall. The ornaments may be in the classic tradition—Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, baroque, or rococo. There are occasionally gothic, romanesque, or moorish trefoil arches. The native touch is evident in the unorthodox use of classical ornaments or in the introduction of local motifs. Facades outstanding for their ornamentation are those of the Miag-ao Church in Iloilo, which depicts St. Christopher carrying the Infant Jesus amid lush tropical vegetation, and of the San Joaquin Church, which shows the surrender of Tetuan in low relief.

Early churches were of wood and bamboo, so they easily caught fire. Then stone churches were built, but with earthquakes, they caved in. Later, stone churches were provided with buttresses that came in various shapes: flat and thin, massive and rectangular, sloping, stepped, saw-toothed, barrel-shaped or curved.

Bell towers vary in design as well as in location. In plan, the bell tower may be square, octagonal, hexagonal or, in rare instances, circular. In height, it may rise from three to five stories. It may be at some distance from the church, adjacent to it, or integrated in the facade. Some churches have two towers, a few have three. When the bell tower is attached to the church, its ground floor houses the baptistry.

In the past, these churches were called Spanish, probably because they were designed by Spanish friars who were missionaries or parish priests, and the designs could have been based on pictures of European churches or on one's recollection of a European church. But more and more the Filipino character of these churches has become apparent; for local artisans—native or

Chinese—did not always execute the classical ornaments or the baroque or neoclassic designs according to the rules, but interpreted them according to their own skill, imagination, and taste. Thus whether instructed or so inspired, the artisans often incorporated local motifs—flowers and fruits or even a crocodile's head into church ornaments. In these designs, local artisans expressed something of their spirit—their simplicity and lightheartedness, and their love for abundance.

The 19th-century townhouse, called *bahay na bato* (stone house), was a product of economic and social developments, as well as of architectural evolution. With the opening of Manila to international trade in 1834 and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, trade and agricultural production rose to exhilarating heights and increased the fortunes of the native aristocracy, particularly in the provinces. Wealth became the passport to higher education not only in Manila but also in Europe. The elite or principalia included landowners and traders, as well as professionals—physicians and accountants—and the highly educated, cosmopolitan *ilustrado*. The lifestyle, aspirations, and even pretensions, of the upper class demanded a new type of dwelling that was spacious, durable, comfortable, impressive, noble, and elegant—the bahay na bato.

Several house forms contributed to the emergence of the bahay na bato. One of its ancestors is the bahay kubo, which in itself might not have been a worthy dwelling for the ilustrado, but whose principles of design were too practical to be ignored. The steep hip roof, elevated quarters, post-and-lintel construction, and maximized ventilation are features of the bahay kubo that appear in grand style in the bahay na bato. A second ancestor may have been the native chieftain's house described by Antonio de Morga in the 17th century, which was elevated, sturdily built of timber, well-furnished, and spacious, having many rooms. A third influence may have been the houses of the Spanish residents of Intramuros, who combined the native and the foreign styles of building in their two-story houses with wooden posts and beams, stone walls around the ground floor, and timber construction above. Finally, another model for the bahay na bato may have been the convento, rectory, or monastery built adjacent to the mission church, an authoritative presence in the center of the town which must have antedated the bahay na bato. Extravagantly spacious and solidly built, it could have become the local standard for grandeur.

In general, the bahay na bato may be described as a house with wooden legs and a stone skirt, a style of construction which makes the house a sure survivor of earthquakes. The wooden frame gives it both flexibility and stability, while the one-story high stone wall is less likely to collapse. Large wooden posts are sunk into the ground but stand high enough to carry the roof. The posts are independent of both the stone wall below and the wooden walls above. Because they are of exceptionally precious hardwood, they are worth displaying. The living quarters are elevated and are reached through an interior stairway located in the *zaguan* on the ground floor. The zaguan, with its naked stonework, is a grim entrance hall but, with its abundant space, is the perfect storeroom for just about everything. The stairs are not only a means of access but also the setting for a stately arrival. A surrounding balustrade detached from the wall provides room all around for welcoming committees and prolonged farewells. The stairs lead up to the *caida* (upper entrance hall). Opening to the caida is the *sala* (living room). Bedrooms flank the sala and nearby is the dining room. At the rear of the house are the kitchen and, next to it, the open-air *azotea*. Running along the front and sides of the house and flanking the major rooms is the *volada*, a gallery which protects the rooms from the heat of the sun. Along the volada is an elaborate system of windows. The broad, massive window sill is grooved and holds two sets of sliding shutters: a set of capiz or oyster shell shutters, or a set of glass-paned shutters, and a set of shutters with louvers or jalousies. Between the window sill and the floor runs the *ventanilla*, with sliding wooden shutters and iron grills or wooden balusters. Wide double doors are flung open to join each room to adjacent rooms. With all doors open, the house becomes one big hall. The interior of the bahay na bato is a striking example of space surrounded by space. Running above the partitions are panels of wooden fretwork, which allow the air within the house to circulate.

The bahay na bato represents the apex in the development of indigenous Filipino architecture, because it expands the prototypal structure of the ethnic house from a

one-room dwelling to a multiroomed house of grand scale while preserving the basic features, and because it adapts Western architectural influences to form a synthesis of native and immigrant art. The bahay na bato is a product of economic progress and cultural adaptation, and as such is a symbol of the affluent westernized Filipino. It stands as a reminder of the social situation in which it evolved, a situation which has not significantly changed even with the introduction of democracy, public education, and free enterprise.

The Spanish colonial era witnessed not only the construction of churches and civic buildings and the evolution of the bahay na bato, but also the rise of the first important architects in Philippine history. While most of the churches in the provinces were planned and designed by the friars, the bahay na bato were probably the result of architectural collaboration between the homeowner, the master carpenter, and the chief mason. There were, however, professional architects who were active in the 19th century, particularly in Manila. Luciano Oliver, a Spaniard, designed the Taal Church, the Malabon Church, and the 1872 Manila Cathedral. Felix Roxas Sr., considered the first Filipino architect, trained abroad and was renowned for his revivalist designs. His works included the neogothic Santo Domingo Church and the neoclassic San Ignacio Church, both in Intramuros, and a number of elegant houses for the upper class of Manila. Juan Hervas, a Spaniard, active from the late 1880s to the early 1890s, designed the Tutuban Railroad Station, the Monte de Piedad Building, the old Assumption Convent on Herran Street and a number of houses. Arcadio Arellano, a trained *maestro de obras* (master builder), was appointed architectural adviser to Governor William Howard Taft in 1901 and is known for the gothic-revival house of the Hidalgo family and the art nouveau Bautista-Nakpil house. Genaro Palacios designed the prefabricated all-steel San Sebastian Church in the 1880s. In the middle of the 19th century, Bartolome Palatino, a noted citizen of the wood-carving town of Paete, designed and built the splendid facade of the church in Morong, Rizal, one of the finest examples of what can be called Filipino baroque.

The American Colonial and Contemporary Traditions

With the occupation of the Philipines by the United States in 1898, a new phase of Philippine architectural history began. In accordance with America's thrust towards establishing an American-style government, urban planning and architecture served the needs of secular education and public services. In 1904 American architect Daniel H. Burnham came to the Philippines to conduct a survey of Manila and Baguio to prepare development plans for both cities. Burnham was one of the architects of the 1893 Chicago Exposition which, under the influence of the Beaux Arts School of Paris, revived the neoclassic style of architecture. Burnham admired the bahay na bato and the colonial churches for their practicality and charm, and suggested that they be models for future development.

Burnham's recommendations for the development of Manila included the establishment of a government center with streets radiating from it; the retention, cleaning, and improvement of the esteros or canals; the construction of a bayshore

boulevard from Manila to Cavite; the development of parks and waterfronts, and the provision of sites for major public facilities, such as schools and hospitals.

Among those assigned to implement the Burnham plan was American architect William E. Parsons. Parsons followed Burnham's recommendation that a style of architecture be developed to suit the tropical climate. Parson's major works include the Normal School (now Philippine Normal University), the Philippine General Hospital, the Manila Hotel, and theArmy-Navy Club.

These buildings and others of the early 20th century represented the thrust of American colonial policy in the Philippines—health, public education, free enterprise, and training in self-government. In contrast to the romantic air of colonial architecture, early 20th century architecture in the Philippines was rational, functional, and seemingly plain.Young Filipinos who went or were sent to the United States for training in various fields included aspiring architects. They studied in American universities and institutes which were then under the influence of the Beaux Arts School of Paris. Among the US-trained Filipino architects of the early 20th century were Carlos Barreto, Antonio Toledo, Tomas Mapua, and Juan Arellano. They became exponents of the neoclassic style and designed buildings characterized by monumental scale and fidelity to tradition. Since they were employed in the government which was engaged in a nationwide building program, their influence on the architecture of the time was extensive.

True to his classical training, Arellano designed the Manila Post Office Building and the Legislative Building following the canons of Graeco-Roman architecture. Although a disciplined classicist, Arellano experimented with romanticism and brilliantly succeeded in producing the Metropolitan Theater in 1931. With art deco motifs, stylized interpretation of native plants, and a variety of color and texture, the Metropolitan, even decades after its design, is a refreshing piece of architecture.

In the early 20th century, new house forms developed. But the basic design was still the house on stilts. Following the tone set by Parsons and turning away from the ornaments of the bahay na bato, the suburban house called *tsalet* (chalet) was comfortably functional and, in many cases, plain. A prominent feature of the house was the front porch or the surrounding porch. Some houses were entered through an exterior L-shaped or T-shaped concrete or wooden stairway. The chalet was a simple, respectable house for those moving up to the middle class.

Architecture for the technological age was anticipated by the prefabricated, all-steel structure of San Sebastian Church built in 1891, and by the University of Santo Tomas (UST) Main Building built in 1927, which is impressive not only for its monumental proportions but for its earthquake-proof construction. The latter consists of 24 separate sections with soft material, like tar, serving as cushions at the joints. During an earthquake, the walls do not crack, having been precracked, as it were. The all-steel church and the earthquake-proof building foreshadowed further technological developments in construction, specifically, more extensive use of steel,

daring structural design, and more imaginative use of reinforced concrete.

While the first generation of 20th-century Filipino architects firmly held on to tradition, the succeeding generation broke away from it and introduced a new style. The 1930s were a time for looking forward more confidently to national independence. The period marked the emergence of the Filipino business magnate, who rose from rags to riches in the heady atmosphere of free enterprise. The developing economy demanded new types of buildings like commercial office buildings, hotels, apartments, movie houses, and homes for the upper class.

Into this environment of progress and experiment the young architects Andres Luna de San Pedro, Fernando Ocampo, Pablo Antonio, and Juan Nakpil made an auspicious entrance. Luna, son of painter and national hero Juan Luna, was an exponent of the art deco style. Among his existing works are the Perez-Samanillo Building on the Escolta. Ocampo likewise was notable for his art deco buildings, among them the Central Seminary of the UST. Nakpil's early works in the art deco style include the Avenue Theater and Hotel Building and the Quezon Institute Buildings. Antonio's works were marked by a certain boldness, the play of planes and volumes, and strong, dynamic movement. His works include the Far Eastern University Main Building, the Bel-Air Apartments on Roxas Boulevard, and the Ramon Roces Publications Building.

Modern architecture in the Philippines was a departure from the neoclassic beaux arts tradition, but like the local neoclassic, it was still a product of foreign influence, a transplant from the west. While it was hailed as innovation, it was basically a new conformism to western trends.

At the end of the World War II Manila was in ruins. The irreplaceable treasure that was Intramuros was reduced to rubble. The once magnificent government buildings were bombed-out shells. Hasty reconstruction resulted in makeshift structures with false fronts. The atrocities of war were followed by the atrocities of reconstruction. While the established architects resumed their practice, new graduates emerged in time for the building boom that followed the war. The neoclassic government buildings that lay in ruins were rebuilt following their original plans. New government and commercial buildings departed from the neoclassic and art deco of the previous decades and sought fresh inspiration in the work of contemporary Western architects. The sunbreak, made popular by the Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer, became the object of extensive and even irrational imitation.

With the increased volume of construction, real estate development grew in scale and began to be planned more rationally. Upper-class and middle-class villages and state housing projects signified recognition of the need for planned communities.

While early 20th-century Filipino houses had developed from indigenous architecture, postwar houses marked a departure from the native tradition. The break had been indicated earlier in the emergence of the two-story house in which living

quarters occupied both first and second floors. In the bahay na bato, the living quarters were on the upper floor. The lower floor was a storage area. The tsalet of the early American regime followed the same scheme. The so-called Spanish-style house—with tile roofs, arches, and the indispensable three-story tower—began to appear in the 1930s and became the badge of the bourgeoisie for the next three decades. After the war came the one-story California bungalow, with picture windows, lanai (borrowed from Hawaii), and a two-to-three-car garage. This new status symbol represented the Americanization of the Filipino house.

With the appreciation of things Philippine ushered in by the folk dance revival, the interest in various folk arts, and the rage for santos, antique furniture, and other colonial artifacts, many houses of contemporary style have looked back to native tradition, incorporating such features as steep-hip roofs, wooden lattices, capiz screens, and decorative woodwork, probably out of nostalgia or, hopefully, nationalism.

In earlier years, low-cost urban housing was provided by the *accesoria* or woodenrowhouse, which survives in many old sections of Manila. Two-story units, each 3 to 4 meters wide, stood crowded together, with openings in front and at the back and, if fortunate, a small backyard. Government housing projects built after the war provided one-story, cement-block dwellings, either detached from or joined with others and set on small individual lots. With the Filipino penchant for remodelling, many of these pitifully plain units have metamorphosed into charming examples of personalized architecture.

Multistory tenements, an alternative response to the need for mass housing, were nothing more than rowhouses extended horizontally and vertically. The Bagong Lipunan Sites and Services (BLISS) houses, a legacy of the Marcos regime, are multiple-unit, multi-story buildings that take into account the decreasing availability of land.

Even with the housing projects of the government, there are still not enough dwellings for the low-income group and the urban poor. The growth of the urban population, resulting from a high birth rate and uncontrolled migration from the rural areas, has exceeded the government's capacity to provide adequate housing. Occupying whatever space is available—along railroad tracks, along or right over esteros, around garbage dumps, under bridges, along the seawall, inside abandoned buildings, on any unguarded vacant lot—the urban poor have built their rickety one-room shanties using discarded materials, cardboard boxes, rusty roofing sheets, and rotten wood.

Philamlife Homes in Quezon City, a fine example of middle-class housing built in the 1950s, was noteworthy for its simple yet attractive houses, many of which have been remodelled beyond recognition. Its well-planned site is distinguished by an organic layout; i.e., its streets follow the contour of the land.

Upper-class residential architecture is represented by both sprawling houses on spacious gardens in the plush villages and the deluxe air-conditioned apartments in high-rise condominiums. Lower in the scale of luxury, the townhouses of the rising bourgeoisie are sophisticated versions of the urban rowhouse.

Grandeur, or just plain bigness in architecture is a function of autocratic government or corporate omnipotence. The splendid architecture of Rome, for instance, was the work of the emperors, the popes, and Benito Mussolini. The skyscrapers of New York are glittering monuments to big business and imperialism. Martial law and the rule of the Marcoses was the setting of massive and monumental construction in Metro Manila never witnessed before in the country. The North Diversion Road, the South Superhighway, the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Main Building, the Manila Film Center, the Folk Arts Theater, the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC), the five-star hotels, the Batasang Pambansa, the Philippine Heart Center, the Lung Center, the Central Bank Buildings, the Philippine National Bank and Government Service Insurance System Buildings at the reclamation area, and the restoration of the walls and gates of Intramuros were all possible only under a monopoly of power maintained by extravagant spending for the sake of political impact.

The rivalry for supremacy in business is evident in the ubiquitous malls, superbuildings that accommodate under one roof supermarkets, department stores, bookstores, boutiques, restaurants, movie houses, amusement centers, and drugstores. With land rising in value, the use of urban space is maximized through vertical expansion—upwards, with taller buildings, and downwards, with deeper multilevel basements. Until the 1950s the height of buildings was restricted by ordinance to 30 meters or about 10 stories. But since the development of Makati, high-rise buildings have exceeded that limit, going up to 20 floors and now going beyond 40.

The coming of age in contemporary Philippine architecture is evident in such buildings as the National Press Club, Philamlife Home Office, Magsaysay Memorial, San Miguel Corporation Head Office, Twin Towers, Ritz Towers, Pacific Plaza, CCP Main Building, Philippine Plaza Hotel, PICC, Pacific Star, Meralco, Tahanang Pilipino, and many others constructed in the last 30 years.

All these testify to the genius and maturity of their architects. It is no longer enough for architects to design efficiently organized and aesthetically satisfying space. They also have to take into account the complex technology that will go into it: elevator and escalator systems, air-conditioning, fire-protection systems, and computers. While adapting architecture to the demands of technology, architects realize that architecture must also be a reflection of culture and an embodiment of art.

Prospects for Filipino Architecture

With Filipino architects becoming more at ease in the modern idiom and more aware of the Filipino's search for cultural identity, they became more concerned with questions like: Is there such a thing as Filipino architecture? Were the works of Filipino architects mere imitationsof Western models? Would a modern Filipino architecture eventually develop? And the questions are valid. For the art and science of architecture is not only a response to human needs—the need for shelter, the need for order, the need for beauty, and the need for a sense of transcendence; it is also fundamentally a search for identity.

The variety of houses and buildings that emerged through centuries of Philippine history, from one end of the archipelago to the other, yield common characteristics that should be considered by young architects concerned with a Philippine style of architecture. One feature of the Filipino house, and hence, of Filipino architecture, is the concept of space and the interrelation of different spaces like outdoor and indoor space, and the various areas of indoor space. An interior space is a space surrounded by space. Rooms open to adjacent rooms, or within a room, different spaces are created by means of levels or visual dividers. Space becomes a place for gathering or for solitude while remaining integrated. It is a function of personal relations. Also, in a tropical climate, a house must breathe. Thus transparency has become a feature of the Filipino house. It allows for cross ventilation or better circulation of air. Transparency also arises from the relation of spaces. Even when interior space is well covered and protected, the character of transparency is somehow expressed. Then there is the lightheartedness of the Filipino, which is reflected in the visual lightness of architecture. A structure appears to be a floating volume. Massive structures are treated in such a way that they look light.

In addition, the Filipino—who lives in a lush, baroque landscape—seems not to be comfortable with empty space or plain, unadorned surfaces. Space has to be filled, or broken up, or at least, be the setting for texture. Lastly, the play of space, visual lightness, transparency of structure, and texture all contribute to a spirit of festivity, or better still, of tropical festivity. Filipinos love their fiestas, and architecture becomes one of their forms of celebration.

But the search for form and the search for identity must also consider new conditions and directions. The vastly increased population demands that today's architecture be concerned not only with the design of individual buildings, but with the design of communities. This means more than mass housing. It means creating communities that are economically self-sufficient, environmentally safe and healthy, and adequately provided with services, such as schools and hospitals.

As the city dominates contemporary life and devours land for its infrastructure and megaprojects, will there still be space for every needy person to have a decent dwelling? Or shall one have to accept, as inevitable, living in one small compartment of an urban honeycomb? The single dwelling anchored to the ground signifies respect for the individuality of the occupant, while the multidwelling complex stresses the need for community. Architects are challenged to create the kind of dwelling that

fosters one's solidarity with the land and with neighbors. The larger task for architecture today is to create new communities for the poor and, in so doing, raise them from the inhumanity of poverty to a way of life worthy of their human dignity. Architecture for the poor will help to answer the long urgent need to redesign and transform the social order. • R.D. Perez III

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