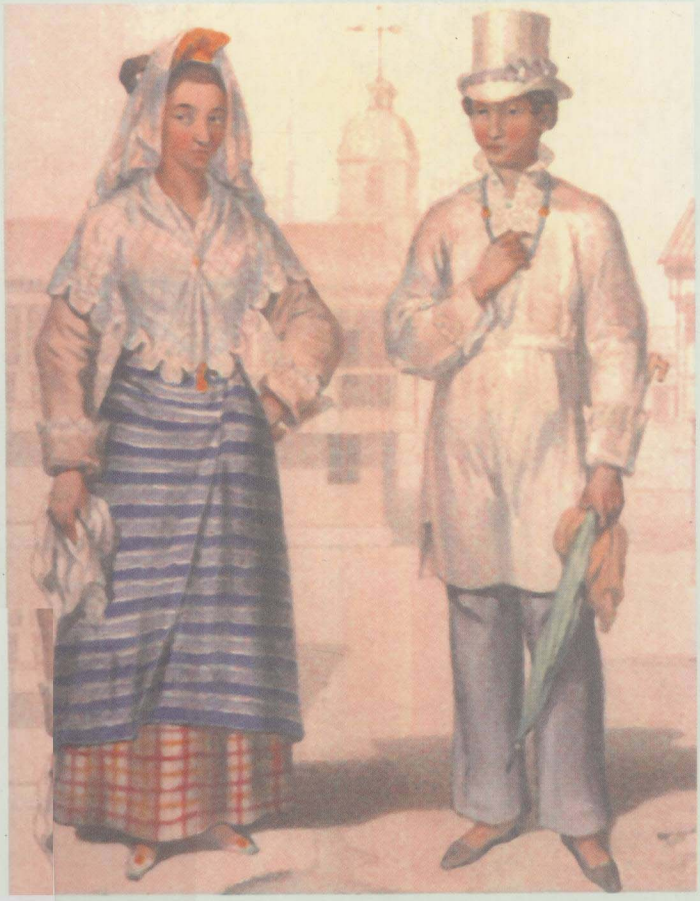
THE CHINESE MESTIZO IN PHILIPPINE HISTORY

Edgar Wickberg
with Chinese translation by Go Bon Juan

菲律濱歷史上的華人混血兒

魏安國 著　　吳文煥 譯



The Chinese Mestizo in Philippine History

Edgar Wickberg

THE CHINESE MESTIZO IN PHILIPPINE HISTORY

Published in Manila, 2001

by

KAISA PARA SA KAUNLARAN, INC.

For inquiries and other publications, please contact:
Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran, Inc.
2/F Kaisa-Angelo King Heritage Center
Anda corner Cabildo Streets
Intramuros, Manila 1002
Tels.: 526-6796 • 526-6798 • 527-6083
Fax: (63-2) 527-6085
Email: kaisa@philonline.com
Visit our website: http://www.kaisa.ph

Printed by: ELJAY Printing Co., Inc.
3329 Zapote Street, Makati City
Tels.: 895-3630 • 895-5722
Fax: (63-2) 897-1474

ISBN 971-8857-24-9

菲律濱歷史上的華人混血兒

魏安國 著　　吳文煥 譯

出版說明

我們菲律濱的華人混血兒(MESTIZO)以及他們在菲律濱歷史上所扮演的角色，可以說都是十分獨特的，是東南亞其他國家所沒有的。因此，不言而喻，對華人混血兒的研究，無論是從歷史上或是從學術上來看，其價值和意義都是十分重大的。

魏安國教授（EDGAR WICKBERG）是研究我們菲律濱的華人混血兒的第一人。他這篇在一九六四年寫成的，有關菲律濱歷史上的華人混血兒的論文，既是有關華人混血兒的第一篇學術論文，也是有關華人混血兒的經典性名著。可以說，華人混血兒這個領域的研究，是由魏安國教授開拓的。

魏安國教授的這篇名著，和他後來出版的《華人在菲律濱生活中》(THE CHINESE IN PHILIPPINE LIFE)一書，都是研究菲律濱華人史的經典著作。華人混血兒這篇論文的內容，有一部份雖然包含在《華人在菲律濱生活中》一書，但作為對華人混血兒的研究之系統性論文，不但可單獨成篇，而且只有通讀這

篇論文，才有可能對華人混血兒的歷史現象及其發展有一個全面和系統的了解和認識。魏安國教授對華人混血兒在菲律濱歷史上的出現、形成、發展及其所扮演的重要角色和所發揮的重大歷史作用之論述，是十分深刻且精彩的。

魏安國教授對華人混血兒的研究雖然碩果纍纍，已取得了不起的成就，但他仍然是十分謙虛的指出自己在這一領域的知識還不夠，對這個領域的研究尚待進一步開拓，並在這篇論文的最後部份提出四個有關假設，激勵後人進一步去進行研究。

繼魏安國教授之後，研究華人混血兒的另一位學者，是已故的歷史學家陳守國博士（ANTONIO TAN）。他在一九八一年發表了題為《華人混血兒與菲律濱民族的形成》(THE CHINESE MESTIZOS AND THE FORMATION OF FILIPINO NATIONALITY)，着重從菲律濱民族在十九世紀後期形成的過程中，華人混血兒所發揮的作用這個角度來研究華人混血兒。此外，就不見有其他對華人混血的什麼專門研究了。

對於魏安國教授這篇有關華人混血兒的名著，我們早就慕名，希望能夠拜讀。可是，直到不久前，在一個偶然的機會中，我們才找到這篇論文。拜讀之下，大為受益。不但加深了對華人混血兒的重要歷史作用的認識，也增加了許多有關菲律濱歷史和華人史的知識，特別是對華人混血兒在歷史上出現的背景和所起的社會作用之認識。對華人混血兒的研究，實在是一個有待進一步好好深入研究和開拓

的重要領域。魏安國教授在三十多年前先行一步，進行了先驅者的開拓性工作，尚待後人繼續努力。

在拜讀了這篇論文的英文原作之後，我們馬上產生有需要把它譯成華文出版，向華文讀者介紹的想法，並隨即見諸行動，加以實現。

由於魏安國教授這篇論文當年是發表在美國出版的學術性刊物《東南亞歷史學報》之上，有機會和條件看到的人很少，因此我們也決定出版其英文原作的單行本，與華文譯本同時出版。

STUDENTS OF SOUTHEAST Asian history have had little to say about the historical role played by the Chinese mestizo in that region. Although studies of the Chinese in Southeast Asia have devoted some attention to the position of native-born Chinese as opposed to immigrant Chinese, the native-born Chinese of mixed Chinese native ancestry is rarely singled out for specific treatment. Perhaps this is because in most parts of Southeast Asia the Chinese mestizos (to use the Philippine term for persons of mixed Chinese-native ancestry) have not been formally and legally recognized as a separate group – one whose membership is strictly defined by genealogical considerations rather than by place of birth, and one which, by its possession of a unique combination of cultural characteristics, could be easily distinguished from both the Chinese and the native communities.

Such distinctiveness was, however, characteristic of the Chinese mestizo in the Philippines during the 18th and 19th centuries. Both the Spanish colonial government and the mestizos themselves concurred in this exact identification as neither Chinese nor native, but specifically Chinese mestizo. It is precisely because they formed a separate group, legally defined as such by the Spanish government, that we are able to determine with considerable clarity the nature of the mestizo's activities – and hence, the nature of their role in that period of Philippine history. That role was, as I will attempt to demonstrate below, of great significance to Philippine historical development. Indeed, although close comparison is difficult, it is likely that no other group of mestizos – that is, not simply locally born Chinese, but specifi-

cally mestizo Chinese – played a similar role in the development of a Southeast Asian country.

The present paper is a kind of preliminary research report. In it I will present my findings to date as well as some rather new interpretations of Philippine history that I have come to as a result of the work done thus far. I hope these interpretative comments may stimulate discussion on both the mestizo and on broader problems in Philippine historiography.

BACKGROUND OF THE DISCUSSION

If the Chinese mestizo was important in the 18th and 19th centuries, and if Spanish legal distinctions make it easy for us to follow his activities during that period, why then is so little said about him in modern writings about Philippine history? Why has there been almost no research on this topic?

One of the answers seems to be that there is confusion about the term "mestizo" – a confusion compounded by the fact that since 1898, there has been no legally defined mestizo class which we may use as a basis for understanding the Spanish usage of the term. It is sometimes claimed that Spanish mestizos were of great importance in Philippine history when, indeed, the activities described as support for this statement were those of Chinese mestizos. One recent study, the Human Relations Area Files monograph on the Philippines, goes so far as to say that although they were of some importance during the first decades of the Spanish period, the Chinese mestizos faded into obscurity thereafter.[1] Statements of this kind seem to be based upon the assumption that the term "mestizo," when encountered in its unmodified form in materials of the Spanish period, refers to Spanish mestizos – that is, persons of mixed

Spanish-native ancestry – rather than to Chinese mestizos. Because of this apparent confusion over the term "mestizo" it is best to begin with a discussion of the distinctions that were made during the Spanish period – both by the Spanish government and by popular usage.

From the time that Chinese mestizos became numerous enough to be classified separately, the population of those parts of the Philippines that were controlled by Spain was formally divided into four categories: those who did not pay the tribute (which included Spaniards and Spanish mestizos), *indios* (Malayan inhabitants of the archipelago who are now called Filipinos[2]), Chinese, and Chinese mestizos. The last three of these groups were considered tribute-paying classes, but the amount of their tribute payments and the services demanded of them varied. Normally, the *indio* paid the lowest tribute. The Chinese mestizo paid double the tribute paid by the *indio*, the stated reason being that he was assumed to have approximately double the earning capacity of the *indio*. The Chinese, in turn, paid a much larger tribute than that paid by the Chinese mestizo, again, on the grounds that his earning capacity was larger than that of the mestizo.[3] It would seem, therefore, that in Spanish thinking, biology and economics had a certain correlation.

On the other hand, Spanish policy may have been grounded more in economic and social reality than in bioeconomic theory. Throughout most of the Spanish period the *indio* and mestizo also had to supply a fixed amount of forced labor every year, an obligation that did not fall upon the Chinese. It is possible that this requirement, taken together with other taxes, represented simply a recognition of the occupational facts of Philippine social life. The Chinese

was, first and last, a commercially oriented moneymaker. What he could best supply was money. At the other extreme was the *indio*, whose concerns were chiefly agricultural; what he could best supply, other than tribute grain, was labor. The Chinese mestizo was somewhere between – possibly engaged in agriculture, possibly in commerce, possibly both.

In any event, the tribute-paying classes remained, until late in the 19th century, divided as indicated above. Why so? Aside from matters of theory and convenience in taxation as discussed above, one may cite the familiar political reason: divide and conquer. This is a simple, comfortable, and hence, tempting answer. It is also not without validity for the middle and late 19th century Philippines. But we ought not to assume automatically that it was the basic reason why the Spanish, midway through the colonial period, established a policy of social compartmentalization. Indeed, there is some evidence that the separation of groups in this fashion was originally based upon no more than a Spanish belief that the healthy society was one in which peoples of different cultural backgrounds were kept apart and not allowed to live together in helter-skelter fashion.[4]

For whatever reason, *indios*, Chinese mestizos, and Chinese remained as three separate groups, especially in terms of tax obligations. But insofar as rights were concerned – such as rights to move about the islands, own property, or participate in town government – the division tended to be two-fold, rather than three-fold. That is in general, the mestizos had most of the same rights as the *indios*, while the Chinese usually did not. The case of property ownership is not clear. But in matters of geographic mobility, the Chinese were usually restricted (with varying degrees of success) while the

mestizos, like the *indios*, were relatively free to change residence.[5] Likewise, in local government, the Chinese could never participate, but the Chinese mestizos, individually and corporately, could and did participate with the *indios*.[6]

The maintenance of three categories in orderly fashion was provided for by Spanish legislation. Legal status – as Chinese, mestizo, or *Indio* – by the terms of this legislation – was not ordinarily a matter of personal orientation or choice. Rather, it was the status of the parents – particularly the father – that was most important. Thus, the son of a Chinese father and an *india* or mestiza mother was classed as a Chinese mestizo. Subsequent male descendants were inalterably Chinese mestizos. The status of female descendants was determined by their marriages. A mestiza marrying a Chinese or mestizo remained in the mestizo classification, as did her children. But by marrying an *indio* she and her children became of that classification.[7] Thus, females of the mestizo group could change status but males could not. The implications of this system was that so long as legislation remained constant there would always be a sizeable group of people legally classified as mestizos, whatever their cultural orientation might be.[8]

This posed a problem for mestizos who wished to be considered *indios* or Chinese, or for *indios* of mestizo heritage on their mother's side who might wish to be considered mestizo. But there is evidence that the system was not inflexible in that there were procedures by which one could change his status. The lineage history of José Rizal, as given by Austin Craig, is to the point here. Purely in terms of his ancestry, Rizal might be considered a fifth generation Chinese mestizo. His paternal ancestor, a Catholic Chinese named Domingo Lamco, married a Chinese mestiza. Their son and

grandson both married Chinese mestizas. This grandson, having achieved wealth and status in his locality, was able to have his family transferred from the mestizo *padron*, or tax-census register, to that of the *indios*. Thus, Rizal's father, and Rizal himself were considered *indio*.[9]

It would appear that individual dispensation was possible, given certain procedures. It is likely that the procedures in question were those widely used in Spanish colonial America in the late 18th century and called *dispensa de ley*, or *gracias al sacar*.[10] By these procedures, one paid a sum, a genealogy and other instruments of proof were prepared, and one's status could be legally altered. I have no knowledge at present about how often such things happened in the Philippines. Nor do I know by what means a Chinese mestizo, if he so desired, might be registered as a Chinese, or how a non-mestizo could achieve mestizo status. Given the prestige of the Chinese mestizos, it is likely that there were many non-mestizos who sought such status. On the other hand, the Rizal example notwithstanding, it is doubtful that there were many instances in which mestizos attempted to alter their classification.[11] The position of the mestizos was, in many ways, a favorable one.

It needs to be emphasized here that the legal distinctions spoken of were also social distinctions. The Spanish government followed a policy of social division but the result could never be a rigidly defined "plural society." Mobility between groups was possible for individuals and families, by legal action, as suggested above, or, more commonly, by intermarriage. The basis of intermarriage was that both parties be Catholic. It is the presence of Catholicism, and Spain's emphasis upon propagating it that distinguish Spanish Philip-

pine social policy from that of other colonial countries in Southeast Asia. Spanish social policy was one of social division mitigated by cultural indoctrination, centering upon Catholicism, which was available to all elements in society. The result was that the various fragments of Philippine society could not only meet in the marketplace; they could also meet in the church.

Given the legal distinctions and problems of personal identification mentioned above, what was the popular distinction of the term mestizo? By the 19th century, the Chinese mestizos had become so numerous and their influence so great that the term "mestizo" as popularly used in the Philippines meant Chinese mestizo. This point is made by Retana in his *Diccionario de filipinismos,* again in testimony before the U.S. Philippine Commission, and (naturally enough) by the Chinese mestizos themselves.[12] This explicit definition of "mestizo" as "Chinese mestizo" was implicitly opposed by James LeRoy, an acute, if not always accurate American observer of the Philippine scene. LeRoy argued that Spanish mestizos were of predominant importance in the late 19th century, and scarcely mentioned the Chinese mestizos.[13] Apparently LeRoy chose to believe that in popular usage the term "mestizo" referred to Spanish mestizo or else he did not concern himself with popular usage. Perhaps he simply assumed that logically, those enjoying fortune and power were most apt to be descendants of the conquerors and rulers. Whatever the reason, LeRoy was, I believe, in error, and I shall now attempt to demonstrate why I think so.

The development of a Chinese mestizo group in the Philippines can be understood only by first considering briefly certain features of the history of the Chinese in the Philip-

pines. Soon after the Spaniards arrived, the Chinese moved into an important economic position. Chinese merchants carried on a rich trade between Manila and the China coast and distributed the imports from China into the area of Central Luzon, to the immediate north of Manila. The Chinese established themselves at or near Spanish settlements, serving them in various ways: as provisioners of food, as retail traders, and as artisans. Because the Chinese quickly monopolized such activities, the Spanish came to believe their services indispensable. But just as quickly, they developed mutual feelings of distrust and animosity between Chinese and Spaniards, cultural differences seemed too great to be bridged. In the early years of Spanish rule in the Philippines, open hostilities were frequent. The Spanish dilemma was quickly apparent: unable to live without the Chinese, they were equally unable to live with them. The Chinese population was many times larger than that of the Spanish, further inciting Spanish fears of Chinese revolts. The result was a compromise in Spanish policy between economic interest and political security. Early in the Spanish period, laws were passed limiting the number of Chinese who could reside in the Philippines and restricting their areas of settlement. But – at least until the mid-18th century – such laws were often enforced in a very loose manner.[14]

Given the Spanish assumption that the Chinese were economically indispensable (and few Spaniards questioned the assumption during the first centuries of Spanish rule), the only way to overcome the dilemma would be to find means to convert the Chinese to Catholicism and Hispanism. This is not to say that efforts to convert the Chinese were entirely a matter of studied policy whose objectives were to "tame"

those who controlled so much of the colony's economic life. The Spanish priests in the Philippines had other reasons for wishing to work among the Chinese. One of these was related to their desire to open up and develop the China mission field. It was hoped that work among the Philippine Chinese might help bring this about.[15] A more basic reason was simply that the Chinese were there and that the Spanish mandate to Catholicize and Hispanize the people of the Philippines seemed to mean **all** the people in the Philippines. Nevertheless, the creation of a dependable group of Catholic Chinese merchants and artisans loyal to Spain would be a clear advantage. Economic interest and political security could thus be harmonized.

Spanish policy thus included attempts to convert the Chinese, sometimes making use of such inducements as reduced taxes and fewer restrictions on travel and residence for those who accepted the Faith.[16] But an even better method of "taming" and perhaps assimilating the Chinese was conversion followed by marriage and permanent settlement in the Philippines. There being no Chinese women in the Philippines, "marriage" meant "intermarriage" with *indias*. Informal unions between Chinese and *indias* were common. There would have been a sizeable mestizo population regardless of Spanish policy. But the fact that marriages between Chinese and *indias*, when both partners were Catholics, were legally recognized and encouraged resulted in the creation of special communities of mestizo. The most important of these was the Binondo community across the river from the walled city of Manila.

Binondo was founded as a Chinese town in 1594. A royal order for the expulsion of all the Chinese in the Philippines had been received. But Governor Dasmariñas realized that

the city of Manila, the largest Spanish settlement, needed to retain, at least, a small number of Chinese for its economic services. Therefore, he purchased a tract of land across the river from the walled city and gave it to a group of prominent Chinese merchants and artisans as the basis for a new Chinese settlement. Since the existing Chinese settlement near Manila, the Parian, was supposed to be evacuated, the establishment of Binondo was intended to be a means of formally obeying the royal order while insuring the availability of goods and services provided by the Chinese. In the beginning, religious and cultural questions were not involved.[17]

But the missionary enterprise of Spanish Dominican fathers soon made of Binondo a kind of acculturation laboratory. Once Binondo had been assigned them as a parish, the Dominicans quickly made of it a community of married Catholic Chinese. Non-Catholic in areas around Binondo were proselytized, baptized, married, and added to the community of married Catholics. By 1600, this group had reached a size of perhaps 500 or more.[18] The first generation of mestizo offspring had also appeared, and there were high hopes that they would excel in higher education and assist the Dominicans in the spiritual conquest of China.[19]

Thus, almost from the first, Binondo, was a separate, Catholic, Chinese, and mestizo community, with certain special privileges. The Chinese had founded Binondo on the basis of Dasmariñas' land grant, which was given in perpetuity, to be tax free, and inalienable to non-Chinese and non-mestizos. The grant was accompanied by limited self-governing privileges.[20] The Community of Christian Chinese and Mestizos, as it was called in the 17th century, was repeatedly confirmed in its communal possession of the land on which Binondo