

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

The Tianguis: A Preliminary View of an Indigenous Rural Marketing System in the Spanish Philippines

Serafin D. Quiason

Philippine Studies vol. 33, no. 1 (1985) 22–38

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at philstudies@admu.edu.ph.

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>
Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

The Tianguí: A Preliminary View of an Indigenous Rural Marketing System in the Spanish Philippines

SERAFIN D. QUIASON

My interest in the *tianguí* as an indigenous rural marketing institution began about three years ago when I came across a passage in Martínez de Zuñiga's work. Later on, as I continued further in my readings on the topic, I was struck by the inadequacy of information given by other Spanish colonial writers. The subject deserves serious study and consideration mainly because the *tianguí* occupied an important position in the rural economy and also because it still persists today in many parts of the rural Philippines. The term itself derives from an Aztec word *tianguiztli*,¹ meaning "fair" or "market" where essential commodities and other farm products were bought and sold on a certain day of the week in the *pueblos* of the interior of Mexico. In the course of the hispanization of the Philippines, the word gained currency to denote a weekly market. Like its Mexican counterpart, we should look, however, for the origin and growth of this indigenous economic institution in the pre-Spanish context rather than in the colonial era. Even prior to the advent of the Spaniards there existed an indigenous marketing system in which the native peasants began to develop a type of entrepreneurship based primarily upon the exchange of goods and services between the peoples of the upland (*sa-ilud*) and the peoples of the lowland (*sa-ilaya*).

The relative stability of rural society and the coexistence of dichotomous economies, that is, a hispanized economy and the traditional or indigenous economy, and the continuing interaction

1. See *Diccionario Enciclopédico*, Tomo X (Mexico: Union Tipografica Editorial Hispano-America, 1953), p. 62; also Espasa-Calpesa, *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europeo-Americana*, Tomo 56 (Madrid 1928), p. 737, and *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*, 2nd edicio (Barcelona), p. 1581.

between the upland ethnic groups and the hispanized ethnic peoples in the lowlands had allowed the tiangui in many parts of the archipelago to reach full maturity and to survive up to modern times. Our problem, however, in the study of the tiangui as a natural outlet for local produce, marine and forest products, and later on, of Chinese and European imported commodities is the unavailability of ample documentary sources to enable us to determine the financial dimensions as well as the process of change within the rural marketing system.

ORIGINS OF THE TIANGUI

One group of tiangui dealers was of upland origin. They specialized in the exchange of forest products, gold dust, as in the case of the ethnic peoples of northern Luzon, and root crops for salt, tobacco, earthenwares, and brass work with, for instance, the Pangasinenses and Ilocanos. In the early part of the seventeenth century, Alonzo Fajardo de Tenza estimated that the quantity of gold which the Igorots brought in annually amounted to "20,000 taes,² each of which is equivalent to a peso of 10 reals." Writing in the 1760s, Juan de Medina, O.S.A. and Le Gentil mentioned the periodic visits of the upland peoples of Panay and the Igorotes, bringing enough gold dust, "wax and pitch,"³ which they traded with the Christianized Filipinos as well as "the friars in the different villages and to the *alcaldes*."⁴ Around 1821, Tomas de Comyn, a Spanish historian, observed that "grains of one or two ounces weight"⁵ of gold were exchanged for "coarse goods and

2. According to Fajardo de Tenza, the Igorots mined just enough gold which they needed for the barter trade with the Christianized lowlanders living in the Ilocos region and Pangasinan. See "Alonzo Fajardo de Tenza to Felipe III, 15 August 1620, Manila" in Emma Blair and James A. Robertson (henceforth B & R), *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898*, vol. 19 (Cleveland, Ohio: The A.H. Clark Company, 1903), p. 159. Writing in 1630, Juan de Medina, O.S.A. reports that "A great quality of gold has been and is obtained from the province . . .,"[and] "the Igorotes bring it down from the mountains." See Medina's History in *ibid.*, vol. 23, p. 279.

3. Antonio Mozo, O.S.A., "Later Augustinian Missions," in *ibid.*, vol. 48, p. 113; "Ordinances of Government," *ibid.*, vol. 50, pp. 213-18.

4. See Le Gentil's account of Manila and the Philippines, trans. F.C. Fisher in type-script Part II, p. 42.

5. Thomas de Comyn, *State of the Philippine Islands being a Historical, Statistical and Descriptive Account of the Interesting Positions of the Indian Archipelago*, trans. William Walton, Esq. (London: Printed for T. and J. Allman, 1821), p. 31.

firearms”⁶ with the Christianized Filipinos of the nearby towns in the lowlands. Felipe M. de Govantes, reporting in the 1870s, tells us that the various Igorote traders carried on a brisk trade with the Christianized towns selling potatoes and “*un poco de oro*”⁷ or small amounts of gold, and the Gaddangs and Negritos exchanged their resins, wax, and honey for cloth and food with the Christianized *pueblos* in Isabela.

The second group of dealers was of maritime origin and engaged itself mainly in the fish trade.⁸ The third group of dealers were those coming from the barrios of the lowland and other riverine settlements and whose chief economic pursuit was the cultivation of basic crops such as rice, sugar, coffee, abaca, tobacco, etc., the production of garden crops and fowls, the manufacture of cloth out of native materials, and handicrafts. The process of interaction and interpenetration among these three distinct groups of dealers through the vehicle of the tianguí continued far beyond the termination of Spanish colonial rule, despite major alterations in the pattern of land ownership, despite the exploitative use of native labour, and despite dislocations suffered by the indigenous social system.

The transition from subsistence farming to market agriculture varied from locality to locality and from region to region in the Spanish colonial Philippines. As the Spanish *reducciones* progressed, the tianguí became the principal locus of trade, until the advent of the regular *mercado*, in all types of local produce, which drew the whole organized community into its orbit. It served also as the link, on the one hand, between the peasants who produced surplus agricultural goods and the townsfolk and, on the other hand, between the upland dealers and the Christianized lowlanders. In time, the tianguí dealers, mostly women, formed themselves into a small but active class of enterprising peasants and fishermen tied to the rural market economy. They were unschooled, yet their market intelligence and business acumen were quite astonish-

6. Ibid.

7. Felipe M. de Govantes, *Lecciones de Geografia Descriptiva de Filipinas* (Manila: Imprenta del Colegio de Santo Tomas, 1878), p. 57.

8. Miguel de Loarca, a pioneering *encomendero* of Panay noted that . . . “the inhabitants of the mountains cannot live without the fish, salt and other articles of food, and jars and dishes of other districts; nor on the other hand can those of the coast live without the rice and cotton of the mountaineers See “Relacion by Loarca” in B & R, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. 5, p. 121.

ing. Traditionally, trading by the women marked a logical differentiation of roles from the more laborious farming and arduous fishing activities of the men. Besides, attending the tiangui also created a social outlet for the women.

By the eighteenth century, both the upland regions and the barrios in the rural areas provided the *cabecera* or capital of the province and the other adjoining towns with basic goods and other saleable merchandise through the tiangui and later on through the regular public mercado. Since the key towns and cabeceras could not raise enough to meet their needs, they constituted a constant outlet for surplus commodities. Among the upland peoples, many necessities were not regularly available and hence the uplanders were dependent on the downstream settlements or coastal towns for items such as salt, dried fish, sugar, tobacco, etc. By the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a variety of imported goods such as Madrasi piece-goods, exotic Chinese merchandise, and European manufactured goods were provided by clusters of Chinese shops — the new economic nodes in the most progressive rural areas. English-made textiles or *tejidos ingleses* as well as European assorted goods ("*varios efectos de Europa*")⁹ had long made inroads into the Ilocos region and the other provinces in Luzon and the Visayas through the intermediary of these Chinese middlemen.

THE TIANGUI DAY

The scheduling of the tiangui day varied from locality to locality. Hence, the tiangui, unlike the regular public *mercado*, was held periodically rather than continuously, and convened only once a week. Usually, in many major towns, it lasted for several hours of each morning, or the late afternoon in some other localities. Whether the specific marketing day in each town was based on the natural or lunar cycle or artificial in origin needs to be examined in depth.

In the key towns of Naga, Albay, the market day was Wednesday and Saturday; in Guinobatan, it was Thursday; in Cagsawa, it was held on Monday and Friday; and in Ligao, it was Monday.¹⁰

9. Govantes, *Lecciones de Geografia*, pp. 72, 79.

10. See Felix de Huerta, *Estado, Geographico, Topografico, Estadisco, Historico, Religioso de la Santa y Apostolica Provincia de San Gregorio Magno de Religiosos Me-*

Henry Ellis, an English visitor, gives us his interesting impressions on the tianguis at Imus, Cavite, as follows:

. . . It was market day, and the large square in the centre of the town was thronged with buyers and sellers of all manner of both native and foreign produce, who, with their gay and various costumes, strange dialect, and many different shades of complexion, formed a novel and interesting spectacle well worth the trouble taken to see it.¹¹

In the town of Jaro, the “most opulent place”¹² in Panay, John Bowring, the British governor of Hongkong, took keen note of the weekly market activity:

The manufacture of fine stuffs and cotton *piña* and silk is very considerable. These fabrics are exposed for sale at a weekly market, held on Thursday, which is crowded by people from every part of the province.¹³

Towards the beginning of the American colonial period, the market day in Jaro, which then had a population of 10,000, lasted, as Trumbull White noted, “all during the forenoon and then the throng began to dwindle away.”¹⁴ “The long rows of bull carts and *carromatas*,” he added, “scattered off through the country at one o’clock and the scene of our financial conquest was quiet and sleepy.”¹⁵

Several years later, Florence K. Russell described in detail the market day in Iligan, Misamis Oriental, which took place on Saturday. She said.

It was full of interest to everyone, for it is there the moros come to town, like the beggars in the old nursery rhyme, ‘some in rags and some in tags’, but none in velvet gowns . . . It was a glorious day of dazzling sunshine, and the market place fairly swarmed in colour, which blinded the eyes and warmed the heart. There were to be seen in sarong and coat, in

morias Descalzos de la Regular y mas Estrada Observacion de NSIS Francisco de las Islas Fillipinas (Binondo, Manila: Imprenta de los Amigos del Pais, 1865), pp. 182, 272, 274.

11. Henry Ellis, *Hongkong to Manila and the Lake of Luzon in the Philippine Islands in the Year 1856* (London: Smith Elder & Co., 1859), p. 65.

12. John Bowring, *A Visit to the Philippine Islands* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1859), p. 361.

13. *Ibid.*

14. Trumbull White, *Our New Possessions, A Graphic Account, Descriptive and Historical of the Tropic Islands of the Sea which have Fallen Under our Sway, their Cities, Peoples and Commerce, Natural Resources and the Opportunities they Offer to Americans*, Book I: The Philippine Islands (Chicago: John E. Hoham & Co., 1898), p. 199.

15. *Ibid.*

turbans, in faded reds, subdued blues that artists love, with here and there a dash of vivid green, scarlet, and purple, barbarously tropical.¹⁶

The holding of a market meeting only once a week could create a viable level of demand from the townsfolk. This periodicity in marketing, therefore, worked in favour of the tiangui dealers in the sense that they could concentrate on the demand for their products, especially the nonperishable ones, in each town on their circuit on each market day. With regard to "European imported goods," John Bowring stated that they were disposed of "in rather primitive ways of conveying them from place to place on certain fixed days."¹⁷ He went on to say that

... goods that appear today at the weekly fair or market at Jaro are subsequently offered for sale at Molo, Mandurriad, Oton, Arevalo. They are carried to and from the different pueblos in cumbersome solid-wheeled vehicles drawn by buffaloes and oxen, a mode of conveyance which during the wet season is attended with a good deal of delay and risk.¹⁸

In the process of moving from town to town within the same province, the tiangui dealers had expanded their marketing area, enabling them to encompass enough demand to support the tiangui. For the nonperishable items which were not disposed of were usually sold in another neighbouring town.

The tiangui had and still has a definite and recognizable place in the town proper, usually at a convenient site along the bank of a river or, in some key towns, in the plaza complex itself.¹⁹ Examples of these are the Payi in Boac, Lubtangin in Gasan, Marinduque and the *poblacion* of Imus, Cavite. The tiangui was of modest size, often covering a space near the sea but close to the town. In the case of Jaro, it was a "district of five or six acres in extent" with irregular lanes of small shelter houses. . . . Several natives were thronging up and down these lanes, bargaining and smoking tremendous cigarros."²⁰ The tiangui attracted hundreds of buyers in

16. Florence K. Russel, *A Woman's Journey through the Philippines on a Cable Ship that Linked Together the Strange Lands* (Boston: L.C. Page & Co., 1907), p. 96.

17. Bowring, *A Visit to the Philippine Islands*, p. 401.

18. Ibid.

19. In many major towns like Guinobatan, Albay and Imus, Cavite booths thatched with nipa or coconut palm leaves were erected on the market day in the center of the plaza. See Frederick E. Foster letter to the Editor of *Japan Mail* (in MSS form, Lopez Memorial Museum) dated 5 June 1887.

20. White, *Our New Possessions*, p. 199.

a single day. The general impression given by the tiangui was one of great activity, involving much movement and noise by the hundreds of ethnic peoples, a maze of colourful goods on display, and the fusion of many odours. In the town of Jolo, Sulu, the market place was close to the bank and the Joloanos still call it tiangui.²¹

In many coastal towns like Gasan, Bumaca, Orani, Baclayon, Dapitan, Dumangas, Taal, Lingayen, to mention but a few, the fresh catch of the fishermen from the lake or sea was immediately exposed for sale at the tiangui. Antonio de Morga was able to identify the variety of fish sold at the tiangui in this manner:

There are many good sardines, sea-eels, sea-brems (which they call *bacocos*), daces, skates, *bicudas*, *tanguingues*, soles, *plantanos*, *taraquitos*, needle-fish, gilt-heads, and eels, large oysters, mussels, *porcebes*, crawfish, shrimp, sea-spiders, center-fish and all kinds of cockles, shad, white fish.²²

Examples of fish from Lake Bai, in Laguna, such as *dalag*, *candole*, *bia*, *camarones*, are in Felix Huerta's and Rafael Diaz Arena's list of saleable local products.²³

The movement of commodities by land, sea, and rivers was a crucial matter in colonial times. Lake and river transportation had been an important factor in the agricultural development of lake towns and riverine settlements. The production of surplus goods and the comparatively free movement of goods had combined to make the natural lakes in the archipelago a significant fresh water highway. The produce intended for the market was ferried in slow moving carts drawn by carabaos or by *bancas*, *cascoes* and *balsas*, depending upon the topography or nature of the terrain. In many instances, however, the tiangui dealers walked along the barrio pathways carrying their garden produce of fruit and vegetables and fowl with the aid of a *pinga* or bamboo pole. Many enterprising women dexterously held *bilaos* laden with farm goods on their

21. F. H. H. Gullemard, *The Cruise of the Marchesa to Kamschatka and New Guinea and Notices of Formosa, Liu-Kiu and Various Islands of the Malay Archipelago*, 2nd ed. (London: John Murray Albermale St., 1889) p. 208. The principal merchants were the datus, and the sultan was also the main supplier of local produce to the Chinese and European traders (Thomas Forrest, *Voyage to New Guinea and the Moluccas from Balambagan, Including an Account of Maguindanao, Soloos, and other Islands . . .*, 2nd ed. [London: J. Robson, 1780], p. 325).

22. Antonio de Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* in B & R, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. 16, p. 94.

23. De Huerta, *Estado Geographico, Topografico*, pp. 118 to 173; and Rafael Diaz Arenas, *Memorias Historica Y Estadisticas de Filipinas y particularmente de Grande Isla de Luzon* (Manila: Imprenta de Diario de Manila, 1850), p. 7.

heads, which they cushioned with a piece of twisted cloth fashioned into a disc. It was primarily owing to distance and transport factors that the scheduling had to be periodic rather than daily.

WEIGHTS, MEASURES AND EXCHANGE

In many regions, the weights and measures used both at the tiangui and at the public mercado were traditional in character, but considerable variations occurred with regard to linear, area, dry, liquid, monetary, and other units. Reflecting the idiosyncrasy of each distinct geographical area, every major ethnic group developed its own system, which it enforced upon all traders and inhabitants within its jurisdiction. But in the Hispanized areas, Spanish weights and measures were either adopted on a highly selective basis or coexisted with those of the traditional or ethnic systems and were given their equivalent values in the vernacular languages. Over and above these confusing ethnic and Spanish metrological practices was the adoption of Chinese units such as *pico* (*picul*), *tahil* and *kati* (*catty*). One reason why the complex and unwieldy Spanish metrological system did not take firm root in many parts of the archipelago was that there was a dearth of administrators and inspectors to enforce the various royal ordinances on multiple and fractional weights and measures.

The ethnic Filipinos as well as the native entrepreneurs clung to their preference for measures of anthropological origin, such as *dangkal* (palm), *dipa* (six feet), *sangdaliri* (breadth of the finger), *sangdacma* (breadth of the hand) and *sapaha* (foot).²⁴ There were also indigenous measures for which no precise equivalent existed, such as *kaing*, *bakol*, *caban*, *salop* or *ganta*, and *chupa*.²⁵ The *ganta*, for instance, was the traditional measure for grain. In external as well as domestic trade, such Spanish units for weights as *quintal*, *tonelada*, *arroba*, *fanega* and *libra* were frequently applied. The Castilian *arroba*, was equivalent to 25 lbs. weight, the *azumbre* was equal to one eighth of an *arroba* and the *cuartillo* was one

24. See Juan Francisco de San Antonio's *Cronicas* in B & R, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. 40, pp. 361-63; see also Bowring, *A Visit to the Philippine Islands*, p. 124.

25. For a detailed table of Spanish weights and measures and their English equivalents used in the Philippines, see Bowring, *A Visit to the Philippine Islands*, pp. 304, 404, 419.

quarter of an azumbre in liquid measure.²⁶ Such units for linear measurement as *vara*, *braza*, *cabelleria*, *pie*, *pulgada* and *linea*²⁷ had crept in, and the *canasta* for corn, *cajon* for fruits and vegetables, *saca* for wood and charcoal, and *bariles* and *litro* for liquids were Spanish units adopted by the Christianized Filipinos. The introduction of Spanish weights and measures in the archipelago brought some semblance of order out of a confusing variety of ethnic systems, especially in the Hispanized areas, but it never gave the entire colony a systematic, still less a simplified and standardized metrology.

Barter was the main medium of exchange and persisted even in Hispanized areas where a money economy prevailed. In the words of Tomas de Comyn, "a propensity to barter and traffic in all kinds of ways is indeed universal among the natives."²⁸ Robert MacMicking described the mode of payment of the Joloanos for the various articles they procured, using "edible bird's nest, *beche de mer*, M.O.P. wax, gold dust, pearls, tortoise shells"²⁹ for exchange. As Feodor Jagor observed: ". . . in places where rice is scarce, the lower class of people catch fish, salt and dry them, and barter them for rice. In the chief towns purchases are made with the current money, but in the interior, where there is hardly money, fabrics and dried fish are the most usual means of exchange. . ."³⁰

In towns, where the colonial currency was in regular circulation, the Christianized Filipinos, according to a late seventeenth century Spanish chronicler, gave to each piece of Castilian coinage its proper name, taking the *toston* coin of "real of four" as the basis for greater sums. The term they used for all kinds of money was *salapi*, which they divided into "two *cahatis*, the *cahatis* into two *seycapat*, the *seycapat*, into two *seycavalos*, the *seycavalos* into two *calatios*, the *calatio* into the *cuding*, etc."³¹ The *toston* thus be-

26. See Comyn, *State of the Philippine Islands*, pp. 10 and 116.

27. The tables of equivalent for the *puntos*, *lineas*, *pulgadas*, *pies*, *obras* and *dedos* are in "Relations of the Western Islands" in B & R, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. 3, p. 201.

28. Comyn, *State of the Philippine Islands*, p. 64.

29. Robert MacMicking, *Recollections of Manila and the Philippines During 1848, 1849 and 1850* (London: Richard Bentley, 1851), p. 163.

30. Feodor Jagor, *Travels in the Philippines* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1875), p. 293.

31. See Juan Francisco de San Antonio's *Cronicas* in B & R, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. 40, p. 361.

came the common denominator for all the fractional units, and the cahati had a value equivalent to one half toston, seycapat a quarter and calatio, which was a Tagalog corruption of the Spanish *cuartillo*, an eighth.

The Spanish monetary system did not extend to all parts of the archipelago. Nor was it of equal importance in Luzon, where the principal central market was situated. The limited amount of Spanish currency in circulation in many parts of the archipelago favoured the tiangui. In many areas where the silver *reales fuertes* were scarce, tributes were also collected in kind.

In Sulu and in Mindanao, the currency used in trading was the Chinese *kangan*, a kind of coarse, thinly woven cloth, *konfongs*, a sort of dyed black nankeen, and *kompow*, a piece of white linen made of Chinese flax. The other currency used was the *palay*, and the unit of measurement employed was the *gatang*. Ten *gatang* of four lbs. each made a *battel*. Three *battels*, which was equal to 120 lbs. of *palay*, were exchanged for a *kangan*. The Chinese metallic coins that circulated, though rarely, in Maguindanao, Cotabato were known as *pousin* and had "holes as in China."^{3 2} Their value was estimated by Captain Thomas Forrest at about 160 to 180 for a *kangan*. In Sulu, a base copper coin called *petis* had an equivalent value of about 200 for a *kangan*.

THE INTERNAL ECONOMY

Toward the latter part of the eighteenth century, the internal economy developed, first within the local areas and between towns, then among the provinces and finally inter-regionally. Following closely upon this growth of the internal economy, came the increasing use of silver reales as the medium of exchange, especially in the area round Manila and other major towns. Its growth was signalled by a number of other closely related developments. The rise of new towns from about 1810 onwards provided an expanding market for local agricultural products. Manila of course, being the primate city, was the principal market, while the cabeceras or provincial capitals constituted the intermediate market centers of the various provinces, and the key towns formed minor markets.

32. Forrest, *A Voyage to New Guinea*, p. 280.

The early nineteenth-century French traveller, M. Dumont D'Urville visited Santa Cruz, a cabecera of Laguna, and was amazed by "the brisk sale of palm wine and coco spirits."³³ Several years later, Robert MacMicking, describing the market scene at Santa Cruz, says:

An immense crowd collects to supply their household wants and innumerable are the articles in the shops. . . The more perishable commodities are exposed for sale and fish being the principal article of the native's food is exposed for sale in large quantities.³⁴

In addition to these varieties of local produce, Rafael Diaz Arenas added to his list all kinds of beautiful tropical birds which were sold at the tianguí and at the public mercado in the provincial capital. Such native birds are "*cacatuas, loros, culianguns, colasisi, martin pescador* and *mayas*." In the towns, the weekly tianguí continued to flourish. By 1810, the main agricultural products traded at the tianguí included all sorts of indigenous staple crops and "assortments of home manufactures, as well as imported goods."³⁵ Zuñiga gives us a clear view of the tianguí and the involvement of the Chinese mestizos in the weekly trading activity, by citing the town of Polo, where the market day was held every Wednesday. He says:

. . . This is a kind of town fair which many people from Manila and its environs attend. Many *mestizos* come from the neighbouring towns to offer for sale all kinds of clothes from Europe and China and many come to sell all sorts of provisions, groceries, fruits and vegetables. These markets are very useful because the natives buy all the things needed in the household for the whole week. These weekly fairs are but a small part of the trade activities of this town because its business-minded inhabitants travel to all provinces that can be reached by their vessels, gather imperishable local products, store them and bring them to Manila during times of scarcity.³⁶

Thus the sale of consumer goods at the weekly tianguí was a contributory factor in the expansion of internal trade, as were the handicraft industries and the increase in the manufacture of house-

33. J. P. de la Gironiere, *Twenty Years in the Philippines* (London: Harper & Brother Publishers, 1854), p. 356.

34. MacMicking, *Recollections of Manila*, p. 164.

35. Joaquín Martínez de Zuñiga, O.S.A., *Estadismos de las Islas Filipinas; o mis viajes por este país*. Tomo primero en la Imprenta de la Viuda de M. Minuesa de los Ríos (Madrid, 1893), p. 349.

36. *Ibid.*

hold goods, particularly native handwoven textile products. Certain capital intensive industries also developed, for example, cocoa and nipa wine or *basi* making, and the production of earthenware, and other incipient manufacturing activities were also seen in Tayabas (now Quezon Province), Laguna, Bulacan and the Ilocos region. A fair degree of specialization developed in a number of key towns, which became centers for the production of certain types of goods. In the Ilocos region, Sarrat was the center for the manufacturing of blankets and canvas for sails, while Piddig specialized in *basi* making. In what is now Rizal province, Malabon produced indigo for export and local consumption, and Pasig turned out all sorts of earthenware, because of the abundance of red clay in the area. Taal, an ancient town in Batangas, manufactured sinamay, while the old towns of Cebu and Iloilo became famous for their fine muslim cloth made out of pineapple fibres and known as *piña*³⁷ — a highly-prized item of internal commerce.

We may safely say that the development and growth of the internal economy had important consequences for the increased productivity of the colony. Not only did the growth of markets, both local and foreign, promote specialization of production, but improvements in the inter-regional trade were themselves a very important spur to productivity. The increase of productivity and activities associated with the distribution and consumption of local produce and imported goods affected not only the quality but also increased the variety of the commodities exposed for sale at the tiangui.

The development and expansion of commercial agriculture in the nineteenth century favoured the tiangui, since the major regions of the country began to specialize in the production of single crops like tobacco and cotton in the Ilocos region, *abaca* in the Bicol region, and sugar in Panay, Negros and Pampanga, cotton and coffee in Batangas, indigo in Bulacan, and black pepper in Tayabas (Quezon). From the 1840s onwards, the energies of the native Filipinos were almost wholly occupied with the production of cash crops for export. Many areas, therefore, came to depend on a single crop, with all the consequent imbalances that followed.

37. See H. N. Mosely, "Notes by a Naturalist," *An Account of Observations Made During the Voyage of H.M.S. "Challenger,"* (London: John Murray Albermale St., 1892), p. 355.

Regional specialization, coupled with the growth of population, enhanced demand for certain goods which were not normally available in the area. In certain regions it heightened effective demand for basic commodities, particularly *palay*, sugar, salt and other farm products.

FINANCIAL DIMENSIONS

One of the main attractions of the tiangui was the reasonableness of the prices of the commodities. The realization of fair prices without intermediaries or middlemen was the most apparent benefit derived by the householders from the direct marketing of local produce at the tiangui. However, as the Spanish colonial period came to an end, the townsfolk were drawn more to the regular public mercado mechanism. Here, the goods bound for the intermediary markets and the principal central market of Manila passed through several hands on their way from the peasant producers to the shops and stalls operated by Chinese mestizos and native traders in key towns and the primate city of Manila.

In the early stage of its development, the tiangui dealers were mainly concerned with simply making a small margin of profit in kind to enable them to meet their basic necessities, but as the money economy spread to many parts of the Hispanized areas, the profit motive became more and more pronounced. An idea of how much profit could be made by a group of Pampango *homines economici*, motivated by the spirit of cooperation, is given by Charles Wilkes, the head of the U.S. Naval Exploration in the late 1830s and early 1840s,

. . . In some of the villages, the chief men unite to build a vessel, generally a pirogue, in which they embark their produce under the conduct of a few persons, who go to navigate it, dispose of the cargo. In due time, they make their voyage, and when the accounts are selected, the returns are distributed to each according to his share. Festivals are then held, the saints thanked for their kindness and blessings invoked for another year. After this is over, the vessel is taken carefully to pieces and distributed among the owners to be preserved for the next season.

The profits on the crops, according to estimates, vary from 60% to 100%.³⁸

38. Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of United States Exploring Expedition During the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842*, vol. 5 (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1845), p. 290.

Certain qualities of sugar were permanently in demand for particular purposes. For example, Pampango sugar, especially the clayes and *muscovado* were popular for making preserves.

The indigenous Filipinos did not develop a fixed price system for their products. One could expect therefore the prices of grain, dry goods, fish and other local produce to differ from region to region and between producing areas and consuming centers. A great deal of bargaining took place in the tiangui. Haggling often animated and vociferous, sometimes quite subtle was the general rule. A price once offered could be changed and, if accepted, this would reinitiate the haggling process. The Spaniards found it difficult to tolerate such forms of negotiation because they lacked sufficient knowledge of native psychology, patience and tact.

The Chinese merchants, who well understood the rules of the game in both the tiangui and the public mercado, put prices on their commodities that would allow for a substantial discount. In the end, the native consumers would feel satisfied, although the astute Chinese merchants would have the best of the business deal.³⁹ The other ethnic peoples living in the peripheral areas in Mindanao or elsewhere had long been victims of the Chinese and Suluans, who often cheated them through deception and the manipulation of prices and weights. No less an observer than Charles Wilkes attested to these sharp and cunning practices when he said:

The trade requires great knowledge of articles produced for the Chinese and Sooloos are both so adept in fraud, that great caution and circumspection are necessary.⁴⁰

He added that

in trading with natives, all operations ought to be carried on for cash, or if by barter, no delivery should be made until the articles to be taken in exchange are received.⁴¹

We can also get some idea of the prices of the bartered commodities from Feodor Jagor's observations. For instance, wax weigh-

39. The native consumers were deceived by the Chinese merchants not only on the prices but also on the weight of goods sold to them. "Extract from a letter by Father Pablo Pastells to the Father Provincial Juan Capell, S.J.," Manila, 20 April 1887. B & R, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. 43, p. 27.

40. Wilkes, *Narrative of United States Exploring Expedition*, p. 347.

41. *Ibid.*

ing from 200 to 300 *piculs* was given the value of between twenty-five to fifty reales per picul by the upland peoples of Samar.⁴² An ounce of gold dust was valued at about two pounds ten shillings. About eight to fifteen gantas of *camotes* or sweet potatoes could be purchased for half a *real*. A fat hen was sold at half a real, while thirty eggs could fetch a price of one real. The value of rice per *cavan* before harvest time was ten reales⁴³ and after the harvest it was three reales. Fish, crabs, and vegetables could be bought for three cuartos, oil for two cuartos, *buyo* (betel nut) for one cuarto, and tobacco for three cuartos. In Iloilo, sugar was sold at prices ranging from one Spanish peso to one peso twenty-five centimos per picul. A picul of hemp could be purchased at seven dollars. Cocoa was retailed at two or two and a half pesos per ganta (three litres). Imported European cloth cost five reales, two handkerchiefs one and a half reales, and a pair of slippers two reales. A woman's *camisa de guinara* (a short shift of abaca fibre) had a value of one real, a *mantilla* for going to church six reales, a comb two cuartos, a petticoat of two pieces of *naguas* four reales. A coarse *patadion* was priced at three reales. Household items such as plates cost between two and five cuartos, a pair of scissors would be valued at two reales, an iron pair (*cawali*) three or four reales, and an earthenware cooking pot between three and ten cuartos. Although the prices were stated in Spanish reales, payment was often made in varying amounts of rice, dried fish, cloth forest products, etc. The goods sold at the tianguí were obviously cheaper than at the regular town *mercado* or *palengke*.

SOCIAL DIMENSIONS

A word may be said about the social dimensions of the tianguí. The tianguí dealers were able to establish linkages with the townsfolk through ties of trade and social intercourse. The tianguí was the social agora of the wives of *principalia* or indigenous elite and peasant traders. The women dealers kept abreast of the gossip

42. Jagor, *Travels in the Philippines*, pp. 391-93, 389.

43. Around this particular period, the price of rice (*Oryza sativa lanuyo*) in Iloilo was 10 reales per cavan and in other localities it was 10½ reales per cavan. MacMicking, *Recollections of Manila*, pp. 28 and 361.

and information circulating in the towns proper. As James A. Leroy aptly puts it, “. . . going to market and spending a part of the day there exchanging gossip is at least as much a consideration with the vendors as the money which is to be obtained”⁴⁴ The natural consequence of this was that they enlarged the circle of their acquaintances and deepened their social knowledge of the principalia.

Every region, every province and every town had its culinary specialties. Thus, the types of commodities collected and sold by the tiangui dealers catered to the fine gastronomic tastes of the principalia. The closest competitors of the principalia in keeping a good table were the friars.

C. S. Stewart, a U.S. naval officer who visited the Philippines in 1829-30, marvelled at the way the principalia served “a profusion at dinner of fish, fowl, meats, and various deserts and fruits.”⁴⁵ An English lady traveller Anna d’Almeida enjoyed immensely the chocolate,⁴⁶ a favourite drink of the Castilian friars, which she was served on her trip to Laguna. Among the favourite recipes of the Europeans, particularly the English mercantile community, was frog curry,⁴⁷ and prawns and *sugpo* (king-size shrimps) were always in great demand.

The principalia were the ones who could afford both the local exotic produce and could also well afford the more expensive imported items. Tomas de Comyn referred to the principalia and sangley mestizos as an industrious class of men “possessed of the largest portion of the specie.”⁴⁸

44. James A. Le Roy, *Philippine Life in Town and Country*, limited editions (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1968), p. 30.

45. C. S. Stewart, *A Visit to the South Seas in the U.S. Ship Vincennes during the Years 1829, and 1830 including scenes in Brazil, Peru, Manila and Cape of Good Hope and St. Helena*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1832), p. 314. Le Gentil writing in the 1760's observed that one favorite recipe among the well-to-do indigenous class was *paksiw na pata*, a stew made of pig's feet, an excellent menu especially “when the pig's feet are well-cooked” (Le Gentil's account of Manila and the Philippines, p. 157).

46. Anna D'Almeida, *A Lady's Visit to Manila and Japan* (London: Hurst and Blackett Publishers, 1863), p. 27.

47. Robert MacMicking, *Recollections of Manilla and the Philippines During 1848, 1849 and 1850* (London: Richard Bentley, 1851), p. 105.

48. Comyn, *State of the Philippine Islands*, p. 64.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, we may say that the tianguí became a convenient market device considered essential for the sustenance of both the tianguí dealers and the urban consumers. More significantly, it was the starting point for the downward flow of forest or sa-ilaya products and the upward flow of sa-ilud and marine goods to the upland regions as well as into the interior of the archipelago, prior to the formal establishment of a hierarchy of markets consisting of towns, provincial cabeceras and the principal central market of Manila. The dependence of the local populace on the tianguí market system appreciably increased, owing largely to the fact that the tianguí dealers performed the essential task of suppliers of basic agricultural and marine products to the town areas where they were wanted most. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the growth of the regular market system or *palengke*, brought about a gradual decline of the tianguí, especially in towns where Spanish money had taken firm roots and where the local population had shown a marked increase.

In essence, the tianguí represented an effective adaptation of the needs and requirements of the ethnic peoples to the ecological environment of the archipelago. The controlling factors were several, notably the hot climate, the curves of supply and demand, a profusion of edible but perishable commodities, and a fairly concentrated population in every colonial town, or every cluster of barrios, and these conditioned in varying degrees the character, structure and mechanism of the tianguí from region to region. What is also important to realize in this preliminary study is that the tianguí must be considered in the context of an appreciation of the ethnic and cultural background as well as the income and life-styles of the various ethnic groups. The tianguí, and later the regular mercado, constituted the heart of the internal economy and an understanding of them is essential to an understanding of the mainstream of rural commercial life in the Spanish Philippines.