

A Tribute to Dr. Jose Rizal

José Protasio Rizal Mercado y Alonso Realonda (June 19, 1861 – December 30, 1896) was a Filipino nationalist, writer, naturalist and polymath whose ideals of freedom and justice ignited the flames of Philippine independence at the end of the colonial period of the Philippines and inspired many freedom movements in the region in the decades to come.



He is considered a national hero (*pambansang bayani*) of the Philippines. An ophthalmologist by profession, Rizal became a writer and a key member of the Filipino Propaganda Movement, which advocated political reforms for the colony.

Through his novels *Noli Me Tángere* (1887) and *El filibusterismo* (1891), in addition to numerous poems and essays, he wielded his pen as a formidable weapon against oppression and injustice. His profound intellect, unwavering courage, and tireless advocacy of human dignity, equality, and the pursuit of knowledge transcends borders and continues to inspire generations to come.

May this Park stand as a tribute to his legacy and his profound impact on the quest for justice and liberty worldwide.

Dedicated with respect and admiration,
Filipino Community in Victoria

19 June 2024

Plaque was originally inscribed in 1996

Rizal's Novels Fuelled the Birth of the First Republic in Asia: An Inspiration for Democratic Movements in the Region

In the historical tapestry of the region, Dr. Jose Rizal's remarkable contributions to the birth of Asia's first Republic, the Philippines, shine brightly.

Rizal was a man of many talents. In his short life of only 35½ years, he was a linguist, an anthropologist, an educator, a medical physician, an engineer, and a businessman, among other roles. Rizal fought oppression and injustice, not with a gun, but with a pen - an instrument that proved to be a powerful weapon in championing truth and justice.

His novels, *Noli Me Tangere* (Touch Me Not) and *El Filibusterismo* (The Subversive), were a driving force in the Philippine struggle for independence during the Spanish colonial era that set into motion the establishment of the First Philippine Republic in 1898.

Written during his years of exile in Europe, Rizal's novels laid bare the social injustices and rampant corruption under Spanish colonial rule, stirring a collective awakening among Filipinos. They were more than literature; they were a rallying cry, fostering a sense of nationalism that eventually birthed a nation.

Noli Me Tangere presented a biting critique of the Spanish colonial regime, chronicling the sufferings of the Filipinos and the systemic injustices they faced. Its sequel, *El Filibusterismo*, was a call to arms as a means to achieve freedom. The powerful messages encapsulated in these novels made them instrumental in the Philippine independence.

The importance of Rizal's novels extends beyond their historical context. His life and principles continue to inspire democratic movements across Asia's diverse political landscape. His advocacy for peaceful reform, his vision of a free society, and his belief in education and national identity reverberate through the region. His teachings, encapsulating ideas of modern democracy and western liberalism, resonate with those striving for liberty, equality, and human rights.

Rizal's legacy continues to be felt in modern times. His emphasis on education, civic consciousness, and national identity continues to be influential in the ongoing democratic transformations in the region. His belief in the potential of the youth as the hope of the nation is echoed in youth-led movements advocating for change and reforms. He championed the belief that every individual, regardless of background, could contribute to the world, given the opportunity. He envisioned a future free from racial prejudice, where justice rules, and all people are citizens of an enlightened world.

His contributions extend well beyond the Philippines. Rizal has been recognized internationally, with streets named after him in Spain and historical markers in many parts in Europe, United States and Asia. Every city in the Philippines bears his name on a street or boulevard, and statues erected in his honor are found across the country.

In the face of challenges to democracy in various parts of the world, Rizal's novels serve as potent reminders of the enduring power of the written word in challenging tyranny and advocating for freedom and justice. His legacy serves as an inspiration, a beacon of hope, for today and for generations to come.

VOLUNTARIOS



A mis P

Al escribir
continuamente
fundido los
ras idios; a
crito de mi
Berlín

Entonces
abeis in
las prime-
co este manus-
ueba de amor.

1897

por
J. Riza



J. Rizal

El Filibusterismo



PADRE BURGOS, GOMEZ Y ZAMORA

Adieu, Patria adorada, región del sol quemada,
Perla del mar de Oriente, nuestro perdido Eden!
¿Darte voy alete la tibia mustia vida,
Y fuera mas brillante mi persona, mas florida,
Tambien por ti la diere la diere por tu bien
En campos de batalla, luchando con delirio
Otro te daré sus vidas sin dudas, sin pesar.
El darte nada importa, ciprés, laurel o lirio,
La dules o siempre abierto, combates o en el exilio,
Lo mismo es si lo piden la patria y el hogar.

Te muero cuando ves que el cielo se colora
Y al fin anuncia el día tras lóbrego capar
Te grana neceitas para vivir tu aurore
Vierte la sangre viva, derrama un buen hervor
Y dónale un reflejo de su nascente luz.

Muere cuando apenas muchacho adolescente
Ella crece cuando joven ya llena de vigor.
Fueron el verte ese día forja de mar de Oriente,
Sees los negros ojos, alza la tierra frente,
Sin cenir, sin arrear, sin manchar de rubor.

Encuentro de mi vida, mas ardiente vivo anhelo
Sabes te quita el alma que monta a ir a partir!
Sabes el al que se hermanó caer por darte en la
Morte por darte vida me vio bajo tu cielo.
Y en tu encantada tierra la eternidad dormid.

Te sobre mi sepulcro iras bromar con dia
Estrella expresa y con sencillez humilde flor
Arreaba a tu labio y boca labiosa o sea,
Tráeme ya en mi frente bajo la tierra afoia.
De tu amor el copla, de tu habito el calor.

Diga - la lleva venis con las to angula y seipe
Diga que habla suir de sept color fijos
Diga garru el viento conalun que mullis grace.

Mi Último Adiós
Dr. José P. Rizal (1861 – 1896) - Philippine National Hero

My Last Farewell
 Contemporary English Translation By Marilyn Castillo Proctor

Dr. Jose Rizal finished writing this poem the eve of his execution by the Spanish army on December 30, 1896. His execution was believed to be the catalyst to the Philippine revolution against Spanish rule.

Farewell, beloved homeland, dear land of the sun, Pearl of the eastern sea, our lost Eden! With gladness I give you my life; sad and gray, That it be more brilliant, renewed, and colorful, To you, I offer, and give for your glory. On the battlefields, a furious fight, Others give their lives, no doubts, no regrets, The place matters not: cypress, laurel, or lily; Gallows or open field, combat or cruel martyrdom, They all answer the cries of my home and country. I die as I see the early hues of the sky As finally the day breaks after a gloomy night; If you desire a crimson colored dawn, Pour my blood, spread it in time For a bronze reflection in your rising light. The dreams of my adolescence, The dreams of my youth filled with vigor, Were to see you, jewel of the eastern sea, Dry dark eyes, soft glowing temple, No frown, no wrinkles, no blemish. Dream of my life; my burning desire to live, Hurrah to you! Cries my soul that soon departs! Hurrah! Oh, how sweet it is to fall so you can fly; To die so you can live, to die under your sky, And to sleep eternally in your enchanted land If over my tomb someday you should see sprout, Amid the thick grass a simple humble flower, Raise it to your lips and kiss my soul, That under the cold tomb, my temple may feel Your gentle essence, your warm breath. Let the moon illuminate me with tranquil soft light, Let the dawn send forth its fleeting glow, Let the wind cry with its grave murmur, And should a bird descend and perch upon my cross, Let it intone a song of peace.	Let the sun burn, the rain evaporate, And the heaven become pure, with my cry in pursuit; Let a friend grieve my untimely death And on quiet afternoons when one prays for me, Pray too, oh, my country, that I may rest with God. Pray for all the ill-fated dead, For those who suffered disparate pain, For our poor mothers who cry out with bitterness; For orphans and widows, for tortured prisoners And pray too for your final redemption. And when the dark night envelops the cemetery Where only the dead keep watch, Disturb not their repose, disturb not the mystery, If you hear the chords of a guitar or a harp, It is I, beloved homeland, who sings to you. And when my tomb is forgotten No cross nor headstone to mark its place Let a man plow it, scatter it with a spade And before my ashes are no more Let them turn to dust to cover the earth. Then it matters not that you should forget me, In your skies, mountains, valleys, I shall remain. Vibrant and clear melody, I am to your ears, Repeating constantly the essence of my faith: Aroma, light, colors, whisper, song, laments, My beloved country, pain of my sorrows, Dear Philippines, hear my last farewell. I leave you all: my parents, my loved ones. I go where there are no slaves, executioners nor tyrants, Where faith does not kill, where God reigns. Farewell, parents and brothers, fragments of my soul, Childhood friends of my lost home, Give thanks, I shall rest from a tiring day; Farewell, sweet foreigner, my friend, my joy, Farewell, my loved ones; death is a sweet repose
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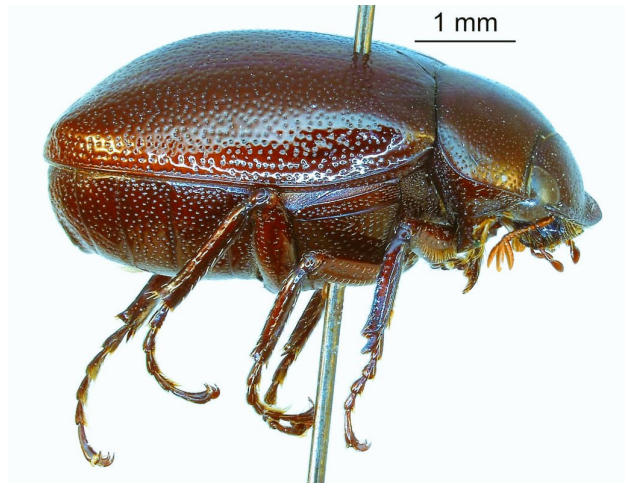
When Dr. Jose Rizal was in political exile in Dapitan, he spent a considerable amount of time studying nature. He collected numerous specimens of reptiles, amphibians, birds, insects, plants, and shells, many of which he sent to the Ethnographic Museum in Dresden, Germany for proper identification.



One of them was a type of frog that, in 1899, was given a scientific name that honored Rizal by German zoologist Oskar Boettger: the harlequin tree frog (*Rhacophorus rizali*).

Apogonia rizali

This rare kind of beetle grows to about an inch long when fully mature. This is the only species Rizal discovered whose name has been retained and is still widely used.



Draco rizali

Said to be found only in the dense forests of the Philippines, *Draco rizali* feeds on ants and termites, and can grow to a length of eight inches. This peculiar lizard has extended wing-like ribs that enable it to glide across distances of up to nine meters.

Spathomeles rizali

The National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) mentions a fourth species bearing Rizal's name. *Spathomeles rizali*, a type of fungus beetle, was reportedly one of the many specimens Rizal sent to Germany for identification. It's also known as the "handsome fungus beetle."

Hydropsyche rizali

Meanwhile, the official database of Harvard University's Museum of Comparative Zoology has an entry on *Hydropsyche rizali*. Based on its taxonomy, *H. rizali* is a type of caddisfly, an insect that starts life as aquatic and becomes terrestrial upon maturity.



Unfortunately, since many of the specimens Rizal sent did not make it to the scientific catalogues of that era, little information exists about this species.