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Chapter 1 Profile

Introduction

Say “Cebu” and you are geographically referring to many things—a province, an island, a metropolitan area, and a city. Lying near the middle of the Visaya Islands, the central part of the Philippines archipelago, Cebu Province is also the center of Cebuano culture. This culture has spread as the Cebuano have migrated to other parts of the Philippines, in part due to high population densities at home. Today, there are over 17 million Cebuano living throughout the Visayas and other islands, making them the second largest cultural-linguistic group in the Philippines.1 Cebu itself has emerged as both an industrial and tourist center, which, as we shall see, has led to some environmental conflicts.

The Cebuano are often grouped together with other peoples living in the Visayas who speak Austronesian (Malay-Polynesian) languages. These languages, including the three main ones (Cebuano, Hilgaynon, and Waray-Waray), are often referred to collectively by the name Visayan or Bisayan.2 Thus, a Cebuano speaker may refer to his or her native language as either Cebuano or Visayan, which obviously can cause confusion as these various languages are not mutually intelligible.

Area and Climate

Cebu Island, part of the Philippine archipelago, is where Ferdinand Magellan first set foot in 1521, beginning the Spanish colonization of the Philippines. Cebu is bounded by the Visayan Sea in the north, the islands of Bohol and Leyte in the east and northeast, and Negros Island across the Tañon Strait in the west and southwest. A long, mountainous island with over 150 islets, it lies near the center of both the Visaya Islands and the Philippines as a whole. Cebu Island is 196 km (122 miles) long and 32 km (20 miles) at its widest point. Its total area is approximately 4,421 sq km (1,707 sq miles).3

Like the rest of the Philippines, Cebu has a tropical maritime climate, which means that it receives a high amount of rainfall and its temperature and humidity are moderately high for most of the year.4 Northern Cebu receives its rainfall throughout the year, while the

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central and southern parts have a short dry season (sometime between January and April) that can last from one to three months. Even in the dry season, however, rain will occur periodically.

The rainiest months are June through November, which coincide with the typhoon season. The average annual rainfall is 1,623 mm (63.9 inches). Average monthly temperatures range between 20.6° and 34.8°C (69.1°F and 94.6°F). The coolest month is January and the warmest month is May.5

The islands surrounding Cebu typically weaken the few typhoons that reach the island, and the surrounding islands also protect Cebu from the danger of tsunamis.6

Major Cities

Cebu Province consists of 47 municipalities and six chartered cities. The two largest (Cebu City and Mandaue City) are designated as highly urbanized cities and together form the core of the metropolitan area of Cebu. Chartered cities in the Philippines are self-governing, independent of the provincial government.

A major concern for all cities and municipalities in Cebu is access to safe drinking water. Most water in metropolitan Cebu comes from wells. Groundwater overuse and contamination are two important issues facing the metropolitan area of Cebu, and in recent years, water planners have considered various proposals to make use of the mostly polluted local streams and rivers. In the city descriptions below, we cite the most recent safe water statistics for each city are cited.

Cebu City

Cebu City on Bohol Strait is the oldest city in the Philippines and the largest in the Visaya Islands, with a population of 767,450 in 2004.7 Well before Manila’s colonization in the 16th century, Cebu City was already an established trading center. It became a military outpost for the Spanish, and the starting point of Christianity’s introduction in Asia. One of Cebu City’s top tourist attractions is the Basilica Minor del Santo Niño, which dates from 1602, and is the oldest Catholic Church in the Philippines.8

World War II, Japanese forces occupied Cebu City for almost three years. Nearby Talisay (now Talisay City) was the landing site for Americans freeing the island in 1945.9

Cebu City is the heart of the metropolitan area of Cebu, an area of over 2 million people. Cebu City is surrounded by Mandaue City and the municipalities of Consolacion and Compostela to the northeast; Mactan Channel, which includes Cebu Harbor, to the southeast; Talisay City to the southwest; and the municipality of Balamban to the northwest. Nearly 99% of the households in Cebu City have access to safe water.

Danao City
Danao City is 34 km (21 miles) north of Cebu City. In 2005, it was designated part of the metropolitan area of Cebu. Its population in 2004 was 111,255. Some refer to Danao as “Durano Country,” after the late politician Ramon Durano, Sr., who was the patriarch of a family that dominates the political landscape in Danao to this day. Durano Sr.’s political power was important in helping to secure the funding to help make Danao an industrial center. Today, Mitsumi, a Japanese electronics firm, employs many of the residents of Danao and is the largest exporter in the Visaya Islands.10 Other industries include coal mining, fishing, and pottery. In addition, there is a sugar mill and a cement factory located here. Gunmaking, both legal and illegal, is a prominent cottage industry in the city.11 Danao’s primary means of transportation are trisikad (bicycles with sidecars) and mopeds.12 Only 78% of households have access to safe water.

Lapu-Lapu City
Lapu-Lapu City, formerly Opon, is located on Mactan Island and connects to Cebu Island by two bridges over the narrow Mactan Channel. Like all but one of the six chartered cities in Cebu Province, it is part of the metropolitan area of Cebu. For most visitors, it is the gateway to Cebu because of the Mactan-Cebu International Airport. Lapu-Lapu City has a population of 254,175 people (2004 estimate) and is both a port and industrial center. The Mactan Economic Zone, begun in 1979, is home to over 140 businesses and manufacturers.13 Lapu-Lapu is also widely known for its handmade guitars.14 With its beautiful beaches and coral reef on the eastern side of Mactan Island, it is also a tourist destination. All houses have safe water access.

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Mandaue City
Mandaue City is part of the metropolitan area of Cebu and lies just to the northeast of Cebu City. Its 2004 population was 300,586 people. This large industrial center manufactures products such as porcelain, handicrafts, furniture, beer, soft drinks, clothing, and building supplies. It is a growing commercial center and today has the highest population density in all of Cebu Province. The city is the home of the brand new Cebu International Convention Center, host of the 12th annual Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) economic and cultural summit in December 2006. Only 74% of Mandaue households have safe water access.

Talisay City
Talisay City is located just southwest of Cebu City. It is also a part of the metropolitan area of Cebu with a population of 174,739. It is primarily a residential city, but there are also factories that manufacture woodcrafts, metal crafts, ceramics, rattan crafts, and fashion accessories. Talisay is known for roasted pig (inasal baboy) and for its resorts on beautiful sandy beaches. Safe water access is at 84.5%.

Toledo City
Toledo City, formerly known as Pueblo Hinulawan, is the only large village on the west side of the island. An earthquake destroyed the old Hinulawan in 1863. Today the city has a population of 150,665 people. Copper mining once employed 10,000 residents in this rural city, but in 1995, the mine closed. Today there is still some mining, and the government is trying to create work in the town by improving the infrastructure. Approximately 97% of the city’s households have safe water.

Major Rivers
There is almost no water storage system, except for one century-old dam, so Cebu is very dependent on underground water for almost 95% of its needs. There is a considerable amount of water in the following rivers, but extensive treatment would be required to make the water from these rivers potable. Dependence on and over-drafting of underground water has meant the intrusion of salt water into supplies well inland. The residents of Cebu have generally not been willing to put energy and money into preservation of wetlands and conservation, choosing infrastructure and consumption.

15 “Mandaue City.” Point Cebu. Basic Information. www.ngkhai.com/pointcebu/facts/mandaue.htm#Tourist
instead. One consistent problem is the lack of adequate sewage processing beyond simply adding it to the flowing rivers. There is, in fact, almost no sewage system for Cebu City.20

**Guadalupe and Mahiga Rivers**

The Guadalupe and Mahiga Rivers are a major river system and have been considered biologically dead.21 This means that until recently there was no life in these rivers. The system begins as clean water in the highlands and empties into the sea at Cebu City. Liquid and solid waste from business establishments and households along its banks heavily pollute it. It serves as a natural flood drain for the city of Cebu and divides the city into northern and southern parts.

**Buhisan River**

The Buhisan River is a complex river system that empties into the Mactan Channel near Cebu Harbor. The businesses and homes along its banks pollute it heavily. There is a dam, built in 1912 with an original capacity of 10,000 cubic meters (8.1 acre feet). Because of silting caused by deforestation, the dam’s capacity is now no more than 2,000 cubic meters (1.62 acre feet).22

**Busay-Lahug River**

The Busay-Lahug River is 10 km (6.2 miles) long and empties out into the sea in Cebu City. It, too, is considered biologically dead, heavily polluted from the businesses and homes located on its banks. It serves as a natural flood drain for the city of Cebu.

**Bulacao River**

Bulacao is a short river system that begins in the hills near Cebu City and empties into the sea after passing through Inayawan. The river is polluted with solid waste and effluents from the homes and businesses located along the river.

**Mananga, Kotkot and Lusaran River System**

The Mananga, Kotkot and Lusaran River system serves the Cebu City area, including Mactan Island, but is in seriously degraded condition due to pollution. One observer

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20 “Mactan Channel (Cebu, Philippines) Environmental Monitoring: Insights from a Multisectoral Stakeholder Participative Approach Towards An Effective Management.” 2003, Largo, Ph.D., Danilo B.
www.icriforum.org/itmems/presentations/MactanChannel_DLargoT5.doc

www.iges.or.jp/kitakyushu/mtgs/network/kin1/Presentations/Session%20III/42%20Cebu.doc

noted plastic mineral water bottles, animal bodies, and other trash floating in the Mactan Channel at the mouth.23

Geographic Divisions

Mountainous Region

Most of Cebu Province is hilly and mountainous due to a mountain range that runs down the center of the island from north to south.24 Over 73% of Cebu Island has a slope of 18 degrees or more.25 Sources disagree on the highest point on the island; some claim it is Mt. Calabasan,26 near the western shore town of Balamban, while others list Osmeña Peak, the highest peak in the southern part of the island.27 Perhaps the most famous mountain, if not the highest, is Mt. Manunggal. It is a popular hiking spot not far from Cebu City. Manunggal’s biggest claim is that it is the mountain where popular President Raymond Magsaysay’s plane crashed in 1957, killing all but a single survivor.28 Mt. Manunggal is located in Central Cebu National Park.

Most of the mountains on Cebu are bare because of extensive deforestation. The loss of the forests is causing extinction of animals and is contributing to a water shortage in the city of Cebu.29

Coastal Plains

The mountains give way to a small, flat coastal plains region that supports the main highways and densely populated cities. There are many beaches on the main island, as well as on the smaller, uninhabited islands.30

Limestone Plateaus

The islands of Cebu and the Western Visayas rose from the sea about six million years ago and were originally connected during the Pleistocene Age, about 1.8 million years

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23 Ibid.
ago. Since then, the rising waters have left the areas between the coastal plains and the mountains, and the limestone plateaus of ancient corals. Highly porous, the limestone provides a path for the artesian and rain waters that feed the rivers, as well as being good water storage underground, and providing good drainage.\(^{31}\)

**Plants and Wildlife**

A striking feature of Cebu is its almost complete lack of forest lands. Presently there is less than 0.3 %\(^{32}\) of the original forest cover, and much of the reforestation plans are to use exotics not native to the area, but having commercial value. Of the remaining forests, the 200-hectare (494-acre) Tabunan Forest in Cebu, located in Central Cebu National Park, is the only closed-canopy forest on the island. It was home to 14 unique bird species and subspecies, some now extinct, and many other animals and plants that exist nowhere else in the world.\(^{33}\)

Because much of the forest in Cebu has disappeared due to logging and agricultural encroachment, conservation groups are emphasizing the importance of the Tabunan Forest and are working on strategies to save the plants and wildlife that are unique to Cebu.\(^{34}\)

**History**

*The Spanish Arrive*

The recorded history of Cebu goes back to the 13\(^{th}\) century, when Chinese traders came with plates and jars for the natives. In 1521, explorer Ferdinand Magellan, sailing under the Spanish flag, first landed in the Philippines on Cebu. The native word for the island was *Zubu*, or *Sugbu*, so the Spaniards named the natives *Sugbuanon*, which means “the people who walk in the water.” At that time, the ports were so shallow on Cebu Island that the people had to anchor their boats and wade to shore. Even before the Spanish arrived, traders from other parts of the world had made Cebu an important settlement.\(^{35}\)

A native of Portugal, Magellan had convinced the Spanish crown that he could pioneer a route to India, Ceylon, and the Moluccas (Spice Islands) around South America, thus avoiding the Venetians and Ottoman Turks. He converted two local leaders on Cebu to Christianity and agreed to help fight a war against Lapu-Lapu, the Muslim chieftain on

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\(^{32}\) Ibid.


\(^{34}\) “Protecting the few remaining forest fragments is not enough.” Kalikasan, Balik. Babilonia Wilner Foundation. http://www.bwf.org/bk/pamayanan/tabunan.html

nearby Mactan Island. Magellan lost his life in the subsequent battle, the first European to die in the Philippines.36

In 1542, Ruy López de Villalobos officially claimed the islands for Spain and named them Islas Filipinas to honor Philip, son of Charles I. In 1565, Miguel López de Legazpi, colonizing the Philippine archipelago, landed in present day Cebu City. He named it Villa del Santíssimo Nombre de Jesús. It was the colonial capital under Legazpi as Governor, until Legazpi subsequently moved the capital to Manila in 1571 because of its superior harbor facilities.37

**Manila Galleons**

The Spanish traded silver bullion and minted coins from New Spain with imperial China. The Chinese brought their goods, mostly silk textiles and porcelains, to Manila on junks, where the Spanish reloaded the goods on ships bound for Acapulco.38 By sailing north on the Japanese current and south along California, they found dependable winds and currents back to Mexico. The annual voyages of the so-called Manila galleons carried the Chinese goods across the Pacific to resell at substantial markups. These were often huge ships, as much as 2,000 tons, though most were half that size. Nevertheless, they were big, heavily armed, and, by the late 17th century, routine. The value of trade between Manila and Acapulco exceeded the value of the Atlantic trade between Spain and its colonies in the Western Hemisphere. Manila’s share of the trade, a government monopoly, was a surcharge on the value of the cargo.

**The Chinese**

In the 1590s, when Cebu was briefly part of the galleon trade, the Chinese immigrants established a Chinese district in Cebu City. The district became a market and trading center. But Cebu declined as a commercial center over the course of the 17th and 18th centuries because of the government restrictions on trade. The government ordered the Chinese to leave the country, but the expulsion orders did not apply to Chinese who married Filipinas, or had “mestizo” children as a result of those marriages.39 By 1860, the expulsion orders had been repealed and new immigrants were arriving from China. The Chinese Cebuano mestizos tried to protect their brokerage monopoly in their part of the Visayas by collecting goods in the provinces, forwarding them to Manila for warehousing, and pushing for restrictions on non-mestizo Chinese in Manila and the

36 “History of the Philippines.” Dep’t of Foreign Affairs. Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines. philippineembassy-usa.org/about/history.htm
37 Ibid.
provinces.\textsuperscript{40}

\textit{Cash Crops and Serfdom}

The government monopoly ended in 1815, with permission for the Royal Company of the Philippines (RCP) to trade tariff-free directly with Spain. RCP invested substantial amounts of early profits in cash crops such as sugar, indigo, peppers, mulberry trees to feed silkworms, and textiles.\textsuperscript{41} Cebu reemerged as a major player in the economy of the southern Philippines in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{42}

A major reason for the development of Cebu was the growing importance of sugar cane, grown and shipped from Cebu and neighboring islands. Tobacco, Manila hemp, and cotton had grown on haciendas in the Philippines since the 1700s. In 1850, however, there was a worldwide boom in sugar prices.

Sugar cane culture needs a workforce that can endure long, hard hours. That workforce could be found in the Caribbean, due to the slavery there. In the Philippines, the Spanish colonial government established a system similar to serfdom, and many of the landlords lived on Cebu.\textsuperscript{43}

In Europe, serfs worked for a landed lord. In the Philippines, the Spanish government had rewarded service to the government with grants of large tracts of land, much as they had done in settling California. However, in the Philippines, families that lived in the area were required to provide labor for a brief portion of each year. The grants started small but became larger; the export market grew, and grants of land to the elite left little for small farmers. Greater numbers of local people had no choice but to work in fields owned by others. Low wages and high prices for food and clothing from company stores locked plantation laborers into dependencies worsened by cash loans from the landowners during the seasons of no work in the fields.\textsuperscript{44}

\textit{American Colony}

On December 24, 1898, Spain and the United States signed the Treaty of Paris and the Spanish-American war ended. Cuba became independent, and the United States paid $20 million dollars (USD) to Spain as compensation for the cession of Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. The Filipinos had thought that they and the U.S. were fighting for

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{41} “The Decline of Spanish Rule.” 1991, Library of Congress. www.countrystudies.us/philippines/5.htm
  \item \textsuperscript{43} “Negros Island: A Study in Deforestation.” 2002, Heaney, Lawrence R. The Field Museum. www.fieldmuseum.org/Vanishing_Treasures/Deforestation_2.htm
  \item \textsuperscript{44} “Negros Island: A Study in Deforestation.” 2002, Heaney, Lawrence R. The Field Museum. www.fieldmuseum.org/Vanishing_Treasures/Deforestation_2.htm
\end{itemize}
Philippine independence, but the United States had other plans for the Philippines and refused to recognize the independent Philippine government established during the war.

During the first phase of American colonial rule (through 1935), the U.S. saw its role as “tutelage” in helping establish the political and legal frameworks that would prepare the Philippines for its eventual independence. One of the major problems the U.S. tried to address was that of land-ownership, specifically the narrowness of it. In the 16th century, the Spanish had used land grants as rewards for service. Those lands had once belonged to natives of the areas. Now, the Catholic Church, or elites, owned the land. The U.S. administration offered redeemed church lands for public sale, but few Filipinos who could buy them. The sales served only to increase the amount of land privately and narrowly held. The land reform was well intentioned, but only perpetuated and worsened the landlord-tenant relationship that characterized Philippine practices. The American occupation saw the re-emergence of Cebu as an important trade center with improved infrastructure and modern ports and facilities.

**World War II and the Guerrillas**

In 1942, the Japanese took control as part of their “co-prosperity sphere.” It was ultimately an expensive war in terms of lives on all sides. In addition to the loss of over 64,000 Americans, the Japanese lost an estimated 300,000 and the Filipinos an estimated one million, including those lost in the Bataan Death March. Cebu’s strategic location made it a key Japanese base during World War II, subjecting it to heavy bombing by liberating American forces. One of the first World War II large-scale surrenders in the Pacific occurred on Cebu. On August 19, 1945, Japanese officers, commanded by Lt. General Kataoka of the 35th Army, arrived in Cebu City to begin surrender negotiations. The Philippines received independence from the U.S. on July 4th, 1946.

During the war, guerilla activity had been constant and widespread. Estimates are that as many as 260,000 Filipinos were actively engaged in resisting the Japanese. The elite that stayed in the Philippines during occupation had generally cooperated with the Japanese, hoping to make the occupation less harsh. The resistance felt that the elite had given up any moral right to lead the country, and various groups, even after independence, began organized resistance to the Filipino government. One was the Hukbalahap, or Huks, who expected rewards for their efforts against the Japanese, but instead were disarmed and their leaders arrested. The Huks’ antigovernment efforts continued for almost two decades but were waning by the early 1960s.

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Historic Sites of Interest

Fort San Pedro has served many purposes to the Cebuano. The Spanish built it in 1565 when Legazpi arrived on the flagship San Pedro, but it remained uncompleted until 1738. Originally intended to protect the island from Muslim raiders, the port also served as the barracks and a defense post of the U.S. Army during the American occupation, a prison camp during the three-year Japanese invasion, the city zoo, and is now a small park.

Economy

Cebu’s economy has been growing strongly along with the overall Philippine economy. Recent statistics show a decreasing inflation rate, an increasingly strong peso standing at P50.38 to the U.S. Dollar (September 2006), and a 5.5% Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in the second quarter of 2006. Export revenues have been sharply increasing, showing a 32% jump in 2005. In particular, the Cebu furniture-making industry has been expanding at a great rate, despite the lack of raw materials owing to the almost total forest denudation of the island. Cebu is also fast becoming an information technology center of the Philippines. The remainder of the Cebu economy is quite varied. Besides furniture, some of the other major exports are electronic devices and components, fertilizers, seaweed (used in food processing and toiletries), processed foods and fruits, and clothing.

As Cebu becomes increasing industrialized and as once-rural areas become urbanized, the amount of land devoted to agriculture has decreased. From 1991 to 2002, there was a nearly 10% drop in the amount of acreage devoted to agriculture in Cebu Province. During this same period, the number of farms increased, reducing the average farm size to 0.64 hectares (2.3 acres). The small farm sizes and lack of access to farm support services have driven many peasant farmers out of farming and into the urban job markets. Environmental issues, such as seawater intrusion and soil erosion, compound the problems faced by Cebuano farmers.

Corn is the dominant temporary crop in terms of farms and acreage, with sugar cane a distant second. The

www.ualberta.ca/~vmitchel/fw8.html
primary permanent crops are coconuts and bananas, with mangoes, *ipil-ipil* (a source of fertilizer and animal feed), and *malunggay* (a tree whose leaves are used in many Filipino dishes) as the only other significant crops.

During the same period of time (1991 to 2002), there was a corresponding decrease in the raising of livestock. Hogs, goats, and cattle are the most commonly raised animals, but there has been a dramatic decrease (over 25%) in the goat and cattle population during the eleven-year time span.

Media

Reflecting the transition from being a colony of Spain to that of the United States, the Philippine print media made the transition to the English language, as well as adopting the American tradition of a media free from governmental control.

By April 2005, in the print media sector, Cebu City had three English language dailies, *The Freeman, Sun Star,* and *The Cebu Daily News*, which claim circulation of more than 30,000 each. Cebu City also has two vernacular dailies. There are now 40 AM and FM radio stations, 10 broadcast television stations, a cable TV system, and a strong satellite and internet infrastructure. 56

In fact, the Philippine media has enjoyed the well-deserved reputation as the freest press in Asia since 1946. Public issues are widely discussed in both print and broadcast mediums, and there is almost no official censorship. Journalists’ salaries are low, and businessmen and politicians can often buy favorable coverage. The military has also used radio journalists as a propaganda weapon against communist and Muslim insurgents. 57

Ethnic Profile

Cebuano is the second language of the Philippines, and the first language of about a quarter of the Philippine population or around 15 million people. It is dominant in Cebu, Bohol, Negros Oriental, Siquijor, Camiguin, sections of Leyte and Masbate, and most of Mindanao. It belongs to the Austronesian family of languages, which is split up into many language groups or subgroups.

The people of Cebu, or Cebuano, are of indigenous Malayan, Negrito, Spanish, Mexican, and Chinese ancestries. Each of these ethnic groups has formed a separate class in Cebu’s society.

Because these islands do not have large river valleys and plains, there is less room for agriculture. Consequently, more Visayans migrate elsewhere than any other group, either south to Mindanao, north to Luzon, or overseas to find employment or land.

Social class corresponds with ethnicity in Cebu. The poor of more remote villages tend to suffer the least from cultural invasions, and tend to most closely resemble the original inhabitants of Cebu. These rural poor are almost all pure Malayans, dark-complexioned and curly-haired peasants or farmers. Other Cebuano refer to them as Bisdak, an abbreviation of Bisaya dako, or “very Bisaya.” Few in the city understand their speech, which is termed “deep Visayan,” and filled with borrowed words from Spanish and English.58

The middle class is aware of social standing and recognize that their appearances and knowledge of English brings them a higher standing in society. Most Cebuano are mestizos, mixtures that include ethnic Chinese and occupy the large space in the middle of the social spectrum. Generally, the better a Cebuano’s English ability, the higher up the spectrum he or she would be considered. The ethnic Chinese, or Filipino–Chinese, many of whom immigrated from Fujian province prior to the arrival of the Spanish, dominate a large part of the economy.

The old-money Spanish families control much of the economy and continue to speak Spanish at home. They are well educated, fluent in English, and appear almost purely Caucasian.

Another factor the Cebuano rely on to determine social class is dress. The Cebuano claim to tell at a glance whether someone is a servant - i.e. from the lower classes - and are careful to dress in accordance with the accepted norms of their social class.59

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59 Ibid
Chapter Two Religion

Introduction

Christianity, particularly Roman Catholicism, is the dominant religion in the Philippines. Based on the 2000 census, approximately 81% of Filipinos are Roman Catholic, while an additional 11.6% belong to other Christian churches. The latter group includes two churches founded in the Philippines: the Iglesia ni Cristo (2.3%) and the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (2%), also known as the Aglipayan Church after its founder, Gregorio Aglipay. The remaining population is 5% Muslim and 3% other religions, including Chinese Taoist-Buddhists and animists. The majority of the Muslim population (mostly Sunni) lives in the southern part of the country, in the southern and western areas of Mindanao Island, and in the islands of the Sulu Archipelago. Because of security concerns in parts of this region that hindered data collection in the 2000 census, some feel that the Muslim population may have been significantly undercounted and may actually be closer to 8 - 12% of the population.

Within the Central Visayas region (a group of four provinces in which Cebu Province and its chartered cities make up nearly 59% of the population), the percentage of Roman Catholics was significantly higher (92%). No other religion claimed more than 2% of the Central Visayan population.

The Role of Religion in the Government

Despite the predominance of Roman Catholicism in the Philippines, there is no state religion, and there is a constitutionally defined separation of church and state. The Philippine government does not place any official restrictions on practicing any faith. It also does not provide direct subsidies to institutions for any religious purposes. This ban on governmental financial support includes the extensive school systems maintained by several religious orders and church groups. Religious instruction is permitted in public schools, but parents must provide written consent and there must be no cost to the


government as a result of this instruction. Religious practices and beliefs are legally protected within all public schools.

Several national public holidays are religious in nature. Five of these are Christian (Maundy Thursday, the Thursday before Easter, Good Friday, Easter, All Saint’s Day, and Christmas Day) and one is Muslim (Eid-al-Fitr, the end of Ramadan.

Religious Laws
Within Cebu and the rest of the Philippines (except in parts of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago), all civil and criminal laws are secular.

In 1977, President Ferdinand Marcos issued a presidential decree recognizing the shari’a (Islamic law) civil law system as part of national law. Under the decree, the shari’a applies only to Muslims and does not extend to criminal matters. Article 137 of Presidential Decree No. 1083 also established shari’a “courts of limited jurisdiction.” The Philippine Supreme Court administratively supervises these shari’a District Courts and shari’a Circuit Courts, which are located in the western and southern provinces of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago.

Religious Tolerance
In recent decades, Muslims have been migrating into Christian areas and Christians have been relocating into Muslim majority areas on Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. Conflicts have resulted based on differences in religious beliefs, behaviors, and practices, such as views of marriage and treatment of women. On Cebu, violent clashes between the two groups are rare.

History of Religion

Pre-Colonial Cebu
Many of the pre-colonial Cebuanos were animists, firm in their belief of a supreme, though variously named, God. They also believed in a spirit world ruled by gods (anitos) who ruled lower beings and, as controllers of everything from rain to fertility, required prayers and sacrifices in order to be placated.66 There were also substantial populations of Muslims that had come with traders to the Philippine Islands. By the time that the Spanish arrived in

63 Ibid.
66 “Indigenous Religious Beliefs and Cosmology of the Filipino.” Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Illinois University, www.seasite.niu.edu/Tagalog/Modules/Modules/PhilippineReligions/article_indigenous_beliefs.htm
the Philippines, Muslims had already made substantial inroads, colonizing as far north as Manila. It is important to recognize that both Christians and Muslims incorporated their earlier beliefs in spirits (animism) into their new faiths.67

**Arrival of Ferdinand Magellan**

When the Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan, arrived in 1521, most Philippine island communities (barangays) at that time, with the exception of Muslim sultanates on the island of Mindanao and in the Sulu Archipelago, had decentralized authority. The local barangay rulers that the Spanish encountered were datu, or headmen, whose authority came by either inheritance, military or physical skills, or special powers such as magical healing abilities.68 Through means of mass baptism and adaptation of Christian traditions and practices to local languages and beliefs, the Spanish clergy successfully converted most lowland Filipinos to Roman Catholicism within the first 100 years of Spanish rule.69 The Spanish military quickly drove Filipino Muslims from the northern islands, but mostly failed in their attempts to conquer the Sultanates of the southern islands (Mindanao and Sulu Archipelago) until the late 19th century.70

The Spanish also adopted a policy of reduccion, moving scattered villagers and farmers into larger cities. They believed that this would allow the armed Spanish constabulary of the cities to more easily control the movements and activities of the natives and collect taxes. While reduccion was successful in some areas, it proved difficult to enforce. Many of the relocation settlements were “all but abandoned” after only a few weeks. The Spanish also were not able to assimilate many of the mountain people living in the Luzon highlands, who could easily avoid all contact with Europeans.71

**The Spanish Legacy**

The legacy of the Catholic Church in the religious colonization of the Philippines is mixed. On the one hand, the Spanish imposed new values on Filipinos, specifically discouraging practices such as slave holding, polygamy, gambling, and alcohol consumption that were a part of the native social and religious fabric. Spanish clergy also introduced some European Catholic practices that blended well with indigenous ritual practices. Priests staged dramatic theatrical presentations of biblical stories in order to emphasize the central messages of Christianity. Today, the legacy of the early Spanish priests can still be seen when Filipino

69 “Christianity In The Philippines.” Russell, Professor Susan Center for Southeast Asian Studies Northern Illinois University. www.seasite.niu.edu/crossroads/russell/christianity.htm
Catholics re-enact—through religious dramas—the Passion of Christ, or Christ’s martyrdom, during Holy Week. 72

On the other hand, the Spanish clergy also viewed local religious practices as a threat to their attempts to convert the populace. They systematically destroyed indigenous holy places and idols (statues and representations of indigenous spirits, gods, or goddesses). They also tried to stamp out all examples of native scripts and literature for fear that Filipinos were using exotic symbols to bring about rebellion. Finally, the Spanish clergy had extensive landholdings granted for the support of their churches, schools, and other establishments. By the 18th century, the church was the largest landholder in the islands. 73 The problems with this concentration of land ownership continue to the modern day.

Influence of Religion on Daily Life

The Cebuanos are devout. Prayers are not limited to church; they are a part of the Cebuanos daily life. Elderly women often chant prayers around church grounds. In downtown Cebu City, locals kneel before the Basilica Minore del Santa Niño and Magellan’s Cross. In the city, there are also numerous mini-"temples," small corner shrines with a candle stand for people to stop in for a quick prayer. Cebuano Catholics passing a church may make the sign of the cross. 74

In addition, Cebuanos, particularly those who live in rural areas, continue to be firm believers in a world of spiritual beings, who can assume various forms and harm those who offend them. Rituals, such as reciting prayers in Spanish or Latin, making offerings, or using the crucifix and holy water, are used to break the evil spells that these spirits cast on people.

In the Cebuano world, spirits prefer dwelling in caves and should not be disturbed by the construction of a house nearby. So whether a site is appropriate for building is determined by burying three grams of rice wrapped in black cloth at the center of the lot. If a piece of grain is missing when it is unearthed three days later, this means that the site is not suitable because it will cause illness to future residents. February, April, and September are the house-building months, but no home will be built unless a chicken has been sacrificed and its blood

72 Ibid.
sprinkled about. After the blood sprinkling, a Catholic Mass can take place.\(^{75}\)

To bring prosperity and peace to the owners, coins are placed in each posthole before the posts are raised. The ladder of the house should face east to ensure good health. A full moon symbolizes a happy home life when moving to a new house. For example, when one moves into a new residence, the house must be blessed. A priest or church authority says prayers and sprinkles holy water in each room, while the new residents and houseguests follow along. Similar rituals are also performed during the inauguration of public buildings, bridges, and other structures.\(^{76}\)

**Discussing Religion**

When speaking to Cebuanos about religion, you will find them very passionate about their faith. Keep an open mind when talking about religion and avoid making disparaging comments about what outsiders may regard as silly superstitions.

**Exchange 1:** Which way is the church?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Which way is the church?</th>
<th>dee-in aang daalaan paadoolong saa simbahaan?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soldier:</td>
<td>What street?</td>
<td>oonsaang daalaan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exchange 2:** What did you learn?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>What did you learn in church?</th>
<th>oonsa maan aang eemung naatoon-aan saa simbahaan?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Religious Events**

**Christmas**

Filipinos and Cebuanos in particular, are proud of having the world’s longest Christmas season, essentially from September through December.\(^{77}\) The intensity of the celebration increases at Paskuhan, Cebu’s month-long Christmas celebration. It is a joyful time with food, music, lights, and displays of homemade lanterns. From the 16\(^{th}\) to 24\(^{th}\) of December, the *Misa de Gallo*, a dawn mass, is held over nine consecutive days.

The actual celebration of Christmas begins with a midnight mass. *Noche Buena* follows, where family and friends exchange gifts and prayers, and feast on *lechon baboy*, or “roast pig,” and other traditional foods.\(^{78}\) The days after Christmas are for praying. Catholics

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\(^{78}\) Ibid.
hold dawn masses and reenactments around the story of Joseph and Mary almost every day during the Christmas season.

**Exchange 3:** What time is mass?

**Soldier:** What time is mass? kaanus-aa maan aang meesaa?

**Ramadan**

All of the Philippines celebrate *Eid al-Fitr*, the feast at the end of the Muslim holy month of fasting, as a national holiday.

**Sinulog**

Celebrated on the third Sunday of January, this is Cebu’s biggest festival, which honors the holy image of Señor Santo Niño. This image was given to Queen Juana of Cebu by Ferdinand Magellan in 1521. To celebrate *Fiesta Señor*, the Cebuano converge along the route of the Mardi Gras-style procession and enjoy the carnival-like atmosphere. In a choreographed movement, dancing two steps forward and one backward, dancers in dazzling costumes simulate the natural rhythm of sea waves that brought the Holy Child to their shores, as they hold aloft images of their tiny patron. The prayer-dance is synchronized to the beat of drums and shouts of “*Pit Señor! Viva Santo Niño!*”

**Via Crucis**

At Lent, Catholics from Cebu City and surrounding areas walk the penitential procession through a 12-hectare (30-acre) area (Banawa Hills) that has the Stations of the Cross with life-size statues, patterned after the statues in Lourdes, France.  

**Easter**

At Easter, there are solemn Lenten rituals, long processions, and religious dramas. One of the best-known Easter pageants is *sugat* (“encounter”), held in the town of Minglanilla, a few miles south of Cebu City. In the dark hours of the morning, this elaborately staged production depicts the meeting between the risen Christ and his grieving mother. Angels, their wings sparkling with lights, slowly slide down invisible wires to the church entrance for the Easter Sunday celebration. The pageant is followed by fireworks.

**Fiesta sa Carcar**

*Fiesta sa Carcar* honors the city of Carcar’s patron saint, Catherine of Alexandria, on November 24th-25th. Carcar is noted for its old, Spanish style houses in a quiet

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countryside setting. During the fiesta, residents invite friends, relatives, and town visitors into their homes to taste popular local delicacies.\textsuperscript{82}

\textit{Santacruzan}

\textit{Santacruzan} commemorates the legend of St. Elena, wife of Roman Emperor Constantine I, finding the “True Cross.” It is preceded by a \textit{novena} (a prayer lasting nine days) in honor of the Holy Cross. On the ninth day, usually on a weekend in May, the \textit{Santacruzan} is held. A young girl is elected Queen Elena, and a young boy is chosen to represent King Constantine. They and others, representing biblical characters and the Blessed Virgin, process under decorated arches.\textsuperscript{83}

\textit{All Saints’ and All Souls’ Days}

Throughout the Christian world, November 1\textsuperscript{st} is known as All Saints’ Day. On this day, Christians commemorate the lives of the many saints. November 2\textsuperscript{nd} is All Souls’ Day, a day of remembrance for all the dead in one’s family and community. In Filipino practice, however, both days are reserved for remembering the dead. Businesses close for both days and more, and families reunite and gather at the graves of departed relatives and friends. Flower arrangements and candles are placed on graves of loved ones, and the gravesites are renovated by family members or hired helpers.\textsuperscript{84} Food, conversation, and even card games are part of the day. It is a time for celebration, not sadness.\textsuperscript{85}

\textit{Nuestra Señora de Regla Fiesta}

Citizens honor Lapu-Lapu City’s patroness in a festival held on November 20\textsuperscript{th} and 21\textsuperscript{st}. This is a religious event as well as an opportunity to socialize and feast with food, a carnival, a procession, and the coronation of a festival queen.\textsuperscript{86}

\textbf{Places/Buildings of Worship}

Many of the churches seen on Cebu have been around for centuries. These strong, long-lived structures are representative of the Cebuano faith. Church is a part of the Cebuanos’ everyday life, from birth to death. Baptisms, weddings, funerals, and almost everything in between occur in the church.

\textit{Basilica Minore del Santo Niño}

The Basilica Minore del Santo Niño on Colon Street houses the oldest religious image in the Philippines, the

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{basilica-minore-del-santo-nino}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{82} “Cebu Festivals.” 1999, Hotel Travel. www.hoteltravel.com/philippines/cebu/
\textsuperscript{83} “Santacruzan..” 2002, Philippine Feasts, Festivals Celebrations. www.festivalfests.html
\textsuperscript{84} “All Saints Day & All Souls Day.” Cebu Visitor’s Guide. www.wayblima.com/cebu-culture-all-saints-day.html
\textsuperscript{86} “Cebu City : Best of the Islands Philippines Feasts and Festivals.” Cebu City Travel Tips and General Information. Philippines Travel and Hotel Guide www.philtravelcenter.com/philippines/travelinfo/cebu-fiesta.html
Miraculous Image of the Holy Child Jesus, or the Santo Niño. It is the oldest church both in Cebu and the Philippines, and it is the only basilica in Asia. This was the former San Augustin Church, built on the site where one of Spanish conquistador Miguel López de Legazpi’s men found the image of Santo Niño in 1565. The Basilica is not the only church in the Cebu Diocese, just the most famous.

**Exchange 4:** Please take me to the Basilica.

| Soldier | Please take me to the Basilica. | paaleehug, daad-aa ko saa baasileekaa |

*Magellan’s Cross*

The original cross, planted by Magellan’s party on the Cebu shores upon their arrival in Cebu in 1521, is reputedly encased in another wooden cross for protection. Reportedly, people started chipping away at it in the belief that it had miraculous healing powers. This prompted government officials to encase the cross in a *tindalo* wood house placed inside a small temple called a “kiosk.” The kiosk is located along Magallanes Street, named in honor of the explorer, across the street from the city hall of Cebu City. Visitors can pause and pray, drop coins, and light votive candles. Ceiling murals depict the first Catholic mass celebrated on Philippine shores.

*Taoist Temple*

Located in the Beverly Hills section of Cebu City, this temple preserves the teachings of Lao-Tse, the Chinese philosopher who lived around 600 BCE. A towering, multi-tiered, multi-hued temple, it is accessible by three separate winding routes. It is a relaxed place of worship that one can visit in casual street attire. The complex houses a huge, colorful dragon, a replica of the Great Wall of China, and a library. Everyday, Cebuanos of Chinese descent climb its 99 steps to light joss sticks and have their fortunes read.

*Other Places of Worship*

There are many places of worship in Cebu for faiths other than Catholicism. For instance, the Muslim Al-Khairiah Mosque is located in Cebu City. Also, many beautiful, modern Protestant church buildings (most notably, those of the growing *Iglesia ni Cristo* church) are being built throughout the province.

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Behavior in Places of Worship

Visitors should dress appropriately when entering Catholic places of worship. Clothes must be simple and moderate. Women should avoid bright colors and not wear short dresses that go above the knees. They also should not wear sleeveless outfits or blouses that dip below the neckline. Men should wear long pants, shoes, and a long- or short-sleeved, buttoned shirt. The same dress code applies to children and adolescents.

Exchange 5: What time will prayers start?

Soldier: What time will prayers start? oonsaang oRaasa maagsoogud aang pangaadye?
Local: 10 a.m. aalaas diyes saa boontaag

Exchange 6: Who will lead the prayers?

Soldier: Who will lead the prayers? kinsaa aang maangoona saa pangaadye?
Local: The priest. aang paaRey

Visitors are welcome in mosques, but are expected to respect Muslim customs. Conservative dress is important. Before entering, all must remove shoes and women must cover their heads. Men should wear long-sleeve shirts and long trousers. Men and women worship separately. The men pray at noon on Fridays in their section, and women pray in the mosque in their own section or at home on Fridays.

Do not hesitate to ask about entering a mosque if you have any concerns.

Exchange 7: Do I need to put a cover on my head?

Soldier: Do I need to put a cover on my head? keenahaanglaan baa nga taaboonaan aang aakung oolo?
Local: No. waalaa

Exchange 8: Where do the women sit?

Soldier: Where do the women sit? dee-in maan moleengkod aang manga babaaye?
Chapter Three Traditions

Greetings

On Cebu, young men are called lake (pronounced “lah-keh”), and older men are called nong. It is customary to greet the eldest or most important member of a group before the others.

**Exchange 9:** Good morning!

| Soldier: | Good morning! | maa-aayung boontaag! |

Use a firm handshake and a friendly expression when greeting men.

**Exchange 10:** Good afternoon!

| Soldier: | Good afternoon! | maa-aayung paales! |

Use their academic or professional title and last name when addressing them. If you do not know their names or titles, you can say "sir." You should not call them by their first names until you have been given permission to use it.

**Exchange 11:** My name is Peter.

| Soldier: | My name is Peter. | aakung ngaalaan see pedRo |
| Local:   | My name is Joe.   | aakung ngaalaan see hozey |

Cebuano women are called bai, and older women are called nang. The women on Cebu are usually reserved, shy, and quiet. In an introduction, the same protocol used in greeting men can be followed.

**Exchange 12:** Good evening!

| Soldier: | Good evening! | maa-aayong gabee-ee! |

Greet the eldest woman first by gently shaking hands if she offers to do so and giving a verbal greeting.

**Exchange 13:** How are you?

| Soldier: | How are you? | kaamoostaa kaa? |

A title and surname should be used until you are invited to use the first name. Use "ma'am" if the woman’s title is unknown.
Hospitality

Philippine hospitality is well known and possibly springs from their strong sense of kinship and close family relations. One of the most common invitations is to share a meal with a family, even when there is no special occasion.

Local residents usually refuse the first or second invitation. If your invitation is initially rejected, continue to extend it because your insistence shows sincerity.

**Exchange 14:** Come inside!

**Soldier:** Come inside!  
**Local:** Maybe tomorrow.

When you visit the home of a Cebuano, be sure to take your shoes off before entering the house. You may or may not be offered a pair of slippers to wear.\(^90\) Be sure to extend a general compliment to your host shortly after you arrive.

**Exchange 15:** You have a nice house.

**Soldier:** You have a nice house.  
**Soldier:** Thank you for inviting me.

Soldier: neendot aang eemung balaay  
Soldier: daag-haan saalaamaat saa paag-imbeetaaR naako

Before going near the food, wait to be asked a few times, or even until a few house members have been served.

**Exchange 16:** The food is delicious.

**Soldier:** The food is delicious.  
**Local:** Thank you.

Soldier: kalaamee saa paag-kaa-on  
Local: saalaamaat

If it is a formal dinner, wait to be seated by the host. Do not refer to the host’s wife as the hostess; that has a different meaning.\(^91\) If you are invited to a buffet, you may sit anywhere where there is good conversation.

When eating, you will often see the “spoon and fork method” being used. This is where the fork, held in the left hand, is used to push the food into the spoon held in the right hand. It is advised that you follow this method of eating. If the host offers you a plate of leftovers to take home, do not refuse it as that is considered poor manners.

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\(^91\) “Philippines – Guide to Language and Culture.” Kwisential Language and Culture Specialists.  
http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/philippines-country-profile.html
There are some other things to remember when you are a guest or host for dinner. Putting your forearms on the edge of a table is OK, but not elbows. Placing your hands on your face signifies a lack of respect for the food. If in a restaurant, place your utensils together on your plate at the end of a meal so that a waiter can take your plate away and bring the next course or the bill. Do not clear or leave the table if you are a host until everyone has finished. Unless you are the host, do not sit at the head of the table, the cabizera, the seat reserved for the host. One other reason for not sitting there is that in a restaurant, the person at the head of the table pays for everyone’s meal.

Giving Gifts

Cebuanos will do all they can to please their visitors. The host will offer food, shelter, and anything possible to accommodate them. When you are invited to the home of a Cebuano for dinner, it is acceptable to bring sweets or flowers to the hosts. If you do decide to bring flowers, do not choose chrysanthemums or white lilies, as these are associated with special occasions. You can also send a fruit basket after the event, but not before. Sending flowers before your visit would imply that the host cannot provide sufficient hospitality. Wrap gifts elegantly, as presentation is important, though gift recipients do not usually open gifts when they receive them. If you receive a gift, be sure to say thank you as well as send a thank-you card. Do not open it in your host’s presence, as this would suggest that you are materialistic and possibly embarrass your host.

Exchange 17: This is for you.

| Soldier: | This is for you. | kinee paaRa kaaneemo |
| Local:   | What a surprise! | soRpResaa gaayud! |
| Local:   | You didn't have to. | deeli naa neemo keenahaanglaan |

Dress Code

People in Cebu generally dress conservatively. For work, men and women wear well-tailored business attire. For formal occasions, men wear barong tagalogs, white or dyed shirts heavily embroidered on the front. Women typically wear their finest dresses. Many people carry handkerchiefs, mostly as shields from the dust. People typically wear t-shirts and jeans at the beach and on non-working days. Shorts and sleeveless shirts should not be worn to churches, mosques, or temples. It is worth emphasizing here that Cebuanos are proud of their appearance and expect visitors to dress accordingly.

92 Ibid.
The importance of appearance may explain the numbers of beauty pageants in Cebu. Appearance is also something that is important in daily communications and social interactions. Cebuanos generally avoid confrontation when possible. To keep up social appearances, Cebuanos will try to avoid conveying bad news or telling someone something they think will not be appreciated. This can be frustrating to Westerners who are accustomed to a direct exchange of opinions and information. However, it reflects the fact that Filipinos, in general, find it hard to reject or disagree, particularly when conversing with someone they consider a superior. If they feel the truth will offend or embarrass, they answer indirectly. The purpose of an evasive reply is not to deceive, but to please, or avoid confrontation. However, they may be able to be more direct in some forms of written communication, such as a text message. This is a way around causing a public fuss by voicing something negative to someone’s face.

Gender Roles

In many parts of Asia, higher education and wage employment have strongly affected marriage trends, but that is not the case in the Philippines. Women are expected to be homemakers. They are also encouraged to be out in the marketplace earning a living and, when appropriate to have children, to do so and stay home. Marriage age in the Philippines increased after World War II to the early 20’s, and then in the 1970s, stabilized at around age 23.

Women have long had rights to equal treatment and equal inheritance. Their literacy rate has occasionally surpassed men, and they are the overwhelming majority in domestic service, professional and technical positions, and sales. They are also preferred in assembly-type factory work. It is not uncommon to see Philippine women (Filipinas) in governmental and business roles of authority. The most striking evidence for this is the two women who have served as Philippines President in the last 20 years (Corazon Aquino and current President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo).

Despite these strides, however, males still dominate the Philippine society and women often are encouraged to be submissive and to be nurturers. This emphasis on the role of women as nurturers may partly explain why the Philippines exports 15,000 nurses a year.

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most of whom are women. Women have long constituted a large percentage of Philippine workers who contract for work outside the country. With many Western nations facing a critical nursing shortage, the one-time Filipino surplus of highly trained, English-speaking nurses has decreased to the point that there is now an increasing shortage of nurses to serve the health-care needs within the Philippines.

**Traditional Economy**

The economy of the Philippines was governed first by the Spanish and then, by the Americans for the benefit of the colonizers. In addition to the Philippines’ role as trade middlemen between Asia and Europe, the Philippine economy has traditionally been agricultural, with tobacco, copra (dried coconut), and sugar cane predominating. Sugar cane, in particular, has long been a crop associated with Cebu and neighboring provinces and islands in the Visayas, especially Negros Occidental.

**Cuisine**

Cooking in the Visayan Islands (the region of the Philippines containing Cebu) evolved from the region’s contacts with the outside world, integrating the influences of Chinese, Malay, Spanish, and other cuisines. Visayan cooking is generally simple, ranging from basic fish to complicated and tasty *paellas*. Barbeque is very popular and numerous barbeque stalls dot the Cebuano urban landscape. When fish or meat is barbecued, it is called *sinugba*.

Fish or other seafood is the primary source of protein for Cebuanos. In the Visayas, the staple carbohydrate is milled corn. In the rest of the islands, rice is the staple item in the Filipino diet.

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Lechon baboy (roasted pork) is found throughout the Philippines but very much associated with Cebu. It is a favorite dish at celebrations and feasts. Preparation involves stuffing a whole pig with herbs and vegetables, such as lemon grass, garlic, onions, and ginger, and then slow roasting it over an open fire. Talisay City and the town of Carcar, both within Metro Cebu, are the places most closely associated with lechon baboy. 103

Another favorite dish is tinola or tinowa, a soup containing stewed chicken or fish. Other ingredients may include onions, green chilies, salt, pepper, tomatoes, garlic, ginger, kamunggay leaves (known as malunggay in other parts of the Philippines), and fish sauce. A variation of this dish is utan, in which other vegetables may be added along with coconut milk. Kinilaw (sometimes translated as “raw salad”) combines vegetables and raw fish, and is flavored with spices, vinegar and fresh coconut milk. 104

Social Events & Pastimes

Christenings

With such a high percentage of the population being Roman Catholic, it is not surprising that church christenings are major social occasions in Cebu. Children wear outfits that can be quite expensive, and the christening is always followed by receptions in which there is no shortage of food and drink. These are often held in festively decorated banquet rooms and include an elaborate cake. 105

Weddings

Like christenings, weddings generally take place at a church and are followed by an often-lavish reception. Traditionally, the basic Western wedding rites are augmented by four additional ceremonies:

- The arrhae ceremony involves the passing of thirteen silver or gold coins from the priest to the groom to the bride, and then back to the groom again. It symbolizes the husband’s commitment to provide for material needs and the wife’s responsibility to manage the family wealth.
- In the veil ceremony, a veil is placed over the heads of both the bride and groom, symbolizing strength and protection.

• This ceremony is immediately followed by the *cord ceremony*, in which a cord wrapped in a figure-eight configuration is placed on the veiled heads of the bride and groom.

• The *candle ceremony* symbolizes unity. The bride and groom light two candles at the beginning of the wedding, and then light another candle (the unity candle) at the end of the wedding.\(^{106}\)

Afterwards, guests throw rice for good luck and attend a reception with dancing and food. If you are invited to a wedding, a gift of money is always appreciated.

*Funerals*

There are private and public cemeteries on Cebu. The body can be cremated, but scattering ashes is not allowed.

After a loved one has died, friends and family gather for a wake to talk and reminisce. A prayer group forms and prays the rosary for nine days. Food is laid out on a shrine for a few days for the relative who has died. After the ninth day, a large feast is held to celebrate the rising of the person's spirit. Then the body or the ashes are buried.

Customarily, mourners accompany the deceased to burial by walking behind the coffin. When a funeral procession passes, stop to show respect. Some people toss coins as a symbolic gesture. People who are attending the funeral are usually dressed nicely in white. Almost any conservative attire is acceptable, as long as it is not the color red.\(^{107}\) If you send flowers, send them to the funeral home, or send a gift of cash.

**Exchange 18: Offering condolences**

Soldier: I would like to offer my condolences to you and your family.  

Local: Thank you.

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106 “Philippine Traditional Weddings.” 1997, Celeste, Tara. Filipino Wedding Rites  
http://members.aol.com/ZVELASCO/wedding.html

extended-arm poses as the *kristo* exhorts more betting and acknowledges bets. Losing *sabong* contestants are consumed in a dish called *talunan*, or “loser’s repast.”

**Other Traditions**

*Privacy*
There is a Visayan sailor song, or *saloma*, that says,

> “I’d rather ride the waves than the calm of the sea,  
> Because no storm can sink me more surely than solitude.”

Cebuanos value privacy less than people in the West. In fact, privacy barely exists, even as a concept, because it is unheard of for a Cebuano to live alone. Having spent hardly a waking minute in solitude, Cebuanos are extremely uneasy about such a prospect and they may assume that is true of foreign guests as well. If you feel smothered by your hosts, it is important to appreciate the apprehension a Cebuano feels when being left alone, or when leaving someone alone.

When the time for privacy does come, it happens with body language, by looking away, or by turning one’s back, as when changing clothes or when a daughter is sitting with a suitor. For Cebuanos, seclusion means that you can still hear others, even if you are not able to see them.

*Face*

*Hiya* means “shame.” Face is absence of shame. It is an Asian concept, but one that operates throughout the Philippines, a highly stratified society marked by social inequity and economic disparity. Having face, or keeping face, allows you to enjoy whatever position you have in society. Since one treats socially higher-level people more deferentially, to cause someone to lose face publicly causes them to lose social position and demeans them. Therefore, maintaining composure and not showing expression is important in this society. It is not something easily forgotten or forgiven.

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Time Management or the Lack of It

Being on time in Cebu is generally not important. Planned meetings may take place later, or never. You are not considered late even if you arrive thirty minutes past an agreed meeting time. This may be due to the lack of a standardized time in Cebu. The major cellular phone companies keep slightly different times, for example, as do the TV stations. It may have less to do with carelessness about punctuality, and more to do with the fact that Filipinos in general, and Cebuanos in particular, are very patient. If someone in a group of people gets upset about a delay, the assumption is that it must be a foreigner, or a balikbayan, a Filipino residing abroad. That person has lost face by behaving badly in public even if it is justified.

Offensive Language

Foul language is rarely heard in the quiet neighborhoods, except sometimes in an argument. However, at the market, bad words are muttered often. Yelling in public, let alone speaking profanities, is taken very seriously in the community. The one using offensive language loses face, regardless if the yelling and language are justified.

Bayanihan

Bayanihan is a word derived from the word bayan meaning “town,” “nation,” or “community in general.” Bayanihan literally means, “being a bayan,” or pooling together physical, emotional, and civic resources to successfully tackle a seemingly impossible job as a team. Originally a reference to communities coming together to transport traditional Filipino homes, the term is now used to describe any number of civic or business endeavors that depend on group or team cooperation.

Non-Religious Holidays & Festivals

It is difficult to find a holiday or celebration that does not have a religious overtone. The strong influences of the Christian, Catholic, and Spanish cultures are apparent in all the festivals held in Cebu Province. Most celebrations are highlighted with extravagant dances. Female dancers wear colorful, traditional, Spanish-like gowns.

One of the few totally secular holidays occurs on September 9th, which has been declared a national holiday to honor Sergio Osmeña.
Sr., the late second President of the Commonwealth of the Philippines. Osmeña was born in Cebu and became governor of Cebu shortly after the American colonization began (1904). He helped restore the country as President at the end of the Japanese occupation in World War II and during the immediate postwar period. He died in 1961. In Cebu City, September 9th is a nonworking holiday, whereas it is a working holiday in the rest of the province and country.  

*Tres de Abril* commemorates a historic battle under Pantaleon Villegas, or Leon Kilat, as he called himself. The April Third battle gave Cebu the glory of being the first major island outside Luzon to revolt against Spain, a revolt that continued in earnest on other islands starting June 27, 1898.  

*Kadaugan sa Mactan, or Bahug-bahug sa Mactan*, commemorates the Battle of Mactan. In 1521, local forces led by Chief Lapu-Lapu killed *explorador* Ferdinand Magellan and most of his men. On the April 27th anniversary, people gather in front of Chief Lapu-Lapu’s monument to watch the re-enactment of natives slaying the foreigners.

The town of Poro in the Camotes Islands (Cebu Province) celebrates *Tagbo* in January. This festival honors the Patron *Santo Niño de Poro* and celebrates the founding of the town and the reconciliation of two warring tribes. During the festival, dancers perform a special dance named after the town.

The Chinese New Year is celebrated with dates ranging from late January to early February. The big celebration is in Manila, but they are smaller on other islands, such as Cebu.

Other nonreligious holidays include December 31st (New Year’s Eve) and January 1st (New Year’s Day).

**Do’s and Don’ts**

**DOs**

- Do get someone’s attention by motioning downward gently or making the sound of “Psssst.”
- Do wear nice shoes to show the importance of an occasion to you.
- Do smile as a greeting to be friendly.
- Do eat if offered, even if already full, as a courtesy.
- Do wear simple clothes when going out so as not to stand out.

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• Do be modest by avoiding shameful boasting.

DON’Ts
• Don’t beckon a resident to you with a forefinger. It is disrespectful.
• Don’t wear sandals to special occasions.
• Don’t embarrass others by yelling in confrontations.
• Do not shame someone by yelling if you are arguing.
• Don’t use the thumb-and-forefinger “OK” sign in public. It means money.
• Don’t refuse the offer of food when an invitation to a meal is extended.
• Don’t raise your voice in public.
• Don’t wear fancy jewelry when going to the city.
• Don’t brag.
Chapter Four Urban Life

Pattern of Urban Development

Cebu is a highly urban province. Five of the six chartered cities in the province are part of Metro Cebu, the name used for metropolitan Cebu City. Overall, nearly 58% of the residents of Cebu Province\textsuperscript{119} live in Metro Cebu.\textsuperscript{120} This population inhabits 20% of the total land within the province, so population densities are high. In particular, Mandaue City has one of the highest population densities in the country and is the Philippines’ fastest growing highly urbanized city.\textsuperscript{121}

Cebu City has a much lower population density than Mandaue City, but this is a deceiving statistic. The city limits for Cebu City include many rural areas in the adjoining hills and mountains that bring the city’s overall population density down. In fact, most of Cebu City’s population lives within 17% of the city’s total area.\textsuperscript{122} However, increasing needs for affordable housing are pushing people and homes into the once-rural highland areas of the city.

Despite all of this, visitors to Cebu City often comment that the city seems more manageable and less “manic” than much larger and denser Manila, to the north.\textsuperscript{123}

Cebu City dwellers face many typical urban problems (crime, high traffic, air and noise pollution). In addition, the availability of fresh water is an increasing concern. Sea water over the last three decades has been intruding into and contaminating the groundwater system that supplies the majority of the city’s water needs.\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{119} This figure for Cebu Province includes Cebu City and Mandaue City, the two “highly urbanized cities” on Cebu Island. By law, highly urbanized cities are counted separately from provinces in national censuses.


\textsuperscript{121} “2000 Census of Population and Housing (Final Counts). Table 1” 2005. Philippines National Statistics Office. \url{http://www.census.gov.ph/census2000/c2khiglights_final.html}


Daily Life of Urban Dwellers

Despite the many stresses of city life, Cebuanos living in Metro Cebu other urban areas are generally good neighbors. They are friendly and accommodating, and many can speak English.

Exchange 19: Do you speak English?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Do you speak English?</th>
<th>maakaasooltee kaa baa ug in-eengles?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>deeli</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As noted, daily life in urban Cebu can involve many inconveniences. Parts of the city can be very smelly or noisy places, with many varieties of insects and small rodents found inside and outside of houses. Logistically, there are frequent electrical brownouts, sometimes lasting as long as ten hours. Water is not always available, and periodically not of good quality.

Unlike many other large urban areas, servants are widely available and employed in most homes, though the euphemism is “helper.” Their ubiquity explains the lack of quality washing machines, day care for children, and lawn mowers. There are simply enough “helpers” available to take care of these tasks without mechanical or institutional assistance. A yaya is technically a nanny who cares for children, a labandera does laundry, and a kusinera is a cook.125

In Cebu homes, a bathroom is called a “comfort room,” or CR. Cebu does not have a central sewage system, only an old one serving the main business district, so most home toilets flow into local septic systems.126 There may be flush toilets in better houses and apartments. Facilities in other homes are not necessarily unsanitary, just less convenient. Appliances like cooking stoves operate on propane mixtures, referred to by brand names such as shellane or gasul. Tap water in homes should be considered a suspect drinking source unless boiled.

Work Problems

Of those in the work force of the Central Visayas (a region including Cebu, Bohol, Siquijor, and Negros Oriental Provinces), a little over 7.7% were unemployed as of October 2005.127 The actual number of unemployed persons is about 200,000.

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127 “Updates from NSO Region VII.” National Statistics Office Region VII. http://www.cvis.net.ph/nso7/updates.htm
Whereas traditional jobs have been in the service industries, the current employment demand has become more technical. New jobs are emerging in overseas call centers, business-process outsourcing, semiconductor manufacturing or component assembly, and the continuing service centers of hotels and restaurants. Those applying for these jobs must be able to communicate well in English, have good skills in computers, and be able to solve problems.128

One of the things that is most charming about Cebuanos, their patience about things done late or not at all, puts them at a disadvantage in a world market that tends to be clock-driven. In one case, the Cebu Furniture Industries Foundation called for subcontractors to end the “days of crab mentality” and to start doing better in meeting delivery schedules. There are 300 furniture exporters in Cebu, with 82% dealing with subcontractors and 48% of exported products made entirely by subcontractors.129

Education

Formal education in Cebu begins at age five. Elementary school lasts six to seven years. Secondary education continues for another four years. Graduates, who are usually 16 or 17 years old, can then choose between vocational school for two to three years or college for four or five years.

Within Cebu City, there are currently 67 public elementary schools and 44 public secondary schools.130 Many of the latter are for night students. The literacy rate in the city is 97%.131 There are also six major universities and 39 colleges, medical, and technical schools. The University of San Carlos in Cebu City is the oldest school in the Philippines.

Market Place

There are several major shopping centers in the Metro Cebu. The stores carry popular international brands. While most store workers will speak English, knowing some Cebuano will often help bridge any communication gap.

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http://www.sunstar.com.ph/static/ceb/2006/05/01/oped/editorial.html
129 “Cebu exporters shape up to survive competition.” Gladys, September 6, 2006. Wow! Cebu City.
**Exchange 20:** Can you please help me?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Can you please help me?</th>
<th>paaeeh hog tbaanghee aako</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No problem.</td>
<td>waalaay pRoblema</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Cebu City, a popular place to shop is the Carbon Market, a large, open-air market located downtown that sells produce, housewares, and handicrafts. It is the largest such market in the city. This is a very good place to get a good buy on fresh farm produce.

**Exchange 21:** Is this fresh?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is this fresh?</th>
<th>pResko baa kinee?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes. Just arrived.</td>
<td>o-o. bag-ong aabot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exchange 22:** Where did it come from?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Where did it come from?</th>
<th>dee-in maan kinee gekkaan?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>From the mountain.</td>
<td>gekkaan saa bokid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For mall shoppers, the Ayala Centre and SM City are the largest and most upscale malls in the city. These shopping centers are located northeast of downtown Cebu City.

In the numerous smaller markets around the city, bargaining is expected for purchasing produce and handicrafts.

**Exchange 23:** How do you get to the market?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>How do you get to the local market from here?</th>
<th>oonsaa-on paag-aad-to saa meRkaado gekkaan dinhee?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Over there.</td>
<td>ngad-tong daapeetaa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Often, the more you buy, the better deal you will get. Pesos are the national currency of the Philippines.

**Exchange 24:** How much?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>How much?</th>
<th>peelaa maan?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Twenty pesos.</td>
<td>beynte pesos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Cebu, U.S. dollars and credit cards are accepted in large department stores and hotels, although it may be difficult to find a place that accepts traveler's checks.

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Traffic

Narrow streets, drivers who ignore traffic laws, and an incredible number of vehicles of all types and sizes are just a few of the factors adversely affecting Metro Cebu traffic. The number of vehicles (primarily cars) has increased dramatically over the last few decades, and road projects to date have not been able to keep up with the increased flow.

Nevertheless, major new road projects are being built or are under discussion. A noteworthy one is the South Coastal Road, which should help lessen traffic congestion between Cebu City and the southern reaches of the metro area. It is scheduled to be fully completed in 2008.134

Afternoon rush hour is 4:30 to 7:00 PM each day, although unexpected traffic problems can lengthen this time window on either end.

Transportation

The most common cars in Cebu are smaller, Japanese brands, such as Honda and Toyota. Public transportation includes cabs, jeepneys, motorized tricycles (short haul), motorcycles with as many as six passengers, and buses. There is no rail service anywhere on Cebu Island.

Uniquely Filipino, jeepneys originally were converted US military jeeps, but today they are more often rebuilt Japanese trucks.135 In Cebu, they are hard to miss owing to their brightly painted exteriors. They go into every corner of the city and from village to village. Most jeepneys have a conductor (usually a friend or relative of the driver) who hangs off the back of the jeepney. He bangs on the roof, and shouts “lugar, lugar,” or “here, here,” to indicate a stop.136

Buses tend to be longer-haul transportation, often used to travel to the rural areas of Cebu Island. The two main bus terminals in Cebu City are North Terminal and South Terminal, each handling bus routes in the direction indicated by their name. Westbound buses to Toledo City leave from South Terminal.137

Exchange 25: Will the bus be here soon?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Will the bus be here soon?</th>
<th>aang tRaak mo-aabootaay naa baa dinhee saa deelli naa maadoogaay?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>o-o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cabs can easily be flagged down in the commercial areas of Metro Cebu. They are perhaps the most comfortable way to get around the city, although many of them are not well maintained.

Exchange 26: Can I get a cab?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Can I get a cab around here?</th>
<th>maakaakoohaa baa aako ug taaksee?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>o-o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One should be aware that there are hundreds of unlicensed taxis, and they are often difficult to distinguish from the licensed ones. Always insist that the meter be dropped; the flagdown rate extends for 500 meters, and increases every 300 meters thereafter.138

Exchange 27: Can you take me there?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Can you take me there?</th>
<th>maaheemo baa nga eemo aakung daad-on ngad-to?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes, I can.</td>
<td>o-o, maaheemo naako</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Always carry change. Some transport drivers may try to keep the change by just not offering change, or not having it, even for the most common fares.139

Health Issues

The three largest hospitals in Cebu Province are all in Cebu City. These hospitals—Chong Hua, Cebu Doctors’, and Perpetual Succor—are known for their state-of-the-art medical equipment. Smaller medical centers and government-run "free" hospitals are located outside of Cebu City, but these should not be relied upon, especially for serious conditions or injuries, as their standards are lower than average.140

Exchange 27: Is there a medical clinic nearby?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is there a medical clinic nearby?</th>
<th>aadoonaab aay taambalaanaan nga doo-ol?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes, over there.</td>
<td>o-o, ngad-to daapit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The few Filipinos that have health insurance are usually of the upper class. Otherwise, most hospitals ask for a down payment when admitted, and full payment before leaving.

Medical centers do not usually accept U.S. health insurance. There is a law requiring all local hospitals to admit patients requiring emergency care, even if they cannot make the down payment. 141

One growing concern is an impending shortage of skilled nurses in Cebu City and elsewhere in the country. As increasing numbers of Philippine nursing graduates take positions outside the country, some have called for a mandatory two-year period in which nurses must practice domestically. Further complicating the issue is the large number of Philippine doctors who switch to nursing each year in order to fill the demand in the United States and other Western countries.142

Exchange 28: Is there a doctor here?

| Soldier: | Is there a doctor here? | aadonaa baay maanaanambaal dinhee? |
| Local:   | No.                     | waalaa                              |

Crime

Safety

Cebu City by modern urban standards is a relatively safe city, although various parts of the city can be dangerous at certain times of day. For example, pickpockets and purse snatchers target downtown Cebu, the site of many of the city’s tourist attractions, especially late at night.143 Poorer barangays (districts) in the city, with high percentages of squatters, are also known to be relatively crime-ridden areas.

Many beggars populate the streets of downtown Cebu, as do unlicensed street hawkers selling all sorts of wares and services.

Exchange 29: Buy something from me.

| Local: | Buy something from me. | paalit beesaan oonsaa geekaan kanaako |
| Soldier: | No. Go away. | deeli. paaleehog paheelaayo |

While you may be tempted to give money to the street beggars, many of whom are children, such gestures could result in a significant fine because of Cebu City’s anti-mendicancy ordinance.144

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**Exchange 30:** Give me money.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local:</th>
<th>Give me money.</th>
<th>tagaa-ee ko ug kuwaRtaa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soldier:</td>
<td>No, I don't have any money.</td>
<td>deli, waalaa aakoy kuwaRtaa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Drugs**

Cebu City, with its open ports, is a major transshipment point for drugs. Methamphetamine hydrochloride, or *shabu*, is the number one drug imported into the Philippines, and increasingly Metro Cebu children are part of the *shabu* distribution network. Much of this trafficking and courier activity takes place in the squatter communities in the city.

**Demonstrations**

Demonstrations against government policies occur periodically among the city’s college student population. Strikes and protests among workers also usually occur in urban areas. These demonstrations can become violent.

Administrative forces generally control most demonstrations in a diplomatic manner, but when violence erupts, the demonstrators can be fined, detained, or imprisoned.

As recently as February 2006, the Philippines was put on a week-long state of national emergency due to political destabilization efforts in the country. During this period of time, permits for demonstrations and protests were temporarily revoked. Given the volatile political climate in the country, it is best to stay away from any demonstrations unless instructed to do otherwise.

**Gangs**

One of the growing problems in Metro Cebu is, perhaps surprisingly, gang activity tied to college fraternities. Police officials have accused groups such as Alpha Kappa Rho

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and Tao Kappa Phi of staging violent “wars.” Fraternity members and civilians have been killed in the long-running rivalry, and there have been reports of known criminals being recruited into the fraternities.

Terrorism

To date, Cebu City has been mostly spared from the bombings, kidnappings, and assassinations that sporadically take place in other parts of the Philippines, particularly Mindanao Island, the Sulu Archipelago, and Metro Manila. Anti-terrorist vigilance is high, however, and numerous police and military checkpoints are routinely put in place during high-visibility events, such as the December 2006 ASEAN summit in Metro Cebu.

Exchange 31: Where is the nearest checkpoint?

| Soldier: Where is the nearest checkpoint? | dee-in aang peenakaa-doo-ol nga sooseehaanaan? |
| Local: It’s 2 kilometers. | manga doohaa kaa keelometRo |

These checkpoints are clearly marked by signs asking motorists to slow down, and government vehicles are always parked nearby. When approaching a checkpoint, slow down, stop if signaled, turn your headlights off, and partially roll down the windows for a visual inspection. You may be asked to present identification, such as a driver's license.

Exchange 32: Show us your ID

| Soldier: Show us your ID. | eepaakeetaa saa aamo aang eemung teemaa-ilhaan |
| Local: Yes. | o-o |

Depending on the underlying security concern for the checkpoint, you may also be asked about firearms.

Exchange 33: Are you carrying any guns?

| Soldier: Are you carrying any guns? | nagdaalaa kaa baa ug beesaan oonsaa naa poosil? |
| Local: Yes. | o-o |
Chapter Five Rural Life

Typical Source of Income

Agriculture is the main employment sector within rural Cebu. In some areas, tourism also pumps a significant amount of revenue into the local economy and generates jobs. Most industrial production is confined to the cities and adjoining towns. One notable exception is Balamban Township on the west coast of Cebu, which has become a major ship-building center of the Philippines.150

Rural Economy

Rural Cebu is primarily a subsistence farming region, one with land ownership and land fertility problems. Those rural residents who still farm, and haven’t left agriculture for life in the city, are often in extreme poverty. Cebu has about 339,000 people engaged in farming, fishing, and similar pursuits. Tenant farmers till plots of only about 0.25 to 0.29 hectares (0.62 to 0.72 acres) per household. It is not possible to raise vegetables on such small plots and feed an average family of five or six. One of the major problems has been, in addition to small farm sizes, denudation of the forests and resultant erosion.151

Livestock culture is significant, particularly in backyard farming, where poultry is dominant. In 1998, 10.3 million birds were raised, in backyards and other lots, still about 25% less than local demand. In total, rural farmers only produce about 50% of the food consumed on the Cebu Island.

A number of factors hamper Cebuano farmers. Among these are insecurity of land ownership; shortage of quality stocks; a marketing system that puts small businessmen at the mercy of wholesalers; a lack of technical support; high feed costs; constraints of management of public grazing lands; and availability of credit.152

Daily Life in the Countryside

Ownership problems, erosion of deforested land, and the steepness of slopes all limit the availability of land. Yet, agriculture still is a significant source of employment even in relatively urban Cebu Province. Farmers use as much land as they can, even growing crops on steep slopes. Cebu produces corn and coconut, but other crops include sugarcane, banana, tobacco, mangoes, grapes, cut flowers,

152 Ibid.
and cassava. Hogs, goats, and cattle are common livestock, and chicken, ducks, and quails are common poultry raised there.\textsuperscript{153}

An average of five family members lives in a rural household. Fishing, forestry, and agriculture are the main sources of income. Some homemakers get income from selling plants, fruits, or livestock from their back yards. Others commute to the city for work.

Rural Cebuano life is a struggle. Income from agricultural employment usually is not sufficient for basic living, which reduces the lives of many rural people to the poverty level. Also, when a natural disaster occurs, those in rural communities are most devastated. The government has been active in trying to bring water into rural homes to improve sanitary conditions and to reduce disease.\textsuperscript{154}

Females slightly outnumber the men in Cebu's rural areas. Although societal norms put women in the home to fulfill domestic obligations, many rural women are finding it necessary to work outside the home in order to contribute to the household income.

**Land Distribution**

Ownership was communal in Philippine society prior to colonization by the Spanish. Land was held in common by the \textit{barangay} (village), and individuals had rights to use the land and make it productive. The Spaniards introduced private ownership through the granting of legal titles, but most of the grants were either to those who had done service for the Spanish crown or to the Catholic Church. The land became part of large estates in an \textit{encomienda} system of large parcels owned by few and farmed by tenant workers. The tenants, working for housing and food, could only buy at a company store, which maintained an increasing debit balance. Being continually and increasingly in debt worsened the landlord-tenant relationship.

Over 100 years after the end of Spanish colonial practices, concentration in ownership has not changed very much. Typically, coconut and rubber plantations tend to be large, with ownership by major foreign corporations such as Dole, Del Monte, and BF Goodrich, despite bans of ownership by non-Philippines corporations. These companies instead use lease agreements with local businesses.\textsuperscript{155} Failure to disband this pattern of large-scale land ownership has been one of the reasons for the persistence of a communist insurgency over several decades.

Land reform has been an official government priority since the first days of the Philippine Republic. Numerous reform laws have been passed during nearly every presidential administration. In 1971, during the presidency of Ferdinand Marcos, a Department of Agrarian Reform was established under the 1971 Code of Agrarian Reform. But enforcement of land-reform legislation has been slowed by government inaction, lack of knowledge of rights by the tenant workers, and widespread resistance by the powerful land-owning elite that forms the majority in the legislative branch of government.

Transportation Issues

Asphalted roads run along the eastern and western shores of Cebu, connecting the coastal towns and villages, but most roads into the rural highland areas of the island are not paved. The current governor of the province, Gwendolyn Garcia, has made road improvement a priority item, and almost 150 miles (242 km) of road have been paved since she took office in 2004.

Checkpoints

When commuting between cities and provinces in the Philippines, you will sometimes encounter checkpoints. Travelers passing through a checkpoint must show their IDs, have their cars inspected, and answer questions.

Exchange 34: Please open the doors.
Soldier: Please open the doors, hood, trunk, and glove compartment.

Exchange 35: The goal of our checkpoint is security.
Soldier: The goal of our checkpoint is to increase security in the area.

This is done because of the long-standing threat posed by communist and, more recently, Islamic militant groups.

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Exchange 36: Are you carrying any guns?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Are you carrying any guns?</th>
<th>nagdaalaa kaa baa ug beesaan oonsaa naa poosil?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>o-o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An ID check is standard. Until recently, Filipinos used a variety of IDs and lacked a national ID card, complicating efforts to use ID checks to track security threats.

Exchange 37: Show us the (car) registration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Show us the (car) registration.</th>
<th>eepaakeetaa naamo aang RehistRo saa kotsey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>OK.</td>
<td>okey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exchange 38: Is this all the ID you have?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is this all the ID you have?</th>
<th>kinee laang baa aang eemung teemaa-ilhaan nga anaa-aa kaaneemo?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>o-o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Health Issues

Outside of Cebu's city center, many small, substandard medical centers can be found. It is important to take precautions before authorizing any procedure. The centers usually offer basic medical care for simple, common conditions. Larger city hospitals are recommended for anything more serious.

Children receive free vaccinations from the government, usually in the rural health and clinic centers. Rural facilities typically have one doctor, one nurse, and one midwife or assistant, all of whom work on a schedule and are paid by the municipal government. Medical supplies are extremely limited. Depending on the doctor's availability, diseases, injuries, ailments, and other medical conditions are treated in a hospital or clinic, but many who live in the countryside still rely on the power of faith healers, protective amulets, and herbal remedies.

Rural Education

Literacy levels are high in Cebu, both in the rural areas and the cities. In the Philippines six years of primary education is compulsory and free. In 2002-2003, about 97% of the Philippine school-age population enrolled. The enrollment drops by about one-third by secondary school. The literacy rate within Cebu Province (which includes most, but not all, of the rural population) is 93%, compared with 97% within Cebu City (which also
has a rural population within its large city limits).\textsuperscript{159}

While public education is free in the Philippines, in reality some students are asked to contribute for a range of essential school services and materials, including water, lighting, and notebooks and other curriculum items.\textsuperscript{160}
Within rural Cebu, initiatives are underway to improve student access to modern teaching tools, such as computers.\textsuperscript{161}

**Market Day**

Local and town markets are always busy in Cebu. Sundays, when families shop after church, might be slightly busier than other days. And, even with larger malls around, the public market is the main means for obtaining everyday needs. Here, good haggling skills can usually get you a lower price for an item.

**Credit**

For the rural poor in developing countries, one of the main constraints is lack of access to essential goods and services, in particular, credit, which they are unable to secure from traditional lending institutions. As a result, they can only get credit through unofficial sources known in Cebu as “five-six” moneylenders. Small market vendors, hawking everything from fish to vegetables, for example, have had no alternative but to use them if they needed credit. Vendors borrowed money, paying 20 percent interest daily, so the five pesos borrowed in the morning became a debt of six pesos in the afternoon. That practice appears to have been successfully overcome with the entry of cooperatives into the economic life of rural Cebuanos.

Similar to microcredit, cooperatives offer easy access to small amounts of capital through lending services at very low interest to the members, who repay their loans on a daily basis. Moreover, coops also pay their member-borrowers about half of the interest earned on their required savings deposit, which they can only withdraw when they decide to resign their membership from the organization.\textsuperscript{162}

\textsuperscript{159} “Fact and figures: About Cebu.” Department of Trade and Industry, Cebu Provincial Office. http://www.dticebu.net.ph/01_a_03.html
Eating Habits

Most rural people rise early, eat their first meal of the day, almuerzo, then plan on a segundo almuerzo or second breakfast at mid-morning. Their lunch is the main meal of the day, with a merienda or mid-afternoon snack, and an evening meal. Mealtimes are strict. Generally, a diet for poor families is rice, fish, vegetables, and starchy snacks.

Food is seldom served one after another in courses, but all at once so all can eat from whatever they want, simultaneously. Condiments, flavorings, and dips are all served to the table for diners’ use. Knives are seldom used.163

Type of Foods

There are not many refrigerators in rural Cebu, so what is eaten is either bought fresh or salted. Housewives go to the market daily, with leftovers seldom appearing. Any extras go to the servants, or to the backyard dog or pig.

Two dishes deserve special mention. One is balut, a fertilized duck egg that is boiled and then served with salt.164 It is sold by street vendors in a piece of newspaper, similar to English fish and chips.165 The other dish is bagoong, an aromatic shrimp paste that appears as a base of almost everything.

Gender Roles

A young boy growing up in rural Cebu learns and expects that his adult role will be that of provider to the family. Similarly, a girl learns the means of caring for the family by cooking, cleaning, and caring for younger children. Both learn by observation and by helping with those differentiated chores as they grow older.

Chapter Six Family Life

Family Structure

Family is very important to Cebuanos. Clearly defined roles have the males as the financial support of the family and the females caring for the family’s welfare and finances. There is not a lot of overlap, and the children learn their roles early by observation and practice.

In a Cebuano family, the male usually brings home a salary. Women work in the home and care for the children. The children go to school and help take care of the house.

Exchange 39: How is your family?

| Soldier: | How is your family? | kaamoostaa eemung paameelyaa? |

Although it is typical for women to stay home, they also commonly work outside the home in cities and in the fields in rural areas. It is acceptable for women to go to the universities to become doctors, lawyers, teachers, and politicians, or to enter into a career in the arts. If the husband dies, her role is to continue to care for the family. Children are expected to be respectful around their parents and not to talk back. The children are required to listen to their parents and to do what is asked of them. Older children help take care of the younger children. At age 18, children are considered legal adults, but would probably not be asked to leave the house.

Typical Household

In both rural and urban settings, the nuclear family is typically large, around five to six members. Both the matrilineal and patrilineal lines of descent are of equal importance and contribute to very large extended families. Honorary family members, such as godparents, further extend the family boundaries. In addition, the marriage of children links the families with another.

Exchange 40: How many people live in this house?

| Soldier: | How many people live in this house? | peelaa kaa taawo aang naagpooyo dinhee saa baalaay? |
| Local:   | My family of 10.                  | aakung paameelyaa nga naapolo |

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The family extends care and support to all its members. The elderly do not go into special care facilities, but rather are cared for by the younger members. Family patronage is common in the business world, and it is not unusual to see several members of an extended family working for the same company.167

All adults who are close family friends are referred to as “auntie” or “uncle,” but this does not necessarily mean that they are related by blood.

Marriage & Divorce

Marriage
Marriage is a life-long commitment for Cebuanos because of their strong Catholic faith, and because it is the law.

Exchange 41: Is this your wife?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is this your wife?</th>
<th>kinee baa eemung asaawaa?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>o-o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At one time, parents arranged marriages, but now couples meet, fall in love, and agree to marry each other.

The marriage proposal, however, is still a formal affair, at least among traditional Cebuanos. The man’s entire family goes to the girl’s home. With them, they bring musicians, gifts for everyone, food, wine, and two poets. One poet is called a Mamamae, and the other is called a Sagang. They perform something traditionally called a Pamalaye, which is an argument or debate in verse. They have the authority to make the contracts about the dowry and the marriage. Once the agreement is reached, a lavish party begins.168

Divorce
The Philippines and Malta remain as the only countries in the world where divorce is illegal.169 However, annulment is possible. Article 36 of the Family Code (passed in 1988) says a marriage entered into by a person who was, at the time of the marriage ceremony, "psychologically incapacitated to comply with the essential marital obligations of marriage", is null and void, a concept accepted by the Catholic Church.170 Subsequently, several court decisions in the 1990s have narrowed the scope under which

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Article 36 can be applied. Though laws are changing gradually, divorce is still generally frowned upon and should not be a topic for discussion.

Generations

Status of Elderly, Children, and Young Adults

The elderly have an honored place in Cebuano society, as do children. Care is by the young adults. It is expected that the elderly, by the time they need care, would be taken in by and cared for by their children. Children, on the other hand, eat from their parents’ plates until they are about 2 ½ years old. No attempt is made until that age to teach anything other than the necessity of being polite to adults and quiet in groups. After 6 p.m., elderly people expect the gesture of mano-po from relatives or friends when they encounter them or visit their homes. This is a gesture of respect where someone brings the back of the elderly person’s hand briefly to his or her forehead. Only if you are close to the family would you be expected to extend this gesture.

Birth

Nowadays the majority of Cebuano women in urban areas give birth in hospitals. In rural areas, women still commonly give birth at home with the help of a hilot, or midwife. Traditionally the father would not be allowed to be present for delivery.171 Subsequent birthday celebrations are a mixture of East and West, with an often elaborate birthday cake, noodles to represent long life, decorations with balloons, piñatas, and blinking lights fastened to the house in the early evening.172 In the morning, the family hears Mass and thanks God for the birth.173

Naming Conventions

With such strong influences from the Catholic Church, a child’s given name has often been a saint’s name, although that tradition is changing. Last names have a more recent history, only being adopted in 1849 according to a decree issued by the Spanish Governor, Narciso Claveria. He put together a catalog of Spanish names, words for flowers or animals, words for vegetables, and assigned them to town clerks to assign to the families living there. The list omitted names for famous people or for nobles.174 In some cases, Malay or Chinese surnames were left in place, but the pronunciations were changed to Hispanicize them.175

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Many Filipinos also have one or more nicknames. Middle names are traditionally the mother’s surname.176
