

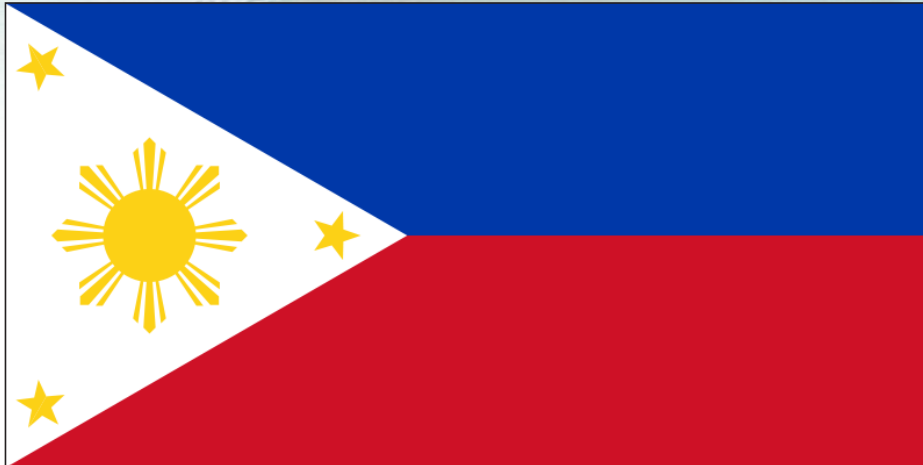
# BALANGHAY

A publication of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts

The  
Philippine  
Factsheet



## The Flag of the Philippines



been waved in other parts of the country. On May 28, 1898, Aguinaldo waved the Philippine flag in Cavite City in connection with the victory of the Filipinos in the Battle of Alapan in Imus, Cavite. This became the historical basis for declaring May 28 as National Flag Day.

The Philippine flag was officially raised for the first time during the Declaration of Independence on June 12, 1898, in Kawit, Cavite.

### The Original Meanings of the Symbols in the Flag

The Act of Declaration of Independence tells of the meanings of the symbols in the Philippine flag. It says that white triangle "represents the distinctive emblem of the famous Katipunan Society, which by means of its blood compact propelled the masses to rise up in arms."

The three stars represent the "three principal islands of this Archipelago...wherein this revolutionary movement broke out." These are Luzon, Mindanao and Panay. The stars do not represent the country's geographical divisions Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao as would be written later on.

The sun represents "the gigantic strides that have been made by the sons of this land on the road to progress and civilization." According to scholar Dr. Florentino H. Hornedo, the sun can also mean "learning and education which 'enlighten' and dispose a people to 'progress and civilization.'"

The eight rays of the sun symbolize the eight provinces "declared in state of war almost as soon as the first resurrection

The flag of the Republic of the Philippines is rectangular with a white triangle, a band of dark blue on the upper portion and a band of red on the lower. Inside the triangle is a yellow sun with eight rays and three yellow stars.

One can see the Philippine flag in public buildings, official residences, public plazas and schools. It is permanently hoisted all day and night, throughout the year, in front of the Malacañang Palace, which is the seat of the Philippine government; the building of the Congress of the Philippines; the Supreme Court; the Rizal Monument at the Rizal Park in Manila; the Aguinaldo Shrine in Kawit, Cavite; the Barasoain Church in Malolos, Bulacan; the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the Libingan ng mga Bayani; Musoleo delos Beteranos de la Revolucion; and all international ports of entry.

### History of the Philippine Flag

The present Philippine flag was designed by then General Emilio Aguinaldo, president of the revolutionary government, during his voluntary exile in Hong Kong in 1897. The Philippine Revolution was starting its second phase. Aguinaldo wanted to have our own national flag and national anthem, believing that these would inspire our men to fight against the colonizers and for the cause of freedom.

The first flag was sewn by Marcela Marino de Agoncillo with the help of her daughter Lorenza and Delfina Herbosa de Natividad, the niece of Jose Rizal, on 535 Morrison Hill Road in Hong Kong. Agoncillo herself painted the sun, which had a face, and the three stars on the white triangle. They handed over the flag to Aguinaldo before he boarded the *McCulloch* on May 17, 1898, on his way back to the Philippines. The flag arrived in the Philippines on May 19, 1898.

Before the declaration of Philippine independence on June 12, 1898, in Kawit, Cavite, the Philippine flag had already

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The first Philippine flag was sewn by Marcela Agoncillo with the help of her daughter Lorenza and Delfina Herbosa de Natividad





National Artist Fernando Amorsolo painted *Making of the Philippine Flag*.

was started." These are Manila, Cavite, Bulacan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Bataan, Laguna and Batangas.

The colors red, white and blue "commemorate those of the flag of the United States of America as manifestation of our profound gratitude... for the disinterested protection, which it lends us and will continue lending." Originally, there were no meanings ascribed to the individual colors in the flag, although later on those who wrote about the flag invented meanings for the colors.

## References

- "The Philippine Flag," pamphlet published by the Philippine Centennial Commission in cooperation with the National Historical Institute (Manila, 1997)
- Ideas and Ideals: Essays in Filipino Cognitive History* by Dr. Florentino H. Hornoedo (UST Publishing House, Manila, 2001)
- Republic Act No. 8491 or An Act Prescribing the Code of the National Flag, Anthem, Motto, Coat of Arms and Other Heraldic Items and Devices of the Philippines, approved February 12, 1998
- "The Philippine Flag: Emblem of our Nation" by Mona Lisa H. Quizon, National Historical Commission of the Philippines Web site ([www.nhcp.gov.ph](http://www.nhcp.gov.ph))

## Conducting the Flag Ceremony



The flag ceremony is when we sing the National Anthem and the Philippine flag is raised. All government offices and schools conduct flag-raising ceremonies every Monday morning. The flag is lowered every Friday afternoon.

During the flag-raising ceremony, people are assembled in formation facing the flag. When the first note of the anthem is heard, the flag is briskly raised and everyone sings the anthem. Everyone in the premises stands in attention and vehicles must stop. When singing the anthem, one places the right palm over the heart or chest. If wearing a hat, one must take it off. Those in the military and scouting, security guards and citizens with military training uniforms will give the salute prescribed by their regulations.

During the flag lowering ceremony, the flag is slowly lowered so that it is at the bottom of the mast at the sound of the last note of the National Anthem. A salute similar to that during the flag raising ceremony is required. The flag is to be handled reverently and should not touch the ground when raised, lowered and transported.

## The Different Flags of the Philippine Revolution

Before the present flag, the Philippines had several flags especially for the revolutionary movements. During the Philippine Revolution from 1896 to 1898, many flags were used by the secret society called the *Kataas-taasang, Kagalang-galangang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan* (Most High and Most Sacred Society of the Sons of the People), or Katipunan for short, and factions of the revolutionary movement.

### The Flag of the Revolution

The three K's in this flag stands for "*Kataas-taasang, Kagalang-galangang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan*" (Most High and Most Sacred Society of the Sons of the People), which was founded by Andrés Bonifacio. Bonifacio requested his wife, Gregoria de Jesús, to create a flag for the society.

### An Early Version of the Katipunan Flag

It has three K's arranged in a triangle.

### Flag with One K at the Center

It has one letter K on a red background, like many other flags, to denote the revolutionary character of the Katipunan.

### The Personal Flag of Andres Bonifacio

Made by women members of the Katipunan just before the revolution, this flag was first used at the Cry of Pugad Lawin, in which Katipunan members tore their *cedulas* (community tax certificates) in defiance of Spanish authority, in August 23, 1896. It was Katipunan leader Andres Bonifacio's ceremonial standard from 1892 to 1896.

### Official Flag of the De-Facto Government

It has a sun with eight rays and the letter K in ancient Filipino alphabet in the middle. The rays represents Manila, Cavite, Bulacan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Bataan, Laguna and Batangas. The K stands for *kalayaan* or freedom.

### First Official Revision

The flag was revised and also declared as the official flag of the Philippine government and its forces in the Naic Assembly in Cavite on March 17, 1897. This flag became the first official flag of the Filipinos but was used for less than a year because the Filipino leaders signed a truce with Spanish authorities on December 14 to 15, 1897.

### The Flag of Mariano Llanera

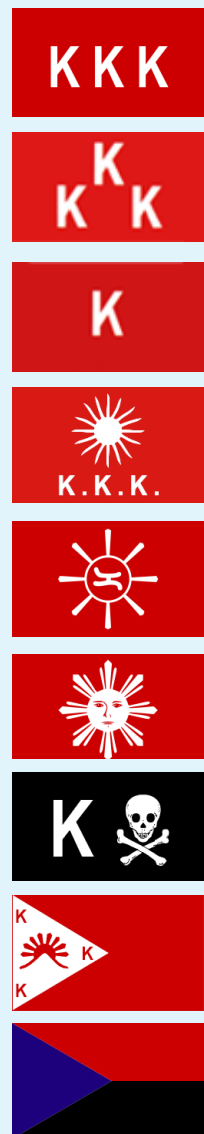
General Mariano Llanera fought in the provinces of Bulacan, Tarlac, Pampanga and Nueva Ecija. The flag he used in San Isidro, Nueva Ecija, was sometimes called "*Bungo ni Llanera*" (Llanera's skull). According to stories, Llanera derived his design from the Katipunan initiation rites using a black hat, white triangle and the letters Z, U and B.

### Pio del Pilar's Flag

Called *Bandila ng Tagumpay* (flag of victory), Pio del Pilar's flag was first used on July 11, 1895 and carried eight rays in the rising sun to symbolize the eight provinces that were put under martial law by the Spanish authorities.

### Gregorio del Pilar's Flag

This was the first among the Katipunan flags to use three colors: red, blue and black. It was used in the Battle of Pasong Balite in Bulacan, and his last stand in the Battle of Tirad Pass in Ilocos Sur in December 2, 1899. According to del Pilar, the design of the flag was patterned after the flag of Cuba, then in revolt against Spain.



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The *balanghay* is an ancient Philippine plank boat adjoined by carved-out planks edged through pins or dowels. More than a mere boat, it was more like a vessel bearing a social unit, thus the term came to mean the smallest political unit in the Philippines. In the late 1970s, *balanghays* were excavated in Butuan City, Agusan del Norte, then considered the first wooden watercraft ever excavated in Southeast Asia. They are a testament to early Filipino craftsmanship and seamanship skills.



*Balanghay: The Philippine Factsheet* is a bimonthly publication of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. It comes with *Agung*, the NCCA newsletter, and is also given to educational institutions, libraries and the general public. *Balanghay: The Philippine Factsheet* aims to be a vessel and conveyor of knowledge on Philippine culture. It also aims to broaden cultural literacy among our people and enhance their understanding of Philippine arts and culture.

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# The Philippine National Anthem

The Philippine national anthem was composed by Julian Felipe (January 28, 1861–October 2, 1941), a pianist and composer from Cavite, commissioned by General Emilio Aguinaldo on June 5, 1898. It took Felipe six days to compose the music which he called "*Marcha Filipina Magdalo*" (Magdalo Philippine March), and played it to Aguinaldo on June 11, 1898. On the spot, Aguinaldo adopted it as the national anthem of the Philippines and changed the title to "*Marcha Nacional Filipina*" (Philippine National March). Originally written as incidental music, the march did not have words.

The national anthem was first played publicly on June 12, 1898, during the Declaration of Independence in Kawit, Cavite. It was played by the town band of San Francisco de Malabon (now General Trias), conducted by Felipe.

Contrary to the belief of some people, musicologist Felipe M. de Leon, Jr., asserts that the music of the Philippine national anthem is not derived from "Le Marsellaise," the national anthem of France, "Triumphal March" from Giuseppe Verdi's opera *Aida* or the "*Marcha Real*" of Spain. The Philippine national anthem was inspired more by local traditions such as the "*Dios te Salve Maria*," a processional religious music, and *battalla* rhythms of the traditional *komedya*.

Originally without words, the national anthem adopted the poem "Filipinas," written in Spanish by 23-year-old soldier José Palma in August 1899, in Bayambang, Pangasinan, and published in the newspaper *La Independencia* on September 3, 1899, as its lyrics.

During the American occupation of the Philippines, the colonial government banned the song from being played with the passage of the Flag Law, which was repealed in 1919. In 1919, the American colonial government decided to translate

the hymn from Spanish to English. The first English translation was by famous writer Paz Marquez Benitez. "Philippine Hymn," written by Senator Camilo Osías and American Mary A. Lane, was the most popular translation.

The National Assembly of the Philippine Commonwealth passed a law on September 5, 1938, officially adopting "*Marcha Nacional Filipina*" as the Philippine National Anthem.

There are also several Tagalog translations which began appearing in the 1940s. The first known translation was titled "*Diwa ng Bayan*" (Spirit of the Country), sung during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines from 1942 and 1945. The second most popular one was "*O Sintang Lupa*" (O Beloved Land) by Julian Cruz Balmaceda, Ildefonso Santos and Francisco Caballo, which was adopted as the official Tagalog version in 1948.

A patriotic song written by Felipe Padilla de Leon (who later became National Artist for music) called "*Awit sa Paglikha ng Bagong Pilipinas*" (Hymn of the Birth of the New Philippines) was commissioned during the Japanese occupation and intended by the Japanese military government to supplant the "Philippine Hymn." It was also sung by the members of the Hukbong Bayan Laban sa mga Hapon or Hukbalahap, an anti-Japanese guerilla movement in Central Luzon, but with anti-Japanese sentiments.

During the term of President Ramon Magsaysay, Education Secretary Gregorio Hernández formed a commission to revise the lyrics. On May 26, 1956, the Filipino translation "*Lupang Hinirang*" (Chosen Land) was sung for the first time. This is the version that is presently used. The Filipino lyrics have been confirmed by Republic Act No. 8491, or the Flag and Heraldic Code of the Philippines in 1998, abandoning use of both the

## Lupang Hinirang

Bayang magiliw,  
Perlas ng silanganan,  
Alab ng puso,  
Sa dibdib mo'y buhay.

Lupang hinirang,  
Duyan ka ng magiting,  
Sa manlulupig,  
'Di ka pasisiil.

Sa dagat at bundok,  
Sa simoy at sa langit mong bughaw  
May dilag ang tula  
At awit sa paglayang minamahal.

Ang kislap ng watawat mo'y  
Tagumpay na nagniningning,  
Ang bituin at araw niya,  
Kailan pa ma'y 'di magdidilim.

Lupa ng araw, ng luwalhati't pagsinta,  
Buhay ay langit sa piling mo.  
Aming ligaya na 'pag may mang-aapi,  
Ang mamatay nang dahil sa 'yo.

Spanish and English versions.

Republic Act No. 8491 requires that the anthem always be rendered "in accordance with the musical arrangement and composition of Julián Felipe," but the original holograph cannot be found. In the 1920s, the key was changed from the original C major to G to enable more people to sing it. Nowadays, it is often sung in the lower key of F, but the original duple meter, written with a time signature of 2/4, must be retained because it is a march, and not processional music.

"*Lupang Hinirang*" was not the first Filipino national anthem to be conceived. The composer and revolutionist Julio Nakpil was commissioned by Andres Bonifacio to compose "*Marangal na Dalit ng Katagalugan*" (Honorable Hymn of Katagalugan), which was later called "*Salve Patria*" (Save Our Motherland). It was considered a national anthem because Andrés Bonifacio, the chief founder of the Katipunan, converted the organization into a revolutionary government—with himself as president—known as the *Republika ng Katagalugan* (Tagalog Republic) just before hostilities erupted. *Katagalugan*, in its usage in the anthem, meant the Philippines as a whole and not just the Tagalog-speaking Filipinos.

## References

- "The Unfinished Evolution: Towards a Filipino Consciousness" by Felipe M. de Leon, Jr., presented during the University of the Philippines Centennial Lecture at the Faculty Center Conference Hall on July 19, 2008.
- Republic Act No. 8491 or An Act Prescribing the Code of the National Flag, Anthem, Motto, Coat of Arms and Other Heraldic Items and Devices of the Philippines, approved February 12, 1998
- "The Philippine Flag," pamphlet published by the Philippine Centennial Commission in cooperation with the National Historical Institute (Manila, 1997)

# Philippine National Symbols

Aside from the flag, anthem, coat-of-arms, motto and other heraldic devices, the Philippines have five national symbols declared by law. These symbols, which are living and non-living objects, represent Philippine traditions and ideals and convey the principles of sovereignty and national solidarity.

## Narra, the National Tree

The *narra* or the *Pterocarpus indicus* is native to Southeast Asia, East Asia, northern Australasia, and the western Pacific islands. It can reach a height of 100 feet and has a large crown of leaves. The trunk widens up to three feet. The yellow heartwood is very durable and has a fragrant odor, which persists even when dry. The *narra* is valued for its wood, which is used in making furniture and houses. Its leaves and bark are used in traditional medicines by several ethnic groups in the country.



Governor General Frank Murphy declared the *narra* the national tree during the Commonwealth Era in 1934 through Proclamation No. 652, together with the *sampagita* as the national flower.

Actually, the name *narra* is a Hispanic corruption of the native term *naga*, which is how the tree should be called and after which Naga City was named.

## Sampagita, the National Flower



The *sampagita*, also known as Arabian jasmine in English and with scientific name *Jasminum sambac*, is the national flower of the Philippines. It is native to South and Southeast Asia. It is a small shrub or vine that bears

small, sweet-smelling, white flowers, which are used in making perfumes and tea in other parts of the world. Here, in the Philippines, the *sampagita* flowers are strung into garlands and leis. We use them to welcome visitors as

well as offer to religious icons. We also use them to honor special guests and students during their graduation.

Governor General Frank Murphy declared the *sampagita* the national flower in 1934 through Proclamation No. 652, together with the *narra* as national tree. For the country, the *sampagita* symbolizes purity, simplicity, humility and strength.



## Philippine Eagle, the National Bird

The Philippine eagle, also known in its scientific name *Pithecophaga jefferyi* and formerly known as monkey-eating eagle, is endemic to the forests in the Philippines. This large bird has brown and white-colored plumage, and a shaggy crest. The adult eagle has a wingspan of about two meters and can dive to its prey at speed of more than 100 kilometers per hour. Although it is known as one of the most powerful birds in the world, the Philippine eagle is critically endangered because its habitat is increasingly being destroyed. There are efforts being made to save the Philippine eagle from extinction. The Philippine Eagle Center in Davao City is breeding the eagle to increase its population. The Philippine Eagle is called *banoy* in Filipino; *manaul* in old Visayan; *mamboogook* and *malamboogook* in Mandaya and Manobo; *tipule* in Subanon; and *bánog* because it is usually mistaken as a hawk.



President Fidel V. Ramos proclaimed the Philippine eagle as the national bird in 1995 through Proclamation No. 615, saying that the eagle's "uniqueness, strength, power, and love for freedom exemplifies the Filipino people."

## South Sea Pearl, the National Gem

The South Sea pearl is one of the rarest kinds of pearl in the world. It is produced by the *Pinctada maxima* pearl oyster, which is the largest pearl oyster, roughly the size of a dinner plate, and can be found in deep ocean habitats or grown in hatcheries. One



has to dive deep in search of South Sea pearls.

South Sea pearls are large and has a warm luster. They can be white, silver, pink, gold, cream and any combination of these basic colors, including overtones of the various colors of the rainbow displayed in the pearl nacre of the oyster shell itself. South Sea pearls are primarily produced in Australia, Indonesia, the Philippines and even in the Cook Islands and Mexico. One can find golden South Sea pearls in the Philippines.

On October 15, 1996, President Fidel Ramos declared the South Sea pearl as national gem through Proclamation No. 905,

## Things Commonly Mistaken for National Symbols

Although many are cultural icons, they are not official national symbols. Most commonly mistaken as national symbols are:

*Anahaw* (*Livistona rotundifolia*) as national leaf  
*Cariñosa* or *tinikling* as national dance  
Carabao (water buffalo) as national animal (or land animal)  
*Bangus* (milkfish) as national fish  
Mango as national fruit  
*Barong Tagalog* (Tagalog shirt) and *baro't saya* (blouse and skirt) as national costume  
José Rizal as national hero  
*Lechon*, adobo or *sinigang* as national dish  
*Nipa* hut or *bahay kubo* as national house  
*Maya* (Eurasian tree sparrow or chestnut munia) as national bird  
*Bakya* (wooden clogs) as national footwear  
*Sipa* as national game  
Juan de la Cruz as representation of the Filipino people

which says that the pearl is "a distinctive part of our socio-economic and cultural tradition," and "the local pearl industry, which is among the world's leading pearl producers, has produced the world's largest pearl, known as the Pearl of Allah or as the Pearl of Lao Tze."

## Arnis, the National Martial Art and Sport

*Arnis* is a Filipino martial art primarily using two sticks, usually made of *yantok* or *kamagong*, as weapons or usually as extensions of the arms. It is characterized by the use of swinging and twirling movements, accompanied by striking, thrusting and parrying techniques for defense and offense. *Arnis* began even before the Spaniards came, and is also called *eskrima*, *kali* and *garrote*. It is also known in other names in other Philippine languages—*pananandata* in Tagalog; *pagkalikali* in Ibanag; *kabaraon* and *kalirongan* in Pangasinan; *kaliradman* in Cebuano; and *didja* in Ilocano.

In 2009, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo declared *arnis* as the national sport and martial art through Republic Act 9850.

