

Manila city

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Manila is located on the eastern shores of Manila bay, which rests on the western shores of Luzon. The city lies 800 miles (1, 300 kilometers) from mainland Asia. The Pasig River bisects the city. Almost the entire city sits on top of centuries of prehistoric alluvial deposits built by the waters of the Pasig and on some land reclaimed from Manila Bay. The city's land has been altered substantially by human intervention, with considerable land reclamation along the waterfronts since the American colonial times. Some of the natural variations in topography have been evened out due to the urbanization of the city.

The city occupies an area of 38. 55 square kilometers and is divided into 897 barangays, the smallest unit of local government in the Philippines. Each barangay has its own chairperson and councilors. For administrative convenience, all the barangays in Manila are grouped into 100 zones. These zones have no form of local government. Manila is composed of 16 former towns and municipalities which was absorbed by the city in the 19th century. These settlements are now known as places within the city. They are further grouped into the six legislative districts of Manila.

Manila City proper is bounded on the north by Navotas and Caloocan City, on the northeast by Quezon City and San Juan del Monte, on the southeast by Mandaluyong and Makati, and on the south by Pasay City. It faces beautiful Manila Bay to the west. A relatively new development is the incorporation of all the cities and municipalities comprising the Manila metropolitan area into one unit--a " mega-city"--called " Metro Manila.

It is governed as one unit by a governor, who coordinates its functions and services through the various city and municipal officials, very much like a provincial governor rules many towns. And yet, the component cities, provinces and municipalities retain their previous jurisdictions. Metro Manila is comprised of the cities of Manila, Quezon City, Caloocan City and Pasay City, and the municipalities of Navotas, Malabon, Valenzuela (in Bulacan province), Marikina, Pasig, Mandaluyong, San Juan del Monte, Makati, Pateros, Taguig (Tagig), Paranaque, Las Pinas and Muntinglupa.

Manila derived its name from two Tagalog words; " may," meaning " there is," and " nilad," the name of a shrub that originally grew abundantly along the shores of the Pasig River and Manila Bay. Long before the Spanish conquest, Manila was settled by Mohammedans, who carried on a thriving trade with Chinese and other Southeast Asian merchants. " Maynilad" was the principal bay settlement of these Tagalogs south of the Pasig River, although it was probably less important commercially than Tondo, the town on the north bank.

Manila was first visited by Spaniards in 1570. Governor-General Legazpi, searching for a suitable place to establish his capital after being compelled to move from Cebu to Panay by Portuguese pirates, and hearing of the existence of a prosperous Mohammedan community in Luzon, sent an expedition under Martin de Goiti to discover its location and potentials. De Goiti anchored at Cavite, and tried to establish his authority peaceably by sending a message of friendship to Maynilad.

Rajah Soliman, then its ruler, was willing to befriend the Spaniards, but would not submit to Spanish sovereignty peaceably. Naturally, this was unsatisfactory to the Spanish commander, so after he secured equipment and reinforcements, he attacked Maynilad in June of 1570. He captured it after a stout fight, and having formally taken possession of the city in the name of the King of Spain, he returned to Panay. The next year, in 1571, the Spaniards returned, this time led by Governor-General Legazpi himself.

Seeing them approach, the natives set fire to the town, levelling it to the ground, while the people fled to Tondo and neighboring towns. After occupying the remains of Maynilad on June 19, 1591, and commencing the construction of a fort there, Legazpi made overtures of friendship to Rajah Lakandula of Tondo, which this time were prudently accepted. Soliman, however, refused to submit to the Spaniards, despite the wise counsel of Lakandula, whose aid Soliman solicited in an effort to expel the invaders.

Failing to get Lakandula's support, as well as that of the Pampangans and Pangasinans, Soliman gathered together a considerable force of Tagalog warriors, and attacked the Spaniards in a decisive battle at the town of Bangcusay. There the Filipinos were defeated, and Soliman himself was killed. With the destruction of Soliman's army, and the friendly interventions of Rajah Lakandula, the Spaniards were enabled to establish their authority throughout the city and its adjacent settlements, and soon several Christian missions were established.

Eventually, Roman Catholic missions, parishes and schools were established by nearly every religious order to come to the Philippines. The first priests

were Augustinians and secular priests, followed by Franciscans, Jesuits, Dominicans and Augustinian Recollects, with many other orders following in later centuries. The rule of the Spanish conquerors of the " City of Soliman" was full of dangers, since the people were opposed to foreign sovereignty. Consequently, the city was frequently the scene of serious disturbances.

The Chinese, angered by the loss of free trade, the commercial restrictions placed by the untrusting Spanish upon them, and the laws forcing them to pay tribute to Spain, made several efforts to destroy the Spaniards. The first of these Chinese revolts occurred in 1574, when a force of some 3, 000 men and 62 Chinese warships under the command of Limahong attacked the city. This attempt proved fruitless, the Chinese being defeated with heavy losses. As a safeguard against similar uprisings later, the Chinese residents and merchants of Manila were confined to a separate district, called " Parian de Alcaceria.

However, this precaution was not totally effective, for at various times in the following century, the Chinese rose in revolt. In 1602, they set fire to Quiapo and Tondo, and for a time threatened to capture Intramuros. In 1662, they again revolted, while in 1686, a conspiracy led by Tingco plotted to kill all the Spaniards. It is no surprise, then, to learn that at various times during the Spanish era, the Chinese were expelled (or decrees were made to that effect) from Manila and from the entire country.

Later reconciliations nearly always permitted the continuation of the Chinese community in the city, however. In 1595, Manila was decreed to be the capital of the Archipelago, although it had already in fact served that

function practically from its founding in 1571. Besides being Spain's pre-eminent city in the Philippines, and dominant over other provincial capitals, it was itself a provincial capital over a province whose territory at one time covered nearly all of Luzon, and included the modern territorial subdivisions of Pampanga, Bulacan, Rizal, Laguna, Batangas, Quezon, Mindoro, Masbate and Marinduque.

Later, these subdivisions were themselves made provinces, leaving Manila province with a territory roughly equal to the present City of Manila proper (except Intramuras, the capital site), and the northwestern two-thirds of Rizal province. The boundary of Manila province went from northeast to southwest, including Antipolo, Cainta, Taytay and Taguig, and all of the towns north and west of them, in Manila province; and Angono, Teresa, Morong, and the towns south and east of them, in Laguna province.

Early in the province's history, the provincial name was changed from Manila to "Tondo" province, by which it was known for most of the Spanish era. In 1762, during the "Seven Years' War," the British occupied Manila, remaining in the city until 1764. The fleeing Spaniards destroyed many of the records, and in the sack of the town by the British, many historical documents of great value were destroyed or stolen from the archives. In about 1853, four pueblos or towns of Tondo province were joined with the northeastern towns of Laguna province to form the politico-military Distrito de los Montes de San Mateo," or District of the San Mateo Mountains.

Tondo province annexed to this new district the towns of Cainta, Taytay, Antipolo and Boso-boso, while Laguna contributed the towns of Angono,

Binangonan, Cardona, Morong, Baras, Tanay, Pililla and Jalajala. But the name of the new district proved unwieldy, too long, and misled many into thinking the town of San Mateo (in Tondo province) was the capital of the San Mateo Mountain District, when in reality the district capital was in Morong.

So, in about 1859, following common practice of the day, the district was renamed after its capital; namely, Morong District. At about the same time, Tondo Province was renamed Manila Province. Being the traditional seat of education and liberal thinking in the Philippines, Manila was a rich field for anti-Spanish propaganda. But outwardly it remained quiet until July 7, 1892, when the secret revolutionary organization devoted to the overthrow of Spanish rule of the country, called the Katipunan, was organized in Manila's suburb, Tondo.

Although initial skirmishes between the Filipinos and Spanish were brief and nearly always lost by the Filipinos, the movement grew until open rebellion broke out in 1896, with the Spaniards losing the Philippines to the combined Filipino-American forces in 1898. But Spain ceded the country only to the Americans, who exerted their control militarily, defeating the Filipinos in the "Mock Battle" of Manila on August 13, 1898. Thereafter, the Americans pursued the retreating Filipino forces province by province, until General Emilio Aguinaldo (then president of the Republic) surrendered in Palanan, Isabela, on March 23, 1901.

Manila continued under an American military government until civil government was established for the city on July 31, 1901. Along with the

establishment of the civil government, the Philippine Commission dissolved the former province of Manila, and merged its pueblos with those of the District of Morong, forming the new province of Rizal. A few weeks later, the Philippine Commission provided for a new charter for the city of Manila, defining its boundaries, and thus annexing some of Rizal Province's towns to the city as districts.

These boundaries were slightly revised and redefined on January 29, 1902, when the suburb of Gagalangin was annexed to the city district of Tondo, and the former pueblo of Santa Ana was annexed as a district to Manila City. On July 30 of that year, the city board officially divided the city into 13 political subdivisions named districts, and the boundaries of each were defined. On August 15 of the same year, Pandacan pueblo was annexed as a city district. The boundaries and city districts of Manila City proper have remained essentially unchanged ever since.

With the outbreak of World War II, Manila entered a five-year period of sorrow and destruction. Hoping to minimize the loss of life and property, government officials declared Manila an open city on December 26, 1941. The following New Years' Day, 1942, President Quezon decreed the merger of the towns of Quezon City, Caloocan, San Juan del Monte, Mandaluyong, Makati, Pasay and Paranaque with Manila City to form the town he called "Greater Manila," to simplify the administration of the metropolitan area during the war.

Being practically destroyed in the process, the city was liberated from Japanese control in March of 1945 by the joint Filipino-American forces. Soon

thereafter, " Greater Manila" was dissolved, and its towns returned to their pre-war status. In 1948, Quezon City was declared the national capital of the new Republic of the Philippines, thus robbing Manila City of an honor it had held since 1595. But on May 29, 1976, President Ferdinand Marcos' Decree No 940 returned the national capital to Manila, declaring that " the area prescribed as Metro Manila by P. D. 824" was to be the seat of the national government.