

# Rizal first trip abroad essay



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The departure of Jose Rizal for Spain was kept secret from Spanish authorities, friars and even to his parents especially to his mother because she would not allow him to go. Only handful of family members and trusted family friends were informed. In order to avoid detection, he used the name Jose Mercado, name of his cousin in Calamba. Before his departure, he scribbled farewell letters to his parents and his sweetheart Leonor Rivera. On May 3, 1882 he boarded on Salvador bound for Singapore.

He was the only Filipino passenger. The captain of the ship, Donato Lecha from Asturias Spain, befriended him although some Spaniards who spoke ill of the Philippines peeved him. To while away his boredom he played chess and always came out victorious for he was truly a good chess player. They landed on Singapore on May 9 and registered to Hotel de la Paz and spent a couple of days sightseeing. Freemasonry is a fraternal organization that took root in Europe and spread all over the world.

Its “ basic aims are to strive for moral betterment, work for the welfare of others, and bring about a universal league of mankind” (Watson in Licauco, 2008). Jose P. Rizal was a freemason who condemned the corrupt ways of the Church and upheld individual and national liberty. When Rizal arrived in Spain in 1882, he found a country that was strongly influenced by Masonic thought. In 1868, less than twenty years before his arrival, Masons like Juan Prim led the revolution that set up a liberal government which advocated for education.

Masonic principles like individual liberty, freedom of speech, equality, religious tolerance, separation of Church and State, and others were also

made part of the laws. (Fajardo, 1996) In 1884, Rizal began to write *Noli MeTangere* to expose the political and religious corruption of Philippine society. Later that year, he delivered a speech at a banquet organized in honor of Juan Luna and Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo, who had both won gold and silver medals at the *Exposicion Nacional de Bellas Artes*. In the speech, Rizal expressed his deep regard for Spain, but condemned the friars in the Philippines.

When copies of the speech reached Manila, he earned the anger and enmity of the authorities who called him *afilibustero* or a subversive. According to Jorge Bocobo, Rizal believed that one could be a good and moral person without the need for organized religion or “the one true faith.” Rizal adopted the Masonic name *Dimasalang* when he was anointed under the *Gran Oriente de Espana*. Rizal is said to have been influenced to join Masonry by Miguel Morayta, a history professor at the *Universidad de Madrid*.

Revolutionaries such as Andres Bonifacio, Apolinario Mabini, Ladislao Diwa, Marcelo H. del Pilar, Juan Luna, Deodato Arellano, Graciano Lopez-Jaena, H. Pardo de Tavera, and so many others in the Propaganda Movement and *La Liga Filipina* were also Masons and as such were automatically excommunicated as decreed for all Catholics becoming Masons since 1738 and reaffirmed by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines in 1990. In 1912, Rizal’s family did not heed the Jesuits’ request to rebury their eminent pupil.

That honor was instead bestowed upon the Masons, led by Timoteo Paez who, in full regalia, carried Rizal’s remains in a long procession to the

Masonic Temple in Tondo for funeral rites, before final interment at the Luneta, where he had been executed for rebellion, sedition, and conspiracy 16 years before. However, a controversy remains on whether or not Rizal recanted Masonry before he died. There were allegedly three eye-witnesses to his retraction: Fathers Balaguer and Viza of the Society of Jesus and Captain Rafael Dominguez, who claim that Rizal had signed a document of retraction and conversion before he was executed.

Captain Rafael Dominguez, who was with Rizal during Rizal's last hours, mentioned it in his notes, which were an hour by hour record of Rizal's last moments. On the other hand, others believe that the documents produced by the Jesuits were fake and altered and the testimonies given were coached. They assert that the Catholic Church only started to claim Rizal as their own once they realized that the people had learned to love and admire Rizal (Fajardo, 1996). To the Filipino Youth

As to the message the poem tries to convey, or in another way of saying, the theme of the poem, " To the Filipino Youth" does carry a very strong one; strong enough to persuade those who are to be persuaded-the Filipino youth themselves. As one of those individuals, I could really feel the nationalistic spirit within me glow brighter the moment I finished reading the poem. It was like telling me that I am one of the existing hopes of our dear country and that through my abilities, expertise and knowledge of things, I am capable of protecting its freedom against oppressive forces that may come through.

Furthermore, it was like telling me that together with my fellow youths, I am responsible for preserving the Philippines as a nation not for the foreigners

but for me and the rest of the Filipinos. Finally yet most importantly, as to the sincerity of the poem, I can really consider “ To the Filipino Youth” as indeed a work from the heart-no pretense, no plasticity and no sort of hidden motives. I can tell it so based on what I felt when I was reading the poem and the emotions that were expressed on each of the poem’s line.

The fact that it came out during the Spanish era was also another thing that made me think that way. Conceiving a work that possesses an anti-Spain theme at that time would be a great threat to the life of the author. But despite that, Dr. Jose Rizal fearlessly created it, sticking to his nationalistic ideology no matter how dangerous the outcome would be to him. With that, I can say that he truly had the sincerity of delivering the message to the young Filipino people; and that this sincerity our national hero possessed can be vividly sensed in the poem even at a glance.