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Jose Rizal Jose Rizal: A Biographical Portrait Rizal's Family Father: Francisco Mercado Rizal Mother: Teodora Alonso Realonda Brother and Sisters: Saturnina, Paciano, Narcisa, Olympia, Lucia, Maria, Concepcion, Josefa, Trinidad, Soledad Date of Birth: June 19, 1861 Date of Demise: December 30, 1896 Notes on Rizal's Family i, i, i, i, i, i, i, i, The father of Jose Rizal --- Francisco Mercado Rizal --- was a descendant of Domingo Lamco, a Chinese who immigrated to the Philippines. It was Domingo Lamco who adopted the surname " Mercado" while the second surname " Rizal" was given by a Spanish provincial governor who was a family friend. The mother of Jose Rizal --- Teodora Alonso Realonda --- had a mixed ancestry, which was quite typical of Filipinos. Francisco Mercado Rizal was born in 1818 in Binan, Laguna, while his mother was born in 1827 in Sta. Cruz, Manila. The Rizal family belonged to the middle class of the society and it was one of the most respected families during its time. Francisco and Teodora had 11 children: 2 boys and 9 girls. Jose was one of the two boys. The other boy was Paciano, Rizal's only brother who was to become a general in the Philippine revolutionary forces. Jose was born on June 19, 1861 in the town of Calamba in Laguna province. The oldest child was Saturnina while the youngest child was Soledad. The eighth child of the family was Concepcion who died at the age of three. The death of Concepcion caused young Jose to experience his first sorrow. Rizal's Education Early Education: Tutorial at Home Elementary Education: Binan School (1869-1870) High School Education: Ateneo - Bachelors of Arts Degree with highest honor (1872-1877) College Education: University of Santo Tomas - Medical Course (1877-1882) Post-Graduate Education: Universidad Central de Madrid - Licentiate in Medicine (1882-1884)

and Licentiate in Philosophy and Letters (1882-1885); University of Heidelberg Specialization in Ophthalmology - (1886) Notes on Rizal's Education

The first teacher of Rizal was his mother. It was from her that Rizal learned the alphabet. Early in life, young Jose exhibited the characteristics of a gifted child. He was a fast learner with an intense curiosity. He learned the alphabet at the age of three, he was able to use the pencil as a tool for sketching and he showed much appreciation to his countryside environment. At the age of eight, Rizal wrote his first poem, entitled: " Sa Aking mga Kababata" (" To My Fellow Children"). The poem contained a line which was to become a famous saying. Wrote Rizal: " Whoever knows not how to love his native tongue is worse than any beast or evil smelling fish." (Zaide, 1997)

Tutors were hired by the Rizal family in order to stimulate the mind of young Jose and to enrich his early education. Young Jose entered school in 1869. The school was a private one and it was located in Binan which was another town in Laguna. Young Jose was the best student of the school. In 1872, Jose Rizal enrolled in Ateneo and spent his next five years studying in this private institution. In 1877, he graduated with a Bachelors of Arts degree with the highest honor. During his stay in Ateneo, Rizal was able to write many poems. One of these poems was dedicated to her mother and the poem's title was " Mi Primera Inspiracion" (" My First Inspiration"). Two of the poems dealt with education and these were " Por la Educacion Recibe Lustre la Patria" (" Through Education the Country Receives Light") and " Alianza Intima Entre la Religion y la Buena Educacion" (" Intimate Alliance between Religion and Good Education"). In 1877, Rizal enrolled in the University of Santo Tomas and took up a medical

course which he completed in 1882. While pursuing his medical course, Rizal joined a literary contest which he won. His prize-winning poem was entitled "A La Juventud Filipina" (To the Filipino Youth"). In this poem, Rizal urged his fellow youth to use their talents in nationbuilding. Wrote Rizal: " Hold high the brow serene, O youth, where now you stand. Let the bright sheen Of your grace be seen, Fair hope of my fatherland!" (Zaide, 1997) . In 1882, Rizal left for Spain to pursue a medical degree. Rizal had a personal reason as well as an altruistic reason for his decision to study abroad. He wanted to become an eye specialist in order to cure her mother from an eye ailment. He also wanted to study the cultures, laws and governments of European countries in order to help his countrymen. During the latter part of 1882, Rizal enrolled in the Universidad Central de Madrid (Central University of Madrid) and took up two courses: medicine and philosophy and letters. In 1884, Rizal was awarded the Licentiate in Medicine and in 1885, he was conferred the degree of Licentiate in Philosophy and Letters. In 1886, Rizal went to Germany to study ophthalmology. He studied at the University of Heidelberg where he attended the lectures of Doctor Otto Becker and Professor Wilhelm Kuehne and worked at the University Eye Hospital under the guidance of Dr. Becker. During his stay in Heidelberg, Rizal, at one time, suffered from homesickness. In his loneliness, he made a poem which he entitled, " A Las Flores de Heidelberg" (" To the Flowers of Heidelberg"). Wrote Rizal: " Go to my native land, go, foreign flowers. Sown by the traveler on his way. And there, beneath its azure sky, Where all my affections lie; There from the weary pilgrim say, What faith is his in that land of ours! .... Bear then, O flowers, love's message bear; My love to all the lov'd ones

there, Peace to my country --- fruitful land --Faith whereon its sons may stand, And virtue for its daughters' care; All those beloved creatures greet, That still around home's altar meet. And when you come unto its shore, This kiss I now on you bestow, Fling where the winged breezes blow; That borne on them it may hover o'er All that I love, esteem, and adore.... " (Zaide, 1997) Rizal's Professional Jobs Proof-Reader, Medical Assistant, Writer, Researcher, Physician, Community-Builder in Exile Notes on Rizal's Professions

While Rizal was still studying in Germany, he was able to find work as a proofreader in a publishing company in Leipzig and as a medical assistant in Dr. Schweigger's clinic in Berlin. On March 21, 1887, Rizal's first novel, " Noli Me Tangere, " was published in Berlin. Prior to its publication, Rizal suffered from poverty. Through the help of his friend Dr. Maximo Viola, Rizal was able to publish the Noli. Noli Me Tangere was a novel that forever changed the lives of Rizal and countless Filipinos. The characters of the novel were based on real persons living during the time of Rizal. As such, the novel was a documentary of the miseries and sufferings of Filipinos under Spanish colonial rule during the second half of the 19th century. It advocated for reforms in order to cure the society's cancer caused by Spanish misrule. By making public his thoughts about reforms in the Philippines, Rizal put his life in danger. Nine years later, he was executed for a crime which he did not commit. Wrote Rizal in Noli: " I die without seeing the dawn brighten over my native land! You, who have it to see, welcome it --- and forget not those who have fallen asleep during the night. " (Zaide, 1997)

Some months after the publication of the Noli, Rizal returned to the Philippines. On August 5, 1887, he arrived in Manila and on August 8,

he proceeded to Calamba. It was a happy homecoming. From 1887 to 1888, Rizal worked as a physician in his hometown. There, he established a clinic and became a well-known physician. In February, 1888, Rizal was forced to leave his home country due to threats to his life which was brought about by the publication of *Noli Me Tangere*. On May 24, 1888, Rizal arrived in England after visiting the United States. He lived in London and devoted much of his time annotating Morga's book, "*Successos de las Islas Filipinas*" ("*Historical Events of the Philippine Islands*"). It was during his stay in London that Rizal penned a letter addressed to the women of Malolos who wanted to establish a school where they could learn Spanish. Wrote Rizal in his Letter to the Women of Malolos: "Let us be reasonable and open our eyes, especially you women, because you are the first to influence the consciousness of man.... Awaken and prepare the will of our children towards all that is honorable... to all that is sincere and firm in purpose... honesty in act and deed, love for our fellowman and respect for God; this is what you must teach your children...." (Zaide, 1997) . . . . . Nearly three years later, Rizal's second novel, "*El Filibusterismo*," was published. It came off the press on September 18, 1891 in Ghent, Belgium. It was a sequel to his first novel, *Noli Me Tangere*. *El Filibusterismo* was a novel that was politically oriented and revolutionary in nature while *Noli Me Tangere* was reform-oriented and idealistic. In October, 1891, Rizal left Europe for Hongkong. In this British colony, Rizal worked as a physician. It was also in Hongkong that he experienced a happy reunion with the members of his family. In 1892, Rizal returned to the Philippines using a special passport issued by the Spanish consul-general in Hongkong. He wanted to continue his fight for reforms not in foreign countries but in the

Philippines. On July 3, 1892, Rizal joined a meeting of Filipino patriots in Tondo, Manila. The purpose of the meeting was to establish a civil society which was later called Liga Filipina. During the meeting, Rizal met a man named Andres Bonifacio who was one of the founders of the civil association and who was to become a revolutionary hero. The aims of the association were: 1) Unite the whole archipelago into one compact and homogenous body; 2) Mutual protection in every want and necessity; 3) Defense against all violence and injustice; 4) Encouragement of instruction, agriculture and commerce; and 5) Study and application of reforms. Three days after the meeting, Rizal was arrested and, several days later, he was deported to Dapitan in Mindanao. From 1892 to 1896, Rizal lived in Dapitan and the kind of life he led in this town was that of a creative and productive community-builder in exile. He established a school for young boys and offered his medical services to the poor people for free. He built water and lighting systems for the town, planted fruit trees and collected animal specimens which he sent to the Dresden Museum. It was also during his exile that he got married to Josephine Bracken. In July, 1896, Rizal was allowed to leave Dapitan; thus, ending his exile. It was Governor-General Ramon Blanco who gave him the permission to leave Dapitan and go to Cuba where he will work as a volunteer medical worker. Many months earlier, he sent a letter to the Office of the Governor-General asking him the permission to work abroad as a volunteer. In August, the revolution erupted but Rizal kept his word and left Manila for Barcelona where he was supposed to receive further instructions. Upon arrival in Barcelona, Rizal was arrested. He was accused of leading the Philippine revolution and sent back to Manila where he was thrown into jail.

In December, Rizal was tried in a military court and the court found Rizal guilty of leading the Philippine revolution. On December 30, 1896, Rizal was executed by firing squad in Bagumbayan Field. Wrote Rizal on the night before he was executed: " Farewell, dear Fatherland, clime of the sun caress'd, Pearl of the Orient seas, our Eden lost! Gladly now I go to give thee this faded life's best, And were it brighter, fresher, or more blest, Still would I give it thee, nor count the cost...." I die just when I see the dawn break, Through the gloom of night, to herald the day; And if color is lacking my blood thou shalt take, Pour'd out at need for thy dear sake, To dye with its crimson the waking ray. " (Zaide, 1997)