



Part 1

The History of the Philippines

The Power of Diversity

Author; **Lancar Ida-Bagus**

Colophon

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Prologue

Dear Readers,

The inspiration for the first part of my book on the Philippines and its people originates from the reality our non-religious society has closely observed over the past five years through our Filipino members. We have witnessed firsthand the complex and often heartrending circumstances on the ground, and the stories of corruption, scandals, and religious influence are not only shocking but deeply moving.

It is with great concern that I observe how the poorest communities bear the weight of a system steeped in injustice and inequality, struggling amid the harsh poverty that surrounds them. These conditions are further exacerbated by the belief held by some of the wealthy that they are divinely chosen. In their eyes, they are the privileged few, while the rest—many of whom are believers—remain trapped in the claws of deprivation and hardship. It is ironic that, while the affluent often present themselves as moral

authorities, many are in reality the greatest oppressors of their own people.

Through religion and the power they wield, these elites have created a system that further marginalizes and subjugates the poor. The struggle of the Filipino people is, therefore, a struggle against this injustice and for a future in which every voice is heard and respected.

It is my sincere hope that this book serves not merely as a mirror reflecting the problems faced by the Philippines, but also as a source of inspiration to take action. Through the stories, experiences, and insights shared within these pages, I aim to raise awareness of the deep-seated injustices affecting so many on a daily basis. Yet awareness alone is not enough.

True change begins with translating this awareness into concrete action – within our communities, our conversations, and our choices. It requires the courage to question the existing system, the solidarity to stand with those most

affected, and the persistence to strive for equality and justice.

Together, we have the power to dismantle walls of indifference and build bridges toward a future in which no one is excluded. A future in which respect, compassion, and justice form the very foundations of our shared life.

Only by uniting our hands, hearts, and voices can we work toward a more just, inclusive, and hopeful society – not only for the Philippines but for all who dream of a world where every human being can live with dignity.

Introduction

The Philippines: Beyond the Postcard

The Philippines, an archipelago of over 7,000 islands, is a country often overshadowed by its breathtaking natural beauty and rich cultural heritage. The sunlit beaches, lush rice terraces, and vibrant markets, however, hide a complex and often shocking story that goes far beyond postcard images. In this book, I delve deeply into

the multifaceted reality of life in the Philippines, where beauty, tragedy, and poverty walk hand in hand.

This narrative highlights the daily struggles of millions living in the shadow of poverty. Despite the abundance of natural resources and cultural diversity, a large part of the population faces significant challenges, including limited access to education, healthcare, and fair employment opportunities. Corruption, deeply rooted in the political system, worsens these issues, and hampers the progress needed to improve the lives of ordinary Filipinos.

In addition, we explore the role of religion in the Philippines, where faith can be both a source of hope and a tool of manipulation. While many devote their lives to religious beliefs, they are often exploited by malevolent forces that prey on their vulnerabilities. This exploitation not only results in personal tragedies but also fuels conflict and division within society.