

LESSON 17

Mga Talang Pangkultura at Pagsasanay Liham na Jose Rizal sa Mga Kababaihan ng Malolos

Jose Rizal's Letter to the Women of Malolos

There are several components to this exercise:

First, read an excerpt of Rizal's letter to the women of Malolos. Try not to look at the English translation.

Second, change the orthography of the words in old Tagalog. Remember, this letter was written in the 19th century, when the language Tagalog had not yet been standardized.

Third, ask and answer questions about the letter.

Should you wish to learn more about the women of Malolos, I recommend the book *The Women of Malolos* by Nicanor Tiongson (published by Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2004).

Background from a website: "Rizal wrote this famous letter in Tagalog, while he was residing in London, upon the request of M. H. del Pilar. The story behind this letter is this: On December 12, 1888, a group of twenty young women of Malolos petitioned Governor-General Weyler for permission to open a "night school" so that they might study Spanish under Teodoro Sandiko. Fr. Felipe Garcia, the Spanish parish priest, objected to the proposal. Therefore, the governor-general turned down the petition. However, the young women, in defiance of the friar's wrath, bravely continued their agitation for the school—a thing unheard of in the Philippines in those times. They finally succeeded in obtaining government approval to their project on the condition that Señora Guadalupe Reyes should be their teacher. The incident caused a great stir in the Philippines and in far-away Spain. Del Pilar, writing in Barcelona on February 17, 1889, requested Rizal to send a letter in Tagalog to the brave women of Malolos. Accordingly, Rizal, although busy in London annotating Morga's book, penned this famous letter and sent it to Del Pilar on February 22, 1889 for transmittal to Malolos.

NOTE: The translation that follows is by Teodoro M. Kalaw.

Mula sa (Source): *Ang Liham ni Dr. Jose Rizal sa mga Kadalagahan sa Malolos, Bulakan, Epistolario Rizalino*, Vol. II p. 122, Febrero 1889. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/17116/17116-h/17116-h.htm>

Orthography Notes:

1. See the tilde above the letter **n**? This was how the letter was written in the 19th century. When Tagalog became the basis for the national language, it was standardized and the letter **n** lost the tilde.
2. Change **ua** to **wa**, for example, **kapua** to **kapwa**.
3. Don't be bothered by some diacritics. You are just not used to them because they are hardly used in contemporary Filipino.
4. Similar to **ua** becoming **wa**, the letter **w** is put between vowels for clarity of sound. For example, **kuentas** become **cuentas**, **matuid** is now **matuwid** and **kalulua** is **kaluluwa**.
5. For **ui**, the **u** is dropped in contemporary spelling, for example, **libaguing** is just **libaging**.
6. Similar to **w**, **y** is also inserted, for example, **Dios** is **Diyos**.
7. Insert hyphens the way they are placed today.
8. Note the use of the letter **K**. As you may remember from the essay on orthography, the comeback of the letter **K** was proposed by both Pedro Laktaw and Jose Rizal.
9. For more information about the history of the Tagalog orthography, see the essay in the book *Tagalog for Beginners*.

Excerpt from the Letter, page 2:

Ñgayong tumugon kayo sa uhaw naming sigaw ñg ikagagaling ñg bayan; ñgayong nagpakita kayo ñg mabuting halimbawa sa kapuá dalagang nagnanasang paris ninyong mamulat ang mata at mahañgo sa pagkalugamí, sumisigla ang aming pag-asa, inaaglahi ang sakuná, sa pagka at kayo'y katulong na namin, panatag ang loob sa pagtatagumpay. Ang babaing tagalog ay di na payukó at luhod, buhay na ang pagasa sa panahong sasapit; walá na ang inang katulong sa pagbulag sa anak na palalakhin sa alipustá at pagayop. Di na unang karunuñgan ang patuñgó ñg ulo sa balang maling utos, dakilang kabaitan ang ñgisi sa pagmura, masayang pangaliw ang mababang luhá. Napagkilala din ninyo na ang utos ñg Dios ay iba sa utos ñg Parí, na ang kabanalan ay hindi ang matagal na luhod, mahabang dasal, malalaking kuentas, libaguing kalmin, kundí ang mabuting asal, malinis na loob at matuid na isip. Napagkilala din ninyo na dí kabaitan ang pagkamasunurin sa ano mang pita at hiling ñg nagdidiosdiosan, kundi ang pagsunod sa katampata't matuid, sapagka't ang bulag na pagsunod ay siyang pinagmumulan ñg likong paguutos, at sa bagay na ito'y pawang nagkakasala. Dí masasabi ñg punó ó parí na sila lamang ang mananagot ñg maling utos; binigyan ñg Dios ang bawat isa ñg sariling isip at sariling loob, upang ding mapagkilala ang likó at tapat; paraparang inianak ñg walang tanikalá, kundí malayá, at sa loob at kalulua'y walang makasusupil, bakit kayá ipaaalipin mo sa iba ang marañgal at malayang pagiiisip?

is itself the cause and origin of those whims, and those guilty of it are really to be blamed. The official or friar can no longer assert that they alone are responsible for their unjust orders, because God gave each individual reason and a will of his or her own to distinguish the just from the unjust; all were born without shackles and free, and nobody has a right to subjugate the will and the spirit of another your thoughts. And, why should you submit to another your thoughts, seeing that thought is noble and free?

It is cowardice and erroneous to believe that saintliness consists in blind obedience and that prudence and the habit of thinking are presumptuous. Ignorance has ever been ignorance, and never prudence and honor.

Rizal, Jose. "Letter to the Young Women of Malolos." London, February 22, 1889. From "A Letter to the Young Women of Malolos." Ed. Teodoro M. Kalaw. Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1932. In "Jose Rizal: Life Works and Writings of a Genius, Writer, Scientist and National Hero." Eds. Gregorio Zaide and Sonia Zaide. Mandaluyong: National Bookstore 1984.