

LESSON 9

Mga Talang Pangkultura: Mga Tao at Lugar Barangay at Bayan People and Places: Barangay and Bayan: Part 2

Have you heard your parents or friends talk about other people and refer to them as **kababayan**, perhaps meaning that they grew up in the same town? Or perhaps, if you are a heritage learner and of Filipino descent but was born in the United States, a Filipino/a referred to you as a **kababayan**, or someone from the same country. This might have puzzled you.

So the question is, what does the word **bayan**—and **kababayan**, **bayan ko** (from the song of the same title), **nangibang-bayan**—mean?

In Lesson 2, you learned about the terms **bayan** and **barangay**. In this lesson, let us learn more about the word **bayan**, as explained by Damon Woods in his article “Evolution of Bayan.”* Woods’ research is particularly commendable because he chose to examine documents in Tagalog from the 15th to the 19th centuries, instead of relying on Spanish accounts on the Philippines during that particular time period.

Some of these documents examined by Woods were the **baybayin** documents, dated 1613 and 1625, found in the University of Santo Tomas archives, and were bills of land sale in Tondo. Woods observed that although the Filipinos who wrote the documents had begun using the Spanish titles Don and Doña by the 17th century, they continued to use the word **maginoo**.

What did **maginoo**, or **maguinoo**, as it was spelled then, mean? In *Vocabulario de la lengua tagala*, 1754, Juan de Noceda and Pedro de Sanlucar defines it as (198):

Maguinoo. pp. Noble, principal, señor. Mag, hacerse no siendolo. Ipag, la causa. Pag-han, ante quien. Pagca guinoo, o caguinoohan, principalia.

We thus learn from this 1754 dictionary that the term **maginoo**, which since then has come to have a gendered meaning of “gentleman” or “gentleman-like,” referred to members of the **principalia** or upper class, or men and women who were landowners (landownership being the measure of one’s economic status).

In the documents that Woods examined, the bills of sale were from Doña Catalina Baiya, who identified herself as **maginoo sa Tondo** (a noble in Tondo), and Doña

* This article appears both in the book *Philippine Studies: Have We Gone Beyond St. Louis?* edited by Priscelina Patajo Legasto (University of the Philippines Press) and in *From Wilderness to Nation: Interrogating Bayan* (UP Press), edited by Damon Woods himself.

Maria Sila, who similarly identified herself as **maginoo dito sa bayan ng Tondo** (a noble here in the town of Tondo).

Bayan, however, as Woods notes, was a fluid term as evidenced by the Spanish equivalents—**pueblo** (town), **poblar** (to people), **lugar** (place), **habitar** (to inhabit), **morar** (to live, to stay), **vivir** (to live, to stay), **poblacion** (town), **peregrinar** (to travel, to roam), **zielo**, **espacio** (space), **tiempo** (time) in Pedro San Buenaventura's *Vocabulario de lengua Tagala*, 1663. Woods observes this (12):

...We are faced with a word that not only had noun equivalents in Spanish but verb equivalents as well. In addition, the even more complexing equivalence given between **bayan** and **tiempo**—as in **masamang bayan**, **mal tiempo** is found as late as the mid-eighteenth century in Noceda and San Lucar's dictionary. It is small wonder that the Spaniards chose **baranggay**, a more static concept than **bayan**, as the designation for basic political unit in Tagalog society. The Spaniards chose to reshape leadership and this had implications for society as well...

Similarly, let us look at the meanings of **bayan**, which had six entries, in Noceda and Sanlucar's 1754 dictionary (44):

BAYAN. pp. Pueblo, espacio ue hay de aqui al cielo. Mag, hacerio. In, la tierra de que. Pag-an, lugar donde se funda. Mag, pc. buscar lugar donde se pueda hacer. Tambien Mag, repartir segun los pueblos y no la gente. Maquipag, ayudar á fundarlo. Maqui, vivir en la pueblo fundado.
BAYAN. pp. Vivir en el pueblo. B. in. M. Pamaan, el pueblo en que vive. Pinapamamayan, dejarle vivir en el pueblo. Hindi ca pamamayanin dito, no te dejaran vivir aqui. Namamayan, pc. extrañar la vivienda.
BAYAN. pp. Morar en pueblo, ser vecino, Maqui. Ser de un pueblo, Cababayan.
BAYAN. pp. Pergrinar, ó desterrado. Nangingibang Bayan, el que anda asi. Pa-gan, donde. Sangbayanan, pc. todo el pueblo.
BAYAN. pc. Dia. Malalim ang bayan, dia grande, ó medio dia.
BAYAN. pp. Tiempo. Masamang bayan, mal tiempo.

We find that not much has changed with the meaning of **bayan** between San Buenaventura's work and that of Noceda and Sanlucar. However, today, we no longer use the word **bayan** to mean **dia** (day) or **tiempo** (time) although we continue to use it as a noun and, with affixes, as a verb (for example, **nangingibang-bayan** [to go to another town/country]).

Woods observed four stages in the use of the word **bayan**. The first stage is exemplified by Tomas Pinpin's *Librong pagaaralan nang manga Tagalog nang uicang Castila* (A book to teach Tagalogs the Spanish language [1610]), which gives three equivalents of **bayan** in the Spanish language: as a word used to indicate location without a place name; as the equivalent for the word **pueblo** (town); and as a word that can be used to describe the homeland of the Spaniards. In the second stage, during early Spanish rule, **bayan** is used formally and legally, to identify people as coming from a particular place or location. For example, in Maria Jimenez's will dated 1687, she wrote (in Woods 15): **acoy si Maria Jimenez tauo sa bayan nang Calumpit**. In the third stage, documents such as the 1745 Revolt in Silang (now a town part of the province of Cavite), shows the expansion of the meaning of **bayan** with statements like " **cami ang buong bayan nang Silang**" (we are the whole **bayan** of Silang)—referring to the community of people that resided in the place known as Silang. The fourth stage occurs primarily in the nineteenth century, when Filipinos imagined the archipelago as a political entity and used **bayan** to express Western concepts of **nacion** and **patria** (nation and country). Although **bayan** as **patria** had been used by both Fernando Bagongbanta in 1605 and Francisco Baltazar in 1838 (in *Florante at Laura*), it became even more emphasized in the writings of revolutionary leaders such as Andres Bonifacio, Emilio Jacinto and Emilio Aguinaldo (Woods 14–22).

Today, **bayan** is also the acronym of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (New Patriotic Alliance) or BAYAN. Filipinos living all over the world have formed in their communities pockets of **bayang Pilipinas**. And many of my students, Filipino Americans who come to my class to learn Tagalog, may not have been to the Philippines their whole life, but think of themselves as part of **sambayanang Filipino** (the Filipino people).