PHILIPPINE CONSULATE GENERAL VIEWS MOST SUBSTANTIAL COLLECTION OF RIZAL MANUSCRIPTS IN AMERICA

Chicago, 27 March 2019 – The Philippine Consulate General in Chicago viewed original Philippine manuscripts, including the most substantial collection of works of national hero Dr. Jose P. Rizal in America, at the Newberry Library in Chicago on 22 March 2019.

Deputy Consul General Romulo Victor Israel, Jr, Consul Ryan Gener and Cultural Officer Noly Dulay were introduced to the Newberry collection by Mr. Will Hansen and Ms. Analu Lopez.

The Philippine manuscripts are part of the collection of Edward E. Ayer. According to Newberry, the collection consists mainly of manuscripts previously owned by the Compañía General de Tabacos in their Barcelona library, which Ayer obtained through Madrid bookseller Pedro Vindel, and expanded subsequently through purchases and gifts.
The 430 manuscripts cover the Philippines under Spanish colonial rule, particularly government papers of the eighteenth century; five volumes of documents on Philippine history and politics, transcribed by Ventura del Arco in the Real Academia de la Historia in Madrid; religious texts, grammar books, and vocabularies in seven different Philippine languages; "corridos," or metrical romances introduced by the Spanish, based on European fantasies and legends; an album of watercolor drawings by Damian Domingo on the native dresses of the nineteenth century; and notebooks and correspondence of Dr. Rizal.

The Rizal manuscripts, according to the library, are the most substantial collection of the original works of the national hero in America. Among these is "Clinica médica," a notebook containing Rizal's notes and sketches while studying humanities and medicine in Manila, Madrid and Berlin from 1881 to 1887. Apart from medical notes, it enumerates a list of books purchased by Rizal, and drafts of his letters. As Newberry notes, "it reveals the precocious talent of a brilliant mind...and displays key leitmotifs of his life and corpus". The notebook is the only manuscript yet to be digitized given its delicate physical state (See https://www.newberry.org/rizal-rizal-lessons-his-notebook for more details.)
The Rizal collection also includes: correspondence with Dr. A.B. Meyer of Dresden from Paris, Brussels and Dapitan concerning linguistic and zoological matters; an 1884 printed diary with handwritten entries when Rizal was a student of art and medicine in Madrid, on his meetings in cafés with other historical Filipino luminaries; and a first edition print of "Mi Ultimo Adios" when it was still known as "Mi Ultimo Pensamiento".

Fr. Pedro Velarde's map of the Philippines (right), one of twelve prints in existence, is exhibited at the ground floor of the Newberry Library.

In addition, on display for public viewing at the Newberry Library is a Philippine map designed by Fr. Pedro Murillo Velarde and engraved and printed by Nicolas dela Cruz Bagay in 1734. According to Newberry, its accuracy was unmatched for seventy years, and the presence of drawings of Chinese, African and western Asian people underscored the importance of the Philippines to global trading networks. END