

ARISTON L. BAUTISTA
(1863-1928)

Doctor, Philanthropist, and
Member of the Malolos Congress

Ariston Bautista was born on February 22, 1863 in Sta. Cruz, Manila to Mariano A. Bautista and Teresa Limpingco. He acquired the degree of *bachiller en artes* from the Ateneo Municipal and the degree of *licenciado en medicina* in March 1885 from the University of Santo Tomas. When the cholera epidemic broke out, he treated many people afflicted with the disease.

His family's affluence enabled him to take further studies in medicine at Universidad Central de Madrid, where he received the degree of *doctor en medicina*. His thesis was entitled, "Consideraciones Acerca de los Abscesos del Higado en los Climas Calidos." He toured hospitals in Paris, Berlin, and Brussels. He also helped the Propaganda Movement in Europe.

He came back to Manila and became a member of the Nilad Lodge which, along with other Masonic groups in the country, aided the Propagandists – the cause of Filipinos. When the revolution broke out in 1896, he was arrested and imprisoned in Fort Santiago, but freed later on. During the later stage of the revolution, he became a member of the Malolos Congress and a professor of clinical medicine in the faculty of medicine of the Universidad Cientifico-Literaria de Filipinas. He was married to Petrona Nakpil in 1903. In 1907, he was appointed professor of clinical medicine and therapeutics of the College of Medicine and Surgery. When Dr. Musgrave gave up his post as head of the department of medicine, Bautista took over. He went to the United States in 1926 as a member of an educational mission, then proceeded to Paris where he studied lung diseases, a field in which he was counted among the few specialist in the country.

Dr. Bautista was a very generous man, a philanthropist, who supported hospitals and religious organizations. Poor patients were recipients of his free service and medicines. He was also an avid patron of the arts and the Tagalog drama. Together with others, he financed the visit of an Italian opera company, which presented "Tosca" in Manila.

He also sent scholars abroad. His income from the Germinal Cigar and Cigarette Co., which he founded, was enough to subsidize the education of students, like Fabian de la Rosa, who studied painting in Europe; Dr. Elias Domingo, a specialist in nervous diseases; Ernesto Vallejo, violin virtuoso; Maria Lanzar, who studied political science (Ph.D.); Juan Nakpil, architect; and others.

While he was a director of the Agricultural bank, he along with a certain Rosales of the Compania General de Tabacos, was asked by Governor general Forbes to look into the financial needs of sugar planters. Upon his recommendation, the government introduced the "crop loan system." He was one of those responsible for convening the country's First Agricultural Congress and the founding of a national bank, an idea that eventually brought into being the Philippine National Bank.

He was a zealous member of the Colegio Medico-Farmacaceutico, the Philippine Medical Association, and the Liga Nacional Filipina Para la Proteccion de la Infancia. A doctor at St. Paul's Hospital, he presided over the examiners' board for medicine.

Bautista passed away on March 3, 1928. Dr. Jose Bantug, an associate, once said of him: "Who among us do not remember this great man? Simple in his dress, he always had a good word for a colleague. He was fortunate as a clinician; as a therapist, he was among the most outstanding. His followers among his pupils were many. As a philanthropist, he was never an egoist. He never made a secret of his excellent prescriptions when he could have made money on them. He did not want to make money on the lives of his countrymen, whenever there was likelihood of an epidemic of cholera. As a professor, his lectures were colored with interesting anecdotes."

Bautista's home on Barbosa Street, Quiapo, was a veritable museum that housed antiques and Filipino paintings. His memorabilia is now at the UP Medical Museum.

On February 22, 1981, the National Historical Institute honored him by installing a marker in his birthplace.

References:

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