

Pamathalaan

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*“Hangga’t hindi binibigyan ng patotoo ang kaloob
namung mga malilit at inaapi, hindi magkakaroon
ng kaganapan ang bayang ito!”*

(Until the *kaloob* [gift of enlightenment] bestowed
on the poor and oppressed is not affirmed by
patotoo [a pure and true proof of commitment];
there will be no fulfillment in this country!)

This deep and haunting cry which is almost a lament reverberates in near and remote areas of the Philippines where Katipunan descendants known as the *Kapatiran* or spiritual brotherhood gather together. It is a cry I have pursued for many years within and outside the academe.

Like a sweet curse, this pursuit which started in 1979 as a mystery event at the University of the Philippines led me to years of research shaped by ever more mysterious experiences. At the beginning, they frightened me, but later on, they nurtured my academic and spiritual life.

How this came about — as a guided process of *kaloob* and *patotoo*— will be tackled in my forthcoming work on “The Prophetic Art of Nationhood,” a research project began through the University of the Philippines Office of Research Coordination.

At the moment let it suffice that my attention keens on the deep and haunting reverberations of *kaloob* and *patotoo* as embedded in the Kapatiran cry of the Katipunan descendants:

*“Hangga’t hindi binibigyan ng patotoo ang kaloob
naming mga maliliit at inaapi, hindi magkakaroon
ng kaganapan ang bayang ito!”*

My first dramatic encounter with the Kapatiran cry for the Katipunan’s *kaloob* and *patotoo* happened in 1983 when I entered an unknown cave in Bulacan together with an old Kapatiran woman leader called *Inang Santisima*. Through her guidance, I was made to recall the agonies suffered by our ancestors and heroes in efforts to restore the bliss and wholeness of our dear Motherland. More crucially, through *Inang Santisima*, I was led to pray for every sacrifice in the world – the sacrifice for freedom, the sacrifice for peace, the sacrifice for justice. According to her, if more and more people unite in this sacred memory and act, then the prophecy regarding Spiritual Government will not be a mere fantasy, but a true reality!

That prayer in the cave was most memorable for me since even my life for five years in the Carmelite Monastery at Lucena City had not prepared me for the experience of praying in memory of or in unison with ancestors and heroes! Only then was I able to internalize the act of Andres Bonifacio and eight Katipunan brothers who ascended the cave of Bernardo Carpio in Mt. Tapusi, San Mateo, Rizal during the Holy Week of April, 1895 – a year before the outbreak of the revolution. On the walls of that legendary and historic cave, Bonifacio wrote and signed the Katipunan’s sacred covenant with the Motherland for her freedom. Bonifacio and his Katipunan brothers executed this covenant with trembling hands and tear-filled eyes.

After that first dramatic experience of mine in an unknown cave with *Inang Santisima*, heightened by ancestral and heroic memories, other episodes, other encounters in the womb of the *Kapatiran* or *Katipunan* descendants became rich and meaningful