

The Philippine Flag

Flag description

Two equal horizontal bands of blue (top) and red with a white equilateral triangle based on the hoist side; in the center of the triangle is a yellow sun with eight primary rays (each containing three individual rays) and in each corner of the triangle is a small yellow five-pointed star.

The Making of the Philippine Flag

During his exile in Hongkong in 1897, Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo designed the Filipino flag as it looks today. The flag was sewn by Dona Marcela Marino de Agoncillo with the help of her daughter Lorenza and Mrs. Delfina Herbosa de Natividad (niece of the Philippine National Hero - Dr. Jose P. Rizal). It was first raised during the declaration of Independence on June 12, 1898 in Kawit, Cavite. It was made of silk with a white triangle containing a sunburst of eight rays at the center, a five-pointed star at each angle of the triangle, a blue field and a red field. The white triangle stands for equality and fraternity; the blue field for peace, truth and justice; and red field for patriotism and valor. The eight rays of the sun stand for the first eight provinces that the colonizers have put under martial law. The three stars symbolize Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Philippine flag

Ako ay Pilipino

Buong katapatang nanunumpa

Sa watawat ng Pilipinas At sa bansang kanyang sinasagisag

Na may dangal, katarungan at kalayaan

Na pinakikilos ng sambayanang

Maka-Diyos

Maka-tao

Makakalikasan at

Makabansa

The Philippine Anthem

On June 5, 1898, Aguinaldo issued a decree setting aside June 12 as the day for the proclamation of Philippine independence. At the same time, he commissioned Julian Felipe, a composer from Cavite, to prepare a composition which would be played during the independence ceremonies. On June 11, Felipe showed Aguinaldo the draft of his musical composition, which was entitled *Marcha Filipina Magdalo*. Aguinaldo and the other revolutionary leaders, upon hearing the composition played on the piano, adopted it as the official march of the Philippines. Aguinaldo then requested Felipe to teach the music to the members of the band of San Francisco de Malabon so it could be played the next day. Felipe changed the title of the march to *Marcha Nacional Filipina* (Philippine National March).

On June 12, 1898, the music band of San Francisco de Malabon played it for the first time during the unfurling of the Filipino flag at Kawit. The beautiful melody of the anthem stirred the people's patriotic fervor. For more than a year, the anthem remained without words. Towards the end of August 1899, a young poet-soldier named Jose Palma (younger brother of Dr. Rafael Palma) wrote the poem entitled "Filipinas". This poem expressed in elegant Spanish verses the ardent patriotism and fighting spirit of the Filipino people. It became the words of the anthem. At last, the national anthem was complete -- with music and words.

Sources: "History of the Filipino People" by Teodoro A. Agoncillo; "The Philippines: A Unique Nation" by Dr. Sonia M. Zaide