

By Bobby Mercado-Reyes

Part V of the Series on “The ReVOTEIution of Hope for Sorsogon”

Part one of this series ([How the ReVOTEIution Will “Reinvent” Education and Life in Sorsogon](#)) stated also the following goals of organizing: QUOTE

3.5 A “Research and Development Institute (R&DI)” that will tap the scientific minds of the Filipino people and the Overseas Filipinos and the Overseas-Filipino workers (OFWs) for certain particular tasks in developing products and technology that can sustain the viability of an “Organic Sorsogon,” which may become the first province in the Philippines to do away with petroleum-based chemical fertilizers, pesticides and other non-organic substances that are harmful to humans, the flora and the fauna.

3.5.1 The R&DI will have an “Abaca International Development and Research Institute

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(AIDRI),” so that Sorsogon Province can be really the “abaca capital of the world.” The ReVOTElation proponents control the domain name, www.manilahemp.com, which can be used by the AIDRI.

3.5.2 It will also have a “Pili-nut Research Institute (PRI),” so that Sorsogon Province can indeed be the pili-nut (*Canarium ovatum*) capital of the world.

3.5.3 The R&DI will also do research in aquaculture, sea-weed farming and other fields, so that Sorsogon can become the Philippine center of research in areas like botany, manufacture of generic drugs, ceramics engineering, reforestation, broadband technology, climate change, etc. UNQUOTE.

The planned “ReVOTElation of Hope” may make Sorsogon the pilot province of what is tentatively called the “BLeSSED Program.” “BLeSSED” is the acronym for “Bicol, Leyte, Samar and Socio-Economic Development.”

As end results of making the pilot province the center of botany in the Philippines, if not in Southeast Asia, tremendous progress are forecast in the manufacture of herbal medicine and

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other plant-based drugs. These are also called “natural-product medicines” to help people and even wildlife.

A leading indigenous source of drug is the plant called the “Lakad-bulan” that is scientifically known as the *Blumea balsamifera* (Linn.) DC. or *Conyza balsamifera* (Linn). As per data found in

<http://www.stuartxchange.org/Sambong.html>

, its uses (folkloric) are:

“Leaves as poultice for abscesses.

Decoction of roots and leaves for fevers and cystitis.

Seitz-bath of boiled leaves, 500 gms. to a gallon of water, for rheumatic pains of waist and back.

Applied while hot over the sinuses. Used for wounds and cuts.

Fresh juice of leaves to wounds and cuts.

Poultice of leaves to forehead for headaches.

Tea is used for colds and as an expectorant; likewise, has antispasmodic and anti-diarrheal benefits.

Postpartum baths.

Decoction of leaves, 50 gms. to a pint of boiling water, 4 glasses daily, for stomach pains.”

I never forgot “Lakad-bulan,” as my maternal grandmother, Regina Mercado y Llamas, once used it for ridding me of fever and a wound that I got while playing with my cousins at her home in Bulan, Sorsogon. (I do not know if the plant was named after my maternal kin’s town, which is the local term for “moon.”)

The “Lakad-bulan” plant is indigenous to Sorsogon, Bicolandia and Leyte-Samar Region. There are other sources for manufacturing plant-based drugs such as the banaba and guava trees (the leaves of which are proven antiseptic remedies against wounds) and perhaps tens of

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hundreds of potential botanical specimens and even among the undersea plants in the Pacific Ocean and/or China Sea, the waters of which lap at the beaches of Sorsogon Province, the Bicol and Samar-Leyte Regions.

For example, the planned AIDRI can do research on abaca as the ingredient of soap and organic deodorants. This author has tried an abaca soap that did not require the use of a chemical-based deodorant after taking a bath.

Botanical Lessons from Professor Loleng

It was in San Beda College where I learned from Prof. Loleng Dolores (now deceased) while I was taking up Botany I the subject of pharmacognosy. It is the branch of the pharmaceutical science that deals with the chemistry and geography of plants and other natural products that are used in the manufacture of drugs.

I never forgot the lessons on botany and pharmacognosy that I learned from Professor Dolores in the mid-1960s. After the Botany I class ended, I would continue on a conversation with Professor Dolores, as my classmates would rush out of the classroom. I learned for instance from him that ground pumpkin seeds serve as “worm ridder” for the victims of schistosomiasis (snail fever). The disease, as prevalent in the BLeSSED-program areas, is caused by blood parasites in water-borne snails. But he said that Bicol, Leyte and Samar and almost all of the P hilippines

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do not grow pumpkin,
which is a gourd-like squash of the genus

Cucurbita

and the family

Cucurbitaceae

. He said that research could be made on the squash that is being grown in the said regions. Or come up with a laboratory-engineered variety of pumpkin that can grow and thrive in the Philippines

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Professor Dolores also said that it would be easy to grow the many herbs and plants from China and other foreign countries that been used in manufacturing natural-product medicine. It would be only a question of generating the right political will and the protocol needed of doing it not only for the good of the Filipino people but also for all of mankind.

I told the politicians in Sorsogon about the botanical potentials of the province as part of a 52-page single-spaced draft of a 25-year development program I submitted to them as the intended socioeconomic platform for the 1987 local elections. But the politicians never went for long-term R&D. Readers may browse the so-called "Sorsogon Province Experience" in this August 2007 article, [Reinventing the "Ramon Magsaysay Line" in Solving Philippine Political Problems](#)

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Perhaps after a delay of more-than almost 26 years, our group's ideas about the R&DI, the AIDRI, natural-product medicine and the cultivation of plants and herbs can take root (pun intended) in 2013 or even earlier.

Editor's Note: To read the other articles of this series, please go to:

[How the ReVOTElution Will "Reinvent" Education and Life in Sorsogon](#)

[A Sorsoganon OFW Appears to Be a Bigger Hero than Manny Pacquiao: How the ReVOTElution Will Protect OFWs and their History](#) (Part II)

[A Bigger Danger than an Eruption Lurks in Bulusan Volcano](#)

(Part III)

[How to Make a Biblical-based Real-estate Redevelopment the Answer to Global Warming, Starting in Sorsogon](#) (Part IV)

How Sorsogon Can Be the Botanical (and Natural-product Medicine) Capital of the Philippines, If Not of So

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(To be continued . . .)

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