

LAO TECK SING, PETITIONER AND APPELLANT, VS. REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES, OPPONENT AND APPELLEE.

G. R. No. L-14735. July 31, 1962

Ponente: PADILLA, J.

Read online (full-text search, related cases, audio case brief): <https://batas.org/library/6296ae0a9b44/>

PADILLA, J.:

Lao Teck Sing seeks to become a citizen of the Philippines by naturalization under the provisions of the Revised Naturalization Law, Commonwealth Act No. 473, as amended. In the petition he filed in the Court of First Instance of Manila to that effect on 30 July 1957 he avers that he possesses the qualifications required by law, and none of the disqualifications, to become a citizen of the Philippines. Attached to his petition are his photograph and affidavits of two witnesses vouching for his qualifications (special proceeding No. 33279). After due publication of the petition by the Sheriff on the bulletin board of the City Hall in Manila (Exhibit D-1), in the Official Gazette (30 September and 15 and 31 October 1957, Exhibit D) and in the "El Debate," a newspaper of general circulation in the City of Manila (27 August and 3 and 10 September 1957, Exhibits C and C-1), the petition was set for hearing on 18 September 1958. At the hearing the applicant introduced evidence in support of his application and the Solicitor General, who appeared in behalf of the Government examined the applicant and his witnesses. After hearing, on 20 September 1958 the Court entered a decree denying his application on the ground that "he does not speak, read and write Tagalog, which is one of the principal languages in the Philippines." The applicant has appealed.

The appellant's evidence, oral and documentary, is: He was born in Manila on 1 November 1927, the legitimate son of Lao Uh Cuan and Lim Chu Po, both Chinese citizens (Exhibit F). He is married to Ng Yam Bee Tuazon, a Chinese citizen (Exhibit I), by whom he has two children, namely, Winston, born on 1 December 1953, and Eleanor, born on 12 February 1957, both in Manila (Exhibits K and K-1). On 29 July 1957 the appellant filed in the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court a petition for change of name to Johnson L. Lao, and on 10 March 1958 the Court granted his petition (Exhibits E and E-1). The appellant is registered in the Embassy of the Republic of China as a citizen of the said Republic (Exhibit H) and he, his wife and two minor children are registered as aliens in the Bureau of Immigration (Exhibits G, G-1, G-2, J, J-1, J-2, L, L-1 and L-2). He has filed his income tax return for the years 1955, 1956 and 1957, where it appears that he had a gross income derived from salaries or wages and bonus of P2,400, P2,400, P400 and P5,400, respectively (Exhibits M, M-1 and M-2), as bookkeeper and collector of rentals of his mother, Lim Chu Po, a real estate owner (Exhibits O and F). According to the certificates issued by the Acting Chief, Accounting & Statistical Division, of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the appellant has no out-standing or unpaid internal revenue tax obligation (Exhibit N); the Chief of Police and the City Fiscal of Manila, the Deportation Board, the Bureau of Immigration, the Anti-Dummy Board, the National Bureau of Investigation, the Clerk of the Court of First Instance of Manila, the Philippine Constabulary and the Committee on Un-Filipino Activities of the House of Representatives attest that there is no pending case against the appellant in their respective offices and that there is no derogatory information against him (Exhibits P, P-1, P-2, P-3, P-4, P-6, P-7, P-8 and P-10); the Director of Prisons, that the appellant "has no prison record in the New Bilibid Prison" (Exhibit P-5); the Land Registration Commission, that no real property

appears to be originally registered in his name (Exhibit P-9); and the Medico-Legal Officer of the National Bureau of Investigation, that the appellant, after physical and medical examination conducted, has been found "free from any indication of any mental disorder or alienation nor of any incurable contagious disease" (Exhibit Q). The appellant finished the intermediate course at the Anglo-Chinese School and the secondary course at the Philippine Chinese High School (Exhibits R-2 and R-1), both recognized by the Government (Exhibits S and S-1), and where the enrollment is not limited to any race or nationality (Exhibits T and T-1), and obtained his bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering at the Adamson University (Exhibit R).

At the hearing on 18 September 1958 the appellant repeated what he had stated in' his petition and swore that he was 30 years of age; that he owes allegiance to the Republic of China in Formosa; that except for a year's sojourn in Amoy, China, when he was seven years old, he has continuously resided in Manila since birth; that he speaks and writes English and Tagalog; that the Republic of China, the country of which he is a citizen is not at war with the Philippines; and that Filipinos may be naturalized as citizens of his country. The rest of his testimony is on his qualifications to become a naturalized citizen as required by law. He further swore that he does not have any of the disqualifications to become a naturalized citizen.

Jacinto R. Rubio, general manager of the Katubusan Tobacco Corporation and dealer in insurance and jewelry business and Fernando A. de Castro, an accountant, who executed affidavits vouching for the appellant's qualifications to become a citizen of the Philippines (Exhibits A and B), testified that they are Filipino citizens at birth and that they know the appellant since 1941. The rest of their testimony supporting that of the appellant is on his qualification to become a naturalized citizen.

There is no doubt that the appellant is able to speak and write English, he having testified orally and having demonstrated his ability to write in that language (Exhibits 1 and X). However, according to the trial court, he has failed to satisfactorily prove his ability to speak and write Tagalog, one of the principal Philippine languages. Tested by the trial court at the hearing, the latter asked the appellant to write in his own handwriting the following sentence in Tagalog and to translate it in English "Maliban (should be naliban) ngayon ang Paglilitis kay Ricardo Parulan sa kasalanang pagiwas sa parusa sa kanya nang hindi sumipot ang kanyang manananggol," (the appellant exerted effort in complying when he wrote, as follows: "Nalibang ang plilities kay Ricardo Parulan, Saksalalang pakilwas, sa pakisa sa culig ng inidig ang cayan malalangol." Given another chance, the appellant wrote in his own handwriting the following sentence that the trial court dictated in English: "My dear friend, I take pleasure in informing you that I am accepting the kind invitation you extended to me the other night when we met at the Riviera," in this wise: "My dear friend. I take pleasure informing you that I am accepted the kind invitation you extended to me the other night we meet at the Riviera," but completely failed to translate it in Tagalog as ordered (Exhibit X). Before that, examining the appellant, the Solicitor asked him to orally translate in Tagalog the following sentence he had previously written in English: "I was born in the city of Manila on November 1, 1927. My present place of residence is O'Donnell street, Santa Cruz, Manila," which he did, as follows: "Ako ay pinanganak ang City of Manila, Nobiembre 1, 1927. Ngayon ako tira O'Donnell Street, Santa Cruz, Manila." Asked by the same Solicitor" to write in his own handwriting the translation he had orally made, the appellant wrote: "Ako pinanganak ang Manila Nov. 1, 1927." "Ako ay hakatila sa O'Donnell St. Sta. Cruz, Manila." (Exhibit 1.)

Although the law does not set a specific standard of an applicant's ability to speak and write any of the principal Philippine languages, yet the finding by the trial court that saw and heard the applicant testify must be given weight and value unless its finding is clearly erroneous. The Court finds no sufficient reason to disturb the finding of the trial court.

The decree appealed from is affirmed, with costs against the appellant.

Bengzon C. J., Bautista Angelo, Labrador, Concepcion, Barrera, Paredes, Dizon, Regala and Makalintal, JJ., concur.

ABOUT BATAS.ORG

Study smarter at BATAS.org

The Philippine bar review and law-school companion built around how your brain actually remembers.

The complete Philippine law library - free for everyone.

More than 100,000 Supreme Court decisions, Republic Acts, and executive issuances - full-text searchable, browsable by category and year, and always free. No paywall, no login. This PDF came from it.

Audio case-brief lectures.

Any decision becomes a podcast-style lecture - facts, issues, ruling, and doctrine - with read-along highlighting and a hands-free presentation mode. Study while commuting, working out, or resting your eyes.

Bar review built on the science of memory.

Complete, sequenced courses for all eight bar subjects, narrated like podcasts and reinforced with retrieval practice and spaced review - the study techniques with the strongest evidence behind them.

The full law-school curriculum.

One subscription unlocks the entire J.D. curriculum - every subject, every lesson, with your progress tracked down to the paragraph so you can pick up exactly where you left off, on any device.

Mock exams that tell you where you stand.

Timed multiple-choice exams graded instantly, with per-subject score breakdowns and focus suggestions that point you at your weakest topics first.

A study planner that keeps you on pace.

Set your schedule and BATAS tells you every day whether you are on track for bar day - and exactly which lesson to take next.

Start free at <https://batas.org>

The law library is free forever - and your first lesson is one click away.

The text of this document is an official public record and remains in the public domain. Formatting, presentation, and compilation © 2026 batas.org.

Downloaded free from the batas.org Law Library. Share it freely - the library is free for every law student, bar reviewee, and practitioner.