

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF MANUEL YU TONG, ALIAS KUANG TZE YOUNG ALIAS MANUEL YU, ALIAS MANUEL YOUNG TO BE ADMITTED A CITIZEN OF THE PHILIPPINES. MANUEL YU TONG SU, ALIAS ...*G. R. No. L-9843. April 23, 1957*

Ponente: LABRADOR, J.

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Appeal from a judgment of the Court of First Instance of Cebu, granting the petition for naturalization of Manuel Tu Tong Su, alias Kuang Tze Young, alias Manuel Yu, alias Manuel Young. The trial court found that petitioner had all the qualifications required by law. The Government does not dispute the fact that except for the disqualification of one of the witnesses, the granting of the petition would be proper. The ground on which the appeal is based is the supposed incompetence or disqualification of one of the witnesses, Ricardo Dorotheo, for lack of sufficient knowledge of the neighborhood life and conduct of petitioner.

Witness Ricardo Dorotheo testified that he had known petitioner since 1935 or 1936, as the latter is the classmate of a son of his who has been a student of San Carlos College; that his son used to bring petitioner to the house many times, and witness then had occasion to converse with and observe the conduct of petitioner; that his son finished his A.B. degree five years before the trial, and he and petitioner had been in association during their school days up to about three years ago when his son went to work in Bacolod. He further testified that he personally believed that petitioner would be an asset instead of a liability to the country, and that he is a law-abiding resident and that he appreciates his (petitioner) friendship. The qualifications of the other witness who testified also as to the conduct of the petitioner is not disputed.

On this appeal the Solicitor General argues that as the witness had met petitioner only on the occasions that petitioner had visited his house, he could not have observed petitioner's conduct in the neighborhood to gauge petitioner's reputation and moral irreproachability, and neither could he have obtained sufficient information on the social behavior and political convictions of the petitioner. The fact, however, is that witness testified that petitioner would make an asset to the country as he is a law-abiding resident. The fact that -witness had not actually seen petitioner on other occasions does not mean that he cannot testify as to the moral conduct of petitioner. If the petitioner had really been unworthy, his unworthiness would have come home to the knowledge of the witness, not from observations of the petitioner himself but from other persons who could have called the attention of the witness as to such unworthiness. It is not those who have actually and continuously seen a person alone that he cannot testify as to the moral conduct of petitioner. In a community the conduct and behavior of a person becomes known more from his reputation than from actual observation. When the witness testified that in his opinion the petitioner would make an asset to the country, he impliedly stated that the moral reputation of petitioner is good and that he is qualified to become a citizen. We, therefore, are unable to agree with the Government's contention that the witness in question did not have the necessary qualifications to testify as to the character of the petitioner.

The judgment appealed from is hereby affirmed, with costs de oficio.

Bengzon, Padilla, Montemayor, Reyes, A., Bautista Angelo, Conception, Reyes, J. B. L., Endencia, and Felix, JJ., concur.

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