



DWELLING ON THE DEAD

Even among the dead, there is life. There are also grocery stores, fast-food stalls, basketball hoops, schools, and mini-markets. None of these serve the deceased, of course—they were built for and by North Manila Cemetery's fifty thousand living residents.

The Philippine economy has grown steadily in recent years but nowhere near fast enough to keep up with population growth. The country's citizenry has more than tripled since 1960, to 89 million, and poverty and homelessness have skyrocketed. One in three Filipinos is unemployed or underemployed, including 27 million who subsist on a dollar or less a day. While the government doesn't officially encourage labor migration, it welcomes the \$14 billion that Filipino expats send home annually—an estimated 10 percent of GDP.

But not all who want to leave are able to, and each year fresh thousands flock to the capital looking for work and a decent place to live, only to find neither. A fifth of metropolitan Manila's 14 million inhab-

itants have no real home. The most impoverished wind up squatting atop the city's main garbage dump.

Those slightly more fortunate upgrade to the 135-acre graveyard pictured above, where they construct rent-free shanties in between and on top of crypts. North Manila Cemetery, the Philippines' largest public burial ground, lodges some ten thousand families, some lucky enough to secure shelter inside inherited family mausoleums. These vaults are often the size of houses, complete with televisions, radios, and other appliances that run whenever city officials forget to cut the bootleg electricity lines. A lack of running water and plumbing further complicates life among the dead here, where inhabitants outnumber the corpses and where births surpass burials.

The problem is so huge that government officials—including the city-hall workers and policemen who live here—have no choice but to look away. Still, every now and then, politicians pledge to clean up the necropolis. In fact, several years ago, officials relocated sixty families—to a nearby dog cemetery. —VADIM LIBERMAN