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WHEREFORE, the petition is dismissed. No costs.

Zaldivar (Chairman), Antonio, Fernandez, and *Aquino, JJ.,* concur.

Barredo, J., did not take part.

SECOND DIVISION

[G.R. No. L-31664. August 30, 1974]

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES, *petitioner, vs.* **HONORABLE SANTIAGO O. TAÑADA,** as Judge of the Court of First Instance of Cebu, Branch V, **HO HANG LIET** and the minors **MICHAEL GO HO, JOHN GO HO** represented by their father and natural guardian **HO HANG LIET,** *respondents.*

SYLLABUS

1. **CHANGE OF NAME; PERSON DESIRING A CHANGE OF NAME MUST SHOW COMPELLING OR WEIGHTY REASON THEREFOR.**— It is the court's duty, as Justice J.B.L. Reyes pointed out, in Oan *v.* Republic, "to consider carefully the consequences of the change of name, and to deny the same unless weighty reasons are shown. It must not be forgotten that the State has an interest in the names borne by individuals and entities for purposes of identification, and that a change of name is a privilege and not a matter of right." That was in 1957. In 1970, in Ang Chay *v.* Republic, there was a further elaboration of the matter in a still latter opinion by the same jurist: "We find no error in the decision of the court below. It is a ruling of long standing in this jurisdiction that change of

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30, 1966, 16 SCRA 962; Guillergan *v.* Ganzon, L-20818, May 25, 1966, 17 SCRA 257; Abanilla *v.* Ticao, L-22271, July 26, 1966, 17 SCRA 652; Arao *v.* Luspo, L-23982, July 21, 1967, 20 SCRA 722; Enciso *v.* Remo, L-23670, Sept. 30, 1969, 29 SCRA 580.

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name is not a matter of right; that being a privilege, before it can be authorized, the person petitioning for such a change must first show proper cause or compelling reason therefor."

2. **ID.; ID.; IT IS NO LONGER UNUSUAL IN THE PHILIPPINES TO HAVE FAMILY NAMES INCORPORATE CHINESE WORDS.—** The mere fact that his present Chinese name may cause difficulty in pronunciation and that as a naturalized citizen he would want to adopt one in accordance with the Philippine customs, do not meet such a standard. If such were really the case, it defies rational explanation why an Anglo-Saxon name was chosen. Moreover, respondent Ho Hang Liet should be aware that it is no longer unusual in the Philippines to have family names composed of Chinese words. The list of respectable individuals in that category is quite impressive. It is far better then, with the needs of the public in mind, that the change sought be not granted.

APPEARANCES OF COUNSEL

Solicitor General Felix Q. Antonio, Assistant Solicitor General Antonio G. Ibarra and Solicitor Enrique M. Reyes for petitioner.

J. R. Gaboya and *J. M. Perez* for respondents.

DECISION

FERNANDO, *J.*:

It is not easy to explain why on such a matter as the change of name, some courts of first instance would be at times, still unable to perceive the public interest involved and thus without due regard to authoritative pronouncements from this Tribunal grant such a petition. So it did happen in this case. The lower court decision now under review authorized respondent Ho Hang Liet to change his name to Hanley L. Young.[1] The ostensible justification was that as a naturalized citizen, he was desirous of being identified in a language easy to pronounce and remember, his Chinese appellation being awkward and difficult to pronounce. The opposition filed by the then Solicitor-General,

[1] His minor children were allowed respectively to do so, respondents Michael Go Ho to Michael G. Young and John Go Ho to John G. Young.

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now Associate Justice, Felix B. Makasiar, was based on binding precedents, primarily *Yu Chi Han v. Republic*[2] and *Ong Te v. Republic.*[3] The lower court was unimpressed, resulting in the aforesaid judgment. Hence this petition for review.

The decision of the lower court stand the test of scrutiny and therefore must be reversed.

The strictness with which the judiciary views an attempt to change one's name is one of the accepted truisms of the law. It is the court's duty, as Justice J. B. L. Reyes pointed out, in *Oan v. Republic,*[4] "to consider carefully the consequences of the change of name, and to deny the same unless weighty reasons are shown. It must not be forgotten that the State has an interest in the names borne by individuals and entities for purposes of identification, and that a change of name is a privilege and not a matter of right."[5] That was in 1957. In 1970, in *Ang Chay v. Republic,*[6] there was a further elaboration of the matter in a still latter opinion by the same jurist: "We find no error in the decision of the court below. It is a ruling of long standing in this jurisdiction that change of name is not a matter of right; that being a privilege, before it can be authorized, the person petitioning for such a change must first show proper cause of compelling reason therefor."[7] No such compelling reason is present in this case. The mere fact that his present Chinese name may cause difficulty in pronunciation and that as a naturalized citizen he would want to adopt one in accordance with the Philippine custom, do not meet such a standard. If such were really the case, it defies rational explanation why an Anglo-Saxon name was chosen. Moreover, respondent Ho Hang Liet should be aware that it is no longer unusual in the

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[2] L-22040, November 29, 1965, 15 SCRA 454.

[3] L-15549, June 30, 1962, 5 SCRA 484.

[4] 102 Phil. 468 (1957).

[5] *Ibid.*, 470.

[6] L-28507, July 31, 1970, 34 SCRA 224.

[7] *Ibid.*, 227.

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Philippines to have family names composed of Chinese words. The list of respectable individuals in that category is quite impressive. It is far better then, with the needs of the public in mind, that the change sought be not granted. That would be to avoid confusion and wrong identification as in the meanwhile, the people he must have dealt with had known him by his real name. Public interest is thus better served. It is not, to repeat, individual preference that counts. Respondents Ho Hang Liet must ever keep that in mind.

WHEREFORE, the order of respondent Judge of December 12, 1969, granting the petition for a change of name, is hereby reversed and set aside. No costs.

Zaldivar (Chairman), Barredo, Fernandez, and *Aquino, JJ.*, concur.

Antonio, J., cannot take part.

FIRST DIVISION

[G.R. No. L-32829. August 30, 1974]

PHILIPPINE ROCK PRODUCTS, INC., FREDERICK W. DRURY, EUSEBIO B. GARCIA AND AVELINO DE GUZMAN, *petitioners, vs.* **PHILIPPINE ASSOCIATION OF FREE LABOR UNIONS (PAFLU), PEDRO ALVAREZ AND COURT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS,** *respondents.*

SYLLABUS

1. **LABOR LAW; FINDINGS OF FACTS OF INDUSTRIAL COURT CONCLUSIVE.—** The finding of the CIR that the alleged breach of trust is not supported by any evidence is one of fact which We are not authorized to review, much less alter, at this instance.