

INTRODUCTION

Tina S. Clemente and Lucio Blanco Pitlo III

China's re-emergence and growing presence in the global stage have sparked considerable local and international interest. While welcome, such a focus in the Philippines largely privileges contemporary geopolitical and security issues. In line with this discursive bent, Philippine relations with China have been shaped by the Cold War and its aftermath, differences in political and economic values, and unresolved territorial and maritime disputes. Hence, the study of China, the Chinese, and bilateral relations has remained a marginal and narrow subject in the Philippines notwithstanding a long history of multifaceted relations harking back to Philippine protohistoric times. In response to the dearth in knowledge and the wide room for better understanding, the Philippine Association for Chinese Studies (PACS) continues to offer nuanced perspectives on these areas of interest with Philippine nation-building as a guiding ethos.

For the past 33 years since the organization's inception in 1987, its community of scholars, civil society leaders, professionals, and business people has been generating important inputs to critical publics and encouraging dialogue. This collection, therefore, is an expression of PACS' long-standing commitment to cultivate knowledge production with scholarship and practice. As such, the pieces are a mix of research articles, commentaries, addresses, and a report written by luminaries in the field who have built valuable expertise as China watchers. We conceived this collection as retrospective in nature in that the pieces engaged discourses in their particular time. While the themes and the spirit of inquiry are timeless, the content and data must be appreciated

in period-specific contexts. On the other hand, the collection is also commemorative in that it celebrates PACS' timeless *raison d'être* of advancing the study of China and the Chinese for greater Philippines-China understanding and cooperation. The articles were selected from the issues of the primary publication of PACS, the *Chinese Studies Journal*. We considered all journal volumes except for the most recent one that came out last year and the volume published in 2015, which featured monographs. It is our hope that this collection inspires the present generation to blaze new trails in advancing discourse and praxis.

The breadth of subject matter featured in this volume speaks of the diversity of interests in the China watching community. The pieces are organized in three categories that indicate the major strands in the field.

China and the World

Aileen San Pablo-Baviera (1993) examines how a post-Cold War multipolar world that featured the rise of regional trading blocs, such as the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement, opened spaces for China to promote economic cooperation and de-emphasize security issues with its neighbors. Jaime A. Florcruz (1997) provides an insightful piece on how China's race towards rapid economic growth left an ideological vacuum. Ericson M. Baculinao (1997) takes stock of key economic reforms undertaken by China that led to its meteoric rise and the tectonic shift of power away from Europe and North America to the Asia-Pacific. In another article, Aileen San Pablo-Baviera (1992) ponders on how China's worldview adjusts to changing times with profound implications for itself and the world, provoking important reflections on Philippine outlook.

Philippines-China Relations

Theresa Chong Cariño (1992) discusses longstanding challenges

in bilateral relations – overstaying Chinese, the trade imbalance, Philippine ties with Taiwan, the one-China policy, and the Spratly Islands dispute – some of which remain contentions to this day. Benito Lim (1993) explores how the end of the Cold War pushed economic concerns to ascendancy in international relations and how this induced a change in the security landscape of China and Asia that must be considered in Philippine policy. Aurora Roxas-Lim (2013) assesses three Chinese official development assistance projects in the Philippines – an agricultural technology center, irrigation, and a fish port – underscoring that relations with China transcend geopolitical issues. As the 2012 Scarborough Shoal incident turned bilateral relations to a nadir, Chito Sta. Romana (2013) argues for the need to understand the foundations on which China rests, the nature of its claims in the West Philippine Sea, and its internal tussle between hawks and doves. In dealing with Beijing, he advises a mix of engagement and hedging.

Chinese in the Philippines

Teresita Ang See (1992) unravels the prejudices and misconceptions about the ethnic Chinese in the Philippines, how these were rooted in the colonial period and how integration and acceptance can change these images. In another paper (1995), she unpacks the economic success of the ethnic Chinese and attendant tensions within mainstream Philippine society. She underscores the importance of their active participation in nation-building and the Filipino body-politic. In comparing ethnicity-based ownership of top Philippine companies, Ellen Palanca (1995) analyzes the ethnic Chinese as a major actor in the country's commercial life, shedding light on the historical and socio-economic factors behind this development.

