

THE DAGUPAN CHINESE*

Benito Lim
Asian Center, University of the Philippines

Of the estimated 7,000 ethnic Chinese in Dagupan City, over 70 percent have parents, grandparents, great-great-grandparents who lived continuously in Dagupan. Most of them consider themselves third or fourth generation Chinese Filipinos. Some of their ancestors made their perilous journey across the southern seas (called *Nanyang* in Chinese) to the Philippines. The mode of transport was on Chinese junks which left the ports of Fujian (primarily from Quanchou and Xiamen) across the South China Sea landing in the ports of the western coast of Luzon. The ports of Sta. Cruz, Bolinao, Anda, Lingayen, Sual as far north as Vigan in the Ilo-

*For the purpose of this paper, the first generation Chinese are the children of immigrants; the second generation are their grandchildren; the third generation are their great grandchildren; and the fourth generation are their great great grandchildren. Although this kind of periodisation is by no means accurate, it covers approximately the four generations of Chinese in Dagupan. Oral accounts of the earliest immigrants who came between 1850 and 1910 are mainly given by the first generation, born between 1911 and 1931, and accounts of the first generation are given by the second (1932-1962 and third (1963-now) generations. There are fourth generation Chinese whose great great great grandparents came earlier than 1875 who can give accounts of their ancestors handed down by their parents and grandparents. A problem I encountered with my informants is that their accounts sometimes do not coincide with some written accounts. Footnotes are supplied to indicate these disparities.

cos coast served as entry points. Those who landed in Manila, and eventually went to Dagupan by railway, were those whose relatives or village patrons were able to secure legal permits from whoever was the dominant authority of the time. Those Chinese immigrants who came in the latter half of the nineteenth century obtained documents from Spaniards, while those who came in the twentieth century were issued legal papers by the American colonial government. All those who came by junks through Zambales, Pangasinan or Ilocos ports, accordingly, came during the mid-nineteenth century.¹

Most Chinese immigrants claimed that they learned about Dagupan from relatives who first immigrated to the Philippines at about the nineteenth century (perhaps 1850-1900). A few attested that their ancestors came to the Philippines about the time of Spanish colonization in the mid-sixteenth century; while others claimed to have been descendants of the sailors or crew members left behind by the retreating forces of the Chinese pirate Limahong.² Whether they came as early as the sixteenth century, or in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many settled and intermarried with Filipinas in the coastal towns near Dagupan such as: Lingayen, Sual,³ Alaminos, and Binmaley. Until the end of the nineteenth century, when their numbers increased to over a hundred families, there were few Chinese immigrants who were tradesmen. For the earlier immigrants were mainly artisans and craftsmen: masons, sculptors, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, cabinet makers, metal workers, bakers, butchers and tanners. Some manufactured candles, glue, and soap.

Masons, blacksmiths, cabinet makers, sculptors and similar artisans were hired by the Catholic church to build or repair churches, carve gods and saints, fashion their altars, confessionals, pulpits, church pews, manufacture lamps, candles and candle holders. Their skills were in great demand all over Pangasinan and the neighboring provinces of Tarlac, Pampanga and the Ilocos. Blacksmiths usually made knives, pots and pans, plowshares, horseshoes, wheels for bullcarts and *calesas* and other mechanical devices used in agriculture and food processing. Many Chinese masons and newly arrived immigrants were hired to undertake the building and repair of roads and bridges. The more settled Chinese immigrants who traced their ancestry to the descendants of Limahong's navy

opened many kinds of shops: saw mills,⁴ rice mills, copra mills and coconut oil manufacturing and soap making. According to one account, many immigrant Chinese settled first in Binmaley and worked as cabinet makers or opened furniture shops. They taught their Filipino apprentices such processes as veneering, gluing, varnishing and joint construction. They found lucrative business from the orders of Churches from nearby towns such as Dagupan, Lingayen, Urdaneta and even as far as Manaoag and Tarlac.

Most Chinese artisans who came to the Philippines learned to speak, and some even read Spanish, by necessity. Those who dealt with their clients and customers daily readily learned to speak and read Pangasinan and Ilocano. They were blacksmiths, shoemakers and repairers, rice millers, operators of lumber yards, butchers, soap makers, candle makers, copra and coconut oil and noodle manufacturers. The wealthiest Chinese were the rice millers, copra and coconut oil processors. Alfred Marche, in his travel to Sual and other regions of Pangasinan in 1879, wrote that rice trade in Dagupan was carried "by two Europeans, one of whom is a young German married to a mestiza of the land, the other a Chinese."⁵

At the turn of the nineteenth century when the number of Chinese residents increased to a hundred or so families, more of them became traders.⁶ They opened small shops on both sides of the Pantal river which divides Dagupan city into two sides.

According to an account of the business sector of Dagupan in 1910:

The principal cluster of Chinese then was near the river along Avenida Torres Bugallon... Here were at least five general stores run by Hokkien speaking Chinese as well as two shoemaker's shops and a bakery run by Cantonese. A bakery and a dry goods store were in the east. Near the railroad were two shops which turned out wheels, bullock carts, and calesas, the principal vehicle of the day. These establishments were also managed by Hokkien. The Chinese formed the core but not the entirety of the commercial sector. Filipino owned businesses were also located on the same road... In 1900 retail trade was dominated by the Chinese.⁷

Today, the river traverses Torres Bugallon Avenue (now Angel B. Fernandez) the main street of Dagupan city. The poorer Chinese opened

small stalls selling candies, meat, grains, and fish in the public market built by the American colonial administrators in Dagupan.

In contrast to the Spaniards who restricted the travel of Chinese within Manila, the Americans liberalized travel throughout the Philippines for the Chinese.⁸ The relaxation of travel regulations and the frequency of railway trips between Dagupan and Manila drew more Chinese to engage in commerce. At the beginning of the 20th century, Dagupan became a fast growing commercial center not only of Pangasinan but of Central and Northern Luzon.

Evidently, other modes of transport besides that of the railway continued in use. For prior to the building of the railway, Dagupan was more accessible to the other regions by sea and through navigable rivers.⁹ As late as the 1920s small *paraos* sailed into Dagupan from Vigan, Sta. Cruz, Bolinao, Alaminos, Anda, Lingayen and Binmaley to trade. During the Spanish occupation, Chinese junks sailed periodically into Dagupan. As late as the first decade of the 20th century, before the American occupation, many Dagupan roads, including Torres Bugallon Avenue, were below sea level. Many first generation Chinese claimed that the main roads of Dagupan in the 1930s were a meter and a half below the shops. Every two or three years, the American colonial government raised and asphalted the main road by one to one and a half meters.

The goals of the Chinese immigrants who were adults in the 1920's to the 1930's were relatively simple: to accumulate wealth to bring home to their family in China; to gain economic independence, specifically to own and manage their own businesses in the Philippines; and to raise their social stature in the Dagupan Chinese community and in China. The earlier immigrants were not interested in gaining entry into the higher echelons of Philippine society or in achieving political stature in the Philippines. Hence, this older generation of Dagupan Chinese were relatively less acculturated to mainstream Philippine life.

The increase in the number of Chinese tradesmen in Dagupan led to the founding of a Chinese elementary school in 1918 and the first Chinese association, the Kong Yak Sia or Overseas Chinese Labor Association in the 1920's. The organization had three main goals:

- Settlement and resolution of conflicts among the Chinese in Dagupan;
- The founding a Chinese school; and
- The building of a Chinese cemetery.

The more successful in business, who were first and second generation Chinese, were usually elected as leaders of the organization. The Kong Yak Sia also brought into existence the Pangasinan Universal School which today is called the Dagupan Chinese Universal School. The leaders registered the school with the government representative of the Republic of China in Manila. The school followed more or less Chinese curriculum and emphasized Chinese history and social events with little or no reference to the Philippines. It was not until 1976 that the curriculum changed in accordance with Philippine educational policy which emphasized the study of Philippine history, society and social developments. The study of Chinese language and history was made only one of the subjects in what was essentially a Philippine curriculum.

A few years later, the Kong Yak Sia also obtained the approval of the American colonial government to build a separate cemetery for the Chinese in Dagupan. To some observers, the desire to build a Chinese cemetery was interpreted as an indication that at least some Chinese have given up their wish of returning to China and decided instead to live permanently in the Philippines. However this may be true only to some extent; the Chinese old timers recalled that the main reason for building a separate cemetery was precipitated by the extreme difficulties they encountered whenever a deceased Chinese had to be buried. The Catholic church prohibited the Chinese from burying their dead in Filipino cemeteries unless the deceased was a baptized and practicing Christian. And even if the deceased were Christians, the Catholic church and other authorities demanded payment and imposed many other requirements. The priests required the Chinese to undergo Catholic rites before they could bring their dead to the church and before burial in the cemetery. Moreover, because the Church prohibited Chinese practice of ancestor worship and other Chinese funeral rites (such as incense burning and food offerings in the cemetery), this created deep psychological trauma among the Chinese. For to the Chinese of the older generation, honoring their ancestors

and the performance of the final rites for the dead were vital to their sense of family honor and dignity.

Whenever the Chinese offered food to their dead, whether it was a roasted pig, chicken or cow, the Catholic priests berated them and accused them of worshipping animals, specially pigs. The Chinese naturally did not conceive of death and the manner of honoring their deceased ancestors in the same way as the Christians. They did not believe that the souls of the dead ascended to heaven, or descended to hell or purgatory immediately after death. Most Chinese even those who were baptized as Christians followed some form of Chinese traditional practices. They performed rituals and ceremonies at appropriate stages of life, from birth, engagement, wedding, coming of age (60 above), death, and regular rites of filial piety. Rituals honoring the deceased included prayers and solicitations which were both recited and inscribed on paper, and cloth bunting, wall hangings, and other ritual objects. They provided offerings, consisting of food delicacies favored by the Chinese. The burning of incense, paper money and other material goods enjoyed by the living were also considered obligatory rites. No doubt most Catholic priests at that time did not understand the philosophical and psychological significance of Chinese beliefs and practices. Some of the priests forbade or ridiculed such practices which led to misunderstandings and further alienation of the Chinese.

After World War II (WWII), external circumstances worked to hasten and intensify the acculturation of the Chinese into Philippine society. When the Chinese Communist Party took over the government of China in 1949, direct relations with China was cut off. This halted arrival of new immigrants, periodic visits of Filipino Chinese to their former homeland, the sending of children specially sons for further education in China. Most significantly, communications with relatives and townmates in the provinces of origin ceased. Like most Filipinos, many Dagupan Chinese were subjected to the prevailing ideological propaganda against Communism. This led many Dagupan Chinese to send their children to Catholic and public schools instead of Chinese schools unless these schools were supervised by the Kuomintang government in Taiwan. So effective was the campaign against Communism that many of the leading Dagupan

Chinese joined the crusade against the so-called "enemy of Democracy and of Christian Philippines."

The world then seemed grim to the Dagupan Chinese cut off as they were from their former homeland. Many joined the Catholic Church and were also drawn in the crusade against communism. In the process, the Roman Catholic priests came to understand the absurdity of their earlier position regarding Church rituals and traditional Chinese practices. Both sides eventually recognized the complexity of their respective cultural beliefs. Indeed the Catholic priests realized that by understanding and converting the Chinese children, and by being kind and tolerant of their parents' practices, they stood to gain more influence and, of course, more financial contributions from the Chinese. Most Chinese who graduated from Catholic schools no longer demanded that their children follow strictly the worship of their ancestors.

By 1920 there were about 160 odd Chinese families in Dagupan. Slowly many of those Chinese who stayed in the Philippines learned that service to the small ethnic Chinese community was a source of psychological satisfaction and the principal forum for community recognition.

According to many Dagupan Chinese old timers, despite their efforts to set up organizations and schools, there were serious inadequacies in their small community made up mostly of traders and businessmen. They came to the realization that having been almost completely engrossed in economic activities, there was much that was missing in their lives whether as individuals or as a community. The older generation of immigrants composed mainly of young adult males suffered extreme loneliness and isolation. First because there were not enough Chinese women around, and secondly because of the separateness of Chinese from the larger Philippine society.

Despite their loneliness, few Chinese courted or married Filipinas. Accordingly, it was not that the Chinese had no opportunities to meet Filipinas or that the Filipinas did not like them. They were attracted by many pretty Filipinas and wished they could court and marry them. Unfortunately, the Dagupan Chinese frowned at and disapproved of mixed marriages between Chinese and Filipinos. This had led many unmarried men to travel to distant cities and provinces where there were larger num-

bers of Chinese families with marriageable daughters, or Chinese women servants. Parenthetically, according to some accounts, many Dagupan Chinese bachelors went to court favor with the Cojuangco patriarch in Tarlac in the hope that he would allow them to marry the Chinese maid servants of his daughters.

The search for prospective Chinese wives and eventual marriages outside Dagupan led to the expansion of the Dagupan Chinese business linkages not only to Manila, Northern, Central, and Southern Luzon but as far as the Visayas and Mindanao.

Prejudice against mixed marriages did not prevent some Chinese from marrying Filipinas. In the twenties and thirties, many Chinese businessmen married the sister, daughter or relative of their Filipino business partners. According to some people, because there were few social occasions for Chinese bachelors to meet young Filipina ladies, the Chinese men frequented nightclubs. There they could socialize openly with little inhibitions. Chinese met and married Filipinas as a consequence of their going to these nightclubs. However these cases were very rare. Perhaps there were more cases of Chinese males marrying their Filipina maids and employees.

Most mixed marriages were not blessed by the Catholic church. Chinese found the church requirements of baptism and attending regular mass too demanding and complicated. A Filipina who married a Chinese in those days told me that the Catholic priests disapproved of mixed marriages unless they were blessed by the church. When she and her Chinese husband decided to be married by a municipal judge instead of a priest, the priest warned her that she was committing a mortal sin. She was told that their children would not go to heaven. However, Filipinas who chose not follow church rituals were not the only victims of scorn. Chinese women who refused conversion were regarded as dangerous heretics.

In the early 20s and 30s, socialization between Dagupan Chinese and the Filipinos was mainly confined to business and business related activities. In the accounts of most Dagupan Chinese old timers, Filipino prejudice against the Chinese were very open. Some believe that such prejudice was a legacy of the Catholic Church. But others claimed that it was reinforced by their resentment of Chinese dominance in commerce. Accor-

ding to one old timer, it was not unusual to hear some public officials telling their fellow citizens that the Chinese did not deserve protection or compassion for aside from being heathens they were siphoning off the wealth of the Philippines to China.

By early 1930 there were over 200 ethnic Chinese families in Dagupan. They owned all kinds of shops: small groceries, bazaars, *sari-sari* stores, bakeries, fruit and candy stores, restaurants, shoe stores, hardware, lumberyard, tin and glassware store, rice and corn stores. Dagupan businessmen were taking regular trips to Manila to buy goods by rail or busses.

The growth of the immigrant population and close interaction among themselves led to an emphasis on the immigrants work and culture. The immigrant Chinese emphasized hard work, discipline, moderation and sobriety. Work means laboring, whether under someone's employ or on their own home, from early morning to late at night. The importance of domestic joy was emphasized. Vital to a loving home was good relationship between spouses. Immigrants were well advised to nurture their daughters. They had to train them to observe Chinese rituals and traditions. They were to be raised as obedient mates, attend to the happiness of the home, the needs of the children. They were to be meek, modest and receive a solid education on attending to household chores. Young girls were told to guard themselves against the wiles of young admirers especially those of young Filipinos.

In the 30s they organized three more associations. The Chinese Shopkeepers Association (1930), Artists' Basketball Association (1931) and Sports Association (1932). These organizations were mainly functional. The Shopkeepers' Association was intended:

- to acquaint themselves with the American Bookkeeping Law;
- to neutralize Filipino prejudice against the Chinese; and
- resolve business conflicts among Dagupan Chinese.

According to some surviving old timers, "although the lofty aims of the organization contrasted starkly with the almost slow and infrequent activities of the organization, nonetheless, they were able to achieve to a certain degree some of their goals." The other two organizations were more

active as they were rival sports associations among the young Chinese.

From organizing community associations, the Dagupan Chinese had learned as early as the 1930s, or even far earlier from their parents, that even within their own small community organization, influence was a function of wealth. Power was not possible without money. The richest and most prominent members usually became the leaders of their community.

Since then Chinese community leaders have been men of tremendous economic wealth. The smart ones usually served as association secretaries, public relations officers, or speech writers. But the poorest of the Chinese in Dagupan were most hesitant in joining these organizations. Regardless of the economic status of the organizers, these associations engaged in benevolent activities, pooling funds for the education of the children of poor families, to help the sick members and the families of deceased Chinese.

From their handling of Chinese community affairs, the Chinese leaders as well as their community members had learned a larger principle of survival, the interconnection of wealth and security. Together they showed an unbreakable linkage between them and their hosts.

By the late 1930s, partisan politics between the Kuomintang Party (KMT) and the Communist Party (CCP) in China found its way to the Chinese community in Dagupan. Prominent business leaders not only declared for the "Three Principles of Sun Yat Sen" they volunteered to be foot soldiers in the ideological war. Some Chinese school teachers and their students organized themselves as sympathizers of the CCP and spread the writings of Mao Zedong. As a consequence, the plague of factionalism due to partisan politics dogged and divided the Dagupan Chinese until today.

One problem that had emerged was the readiness of both the KMT and the members of the CCP¹⁰ to exploit the Dagupan Chinese business community in order to serve the ideological goals of their respective parties. The intensity, the seemingly inexhaustible energies of both groups to win over the business sector was incredible. Sometimes families were divided according to political lines. About the only issue both sides agreed on was the necessity to drive the Japanese invaders out of China. Otherwise ideological rivalry haunted the Chinese during and after WWII.

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Assassination of leaders from both sides became very frequent in the mid-1950s.

The dominant ideological group in Dagupan was the KMT. The purpose of the KMT, which became a Cold War fixture, was to expose and condemn the "cruel, ruthless and savage practices" of the CCP in China. The KMT had recognition and support of the Philippine government, especially the military. The struggle only subsided when the Philippines opened diplomatic relations with the PRC in 1975.

In 1942, the Dagupan Chinese organized the Pangasinan Chinese Chamber of Commerce formally. Most organizers were also board members of the Dagupan KMT branch. The Chamber was very active in its anti-Japanese and anti-Communists campaigns throughout the province of Pangasinan. The organization was immobilized during the Japanese occupation.

When the Japanese occupied the Philippines, most Dagupan Chinese abandoned their businesses. They went hiding in the outlying or remote towns and barrios of Pangasinan. Some went as far as Sual, Anda and Bolinao. Many however were arrested, imprisoned, tortured and some were even beheaded. They attributed their capture to Chinese traitors. Many Dagupan Chinese were surprised to find out that their captors in the Japanese Imperial Army were Koreans and Taiwanese who spoke mandarin and Hokkien dialect very fluently.

Many of those young Dagupan Chinese who sided with the Chinese Communist Party (CPP) had joined the Hua Chi and the Filipino guerrillas in fighting the Japanese. Many of them believed that their organization was linked to the CCP although until now there are no documents linking the Hua Chi to the CPP.

During the war, the Chinese who hid in the barrios or who left some of their offspring under the care of the Filipino barrio folks found them not only most hospitable but were willing to shelter and hide them from the Japanese while risking not only their own lives but those of their own families. Some Chinese who left their wives in China married their Filipina protectors. Their Chinese wives who came after the war found their husbands with many children by their Filipina wives. But many of them sent their children by their Filipina wives to Chinese schools.

The war experience, which was mainly lived under the semi-protection of Filipinos and interacting with them in search of food and manners of commerce, and their common sufferings from Japanese atrocities, allowed the Chinese to see most Filipinos in a different light. The Filipinos turned out to be kinder and more humane than they expected. Indeed it took the Japanese occupation for the generation of Dagupan Chinese artisans and merchants to discover their Filipino hosts. Many of them became less prejudiced against mixed marriages.

The end of WWII found the surviving Chinese businessmen returning to Dagupan, helping to reconstruct the business center by rebuilding their stores which were razed to the ground by the retreating Japanese imperial army.

Many new entrepreneurs were engaged in selling war surplus left by the American military. Many were so successful that 10 years later, they opened new business branches in Baguio, Manila, and Cebu. In the late 50s some even invested in Taiwan.

Despite their dreams of bringing their wealth home to China, almost all the Dagupan Chinese were unable to do so. The civil war between the KMT and the CCP was being fought when they were rehabilitating their business in Dagupan. By the time they were economically stable, the Communist Party won the civil war. The Chiang Kai-shek forces had retreated to the island of Taiwan.

During the civil war, the local chapter of the KMT was able to persuade the sympathetic Philippine government to increase the immigration of Chinese to the Philippines for the reason that they were 'refugees' from communist oppression. The 1950s saw an increase in the number of Chinese immigrants in Dagupan. These were mainly wives, children, close relatives or neighbors of the Dagupan Chinese in China. According to some estimates, there were about two to three thousand Chinese in Dagupan by the mid-50s.

If the Chinese KMT partisans in Dagupan could not fight the civil war in China, they waged aggressive propaganda battles against Communists in the Philippines. The Pangasinan Chinese Chamber of Commerce (PCCC), which was closely linked with the KMT, and which had been financing the Dagupan Chinese Universal School, used October 10 (the

Republic of China's national day), to sponsor programs which propagated "Sun Yat Sen's Three Principles" and to expose "Communist atrocities in China." To attract visitors and guest, Chinese Universal School students paraded on Dagupan's main street in the morning, held athletic competitions participated in by the best teams from nearby towns in the afternoon. In the evening, a three hour program starting with political speeches of the PCCC and KMT members exhorted Dagupan Chinese to support the cause of counter-revolution by the KMT. This was followed by songs and dramas performed by students. The program ended with the PCCC, KMT members and school authorities awarding door prizes to lucky visitors.

Years of propaganda to rally the Chinese in the Philippines behind the KMT failed to achieve the ultimate goal of reconquering the mainland. Soon the propagandists and even the most enthusiastic leaders of the KMT wearied of fighting for the cause.

When the KMT-led lobby was unable to prevent the passage of President Ramon Magsaysay's Nationalization of the Retail Trade Law, anti-KMT critics charged that the KMT was no longer politically influential to protect the interest of the Chinese in the Philippines. Although diehard KMT members rallied to the defense of their organization, they retreated from their role as sponsors of counter-revolution against the PRC. Some pro-KMT elements however continued their unscrupulous witch hunt of so-called "Communists" and "Communist sympathizers" with the support of the Philippine military. Persecution of "communists" and "reds" persisted until President Marcos opened diplomatic relations with the PRC in 1975. Today, some remnants of the KMT shifted their pitch to Taiwan independence.

In 1972, the UN recognized the Communist regime of the PRC as the legitimate government of China. This caused a political dilemma for the pro-KMT Dagupan Chinese. On the other hand, the anti-KMT faction previously quiescent, became more vocal and openly expressed doubts whether the Taiwan government could be viable as a state after losing membership in the UN. The establishment of Philippine diplomatic relations with China, and the subsequent loss in diplomatic status of Taiwan, restricted political activities of the KMT supporters. Hence they concen-

trated their efforts on investing in Taiwan or entering into joint business ventures with the Taiwanese in the Philippines.

The opening of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and China in 1975 changed altogether the thrust of the KMT and the Pangasinan Chinese Chamber of Commerce (PCCC). The PCCC stopped reclaiming mainland China for the KMT. However they maintained the friendship and goodwill of the local KMT leaders as well as their close ties with the Philippine political, military and local leaders. After diplomatic relations with the PRC, the problem of the Chinese community leaders was no longer how to maintain their influence on Philippine political and military leaders, but how to be acceptable to the Philippine society at large.

Their new program contained no hint of the old three principles of Dr. Sun, but centered mainly in helping local communities .

By the late 1950s and the early 1960s many Dagupan Chinese graduates went to Manila for schooling either in Chiang Kai-shek High School, or in prestigious Philippine colleges and universities. Many Dagupan Chinese went to college and enrolled in professional courses such as medicine, engineering, law, and architecture. These were children of naturalized Filipinos who were permitted to take government exams. Another reason why descendants of Chinese shift from trade and commerce to the professions was the passage of the Nationalization of the Retail Trade Law which limited retail trade to Filipino citizens only.

The enrollment of Chinese youths in Philippine colleges and universities also changed the outlook and thrust of the PCCC. Instead of confining their activities to the propaganda work for KMT and cultivating the goodwill of the Filipino elite, their college educated children convinced their parents to engage in community service and social work. As a consequence, the PCCC raised funds to build schools for Filipinos all over Pangasinan. In a span of 30 years, from 1965 to 1995, they have built 117 school houses for elementary and high school students. Filipino political leaders and bureaucrats who saw the shift in the projects of the PCCC, told their Filipino constituents to treat the Chinese as their brothers and sisters.

The changing pattern of socialization between the 1960s and 1970s did not only take place among children of the Dagupan Chinese and their

Filipino classmates, but also among their parents who accepted their children's friends into their homes and on many occasions met their Filipino parents socially.

By mid-70s many third and fourth generation Chinese no longer identify China as their homeland. They found their own organizations such as Masonic Societies, Panda, and Dagupan Volunteer Fire Fighting Association, which suited their interests more than the political organizations of their parents and grandparents. Their most recent concern is the volunteer fire fighting organization. Indeed compared to the organizations of their parents, the interests of the third and fourth generation Chinese center mostly on how to relate and work with the host community. They are less concerned with their ethnic and cultural differences from the Filipinos but "to contribute to the national purpose." The rhetoric may be a bit presumptuous, but at least their hearts are in the right places.

However, the third and fourth generation Dagupan Chinese still keep their traditional ties with their parents. They observed traditional life's rituals such as birth, death, engagement and wedding rituals. Dagupan Chinese burial rituals today manifest an intricate interweaving of Chinese and Christian rituals. Just as close Filipino Christian friends comprehend the meaning of Chinese engagement and wedding rituals so do their Chinese counterparts understand the Christian wedding ritual. There are still some young Dagupan Chinese who held on to pure traditional Chinese rituals, but they do so to please their parents and or grandparents although most of them no longer understand the meaning of such rituals.

According to the school authorities interviewed, about 95 percent of the third and fourth generation Dagupan Chinese still speak their mother tongue (Hokkien). But only 30 percent speak and read Mandarin. But most of them are fluent in Pangasinan, English and can speak a little Ilocano and Filipino. About 80 percent of their parents or grandparents were buried in the Dagupan Chinese cemetery.

Most third and fourth generation Chinese do not believe that they have a future in China. Nor do they want to go back and live in China. But many are impressed with China's current rate of economic growth. Those who have visited China recently believe that by 2020 China would be one of the biggest economies of the world. Still most first and second genera-

tion Chinese who are over 60 years old, have the lingering wish to go back and die in China.

Most Dagupan Chinese consider local politicians from congressmen to provincial governor, vice governor, city officials, and town officials, bureaucrats, police and the military very "friendly, cooperative and helpful."

They understand that there are bad elements among these officials but they think that these are very few and far in between.

When third and fourth generation Chinese were asked whether they have to bribe their way with local Philippine officials, nearly all said no, and claimed that exceptions were very rare. But they attributed this kind of harmony to their own readiness to help officials and other government employees in financial distress.

Several third and fourth generation when asked about their feelings about the Philippines answered me this way: "I am a Chinese when I walk into my house, but I am a Filipino when I walk out of the house."

Most college educated Chinese and successful businessmen in Dagupan believe that majority of the Filipinos are not prejudiced against the Chinese. They claim that those who are prejudiced are only a small minority. For instance, they do not see the rampant kidnapping of ethnic Chinese as a manifestation of prejudice. They agree that compared to other foreign residents in Metro Manila and other parts of the Philippines, more ethnic Chinese are being kidnapped but "that is because the Chinese are easier prey." They pointed out that some of the kidnapping syndicates have Chinese, Hong Kong and Taiwanese partners.

The older, first and second generation Dagupan Chinese have a slightly different view. They believe that:

- There is still a residue of prejudice against the ethnic Chinese among many Filipinos.
- The PRC government does not have the stature to influence the Philippine government to stop kidnappings and other forms of harassment directed against the Chinese.
- The ethnic Chinese have traditionally bought their way out of trouble. In short they have always been paying for their security in the Philippines. And that the kidnappers just took advantage of this attitude.

But the old and the young Dagupan Chinese agree that kidnapping, bank robbery and other forms of crime are problems resulting from the lack of the political will of the national leaders, rather than from prejudice against the Chinese.

One recent development which Dagupan Chinese, specially the second, third and fourth generation, applaud most, is the entry of Philippine ethnic Chinese into mass media. They felt that it is about time that the position and role of the ethnic Chinese in Philippine society be presented in its proper perspective.

One of the wise old-timers I interviewed told me that there are, today, two dominant points of views in the Dagupan Chinese community. The first, shared by the surviving first and second generation Chinese—that they are “leaves that must eventually fertilize the roots of their mother tree.” The second view, shared by the third and fourth generation, believe that they are “leaves that must root themselves in places where they land.”

These statements give us an insight of inter-generational differences among the Dagupan Chinese, how they view themselves in relation to China and the Philippines. While the older generations look at themselves as direct offshoots that “must fertilize” the “mother tree” which is their image of China, the younger generation while recognizing themselves as offspring of the same tree must find their roots on the new land, the Philippines.

From the beginning, the Chinese in the Philippines, particularly in Dagupan, has had a curious history. Marked as separate entities by two colonial governments, never allowed to melt into the Philippine society, they were left with narrow choices, either assimilate into the Filipino community and lose their Chinese identity completely or preserve their separate Chinese culture and suffer the consequence of a minority group bereft of any political rights. They were given the impression that to be a part of Philippine culture they were required to renounce their Chinese heritage. Yet despite all the odds, the third and fourth generation Chinese slowly find in themselves adjusting to Philippine circumstances, and sharing much of the behavior and outlook of the Filipinos of the same generation.

The chairman of the PCCC told me that the future of the third and fourth generation Chinese is in the Philippines. They have already taken

root in the Philippines, and it would be their death if they are uprooted or transplanted abruptly. Perhaps the chairman of the PCCC may have exaggerated the degree to which the third and fourth generation Chinese have become adjusted to the Philippines for when they were asked whether they would pay for their safety like their parents or grandparents, they asserted vigorously that they would rather move their business elsewhere, even back to China if necessary, rather than pay up to stay in business in the Philippines.

Paying their way to survive has become anathema to many of the third and fourth generation Chinese. They were outraged by the practice of bribing or buying support of public officials. This clearly shows that the younger generation Chinese have grown more politically sophisticated and understood Philippine legal system better than the older generation.

What is unprecedented about Chinese history in Dagupan, perhaps in the entire Philippines, was the confrontation between the view of the world that the Chinese brought and that which they found in the Philippines. What the Philippines really provided was the new way for the third and fourth generation Chinese to perceive themselves, and what changed above all was the most basic feature of their world picture, the distinction between themselves and the Filipinos.

The history of Chinese presence in the Philippines could be said to be a constant tension between the Chinese belief of what their cultural identity is and what identity to assume in their host country.

Younger generation Dagupan Chinese, specially those who went to College, realized that the problem of defining their cultural identity was also the problem of the Filipinos. For they too had to wrestle with defining their cultural identity having undergone colonial imposition of Spain and the United States of America. Many Filipinos as much as the Chinese have been forced to subvert their cultural identity under the powerful influence of the USA.

A combination of historical circumstances, changes in Philippine government policy towards the Chinese, as well as in international relations provided the impetus for the rapid transformation of the attitudes of ethnic Chinese. From a sense of alienation or separateness of the older generation, the succeeding ones accommodated or assimilated into Phil-

ippine mainstream society albeit in various degrees of intensity and with periodic fluctuations depending on specific circumstances. One of the most decisive factors that hastened this transformation was Philippine independence and the adoption of "Filipino first" policy in trade and commerce. The retail trade law limiting its practice to Filipino citizens led many Chinese to adopt Filipino citizenship. It also forced them to enter into a variety of businesses, from wholesale to manufacturing and processing of goods. Others without capital became employees of other Chinese, while those who acquired citizenship entered the professions from which they were previously barred including media ownership.

Changes in international relations also had a strong influence on the transformation of Dagupan Chinese attitudes toward Filipinos and their role in Philippine society. When the PRC became the recognized legitimate government of China, most of the Dagupan Chinese could not readily identify with the Communist regime. Few if ever opted for PRC citizenship, choosing instead Philippine citizenship specially when the naturalization process was made easier by President Ferdinand Marcos. Undoubtedly like many Filipinos, the Chinese harbored lingering fear and suspicion of Communism. Moreover, the younger generation, unlike their elders, had lost contact with relatives and kin in China having established more ties with other Filipino Chinese and Filipinos. It is no longer unusual for many to identify themselves to strangers as Pangasinenses or from Dagupan than Chinese. Primary identification among the younger generation appear to be based on common domicile, acquisition of Filipino languages, prolonged and consistent interaction with Filipinos in a variety of social occasions outside of business, which contributed to their readiness to identify with their provincemates.

The realization of common need to survive and forge a new cultural identity and how to meet the challenges of the modern world is what seems to govern the future relations between the new generation of Chinese and Filipinos.

Naturally there remain Filipinos and Chinese who are suspicious of one another and seek to block each from full participation in Philippine society. But these groups are very small and have been unable to garner any widespread political support. It is because the distinction between

Filipinos and Chinese are more difficult to make, for they usually speak, dress and behave in the same way. Many have shed old prejudices which they feel have no more place in our contemporary world. They realize too that historical changes have shaped them so that they have more common traits and concerns and less differences. In the two colonial worlds of the Spanish and the Americans, even the Filipinos dwelt alone as a people without identity, while the Chinese, forced to live on the margin, subverted their identity.

But after Philippine independence and with the triumph of communist regime and the inability of the Chinese here to identify with the new dispensation, a collaboration of purpose and destiny between the Chinese and the Filipinos, dictated by the necessity to survive and improve their living conditions, led many of them to combine forces in business and at the same time transcend parochialism and prejudice.

The realization of the common need to survive and forge a new country to meet the challenge of the modern world, is what would govern the future relation between the new generation of Chinese and Filipinos.

This same historical phenomenon in the other Southeast Asian countries is what led Malaysian, Indonesian, Thai, and other leaders to allow the Chinese do what they do best unhampered—engage in business.

NOTES

1. Although there were already Chinese in Bacnotan later renamed Dagupan when the Augustinian Order made their *visita* in 1590, due to the entry of Limahong to Pangasinan, Chinese who were not Christians or mestizos were ejected before 1775. They were permitted to reenter in the 1850s. See Rosario Cortes, *A History of Pangasinan (1572-1800)*. It may be of interest to most people that in Vigan, the Ilocano term for Chinese is "Shangtai" (which means "who came?") which Spanish authorities later corrupted into *Sangley*.
2. Limahong was a pirate who pillaged the coastal towns of southern China in the 1570's to 1580's. Probably he was one of the supporters of the Ming Dynasty at the time of the Manchu conquest of China who, unable to offer an organized resistance to Manchu rule, were reduced to banditry together with their large following who numbered as much as hundreds of

sailors, armed men and their respective families. For over a decade, the Chinese imperial government could not suppress much less capture Limahong who harassed not only southern Chinese coastal towns but threatened the Spanish colonies in Manila, Ilocos and Pangasinan. In the latter case, Limahong was able to set up a fortified settlement and resist Spanish siege for over three months in 1575 before he and his fleet were able to escape to some remote island somewhere in southern China. *Blair and Robertson* VI:95-106.

3. Sual as a port languished in the late 1880s due to closure of the custom house as a result of the flooding of cheap rice from Saigon and with the completion of the railway between Manila and Dagupan in 1891. See Gregorio Flormata, Sr. *Memoria sobre La Provincia de Pangasinan* (Manila: La Democracia, 1901).
4. Saw milling and lumber business expanded in the 1920s and became one of the largest single business of Dagupan. See Norbert Danhaeuser, *Commercial Units Marketing Channels, and Trade Networks in a Central Luzon Town Setting* (Berkeley: University of California, Ph.D. dissertation, 1973).
5. Alfred Marche, *Luzon and Palawan* (Manila: The Filipiniana Book Guild, 1970).
6. The US Census of 1903 showed that there were 420 "foreign born yellow" with six women residents in Dagupan (*United States Bureau of Census 1905*: Table 4).
7. Daniel Doepfers, *Ethnicity and Class in the Structure of Philippine Cities* (New York: Syracuse University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1971).
8. Although by mid-nineteenth century, the Spaniards modified their monopoly policies on agriculture initiated 70 years earlier and allowed Chinese to reenter their traditional activities outside the confines of Manila.
9. Dagupan is topographically level. Its northern part is made of beach sand and river sediments while the south is mainly silt loam and clayey subsoil. It was in the nineteenth century when the basic road network was constructed. See Robert Reed, *Hispanic Urbanism in the Philippines: A Study of the Impact of Church and State* (Berkeley: University of California, M.A. thesis, 1966).
10. Although official documents of the Chinese Communist Party after 1944 showed that the party prohibited the conduct of political activities outside of China, many of the partisans in the Philippines joined the Communist Party through the International Comintern.

THE URBANIZATION OF MALOLOS, BULACAN 1762-1872

Dr. Jaime B. Veneracion
University of the Philippines

The urbanization of Malolos during the last half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries may illustrate complex political, social and economic developments occurring in the Philippine countryside prior to the Revolution of 1896. Whereas we read that it was in Malolos where the Philippine Republic was proclaimed, there has not been a serious attempt in the past to explain why this particular place was chosen for that purpose. By looking into the dynamics of urbanization, this paper hopes to provide part of the answer to the problem.

Urbanization is a concept borrowed from social geographers. It is manifested by the concentration of a large number of people, big buildings and other infrastructures and a complex way of life. From the social geographers' point of view, such infrastructural forms as buildings, parks, places of worship and governance, etc. are positioned in such a manner as would manifest underlying social and political relationships in a given geographic setting. This may be seen in the development of Malolos as an urban center, characterized as it was by big "Antillian" houses and beautiful churches.

The main thesis of this paper is that the material progress of Malolos was linked to the concentration of the Chinese and the Chinese mestizos in a place known as *Parian*, located near the Church and the plaza complex. As a center of commerce, the *Parian* soon absorbed the productive