

²⁵ *Ereccion de Pueblos - Albay, 1772-1836*, Tomo I Alcalde Mayor de Albay Domingo Navea (to) Gobernador General, Sorsogon, 26 de Abril 1810. As of 1834, Don Pedro Aguirre continued to occupy a position of power and responsibility in Albay Province—he was the Almacenero of partido de Sorsogon (In-charge of the colonial government's warehouse in Sorsogon), see Albay (new bundle), Folio 66.

²⁶ *Santa Vizita*, Box 4-A-2, Folio 159-162. *Santa visita del Pueblo de Bulusan, 1810*.

²⁷ *Ereccion de Pueblos-Camarines Sur, 1799-1820*, Folio 58-75. *Expediente creado de consulta del Alcalde Mayor sobre haverse empadronado en la Cavecera 149 tributos de Mestizos de Sangley, con el fin de que se les conceda un Gobernadorcillo y sus Oficiales. Camarines, Año de 1803*.

²⁸ *Varias Provincias-Albay, Bundle V. Expediente sobre conflicto de atribuciones suscitado entre el Gobierno Civil y Juzgado de Primera Instancia de esta provincia / de Albay / contra el Gobernadorcillo Don Esteban Amador / del pueblo de Bacon / por exacciones ilegales. Albay, 5 de Octubre 1888*.

²⁹ For a detailed discussion of General Paua's role during the Revolution and the Philippine-American War see Luis C. Dery, "General Jose Ignacio Paua and His Role During the Philippine Revolution", JOSE IGNACIO PAUA: CHINESE GENERAL IN THE PHILIPPINE REVOLUTION (Manila: Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran, Inc., 1988), pp. 19-41.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Frederic H. Sawyer, THE INHABITANTS OF THE PHILIPPINES (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1900), pp. 204-205.

³² *Ereccion de Pueblos-Samar, 1769-1799. Expediente en que el Alcalde avisa que hallandose en aquella Provincia muchos mestizos de Sangley y Vagamundos, sin querer cultivar ni hacer sus sementeras seria combeniente que estos viniesen a vivir ala Cavecera bajo del mando del Alcalde. Catbalogan, Junio 15 de 1771*.

³³ *Ereccion de Pueblos-Camarines Sur, 1799-1820. Camarines, 1815-1820. Consulta sobre la emigracion de los Indios a otros pueblos sin mas motivos. / Nueva Caceres, 16 Diciembre 1815. Antonio de Zuñiga /*.

³⁴ *Bandos y Circulares-Bundle 10. 1827. Circular de 22 de Junio para que los Gefes de Provinciana remitan a esta Capital los Chinos que ecsisten en ellas sin la competente licencia de radicacion*.

³⁵ *Ereccion de Pueblos-Camarines Sur, 1837-1850, Folio 260-264. Camarines Sur, 1839. Consulta sobre los llongos sin pasaportes ni licencias en la provincia de Camarines Sur*.

³⁶ *Ereccion de Pueblos-Camarines Sur, 1781-1833, Folio 415-457b. Los Cavesas de Barangay del pueblo de Camaligan de quejan de lo molesto que les se trabajan en el camino de Pasacao, en las sementeras de Anayan, en las conducciones de arroz de a la Yraya, en el pila arros cascara y en presnar abaca de Gobernador de aquella provincia (van unidos otros recursos de los de Milaor, Canaman, Baao, Bonbon y Oas sobre quejas que tienen analogia con la procedente). Camarines Sur, 1845*.

³⁷ *Ereccion de Pueblos-Camarines Sur, 1799-1820, Folio 58 - Expediente creado de consulta del Alcalde Mayor sobre haverse empadronado en la Cavecera 149 tributos de Mestizos de Sangley, con el fin de que se Camarines, Año de 1803*.

Images of the Chinese in the Philippines

Teresita Ang See

Introduction

When we were first brainstorming over topics for this conference, the first choice of topic for me was historiography of works on the Philippine Chinese. However, when we had our planning session at Los Baños two months ago, there was a consensus that historiography as a topic would interest only a limited number of scholars who are doing research on the Chinese in the Philippines, and we must admit, the number is, indeed, limited.

When we formed the Philippine Association for Chinese Studies (PACS), we stated that one of our goals is to do research and studies that would, hopefully, have impact on a greater number of people, and most importantly, on policy-makers and opinion-makers. A paper I delivered last year, in another conference jointly sponsored by PACS and De La Salle China Studies Program, we are happy to say, had a positive impact on some of our policy-makers. Articles written by some of our PACS members, (those published in the papers, especially), also had impact on opinion-makers. Hence, the decision to change the topic came about and the new one chosen is "Images of the Chinese in the Philippines."

What prompted us to arrive at a unanimous decision on the choice of topic was an incident recounted to us by Dr. Bernardita Churchill during our meeting. This was about the Radio Veritas program on Filipino American relations last July, 1989. In a discussion on the adverse effects of multinational companies, a young moderator quipped - "The adverse effect of multinational companies is small compared to the damage done if the Chinese were to gain control of our economy."

No less than Teodoro Locsin, former Presidential spokesman and now publisher of *Daily Globe*, in his recent column dated October 22, 1989, said:¹

If you want brilliant management, go to the Chinese, if you want solid investments, go to the Chinese because they have real money, unlike fake Filipino entrepreneurs who can invest only what the government lends them. If you want charity, go to the Chinese. Look at our metropolitan police forces—most of their spanking new patrol cars are gifts of the Chinese community. If you are a public official and want someone to shake down, go to the Chinese. And if you are an AFP officer and want to get the matter of your retirement fixed with a good kidnapping before committing yourself fully to the national defense, turn to “C” in the telephone directory, for Chen, Cheng, and Chung.

This column of Locsin is at least a kind of slanted, “tongue-in-cheek” praise. It represents a typical view of the Chinese as rich businessmen, docile milking cows, and convenient scapegoats. Aside from the comment in the Radio Veritas program, that “the Chinese control the Philippine economy,” there are often accusations that the Chinese are price manipulators and hoarders, especially whenever a crisis such as rice or flour shortages occurs. These comments are prevalent politicians, media people and consumers make them.

Economic nature of prejudices

Many social distance surveys² and studies on ethnic prejudices have been conducted in the past. Although they differ in measurements, they still have a common finding—that the Chinese, like the Muslims in the South, lie low in the social distance scale. In studies using semantical differences, both Weightman and Berreman³ came up with these adjectives—the Chinese are business-minded, good in mathematics, rich, industrious, thrifty, dynamic, and persevering.

An analysis of both the positive and negative images of the Chinese leads to one conclusion—all the traits mentioned are economic in nature. They are a reflection of the supposed “business success” of the Chinese. In fact, they intensify the myth that all Chinese are businessmen—or to say it more bluntly—the Chinese are all “economic animals”. But let us examine the facts first—how true is this belief? Are the Chinese all in business and are they all good in business? Are all Chinese rich and successful? Why are the Chinese predominantly in business and how did the myth of Chinese control come about in the

first place?

Allow me to cite some little known facts to refute this myth:

Do you know that out of the reportedly close to 80,000 Filipino workers in Taiwan, 60% are of Chinese descent? The young Chinese Filipinos, like many other Filipino overseas workers, have to go abroad too in search of greener pastures.

In one of the more prominent Chinese high schools in Metro Manila—Grace Christian High School, a young boy of fifteen committed suicide due to poverty. The father was bedridden and his mother eked out a living in the “buy and sell” business. The boy did not have money to pay his tuition for the second semester; he did not have money for his “parol” project in practical arts; he did not have money for school supplies; and often he went hungry because he was ashamed to take out his baon of rice and fish in front of his classmates.

The same thing happened to a 60-year old Chinese who hanged himself upon losing his job and being told by his landlord that the apartment he was staying in had been sold and he had to move. If he had been 65 years old or more, he would have qualified to live in the old folks home located, of all places, inside the Chinese cemetery. An old folks home for women is located in Malinta, Bulacan.

Do you know that there are Chinese who live in squatter areas and do you know that in Chinatown, there are many ladies of the night who are of Chinese descent, forced into the oldest profession, again, because of economic circumstances?

Talking about success in business—let me cite one example. There used to be seven indigenous soft-drink companies in the fifties, all owned by Chinese. None of them could compete with the giants like Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola so one by one they were forced out of business. The last surviving Filipino softdrink company—Cosmos, owned by the Wong family—finally had to sell out to the Concepcions just last August. Are all Chinese successful in business? For every success story, there is also a failure which seldom gets reported because of loss of face.

Although extremely poor Chinese are really the exception, we cannot deny the fact that there, indeed, are poor Chinese who have to scrounge for their daily meals. The poor Chinese are seldom heard of because in most circumstances, they have already assimilated into the

Philippine society and often, their Filipino neighbors are not even aware of the family's being Chinese. Others, on the other hand, have means to seek assistance from the Chinese community. The old folks home, for instance, is managed by the Philippine Chinese Charitable Association. Many groups provide scholarships for indigent children, and there are also free clinics where both Filipinos and Chinese can go to for free consultations and medicines.

Concentration in business

Most of the early Chinese who went overseas to the United States, Europe and other parts of Southeast Asia ended up as service workers (laundry men, tailors, barbers, etc.), as laborers, or as agricultural workers and miners. Why did many Chinese who came to the Philippines go into business? Many have been analyzing the reasons and this topic would fill up the pages of another lecture. I will cite only these simple but important reasons:

1. The Philippine economy was still in its natural subsistence stage when the Chinese came. So the Chinese conveniently filled the vacuum left by the Spaniards, who considered being merchants too lowly an occupation, and by the inhabitants who were still subsistence farmers at that time. As middlemen and traders, the Chinese served as the backbone of Spanish colonial economy by providing the basic needs of the people. Had the Chinese come a few hundred years later, for instance, when the Philippine economy was in a more advanced stage of development, it would be highly doubtful that many of them would be in business.

2. As immigrants whose stay was meant to be temporary only, the Chinese were after quick returns so they could go back home sooner. Agricultural production, requiring a much longer gestation period, was not an option for them.

3. No Chinese could own land even during Spanish times, hence they could not go into agriculture unlike in other parts of Southeast Asia, such as the zinc mines and the rubber plantations in Malaysia which absorbed a number of Chinese immigrants.

4. The United States applied the California Exclusion Act to the Philippines, allowing the entry only of Chinese merchants and their immediate families into the country.

5. Lack of citizenship barred the Chinese from the practice of professions, hence they all had to flock into business.

On the other hand, back home in China, especially within the feudal rural area where most Chinese come from, the Chinese never had the opportunity to become businessmen, no matter how thrifty and industrious they were. This proves in another way that the Chinese are not "economic animals" by nature.

In short, the role of the Chinese in Philippine business was created more by historical forces rather than by personal factors. The so-called business ability of the Chinese is something acquired and not something inherent in the Chinese make-up.

Myth of economic control

How did the myth of Chinese control of economy come about in the first place? Chinese businessmen are very visible because they are predominantly in the frontline trading business—they buy and they sell. This, as I said, is because of historical circumstances—trading was the only means of livelihood open to them during colonial times. Let us examine other facts to refute this myth of Chinese control.

1. There are no Chinese in strategic industries such as fuel and power generation. You know who owns the fuel companies and how fuel price increases affect prices of all other commodities. You also know who owns the power company. If power shuts down, all businesses grind to a halt—that, we can call control.

2. There are no Chinese in another vital industry—mass transportation like jeepneys and buses. You know how mass transportation strikes can paralyze the whole country's economy. It is only lately, due to the acute shortage of mass transport vehicles, that some Chinese have entered into joint ventures with foreign companies to provide the additional buses plying our streets. Many traders and dealers of spare parts, however, are Chinese.

3. The Chinese are successful in such light industries as textile, winery, cigar and cigarettes and such businesses as hardware, lumber, and flour trading because they are pioneers in these fields. Many used to be traders who were forced to go into manufacturing of the lines of products they used to sell due to the passage of the retail trade nationalization law barring them from retail trading.

4. The high profile business magnates like Henry Sy, John Gokongwei and the Gaisanos are all in the fast turn-over department store businesses. They need the publicity to boost their sales. They intensify the myth that all Chinese are rich, successful businessmen. The rest of the Chinese are quietly doing their share in spurring this country to be the next newly industrializing country (NIC) of Asia.

5. Chinese businessmen are not a unified homogeneous group. Cut-throat competition among them is even keener than between them and the Filipinos, hence, it is impossible for the Chinese to form a cartel to dominate the economy.

These few facts hopefully can help people see the Chinese image more clearly. However, we cannot deny that the economic image of the Chinese exists and that it is the more persistent image that enters into the Filipinos' consciousness.

The social image

The social image, likewise, leaves much to be desired. Many of the early surveys showed that the Chinese are considered "unassimilable", that they are clannish, that they refuse to marry Filipinos, that they are a dirty and noisy people, and similar other negative impressions. The image of the Chinese as "Intsik Beho or Intsik Tsekwa" is still the typical image we find in Philippine literature.⁴ The myth that "Once a Chinese, always a Chinese," is, unfortunately, still a prevalent belief. Gregorio F. Zaide, writing his *Political and Cultural History of the Philippines*, summed up the prevalent anti-Chinese sentiments this way: "the Chinese were obnoxious because they were economically dominant, strange because they were culturally alien, repulsive because they were culturally clannish and disloyal because they were politically unreliable."⁵

But, do realities fit this image? Rapid changes have occurred, especially among the young local-born Chinese. The accusations of "unassimilability" of the Chinese can easily be refuted if you look at the present crop of Chinese Filipino students in your universities. The socio-cultural changes that have happened to them since World War II are very visible and far-reaching.

Dr. Gerald McBeath, a political scientist, in his study on the *Political Integration of the Chinese in the Philippines* way back in 1969

pointed out some indicators of this socio-cultural change among the Chinese youth. Last April, I conducted a rough survey of 381 Chinese students distributed among seven schools. It is not as scientific as what McBeath did but nevertheless, the findings showed how much changes have occurred twenty years after his 1969 study. Let me go through a few of these indicators:

Language—Language is the strongest link to one's sinicity or to one's Chinese heritage. It is an unfortunate reality that many young Chinese have lost the facility to speak, much less to read and write, in Chinese.

McBeath's survey of 2,490 students showed:⁶

Fluent in Mandarin	32.9%
Fluent in English	37.7%
Fluent in Filipino	59.6%

My survey showed :⁷

Fluent in Mandarin	24.40%
Fluent in English	68.24%
Fluent in Filipino	85.30%
Fluent in Hokkien	47.50%

As to the language spoken at home, McBeath's 1969 findings showed 36.9% speak a mixture of Chinese and Philippine languages while 44% speak Chinese only at home.

My findings showed 10.5% (compared to McBeath's 44%) who speak only Chinese at home, 77.94% speak a mixture and 11.29% speak only English and Tagalog.

Actually, even if the present local-born Chinese can speak in Chinese, it is an adulterated kind of Chinese mixed with Filipino prefixes and suffixes and using Filipino syntax spoken in Filipino accents which easily distinguishes them as Philippine Chinese.

Reading preferences—My findings showed that 1.57% read Chinese newspapers only (they must be among the new immigrants) while 66.67% read English and Tagalog papers only. Only 31.76% read both

Chinese and English papers. I said only because some of the Chinese high schools have a once-a-week Chinese newspaper reading subject.

Intermarriage—My figures on intermarriage are equally interesting. Students were asked what their parents' reaction to intermarriage would be. 9% said the parents will be favorable, 45% said parents will be unfavorable and the remaining parents will either be unconcerned, (they do not care one way or another) or have reservations. When asked about their own possibility of contracting interracial marriages, 12% said yes, 26% said no, and a high of 60% said maybe.

Religion—My survey showed that a high 78% of the respondents are Christians. It is interesting to note that even for the old Chinese who practice Buddhism, Taoism or folk traditions, Christianity is also accepted and the more prevalent religion is actually a syncretic combination of Catholic, Buddhist or Taoist and folk traditions.

Food choices—Gerald Mcbeath in 1969 said that "the Philippine Chinese share in large part the diet of the Filipinos, especially since most families would have Filipino maids who do the cooking. Unless the Chinese wife cooks Chinese dishes, the Chinese restaurant is now the sole repository of this part of Chinese culture, and the family is raised largely on Filipino dishes."⁸ This observation is even more applicable now. Even in the so-called Chinatown area, the traditional Chinese bakeshops churning out hopia and rice cakes have given way to refrigerator cakes, chiffon cakes and the like. Within a one kilometer radius from the heart of Chinatown, one can count at least six hamburger and fast-food chains. The young ones now prefer hamburger and Coke to *siopao* and Chinese tea.

The use of chopsticks has also vanished even in Chinese restaurants. Before, Chinese restaurants would place chopsticks on the table and one has to request for spoons and forks if necessary. Now, it is the other way around because even most Chinese would find the use of chopsticks cumbersome. In manners of dressing and the observance of traditions, the Chinese are indistinguishable from their Filipino peers. In life rituals such as birth, marriage, and death, the Filipino customs prevail. For instance, several years ago, to avoid traffic congestion during November 1, the Chinese leaders tried to encourage the Chinese to visit their dead on the traditional Chinese *Ching Ming* or

"Festival of the Dead" which falls on March or April but the Chinese still persisted in visiting the cemetery on November 1 like they were used to.

Socio-cultural integration

Another indicator of socio-cultural integration is seen in the fact that more and more young Chinese have native Filipinos as their close personal friends. Likewise, more and more of them are joining Filipino civic organizations like the Jaycees, the Rotary Clubs, the Lions Clubs, etc. instead of joining purely Chinese organizations concerned only with narrow interests of the Chinese community. Professional organizations nowadays are also teeming with active Chinese members and officers. Among them are the Writers Association of the Philippines, the Philippine Medical Society, the University Student Councils, the Filipino businessmen's groups, etc.

In fact, there are quite a number of young Chinese-Filipinos who have quite successfully integrated themselves with the Filipino social milieu. Since many of their close personal friends are Filipinos, they would tend to dismiss or ignore the existence of a "Chinese-problem", or perhaps they are no longer aware of the possibility of any strains in Filipino and Chinese relations.

Moreover, since 1975, when easy access to citizenship was provided through a decree of former President Marcos, many young Chinese became Filipino citizens and more and more of them are moving out of the traditional business field and going into the professions. Without citizenship, they could not practice the professions, so most of them flocked to business courses. Now, scanning through the roster of professional board examination topnotchers, we see many single syllable surnames. Young Chinese are shining in new fields in the arts and sciences—law, literature, journalism, art, music, mass communications, Philippine studies, social work, etc. These courses and/or careers are chosen only by people who have wholeheartedly accepted their being Filipino and the fact that all their lives will be lived in the Philippines. One will not choose to take up social work, for instance, or mass communications, if one does not have a sense of belonging to Philippine society.

With these changing realities, the image of the Chinese will also

change accordingly. While there has been a lot of negative publicity about the Chinese, increasingly there have also been a number of positive commentaries. Willie Esposito, now the imprimatur television of Channel 9, once wrote a column for *Philippine Star*, entitled: "It's Time We Loved Our Chinese."⁹ *Manila Chronicle's* editor-in-chief on leave, Amando Doronila, wrote a guest column for the Chinese Filipino digest, *Tulay*, entitled "The Chinese In and Around Us."¹⁰ He admitted to me that he used to be very anti-Chinese before but now that he has met more Chinese he knows better. *Philippine Daily Inquirer* in its editorial during Chinese New Year last February, greeted the Chinese *Kung Si Fat Choi* but considered the Chinese as Filipinos, a cultural minority who are integral parts of Philippine society.¹¹

In consonance with these changes, even the image of the Filipinos in the minds of the Chinese has also changed. Among the older generation Chinese, most of the personal contacts they have with Filipinos are with their workers, their employees, their maids at home, corrupt policemen and firemen, Bureau of Internal Revenue and city hall inspectors who harass them regularly, and politicians who befriend or lambast them depending on personal convenience and purpose. Hence, the image of the Filipino in their consciousness is also negative. Now, with the younger generation Chinese having personal Filipino friends in school, at work, and in their neighborhood, a deeper and more intimate relationship is formed which gives rise to a generally positive image of the Filipinos in their minds.

Image consciousness

The next question is: should the Chinese be concerned about their image; should they be bothered by the fact that the prevalent image of the Chinese in the Philippines is still a negative one? In Rodolfo Bulatao's 1974 study on Ethnic Prejudices [against Muslims and Chinese] in five Philippine cities, the findings (from 2,000 respondents interviewed) showed that only 6% think that the integration of the Chinese should be given high priority while 54% said it should be given no priority at all.¹² This led Dr. Bulatao to conclude and suggest that:

That most Filipinos rate their ethnic minority problems of low priority is not a healthy sign. Non-rational elements in ethnic identities

have such a capacity for creating trouble and dissension and for upsetting the stability of societies that it would seem shortsighted to assign them to a category of merely transitory side issues.

More importantly, Bulatao says:

Childhood prejudices and narrow loyalties may be diluted and overlaid with specific concerns as one matures, but they remain latent and capable of being mobilized unwittingly or by design. The less aware the public is of these underlying cleavages, the more explosive their potential, and the less adequately ethnic tensions are handled, the more difficult it will be to create one national unity out of the country's various ethnic components.

This warning, especially on the unwitting or deliberate mobilization of latent hostilities, cannot be ignored and there have been increasing signs that the "ethnic Chinese" can be utilized to divert attention on more pressing national issues as what had happened countless times in the past.

You may not know it but three years ago, on July 5, 1986, a day after American Independence Day when a wide anti-American, anti-bases rally was held, there was also an anti-Chinese mass rally held in Angeles City. They were protesting against pressing economic issues - shortage of lumber, high cost of basic commodities, and other similar problems etc. And, of course, they found the Chinese convenient scapegoats and put the blame on them. They distributed handbills and pasted protest posters all over the city. What was intriguing was the fact that all the posters and handbills were printed, not mimeographed, on good quality paper. The huge streamers they hung on the streets were also very professionally executed. The association which spearheaded the rally was such a small association of furniture makers and the instigator was actually someone who could not buy lumber for his furniture making because he had outstanding accounts with just about everybody around. You may call us paranoid but we later found out that the leaders were in Hawaii a few months after the rally.

This incident, together with escalating undercurrents of ethnic tensions, shows that there is an urgency to have something done. Ethnic tensions exist mainly because the Chinese are considered a separate people, they are not integrated, they are apart from the

mainstream. These apparently deep-seated anti-Chinese prejudices have existed since colonial times. In fact, they sprouted largely due to our colonial experiences.

Spanish anti-Chinese prejudices

In the more than a thousand years before Spanish rule that the Chinese were trading with native Filipinos, there were no accounts of racial conflicts. However, during the first two hundred years of Spanish rule in the Philippines, "sullen suspicions and mutual hostility characterized Sino-Spanish relations, exploding periodically into bloody massacres and mass expulsions." Such massacres took place in 1603, 1639, 1662, 1762 and 1820.¹³ John Crawford observed that the lot of the Chinese under the Spanish colonial government was much worse than the Chinese in the Dutch East Indies and the restrictions and disabilities placed on them were unknown in the colonial possessions of other European nations.¹⁴

Measures were adopted which placed them under heavy disadvantage compared with the Spaniards and *Indios*. Ordinances were promulgated which made trading extremely difficult, subjected them to extortionate taxation, limited their freedom of travel and their place of residence, denied them as fair a trial as those granted Europeans and closed certain occupations to them.¹⁵ The underlying motives, were predominantly economic in nature: jealousy and fear of competition in commercial fields.¹⁶ Aside from economic motives, early Catholic priests, in their eagerness to convert the people to their belief, did not hesitate to raise doubts against the Chinese for having a religion different from that of the Catholics.¹⁷

A variety of historical, psychological and sociological reasons made the Chinese—in the eyes of the Spaniards—the most vulnerable of possible scapegoats. The virulence of anti-Chinese campaigns in the last quarter of the 19th century can be attributed to the frustration of the Spaniards in the face of threatening Filipino nationalism. The Chinese became the scapegoat for a social system which had not satisfied the needs of the masses.

In a classic application of the western dictum of divide and rule the Chinese were separated from the natives through residential restrictions in the *Parian*. The colonial authorities sought to cultivate hatred

between the Chinese and Filipinos. For instance, no Chinese may act as a godfather to the child of a native "so that he may not be united to a native by the spiritual bond of *compradazgo*."¹⁸ Likewise, the Spanish authorities deliberately encouraged the dominant native Filipino population to vent their frustrations, hostilities and hatred against the Chinese as a way of diverting attention away from their own misrule.

The roots of these Spanish anti-Chinese prejudices clung tenaciously to future generations of Filipinos down to the present. The Filipinos developed the Spanish prejudices against the Chinese and learned from example to despise them. Even the Chinese mestizos exhibited this hatred. As Wickberg noted, "the Christianization of the Filipino and in turn the Filipinization of the Chinese mestizo developed in both a certain sense of cultural superiority that made them look down and despise the Chinese."¹⁹

American divide-and-rule policy

The American regime proved no better. While the Spaniards separated the Chinese from the Filipinos physically through the *Parian*, the Americans separated the Chinese psychologically by allowing the community to exist as a separate self-sufficient enclave. Again applying the colonial policy of divide and rule, the Americans encouraged the Chinese to put up their own hospitals, their own schools, their own trade and social organizations. The long-term effect of this policy was even more insidious than the legacy of the Spanish policies.

Under the liberal policy of the Americans, the Chinese prospered. Economic growth of this ethnic group was unprecedented. However, having a separate existence from the mainstream, the economic prosperity of the Chinese again became the source of envy and hostility which sporadically broke out into racial riots such as in 1919 and 1924.

During the commonwealth period, Philippine nationalism was not confined to the political aspiration of winning independence but also to economic aspects. Economic nationalism was translated into a policy of de-alienization, of increasing Filipino participation in and control of economic activity. This desire is reflected in the Constitution itself which reserved the development of natural resources and operation of public utilities to Filipinos. Other legislations that aimed to eliminate

alien participation would include the nationalization of the public market stalls.

Post-war economic nationalism

Aggressive economic nationalism was the rule after independence in 1946. Legislative measures such as the nationalization of retail trade, rice and corn industries, enterprises like banking, the practice of professions like engineering, architecture, chemistry, pharmacy, dentistry, optometry, accounting, law, nursing and medicine. As teachers, they were barred from teaching history, sociology and political science. Above all was the adoption of the Filipino First Policy of 1961.

All the above measures stemmed again from the economic motive - the Filipinos' desire to have greater participation in the nation's economic activities. There is nothing wrong with this desire, but history has shown us that hostility and prejudice against the Chinese are not the right ways to achieve this desire.

The Chinese, up to now, are still considered convenient scapegoats for all the economic ills we are suffering from. Sporadically, newspapers, radio, and television, would banner headlines screaming against supposed Chinese control of the economy. As pointed out earlier, the root of the problem is that the Chinese have not been accepted yet as an integral part of Philippine society.

For instance, accusations are hurled against people like John Gokongwei and Henry Sy. What many people do not know is that these two high-profile retail kings are *persona-non-grata* among the older leaders of the Chinese community because they are considered to have "forgotten their Chineseness and Chinese obligations." The Chinese are complaining that these two business magnates do not participate in any of the Chinese community-centered activities. They do not contribute to their hometown or family associations, nor do they participate in any of these associations' activities, and yet, many Filipinos consider them Chinese and not part of the Filipino business community.

This is an unfortunate situation, not only because ethnic tensions of any kind are counter-productive; but most importantly because the potentials of the Chinese minority cannot be harnessed fully. Since the early days of Spanish colonial rule, the local Chinese economy has been

an integral part of the native economy and cannot be isolated from it. Chinese capital and Chinese business are part of domestic economy. Most of the profits the Chinese earn are plowed back into the Philippines and not repatriated to mother companies abroad. Most Filipinos cannot accept this fact and continue to perceive the Chinese as an alien minority instead of as one of the cultural minorities of the country, despite the fact that they have been living here for generations and will continue living here for a few more.

Integration and acceptance

The key to changing the image of the Chinese in the Philippines lies in integration—in being a part of the mainstream. Filipinos would not begrudge the Chinese their successes if they were accepted as part of Philippine society because their success would also be the Filipinos' success—the benefits of the economic growth in the Chinese sector redound fully to Philippine society and vice-versa.

Economic realities cannot be changed. Most of the Chinese belong to the middle class and are comparatively better-off than the average Filipinos. We cannot change this reality just because we want to change our image. This is a fact that we all should be proud of and be happy about because at least, the Chinese are not a burden to society but instead are partners in bearing the burdens of society. Focusing on their business successes and their fortunes is a useless exercise. What is important is to realize how the Chinese, as a sector, have been using the economic influence they wield for the betterment of this.

That the Chinese are here to stay is another reality that cannot be changed and should not be changed. Ethnic Chinese in the country number around 800,000 and 90% of these are Chinese who were born in this country and have known no other home except the Philippines. To these Chinese Filipinos, China is the country of their ancestors, it is a China that they learned from their textbooks or from stories of their elders. They view events in China with a sense of detachment that shocks their elders and puzzles other Filipinos.

The image problem is not something we can erase overnight. We cannot just say that we Chinese want to be part of you Filipinos so you must come forward and accept us. Social acceptance, to be meaningful, has to be deserved and given freely. If and when the Chinese have been

accepted fully as one with the Filipinos, then the image problem will disappear on its own accord. This acceptance will come and we can do much in helping to accelerate it just as we can also do much in retarding this acceptance. Filipinos have no problem accepting the Chinese as Filipinos when they shine in their particular fields. For instance, when Jerome Khohayting won a medal in the Math Olympiad held in Brunswick, Germany, our papers bannered: Pinoy math wizard shines in Olympiad. Basketball fans accept Atoy Co, Samboy Lim, Lim Eng Beng, etc. readily as Filipino basketball players. Filipinos rejoiced with Diane Tanlimco when she won the gold medal in bowling. Others like writer Ricky Lee, singers Jose Mari Chan and Richard Tan, have no problems being accepted as Filipinos.

Let me tell you that the rest of the Chinese Filipinos are people like them, whose hearts and minds are Filipinos who happened to trace their ancestry to China. Way back in 1970, Dr. Robert Tilman concluded in his study of the Philippine-Chinese youth: "The problems, frustrations, prejudices, follies, faults, hopes and aspirations are about the same, whether the students be Chinese or Filipino."²⁰ It is only when more Filipinos can accept this reality that the image of the Chinese in the eyes of the Filipinos will change for the better.

Philippine-China relations and the Chinese

Lastly, let me add a few more words about China's role, or what China's role should be concerning the local Chinese in the Philippines. Philippine-China relations affect the local Chinese and vice-versa.

For instance, on the eve of diplomatic relations with China, the Philippines allowed easy access to citizenship because it did not want a sizable number of people owing allegiance to and falling under the jurisdiction of a foreign government. This action has so far been the only time that a positive policy towards integrating the local Chinese had been adopted. It is also the only policy that has had the most far-reaching and long term effects on the local Chinese.

On the other hand, the image of the Chinese also affects Philippine-China relations. Most Filipinos make no distinction between Philippine Chinese, mainland Chinese, Taiwanese, Hong Kong Chinese, Singaporeans etc. They lump them all together as Chinese. This often creates a lot of confusion. For instance, in one university which

exhibited photographs on Asian heritage, the organizers displayed the flag being used by Taiwan. When I commented on it, they said it's the same, it's also Chinese. When this same school invited me to be one of their guest speakers, they put under my name, representative from Taiwan. When I protested, they asked me so innocently: Why is there any difference, you're Chinese, aren't you?" There are as many variations of Chinese, each projecting a vastly different image from the other, and each embracing widely disparate principles and beliefs from the other.

At any rate, it is heartening for us to read pronouncements from China's top hierarchy that China has not only re-affirmed its policy of considering the Chinese abroad as belonging to their countries of domicile but has even gone further in encouraging them to sink their roots into their own countries and work for the interests of these countries.

As the Chinese Filipinos cross ethnic lines and come to identify themselves more as Filipinos, their cultural traditions also gradually become part of the greater national tradition. It eventually results in mutual enrichment and enhancement of the positive elements in each culture. This healthy interchange can promote greater goodwill among people, among Filipinos and Chinese all over the world especially. Just as in the early days, when Chinese products were a prime commodity for exchange in the international market, the Chinese human elements have also become agents of change that would bring greater enrichment and development to the Filipino nation.

The successful integration of the Chinese into Philippine society will be of great benefit not just to the Philippines but to China itself. The sense of belonging and complete identification of the local Chinese with the Philippine milieu gives rise to their confidence in the nation and the much-needed impetus for them to share in the task of rebuilding the Filipino nation. With the local Chinese businessmen and young professionals giving their best to the development of the Philippines, greater peace and prosperity would not be far away. In this regard, a stable and prosperous Philippines would redound to the benefit of the entire Asian continent and also to China, above all.

Notes

- ¹ Teodoro L. Locsin, "Waktoo" [column] *Philippine Daily Globe*, (October 22, 1989).
- ² For analysis of studies on Anti-Chineseness, consult article of Allen L. Tan. "A Survey of Studies on Anti-Sinoism in the Philippines" *Asian Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (1968), pp. 198-207. Titles that the author was able to consult (not all are in Allen Tan's list) are:

Rodolfo Bulatao, A TEST OF THE BELIEF CONGRUENCE PRINCIPLE IN PREJUDICE AGAINST CHINESE IN THE PHILIPPINES. Quezon City: University of the Philippines (unpublished master's thesis), 1967.

_____. ETHNIC ATTITUDES IN FIVE PHILIPPINE CITIES. [A Report Submitted to the Philippine Social Science Council Research Committee.] Quezon City: Social Science Research Laboratory, University of the Philippines, 1973. (bound mimeographed copy).

Stanley D. Eitzen, "Two Minorities: The Jews of Poland and the Chinese in the Philippines," in Charles J. McCarthy, ed. PHILIPPINE CHINESE PROFILE: ESSAYS AND STUDIES. Manila: Pagkakaisa Sa Pag-unlad, Inc., 1974, pp. 107-128.

Margaret W. Horsley, SANGLEYS: THE FORMATION OF ANTI-CHINESE FEELINGS IN THE PHILIPPINES - A CULTURAL STUDY OF STEREOTYPES OF PREJUDICE. Columbia University, (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation), 1950.

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_____. THE PHILIPPINE CHINESE: CULTURAL HISTORY OF A MARGINAL TRADING COMMUNITY. Cornell University (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation), 1960.

³Weightman, *Ibid.* and Joel V. Berreman, "Filipino Stereotypes of Racial and National Minorities," *Pacific Sociological Review*, Vol. 1, (1958), pp. 7-12.

⁴Joaquin Sy, "Ang Larawan ng Tsino sa Panitikang Pilipino," *Tulay Literary Journal*, Vol. II (February, 1987), pp. 64-87.

⁵Gregorio F. Zaide, PHILIPPINE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY. Manila: Philippine Education Co., Vol. II (1958) p. 63. .pa

⁶Gerald McBeath. POLITICAL INTEGRATION OF THE PHILIPPINE-CHINESE. Berkeley: University of California, Center for South and Southeast Asia Studies, 1973. p. 110, 118.

- ⁷Teresita Ang See, "Integration and Identity: Social Change in the Post WWII Philippine Chinese Community," lecture delivered in the Xiamen Conference on The Overseas Chinese Abroad: Economic, Social and Political Changes, held in Xiamen, China, April 27-29, 1989.

⁸McBeath, *op. cit.* p. 118.

⁹William V. Esposito, "It's Time We Loved Our Chinese," *Tulay*, Vol. I No. 8 (January 15, 1989) p. 6.

¹⁰Amando Doronila, "The Chinese in and around us," *Tulay*, Vol. I No. 1 (January 12, 1989) p. 6.

¹¹"Kung Si Fat Choi," [Editorial], *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, (February 25, 1989).

¹²See concluding remarks of Rodolfo Bulatao, *op. cit.* Ethnic Attitudes

¹³John Phelan, *Hispanization of the Philippines*. Ann Arbor, University of Wisconsin Press, (1959), pp. 11-12.

¹⁴John Crawford. A DESCRIPTIVE DICTIONARY OF THE INDIAN ISLANDS AND ADJACENT ARCHIPELAGO. London: Bubury and Evans, (1856), pp. 93, 391.

¹⁵Antonio S. Tan, "Five Hundred Years of Anti-Chinese Prejudices," Unpublished paper presented at the Conference on: "The Many Faces of Racism, Intolerance, and Prejudices," jointly sponsored by the UNESCO and the National Historical Institute, (February, 1987) p. 4.

¹⁶Tan, *Ibid.* p. 20.

¹⁷Cited in Tan, *Ibid.* p. 39.

¹⁸Rafael Bernal, "The Chinese Colony in Manila, 1570-1770," in THE CHINESE IN THE PHILIPPINES, 1570-1170. ed. by Alfonso Felix. Manila: Solidaridad Publishing Co., Vol. I (1966), p. 62.

¹⁹Edgar Wickberg, "The Chinese Mestizo in Philippine History," *Journal of Southeast Asia*, Vol. V (March 1961), pp. 62-100.

²⁰Robert O. Tilman, "Philippine-Chinese Youth, Today and Tomorrow," IN PHILIPPINE-CHINESE PROFILE: ESSAYS AND STUDIES. Ed. by Charles J. McCarthy, Manila: Pagkakaisa Sa Pag-unlad, Inc., 1974. p. 48.