

Javellana, Ester Jardeleza, interview at 62 J. Luna St., La Paz, Iloilo City (October 1995, July to August, 1997).

Javellana, Alexis Arcosa, informant, Iloilo City (May 29, 1999).

Javellana, Olympia Pacifico, informant, Iloilo City (May 26, 1999).

Javellana, Susana Torre, informant, Iloilo City (May 26, 1999).

Javellana, Antonio Jardeleza, interview at Tony's Fast-food and Catering Services, J. Luna St., La Paz, Iloilo City (August and November 1997).

Javellana, Dante, informant, bank executive of Queen City Development Bank, at their residence in Gen. Blanco Street, Iloilo City (May 22, 1999).

Araño, Toribio "Danggol" Jr. and Velma Javellana-Araño, informants, Doda's Bakeshop, Yusay St., Sara, Iloilo (October, 1997).

Villanis, Melanie, informant, executive secretary, NAPOCOR-Iloilo office, at her residence in Barangay San Nicolas, La Paz, Iloilo City (May 11, 1999).

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## THE CHINESE-FILIPINO SYNERGY: A RENAISSANCE OF INFLUENCE

**I**t was Teresita Ang See who invited me to join the PACS conference to share my insights on the significant Chinese influence in Cebu and other islands in the Visayas and Mindanao based on the observations of the Chinese artifacts unearthed in Cebu and displayed particularly in the Southwestern University Museum where I work as curator.

This invitation proves to be the beginning of a strong friendship, a strong affinity, a sense of oneness — that of an ethnic Chinese, and of a native Cebuana. I was challenged to look into the implication of the involvement of the ethnic Chinese in the Philippines today. I can clearly say and believe that the Chinese and the Filipino today have strong sense of commitment to Cebu and towards nationhood. This is nurtured not only through a strong blood relationship but also through a shared cultural legacy and rich tradition that can be traced as far back to the port island in pre-Hispanic times. My paper highlights the phenomenon of what I call the Chinese-Filipino Synergy: A Renaissance of Influence.

My position is backed by the many observations that I have done while working as the curator of the Southwestern University Museum. For the last four years, the pieces in our collection point to various facts and situations that validate my assumption, that indeed, the Chinese-Filipino synergy exists and has brought about a renaissance of influence not only in Cebu but also in the Philippines.

This influence dates back to the pre-Hispanic past when Cebu played a major role in shaping the destiny and the transformation of this island archipelago into a nation and the Chinese, indeed, were very much part of this past. Archaeological finds link the Chinese back to the time when Cebu was a port of call for the Chinese and other Asian traders in pre-colonial times.

The artifacts that I can single out are the three ancient Chinese coins in our museum collection. One is dated between the 951-960<sup>th</sup> centuries at the short-lived

reign of Zhou Yuan toward the end of the Zhou dynasty during the period of the warring kingdoms. Another is dated 1126 in the Northern Sung dynasty, during the reign of Emperor Jing Kang. The third is from the very beginning of the Qing dynasty, during the reign of Emperor Xun Ji between 1644-1662.

These coins provide us with the strongest evidence of very early trading between China and the port of Cebu. At the very least, the coins could be brought in as part of the intensive inter-island trade among neighboring *barangays* in Cebu and elsewhere which were linked with the extensive eastern trading with mainland China then. Pigafetta recorded the multi-cultural trading in his accounts circa 1521. Pre-Hispanic Cebuanos often carried the products from foreign commerce and trade on to the surrounding islands within the Visayas and far beyond its border to Butuan in Mindanao.

In the pre-Hispanic port of Cebu, Chinese traders had a vibrant presence, as attested by the wealth of Chinese artifacts like blue and white and the green or celadon wares excavated in Cebu City, the towns and municipalities of Argao, Consolacion, or Liloan and other parts of the province. The introduction of the sugar mill (making Cebu the third largest sugar producing province in the Philippines at the turn of the century); the cauldrons used as the major source of iron for the local forges; the brass gongs and drums and cannons, among others are evidences of the extent of Chinese influence in the social mores, habits, lifestyles, artistic, and cultural traditions that have molded the Cebuano character through the centuries.

Cebu historian Resil B. Mojares, in his paper "The Formation of a City: Trade and Politics in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century," states that in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Cebu's inter-island trade quickened. An increased importance of commercial agriculture opened up Cebu and the Philippine countryside to merchants, land speculators, and trading agents. By 1840s Cebu City, except San Nicolas, had a population of 10,921. There was a growing ethnic diversity in the port population. The 19<sup>th</sup> century job census showed that there were around 3,000 Chinese mestizos and the beginning of a new Chinese migration brought Cebu City's Chinese population from 18 to 20 residents in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to 1,500 between 1840 to 1895. Of these immigrants, 72 percent resided either in San Nicolas or in Cebu City. The rest were scattered through the towns of Cebu province averaging 10 per town.

Cebu became a vital link in the export economy, a market city; an entrepot for such products as hemp, sugar, tobacco, rice, corn, and coffee from Negros, Leyte, Bohol, Samar, and Northern Mindanao. On one hand, it was a major transshipment point for goods to Manila and markets in Australia, United States, Great Britain, and Spain. On the other hand, it was also a distribution center for commodities from Central and Eastern Visayas and Northern Mindanao. Cebu's *parian* district was an enclave of the prominent Chinese mestizo merchant elites who controlled the business and trade. The opening of Cebu to world trade made Cebu one of the trade centers of the nation. Trade ushered in a period of rapid urban growth in Cebu's port area. The location of the residents were highly mixed. The Spaniards carried out a policy of residential segregation for different racial groups

— the *Ciudad* for the Spaniards, the *Parian* district for the Chinese mestizos, *Lutaw* (Carbon Market area) for the Chinese, and San Nicolas for the *Indios*. Don Sergio Osmeña Sr. and Don Pedro Cui were among the prominent Chinese mestizos who became prominent leaders of Cebu.

Today, the port city of Cebu has welcomed many ethnic Chinese businessmen. Cebu is home to no less than seven leading Filipino tycoons, including Lucio Tan, Henry Sy, John Gokongwei, Andrew Gotianun, Doña Modesta Sy-Gaisano, Ludo and Luym Paterno, and William Chiongbian who spent their boyhoods in Cebu. These Cebuano-Chinese taipans are not only commercial leaders of the nation but are also cultural leaders who embody the spirit and character of a true Filipino.

They also represent the Cebuano character identity — the entrepreneurial spirit, the tenacity to survive all odds, the thrift, and humility of spirit. These values and character traits found in the Cebuanos may be contemporaneous in other ethnolinguistic groupings in other Philippine islands where the Chinese influence was prevalent.

This character identity must have molded the beginning of a strong Filipino nation. This is an indication that the Chinese traders (even if the Spaniards failed to attest to their presence or to their importance), were in Cebu and the Cebuano multicultural inhabitants adapted and were influenced by the lifestyle and the goods that they brought in. Thus, the Chinese-Filipino synergy must have evolved in this very formative years of our socio-cultural assimilation and transformation.

My deeper insights on what really matters is the understanding and the realization that the ideal model of a Filipino character greatly embodies the leaps of several centuries of Chinese influence in his cultural and artistic legacy, his work ethics, his humility of spirit, and his sense of loyalty to family, country, and God the Almighty.

I believe that the Chinese are deeply involved in the cultural evolution of the nation but also in the socio-political, historical advocacy that relate to moral recovery, the promotion of family values and love of country and nationalism. For example, this comes in the form of advocacy against child abuse, rape, drugs, kidnapping, and many others that some of us would not even dare touch with a ten-foot pole. The example for this is Teresita Ang See and the advocacy work of her group, Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran.

I salute Kaisa for their endeavor in the promotion of children's art expressing nationalism, of publishing books that project better understanding of Chinese brotherhood and cultural heritage, or even the printing of "*Pahimakas*" (Rizal's "*Mi Ultimo Adios*" translated into Filipino by Andres Bonifacio) that I have been proud of disseminating to school offices and classrooms in Cebu.

Further example that supports my assumption of the evolution of the Chinese Filipino as crucial in the development of our nation are the Chinese collectors in Cebu who have been instrumental in supporting the development of the arts, either singularly as a private collection or institutionally as a foundation.

The most laudable Chinese trait, in spite of their many transformative in-

volvement, is their humility. They do not flaunt their acquisition of cultural properties or announce their humanitarian endeavors. In the arts, their magnanimous spirit pervade in the support given to the creative impetus of the artists who they recognize. Martino Abellana, a well-known Cebuano artist who is unsurpassed in his greatness, is one artist who had enjoyed such patronage of the Chinese collectors in his lifetime.

Likewise, in our personal experience of holding mobile "Exhibitions of Paintings of Tribal Mindanao" through the years, businessmen like Teng Hoa Lim, Jaime Sy, the Kings, Gaisanos, Ngo Chuas, Angs, Chiongbians, Cams, among others, were the very first to pick out paintings of social, historical, or ecological significance or even of the genre type to the abstract expressionist and the experimental directions. When they choose paintings at exhibitions, they prefer previewing and buying them before the exhibition opens.

The most touching experience just happened very recently. Four months ago, the historical paintings of my husband Manuel Pañares, "*Sugbu Sa Karaang Panahon*," currently on-line at <cebu-online.com/cai> was acquired as a collection of Global Foundation for International Education. Its founder, Nelia Cruz-Sarcol, married to William Sarcol Dy, is pure Chinese. In the Board of Directors, two are pure Chinese, "carageenan king" Benson Dakay and William Sarcol Dy. Its administrators have a strong Chinese connection, either by affinity or by blood. They dare to use the paintings as a springboard towards their innovative techniques of understanding history — be it in art, in multi-media or even through the age-old story-telling technique.

Children relate the history of Cebu as one walks through a painting exhibition or before the presentation of the dance play "*Makisig*," which is inspired by the paintings, the short story of Gemma Cruz-Araneta, and Pigafetta's Diaries.

I wrote a review of "*Makisig: The Little Hero of Mactan*," a play based on Gemma Cruz Araneta's short story and the story of "*Sugbo sa Karaang Panahon*." Its playbill emphasizes my assumption of a Chinese-Filipino synergy. *Makisig* is played by Kenichi Uang, a Chinese mestizo. Of a cast of 73, there are 24 Chinese participants. Its major sponsors are Chinese. Lucio Tan recently offered to finance the making of the script of Lapu-Lapu, the first freedom fighter of Mactan.

Most of the outstanding testimonies and valuable experiences presented here support my basic assumption of the Chinese-Filipino synergy. The evolution of the Filipino character, and the molding of the Filipino nation would not be complete without the active and meaningful participation and involvement of our Chinese-Filipino brothers and sisters. Being a part of this evolution is a source of pride.

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## THE CHINESE IN BACOLOD: SKETCHES OF THREE KEY ACTORS

No extant historical document recounts when or where the Chinese first ventured into Negros Island. Interestingly, the account by Esteban Rodriguez, chief pilot of the first reconnaissance team sent from Cebu by the Spanish conquistador Miguel Lopez de Legaspi, who landed in the island by chance, mentioned how they tried to pass themselves off as "people from China who had come to barter," but the natives with whom they had a chance encounter told them they were lying "because the Chinese did not have ships of the kind we had we seemed to them impostors who had come to rob..." (*cf. Collection de Documentos Ineditos de Ultramar, Tomo 1, 1969:427ff.*). This reference, though brief, implies the existence of trade contact between the natives and the Chinese even prior to the coming of the Spaniards.

Aside from such evidence of trade, the presence of the Chinese in Negros seem to have gone into eclipse for years prior to 1840. It was only in the mid-1800s when it was again noted how the increased influence of the Chinese in Negros coincided with the phenomenal growth of the sugar industry in the province. Previous to their arrival in Negros, the Chinese presence was singularly felt in Iloilo where they "dominated the local textile industry with their control of the raw materials..." (Varona, 1938:VIII,2). In addition, they engaged in inter-island trade. Every Friday in Negros, for example, was market day when various items like hats, bags, shoes and fans were sold to eager matrons and gentlemen (Echaz, 1896).

Apart from being uncannily shrewd businessmen, the Chinese also served as "financiers" and "brokers" for cash-strapped agriculturists in the province. Their integrity was held in such high esteem that they were adjudged to be the "arbiters in price-fixing" (Varona, *loc. cit.*). There was also a subtle allusion to their industry and hard work when the Spanish chronicler of Negros called them the "Philippine ants" (Echaz, *op. cit.*, 79).