Introduction

This paper is a socio-psychological analysis of the views, opinions, and attitudes of Filipinos and Japanese about each other. The objective is not only to show how the Filipinos and the Japanese regard each other but also to explain how such impressions and attitudes are formed and from there explain the dynamics in a relationship. The analysis of the process of social cognition shall give some understanding of the behavior of these two groups of people and how they affect each other’s lives.

The first part of this paper will be a historical account covering both pre-war and present-day data. This does not include however the attitudes during the war, as much has been written about this. The second part will be a presentation of an analysis of these attitudes from a socio-psychological perspective.

Historical Account

It has been said that Philippine-Japan relations began earlier than the middle of the 16th century (Zaide, 1964:155). By the time the Spaniards came, there was already a sizeable group of Japanese in different parts of the Philippine Islands conducting trade in silks, woolens, cotton, indigo and pearls (Alip, 1950:283).

The Japanese government established a consulate in Manila in 1888 for purposes of establishing trade relations with the Philippines. At that time, there were only 30 Japanese in the Philippines. But the number increased to 1,215 as Japanese workers were brought in to work on the Benguet Road (more popularly known as Kennon Road). Aside from those who came in groups to work on government projects, there were also those who came on their own, lured by their successful relatives and acquaintances (Yu, 1989:17). A good example of this is Kanegae Seitaro who came to the Philippines when he was 16. He had two uncles who were doing small business in the Philippines. Determined and

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with only a small bag containing not even a change of clothes, he came to the Philippines on a fake passport. Without any knowledge of English nor any of the native languages, and quite apprehensive that they would not let him in (Mizuno and Shimamura, 1987). There were also those who just wanted to go south, in search of a better life. One example was Migitaka who wanted to go to Brazil but ended up going to the Philippines as this was the destination of the first available boat.

The Japanese then were carpenters, vendors of *sembei* (Japanese rice crackers) and *mongo con hielo* (sweet beans with ice), and operators of bazaars. Many of the women were engaged in prostitution (Jose, 1990:17). “In 1910, of the 209 Japanese women who were listed with jobs in Manila, 122 were prostitutes and 35 were *yayas* (caretaker of children), the rest being employed in miscellaneous jobs.” (Ibid.).

**Official and Semi-Official Views**

One of the official views came from the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce in the early 1900s. The Philippines was seen as an “excellent place for the Japanese to go and engage in agriculture, found industries and participate in commercial activities. They found the Filipinos were friendly and hospitable to the Japanese” (Yu, op. cit.:27). They even thought that “geographically speaking, the two countries were neighbors and their people’s minds, manners and customs were similar” (Ibid.).

Vice Consul Iwaya Jokichi who was assigned to the Philippines twice (from 1903 February to 1904 June; 1909 April to 1910 August) described, in his report, the presence of many Filipino-Chinese mestizos. Among the characteristics that made an impact on him were “their fondness for entertaining guests, their being show-offs, vain and respectors of social position, and their tendency to give outbursts to their indignation as well as their fondness for listening to such outbursts” (Ibid.:30).

There were many unsubstantiated stereotypes. Of people in tropical countries like the Philippines, he said that “they mature rapidly and age prematurely. He put their active age for both mental and physical activities at between 16 and 27. As laborers they did not work unless told to do so.”

He used the word *dojin*, meaning natives, so he was probably referring to any Filipino excluding the Spanish and Chinese mestizos. He described the *dojin* as being fond of cockfighting and other forms of gambling, having no sense of right and wrong. Thus they lied and robbed people.
In general, Consul Iwaya said Filipinos had “a natural love and talent for music, were emotional, with a tendency to make careless decisions, lacked originality and were excessively hospitable towards relatives.”

He pointed specifically to non-Christian Filipinos as being friendly to the Japanese (Ibid.:31).

There were other biased observations like that of Matsuoka Tomio who thought that coconut cultivation of the Filipinos was simple but “such simplicity fitted the Filipino limited capability.” Another simplistic view was that of Asakura Seijiro, an engineer in the Railways Bureau of the Taiwan Colonial Government, who in his report on Philippine railroads in 1915, said that Filipinos “were fond of sports,” as he saw them playing in the open fields (Ibid..34-35).

Nitobe Inazo, an intellectual born to a samurai family of Morioka, was an agronomist, a teacher, a diplomat and a statesman. He noted in his article Fujin to nan’yo hatten (Women and the Southward Expansion) that the women had a high status in the Philippines. In other articles, he said he was in favor of Japanese emigration to the Philippines, that at that time, he did not believe the Philippines to be capable of independence. Moreover, he believed the U.S. to be doing the Philippines a good deed in civilizing the Filipinos.

Tsurumi Yusuke, a politician and a statesman of the Taisho and Showa periods served in the Lower House of the Japanese Diet and filled other government positions. His views clearly smacked of bias and prejudice. He had doubts about the Filipinos’ ability to build a great nation. He believed, just like Consul Iwaya, that Filipinos (similar to Malaysians and Koreans) became senile at an early age. Although he noted that the children he observed in Tondo were smart, he was sure that by the time they reached the age of 17 or 18, they would lose their smartness due to premature aging (Ibid.:52).

To doubly handicap Filipinos, not only did he declare their biological inability for greatness, he also described their so-called cultural inability. He did not like the Filipino sense of beauty and art. Filipinos, he observed, were fond of glaring colors, like red. To him, this color preference was proof that they did not have a proper sense of color and beauty (Ibid.).

He considered Filipinos as proud of their European heritage (wearing Spanish clothes and speaking in Spanish). He thought that Filipinos looked down on Japanese because the latter were non-Christians and because their carts were pulled by rickshaw men (jinrikisha). He thought Filipinos were arrogant. He criticized an article by a Filipino who ranked the Philippines with Japan and China as three great Oriental countries and called on these three to join hands.
Tsurumi reacted strongly with the following condescending questions: “What right did the Philippines have to boast of being a chosen people of the Orient? If Spanish and American cultures were removed, the Philippines would have nothing. Can a country that dons a borrowed dress, a country without dignity, be called great?” He thought the Filipinos did not consider themselves Asians.

Ironically, however, Tsurumi also commented that “behind the mask of a Filipino was an Oriental heart” (Ibid.:57). This constant reference to Filipinos being Orientals and the grief expressed over the lost Oriental culture of the Philippines was echoed by Miki Kiyoshi, a philosopher trained in Kyoto and Europe, and well-versed in Buddhist and German philosophy. He thought he had struck gold when he saw the Filipinos looking out of the window and staring at emptiness, heard their traditional music, and saw their attitude of resignation in the face of problems and death. He thought this resembled the Oriental philosophy of “nothingness.” But he said, due to the tropical climate, he did not find this “nothingness” as profound as the Japanese concept. It lacked depth. Its hollowness was the same as the emptiness of the beautiful sunset over Manila Bay — a beauty without depth.

He said Filipinos were reserved and polite but these ways were devoid of any philosophical basis, in contrast to the ways of the Japanese and Chinese (Ibid.:258).

He thought that though the Filipinos were once proud of their race, due to American rule, they had developed an inferiority complex towards the white race (Ibid.).

An article by Miyama, a technical expert in the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce described Filipinos as lazy and explained these as a consequence of their living in a country and a climate where they did not have to worry about food, shelter, clothing and the future (Ibid.:67).

After this long litany of negative views of Japanese in official and semi-official positions, it is heartening to note that there were other views that were more positive.

Tsushiya, in his book Philippine Travels, described his three-month travel in the Philippines, from north to south. In explaining the so-called “laziness” of the Filipinos, he agreed with Jose Rizal that the Spanish oppression contributed to the Filipino lack of motivation to work and a wrong educational system for the dislike of manual work. He said that Filipinos were no lazier than Japanese who suffered under the bakufu oppression (Ibid.:81).

He was optimistic about the future of Filipino industries. “He judged Filipinos to be skillful and intelligent and believed that their natural abilities
could be developed by sending them to Japan for training” (Ibid.:82). He believed that the Philippines was behind the times but in time, it would gradually catch up.

Kobayashi Asakichi, formerly a journalist in China and Korea, was in the Philippines in 1919. He put the blame of Filipino weakness not on the genes but on the environment and social conditions. He said that without the barriers, “an eminent Oriental race will emerge on the world stage” (Ibid.:86). His analysis of the low quality of Filipino culture was that Spanish oppression and abuses of the friars had slowed down its development (Ibid.:86). He also explained the low intellectual ability of Filipinos to be due to the lack of education and the hot climate. Aside from the climate, he cited other factors that hindered mental development of the Filipinos: 1) habit of smoking while still a child, and 2) living in isolation. Houses were built quite far apart, making social contact and mutual intellectual stimulation difficult.

He observed the high social status of Filipino women only in Manila. He did not think that the status of women was intimidatingly high in such provinces as Cebu, Iloilo and the town of Tayabas (Ibid.:87). Although he had heard of happy marriages between Japanese men and Filipinas, he thought that the Japanese men did not want to marry Filipino women because they were intimidated by the high social status.

Generally, the Chinese were observed to be better businessmen than the Filipinos. Kobayashi attributed this to the Chinese being more diligent, having more capital for investment, the Spanish oppression, the natural business acumen of the Chinese and to the Filipino weakness in mathematics.

Another optimistic note came from Hoshi Atsujiko, a Japanese school teacher, publisher and writer and a resident of Davao since 1917. Hoshi found Filipinos to be “hospitable to their relatives, friends and even strangers. Since they did not care about saving, they did not mind spending for other people. Secondly, they were flexible. This characteristic had enabled the Japanese to enter the Philippines and engage in business, in spite of the laws against them” (Ibid.:262).

Views of Japanese Students and Professors

Between 1937 and 1940, four Philippine-Japan Student Conferences (Nippi Gakusei Kaigi) were held. The first and third were held in Tokyo while the other two were held in Manila.
Impressions of the participants in the Second Philippine-Japan Conference were published in the *Philippine-Japan Quarterly*. Images which struck the students most were: the *nipa hut*, the *calesa* (horse-drawn carriage) and the young students neatly dressed in white shirts. They considered Andres Bonifacio, Jose Rizal and Emilio Aguinaldo as exemplifying Filipino patriotism. Other qualities observed in the Filipinos were: patience, optimism and talent for music.

As noted by the other Japanese cited, the students found the Filipinos to be westernized. They described Philippine culture as Americanized and having an overabundance of foreign influences without any sign of discriminate selection (*Ibid.*: 228).

Participants in the Fourth Conference held similar views of the Philippines as those in the Second Conference. They also labeled the Filipinos “lazy” when economic problems were discussed.

The Japanese professors who accompanied the students in both conferences were also of diverse opinions. Whereas Itani Zen’ichi, professor of the then Tokyo University of Commerce (presently Hitotsubashi University) seemed supportive of Filipinos, Matsushita Masatoshi, professor of International Law at Rikkyo University, on the other hand, was quite prejudiced and felt superior to Filipinos (*Ibid.* 233-34). Negishi Yoshitaro of Rikkyo University thought the Philippines lucky to have a President in the person of Manuel L. Quezon.

**Political Views**

Politically viewed, the Philippines was judged to be unprepared for independence. Tanaka Giichi, two times War Minister (1918-1921; 1923-24) and Prime Minister of Japan from April 1927 to June 1929 visited the Philippines in May 1922. He noted that “even if the Philippines were given independence, the country, due to lack of racial and cultural unity, a weak economy and a weak national defense, would find it difficult to maintain its independence without the support of a stronger power, or agreement among the powers to protect it” (*Ibid.*: 121).

The value of the Philippines to Japan was emphasized then as it is now. “Due to its location, the status of the Philippines would affect Japan’s security...” Aside from considerations of national defense, the Philippines was also a significant source of raw materials for Japan.

Watanabe Kaoru was concerned about the Philippine economic independence as it was financially unstable. He noted that the fat salaries of government officials was one cause of the imbalance between government earnings and
expenditures. He did not think that decreasing the salaries of these Filipino officials would be feasible (although it was a desirable measure) since “Filipinos had gotten used to the American way of life and could not at all be satisfied with making both ends meet with their own earnings” (Ibid.).

Watanabe suggested projects for the Philippine government to raise revenues which were a reflection of his impressions that Filipinos loved gambling and entertainment.

He emphasized Japan’s role in helping the Philippines after it gained independence since he thought government officials would think of furthering only their own interest, that people would be dissatisfied and would protest while the government would try to suppress such a reaction. This matriarchal attitude towards the Philippines was echoed by Matsushita Masatoshi who considered the Philippines as a “jewel yet to be polished, but she cannot polish herself. Japan has to show her how, for she does not know her potentialities” (Ibid.:261).

Like Tanaka and Watanabe, Imamura Chusuke, a pan-Asianist, believed that the obstacles to Philippine independence were: lack of unity, economic problems, and over-subservience to authority. This over-subservience he blamed on the European, American and Chinese influences. Filipinos had been taught under the colonial rule to treat the white race as superior to them. The Chinese had been, since olden times, subservient to authority (Ibid.:179).

Imamura pointed to the excessive Chinese blood which had mixed with the Malayan blood of Filipinos — that instead of the good qualities of the Chinese, he noted that the Filipinos got the many weaknesses such as “love of gambling, using money to corrupt the government and to bow to its authority and being tricky” (Ibid.:180).

Mikami Keicho (1877-1921), the branch manager of Mitsui Bussan, assigned to Manila in 1912 was, on the other hand, sympathetic towards the Philippines’ fight for independence. He believed that the Philippines was politically ready for independence and that Japan could provide for these needs.

Miki Kiyoshi found Philippine society to be feudal as seen in the system of land ownership and it was democratic only in the sense that Filipinos love to talk (Ibid.:259).

Views from the Japanese in Davao

The Japanese in Davao comprised a good number of the Japanese who were in the Philippines in the 1920s. In 1926, they numbered 5,452. Thirteen years
after (1939), they had already reached a total of 17,888.

A well-known personality then in Davao was Furukawa Yoshizo, founder of the Furukawa Plantation Co., Inc. After having graduated from the Agricultural College of Tokyo Imperial University in 1913, and a visit to the plantations of the Ota Development Corporation in Davao in 1914, he was inspired to set up his own plantation. From a capital of P100,000.00 in 1914, it had grown to P10 million in 1941. In his 35 years of business experience in the Philippines, he found the Filipinos to be a "very jealous and revengeful people, inflexible and legalistic. They had a tendency to interpret laws literally; were fond of legal and judicial arguments and readily brought even trivia matters to judicial courts for solution" (Ibid.:139). He did admit that part of the jealousy of the Filipinos regarding land problems was due to their desire for independence.

Masaki Kichizaemon was for many years one of the directors of the Ota Development Corporation. He saw Filipinos as either pro or anti-Japanese. He was hopeful though that Filipinos would remain hospitable to Japanese labor and capital as his corporation had vested interests in the Philippines.

The Okinawans in Davao, who made up the majority of the Japanese in the place, were quite sensitive about their being compared to other nationals. "They did not want to be below or on the level of non-Christian Filipinos around them. They had to be better than them... They could accept that their culture might be deficient and lower than the culture of the Japanese majority but could not accept that the Koreans, Taiwanese and Filipino minorities might have a higher culture than them" (Ibid.:151).

Views On Hygiene and Security

Yzaburo Okabe, in his article on hygiene in the tropical areas advised the Japanese to regularly check structures which were separated from the main house. This was for sanitary reasons. He noted that "natives do not have the sense for hygiene. If you rely on natives to do the cooking, they would usually leave waste food matters and other garbage lying around..." (Dakudao, 1990:68).

He noted that "natives relieve themselves in rivers, streams and trenches" (Ibid.:69) and advised the Japanese to adopt the use of the new type of toilet which made use of a septic tank. He thought that it was advisable to copy the "natives and some Europeans [who] would usually clean themselves using water after discharging their bodily wastes as it "does not irritate the skin, cleans better, and gives a feeling of comfort" (Ibid.). He also warned the Japanese about 1) natives who are usually afflicted with malaria and who do not give any indication of pain or illness they are suffering from and 2) native servants who
steal (Ibid.:70).

Such fear for their lives and property was reflected in an architectural modification adopted by the Japanese. The nipa hut of the Filipino usually had a space below the house used for storage. The Japanese also had such storage space but they kept this walled to keep the processed abaca from being stolen. Bagobos were feared by the Japanese as they were said to enter the farmsteads at liberty. The Japanese faced the problem of defining boundaries in view of the Bagobo's claim that the Japanese were invading their ancestral lands. The Bagobos were known to spear their enemies from under the floor while the latter were asleep.

To sum up the Japanese attitudes towards the Philippines and the Filipinos, during this period, we can say that:

1) The Philippines was seen as a land of promise where Japanese could go and build a new life;

2) Filipinos were seen

   a) by most officials as incapable of political and economic independence; not having the biological ability let alone the cultural ability to become great.

   b) by many Japanese groups as hospitable and musically-talented.

   c) by students and professors in a positive as well as negative light.

   d) as inferior to the Japanese and the westerners.

   e) as Orientals and yet westernized.

   f) as possessing certain negative traits such as laziness, dishonesty, carelessness in decision-making, lacking of originality, etc.

   g) as giving the women high status in the society.

3. Explanations were given for the condition of the Philippines and the Filipinos which put the blame on so-called characteristic or inherited traits (e.g., from the Chinese) to environmental conditions (educational system, hot weather, etc.).
Pre-War: How the Filipinos Viewed the Japanese

There were varying views of the Japanese, both good and bad. The Japanese women in the Philippines were seen as “female barbers, yayas, flirtatious wives, nightclub singers, and waitresses. Men, on the other hand were viewed as craftsmen, samurai, rough husbands, apay vendors” (Wada, as cited in Jose, 1990). This image of the Japanese changed as more college graduates and professionals (engineers, agronomists, etc.) and laborers came to the Philippines. Some engaged in manufacturing, others in business and trade, while still others entered the professional fields. They were considered “an asset to the community.” They were seen as energetic, industrious, resourceful, thrifty, neat, clean, honest, law-abiding and with a sense of organization. Those who came from poor prefectures could endure hardship and were used to toiling long hours” (Jose, op.cit.:19).

In Davao, Japanese carpenters were known for their efficiency and were favored and hired by the local residents. These carpenters were famous for their “discipline, diligence and economy ... Some old-timers believed that a pair of Japanese carpenters could perform construction work equivalent to the output of three Chinese or five Filipino carpenters...” (Dakudao, op.cit.:113). They were “orderly and systematic that no time was wasted as they labored on the job site from eight to five, without any breaks in between. They always reported on the site with their carpentry tools already prepared and sharpened.” (Ibid.). Not only did the Japanese carpenters accomplish their work in record time.

The Japanese who were better off in Davao were seen to have taken on western ways, such as living in western-style houses which were similar to those of the upper class of Davao’s society. “The ordinary elevated house of a non-Okinawan contained a porch, living room, and a bath and toilet serviced by a septic tank “ (Ibid.:120). However, despite the adoption of such structures, they were noted to have kept to their old habits once inside the house. “The moment the Japanese entered his house, away from the view of the Filipinos and foreigners... in Davao, he will start his Japanese way of living. He may have furniturelike chairs, sofa, tables, but sitting on the floor was still more comfortable for him.”

However, the Japanese were seen as careful not to put themselves in a position that would make them look inferior to the Filipinos as they felt themselves superior to the Filipinos. For educated Filipinos, sitting on the floor was unacceptable. This was something only rural folks would do... “The Japanese were careful in their ways that Filipinos would not belittle them” (Ibid.).
Prejudice against the Okinawans by mainland Japanese was carried over to the Philippines. In the 1920’s a report of the Japanese Vice Consul to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reflected this attitude. Okinawans were praised for their thriftiness, simplicity and respectful ways with elders and superiors. But they were put down by the longer list of bad points they were supposed to show: “being provincial, low culture, non-cooperation with other prefectures, pre-occupation with money, individualistic, profit-oriented, weak in morality, bigoted, dishonest, unprincipled, with no leader who is sufficiently knowledgeable, uneducated, etc.” (Yu, op.cit.:147-48).

Filipinos called the Okinawans “otro Hapon” (the other Japanese). In fact, in Davao, “Filipino residents teased Filipinos who do not dress properly ‘daw Okinawa’ (like an Okinawan)” (Ibid.:28). There was a derogatory note to this as Okinawans, especially the women, were often seen wearing the yukata (a loose robe, open in front) and walking around like “women of loose morals” (Ibid.:148). These Okinawans were also described as controlled emigrants” as they usually left Japan to fill up a position ready and waiting for them in the Philippines. Conditions at home had less to do with their decision to go than the need for his services. They were considered less intelligent and had less initiative than the “free emigrant” (Dakudao, op.cit.:29).

The Japanese that settled in Davao and Manila could be seen in the various areas of economic life. They had restaurants, tailoring and dress shops, bakeries, dry goods and grocery stores like Osaka Bazaar, construction and building materials stores, photography shops, etc. In the 1930’s, they increased their participation in retail activities. They dominated the hemp and lumber production in Davao. Water transportation along the gulf of Davao was also in their hands. Despite their economic affluence at that time, an old-timer of Davao recalls that “there was no racial discrimination shown among the different nationalities co-existing in Davao... Everybody just went about his own business earning a living. Davao was so young and so cosmopolitan” (Ibid.:42).

A content analysis of 6,000 short stories published in Liwayway, the most popular Tagalog magazine was done. Of this, 2,107 were written from 1922-1941 and 3,983 were written from 1946-1983. As cited in the previous paragraphs, the image of the Japanese was generally favorable. They were depicted as friends of the Filipino. The men were known as being asal-dakila (noble in character, fair, honest and sportsmanlike). Japanese women were also described positively. They were maganda (beautiful), mabango (good smelling) and mayumi (feminine, demure). The almond eyes of the Japanese were described as singkit, which during the period was still taken positively (Terami-Wada, 1984).

On the less positive side, they were also seen as “intruders and a threat.” Since they worked harder than the Filipinos, did not mix with them (let alone
intermarry with Filipinos), did not become Christian, they were not very well understood and some Filipinos looked at them with suspicion (Jose, 1990:19).

Japan was seen by Gen. Artemio Ricarte and Vicente Sotto, the former newspaper publisher, as a “source of inspiration, a light to Asia and the Philippines, the liberator from western colonialism.” However, there were others like Claro M. Recto who warned others about Japan’s expansionist ambitions (Ibid.:20). The American military in the Philippines also saw Japan as a major threat. This view was shared by Filipino officers trained in West Point (Ibid.).

Whether seen as a military threat or as a political saviour, the more outstanding image of Japan was economic, more than anything else. Jose (op.cit.:23-24) categorizes the Japanese at that time into five groups: 1) the intellectuals (government officials, professionals and entrepreneurs), 2) the merchants, 3) the fishermen, 4) the carpenters and other artisans and 5) the non-skilled workers.

Filipinos, in general remained unmindful of the threat that Japan posed. So, despite the various measures to limit immigration of Japanese to the Philippines and to protect local industries, for the Filipinos, the Japanese were still “the good, loyal gardeners, photographers, barbers and halo-halo vendors... Japanese goods were cheaper than American ones, but they broke easily. ‘Laruang Hapon’ (Japanese toy) came to mean something broken easily. And since the Japanese kept these things to themselves, few people knew them well. (Ibid.:29).

The Second World War took its toll on both sides. Bitter sentiments attached to the war prevail but there seems less of it from the Japanese side than from the Philippine side.

Post-War: Filipino Migrant Workers

The biggest Filipino group that is now the focus of attention in Japan is the group of entertainers. According to Minister Morihasa Aoki, consul general of the Japanese Embassy in the Philippines, “there are some 30,000 legal Filipino workers and 45,000 to 50,000 illegal Filipino workers at any given time in Japan” (Manila Bulletin, June 17, 1989: 1;16). Visa applications continue to rise, “soaring since 1985 at about the time when oil prices dropped and there was less demand for workers in the Middle East” (Ibid.:16). According to official Embassy figures, Filipinos made up the largest number of illegally staying foreigners apprehended in Japan from 1985 to 1987. But in 1988, they placed third, next to Bangladesh and Pakistan nationals in the number of illegal foreigners deported.
Problems of Filipino migrant workers, especially those who are working illegally, run the whole gamut, from “nonpayment of salaries, violation of contracts, sexual exploitation, unreasonable custody, withholding of passports and tickets, and physical violence (Ibid.).

The stories of Filipinas who have gone crazy because of the ordeals they go through in Japan or those who die because of maltreatment are numerous enough to keep various non-governmental organizations to continuously attend to the needs of these women in crisis. These include the HELP (House in Emergency of Love and Peace), Filipino Workers’ Social Center, Asian Laborers Solidarity, and Bahay ni Maria Crisis Center.

Due to the high cost of living in Japan, workers must bear with austere accommodations. They live in flophouses where about 30 people can stay. A room measuring 3.3 sq. meters, with only a bed and cover, cost Y800 a night (Ibid.).

Aside from deplorable living conditions, Filipinos also suffer discrimination, exploitation and verbal insults. “Employees yell bakaero. But the workers have conditioned themselves to think that the expression means baka or beef and therefore oishii (delicious), just to lessen the pain” (Manila Bulletin, June 20, 1989:16).

Japanese Response to the Plight of Filipino Workers

There have been various responses to the Filipino workers. Starting from the Japanese Embassy in the Philippines stringent screening has been applied. By the end of 1988, of a total of 95,337 applicants for visas, only 74,245 were issued (Manila Bulletin, June 17, 1989:16). In Japan, the government’s restrictive policies have cut down by about 40% the number of entertainers being deployed to Japan (The Manila Bulletin, May 7, 1989:47). Of late, the new law regarding illegal workers has caused anxiety among Filipinos illegally staying in Japan but they are standing their ground.

A volunteer of the Asian Laborers Solidarity and vice president of the Nagoya Bar Association, Lawyer Kiyoshi Inagaki has championed the cause of four Filipino women “who were forcibly detained, raped, pushed into prostitution and physically harmed by their Japanese employer and his staff” (Ibid.).

“Some Japanese students of Tagalog at the Sophia University have expressed the desire to learn the dialect to be able to help other Filipinos in distress, whom they encounter on their jobs. Among the students are a volunteer in an
emergency shelter, a policeman, a prison employee, and a journalist who has been writing about the plight of Filipinos in Japan" (Ibid.).

On the other hand, a Japanese priest describes the reaction of Japanese Catholics to Filipinos as "the kind of people who would do anything for money. Japanese feel allergic to Filipinos. Associating with them scares you that you will catch some infectious disease" (The Manila Bulletin, June 22, 1989:20). This sentiment is supported by Minister Aoki as he describes the "developing resentment for Filipinos" because these "exploited Filipinos chose to go to Japan under false declarations and documents" (Ibid.:1). He adds that "it is primarily the fault of Filipino girls who travel in the guise of tourists and then seek a job as an entertainer and end up being maltreated and exploited" (Ibid.;20). Moreover, he continues to say that "the conditions and plight of the illegal workers are not helping to promote respect of the Japanese for the Filipino people" (Ibid.).

As of 1989, the saving grace seemed to be "President Aquino who, among the heads of government who arrived in Japan to attend the funeral of Emperor Hirohito, earned the respect of the Japanese. She arrived with the smallest entourage, wore black clothes all the while, and refused to wear any fur" (Ibid.). But with the 1989 December coup and the poor economic growth, plagued by scheduled brown-outs, it remains to be seen as to what can be the redeeming aspect of the Philippines as far as Japan is concerned.

Japanese Students' Perception

A survey of 100 high school students in Saitama University made by Prof. Takao Taguchi (The Manila Times, June 1, 1988) showed interesting results. It showed that they did not even know where the Philippines was located. Almost all (97%) thought the Philippines was in South America. The other three percent thought it was in East Asia and Africa. Filipinos were described to be practical (32%), arrogant (23%), diligent (16%), pioneering (18%), and discriminatory (11%).

A majority (71%) answered correctly that Mrs. Corazon Aquino was president. The same percentage answered that Christianity was the main religion in the Philippines. Only a little over half (55%) correctly answered "Manila" as the capital of the Philippines.

Television and radio (50%) were the main media through which they learned about the Philippines. This was followed by textbooks and magazines (31%) and newspapers (12%).
A majority considered the existing relationship between the Philippines and Japan as very important (63%) and somewhat important (18%).

However, a smaller percentage were willing to translate this favorable impression to reality. When asked if they wished to travel to the Philippines, only 17% said they “would like to go very much” and 21% said they “would like to go.” There were a little more who did not wish to go (44%).

A study done on Filipino-Japanese couples (Samonte, 1986) showed Japanese husbands to be generally satisfied with their marital life. But Japanese husbands living in Japan were shown to be more satisfied than Japanese husbands living in the Philippines. Japanese wives married to Filipino husbands and living in the Philippines were also not too satisfied with family income.

In a recent survey of 34,925 small and medium scale companies in the manufacturing sector all over Japan, 9,060 companies responded, representing a 26% response rate. About a third, 2,766 companies (30.5%), indicated their interest in overseas investment, either in ASEAN or in other countries. Of those who expressed interest, 59.8% identified one or more ASEAN countries as their preferred investment destination. It must be noted however, that among the five ASEAN countries, the Philippines was the last preference. Moreover, at present, it has the smallest number (53) of Japanese companies, with Thailand (172) and Singapore (101) at the forefront (ASEAN, 1990:14). Concerns of these potential investors are seen through the following anticipated problems: 1) shortage of Japanese representatives (63.1%), 2) relation with local partner (59.2%), 3) shortage of information about the local market, business customs and regulations (44.6%), 4) labor management (36.2%), 5) local political condition (34.1%), 6) immaturity of related industries such as sub-contractors and parts suppliers (31.0%). It is interesting to note that only a third indicated concern about the political condition. But one must put this in the proper time perspective since the study was conducted before the coup in December 1989. A more recent survey would be useful to see if such concerns have increased in intensity.

Interviews with various Japanese who have lived in the Philippines have pointed to more positive attitudes at the end of their stay. When asked what they liked about the Philippines, invariably they answer, the people, their warmth, their friendliness, their humanity. As one man put it, it was in the Philippines where he discovered what it was to be human. That it was all right to feel and to express one’s feelings. Another stated that despite his being back in Japan, he still felt close to his Filipino friends, that distance and time do not present any problem or gap.

There are also criticisms about the Filipinos, e.g., the corruption in government, the people who don’t seem to try harder to find work, the increasing
number of Filipinos who are leaving the Philippines. Much concern is expressed about the future of the Philippines.

How the Filipinos View the Japanese

Filipinos hold different attitudes towards the Japanese. It is often described as a love-hate relationship. A newspaper feature reports a social worker’s view: “the tragedies of Filipinos in Japan rekindle the ill feelings of Filipinos towards the Japanese, remembering the cruelty and killings by the Japanese during World War II” (The Manila Bulletin, June 22, 1989:20). Such reports have created a stereotype of the Japanese as being “ruthless employers, wife beaters and sex starved tourists.”

Ann-Ann (Midweek, April 12, 1989:9-10;12) says that the “image of Pinays in Japan is so bad that Japanese cops won’t ever touch the women when they fingerprint them. Baka raw mahawa sila (they might catch whatever these women have). At the Japanese immigration, captured TNTs (“Tago ng Tago,” which literally means “Constantly hiding from authorities”) are handcuffed and tied at the waist.”

Ann-Ann, one of the many girls who came to Japan to work, was deceived and forced to work as a hospitality girl instead of a receptionist. Although she tried to escape the first time, she was traced, captured by the Yakuza and beaten so badly that her “forehead was twice its size, her jaws were swollen, her neck dark from the strangling and her back, thighs and legs were blackened with bruises.” She escaped a second time and is now working with the National Council of Churches in the Philippines trying to help the Japayukis. She says, “I’m willing to help just to stop more Pinays from going to Japan” (Ibid.)

A study of 15 Filipina entertainers from various barrios in Hagonoy, Bulacan and Manila (Flores, 1989) shows a different picture from that painted by Ann-Ann. These Filipinas were also forced to go to Japan because of their sad economic situation. Coming from large families (on the average 6-7 bothers and sisters), a majority (9) were not able to go to college, while almost half, (6) of them had parents who were not working. A little over half were also not working before their departure for Japan. Almost all (11) were still single. Most of these women viewed the role of the woman as one of service to the family. Herein lies their main motivation for working in Japan.

When asked about the status of Japanese women as compared to men, the prevailing views reflected a whole range, from very traditional views to more liberal ones. The traditional views are seen in such statements as:
1) “Pagdating sa bahay ng asawang lalaki, galing sa club, lasing, diretso sa higaan. Ang babae, hindi magtatantong-tanong.”

2) “Ang papa-san namin, dalawa ang asawa, pero doon siya umuuwi sa mama-san namin. Okay lang kay mama-san kahit umuwi sa no. 2 ang lalaki.”

3) “Ang number one sa Hapon [ay] trabaho. Pangalawa lang ang babae.”

4) “Sa desisyon, lalaki talaga ang masusunod.”

5) “Sa trabaho, mas malaki ang suweldo ng lalaki.”

6) [Ang babae] “Mayroon silang time paglabas at may time bawat kilos. May pakialaman. Pero ang lalaki, libreng-libre.”

7) “Sa mag-asawa, pag hindi umuwi ang asawa mo, hindi ka kikibo basta may pagkain ka. Pagdating ng lalaki, dapat nakahanda na ang pagkain at damit niya.”

More liberated views are expressed as in these statements:

1) “Ang babae, kahit may asawa, puede pang kumabit sa ibang lalaki. Tanggap na iyon. Puede kahit ilang lalaki.”

2) “Ang babae, gusto ang maraming asawa. Ang lalaki, playboy din.”

3) “Nabibigyan din ng mataas na posisyon ang mga babae.”


5) “Sa parehong trabaho, parehong suweldo.”

6) “Una ang babae sa paglalakad doon.”


The two sets of statements reflect the juxtaposition of two sets of values now prevailing in Japan as seen in the latest study of the national character of Japanese (Tokei Suri Kenkyujo, 1989). For example, as compared to the Second Survey conducted in 1958, there are more respondents in 1988 who are acknowledging no differences between abilities of men and women (p.58).
There is also a continued decrease, from 73% in 1953 to 28% in 1988, among those who would adopt a child to continue one's family line if one had no children. There is conversely an increase among those who would not adopt a child, 16% vs. 52% (p.57). Certainly, there are also more women who would prefer to be reborn as a woman and less of those who prefer to be reborn as a man. However, answers to other traditional and non-traditional questions have remained basically the same through 35 years of survey.

How were these 15 Filipinas treated by the Japanese, particularly, as compared to how Japanese women were treated?

Although there were statements (3) to say that there was no difference, there were more views citing differences in salary, benefits, and human relations. Clearly, differences in salary showed the Japanese women's advantage. Usually the difference was double that of the Filipina's salary. Benefits seemed to favor Filipinas, if one took a listing of these (free transportation, food, lodging, rice, medicine when figuring in an accident during work hours, water, electricity). They were also allowed to take tips from customers.

Interestingly enough, there were more statements which portrayed favorable treatment of Filipinas. These came in two themes:

1) Filipinas were more respected than the Japanese women, i.e., they cannot be touched and pawed as easily as the Japanese, and

2) Filipinas were better liked because they were affectionate, loving, clean and knew how to handle their man.

When asked about the difference in status, reasons given by the Filipinas for Japanese women having a higher status than them focused more on Japanese women having the same blood as the Japanese men. As for the status of Filipinas being higher, the reasons focused more on certain attributes (both physical and otherwise), obligations of the contract, and being a foreigner, as shown in the following statements:

Physical attribute: "Iba ang ganda ng Pilipina. Maganda ang kulay... Gustong-gusto nila ang ating mata."

Other attributes: "Mas malambing ang Pilipina. Ang Pinay kahit kapirasong tinapay na lang ang hawak, hahatian pa ang Hapon."

"Ang mga gusto ng lalaki, nakikita nila sa Pilipina."
"Dahil nakikisama ang Pilipina kahit na masama ang ugali ng Hapon.

Obligations of the contract: Kami under contract." Sagot nila kahit anuman ang manyangari sa amin.

Being a foreigner: "Dahil parang guest ang turing sa amin."
"Dahil taga-ibang bansa kami."

Responses of Students

A 1982 study of attributes of 270 Filipino university students (Howell, Carlos, et.al. 1970) showed that all scores became more positive in the interim between 1970 and 1982, with the most positive scores expressed towards Japan. On the other hand, another study, this time of children, showed that of all the children from 10 different countries, Filipino children (n=120) had the lowest score when the image of the Japanese was measured (Tsujimura, Furuhat, Akuto, 1987:265). However after seeing a movie on Japan, they also registered the biggest change towards a more positive image of the Japanese. It was argued that the relatively low scores may have been due to the fact that, of the 10 countries, the Philippines was the only one that experienced Japanese atrocities during the Second World War. Such experiences are reflected in the history books used in Philippine schools.

A study of the Filipino elites’ image of Japan and the Japanese people (Carlos, 1989), where 63% of the 95 respondents were university students, 20% academics and 17% foreign service officers, also showed a positive view of Japan (84%) and the Japanese (73%). Japan as a country was perceived as "prosperous, economically developed and politically stable." The main rationale for such a view was Japan’s impressive economic development since World War II (41%). When asked about the things usually associated with Japan, 69% gave answers relating to technology and electronics, and 28% to business, industry and economy.” A little less than half (45%) favored close cooperation between the two countries. Strangely, 37% said they would like to see “friendly but not close cooperation with Japan.”

The Japanese people were viewed as hardworking, honest, reliable, efficient and courteous. Economic development (13%) and personal or vicarious experience with Japanese (13%) were given as reasons for such a positive view. Only seven percent (7%) of respondents thought that the Japanese had qualities worth emulating. Some of these qualities are: dedication to duty (93%) respect for elders (56%), consensus society (31%), non-confrontative stance in human relations (19%) and Japan as one whole family with the emperor as head (13%).
A third (35%) of the respondents were willing to have a Japanese as a best friend while 33% were willing to have Japanese as a neighbor. However, only 10% were willing to marry a Japanese.

Those who held a negative view of Japan (11%) and the Japanese (16%) saw Japan as autocratic, meddlesome, and with imperialist tendencies. Other reasons given were abuse of Filipinos working in Japan (1%), Japanese syndicates operating in the Philippines (1%) and negative experiences in Japan (1%).

The current relationship between Japan and the Philippines is viewed by 55% of the respondents to have improved while 16% believed that it has deteriorated. About one fourth (23%) said that there was no difference. Some factors cited as contributory to the improved relations were: foreign aid from Japan (54%), cultural interchange (43%) and scholarship and exchange professors programs (43%). The deterioration in relations is caused by such factors as sex tours (63%), problems related to Filipino domestics in Japan (55%), reported covert operations of Japanese tourist groups (32%), increasing incidence of kidnappings of Japanese nationals (31%) and perception of Japan’s increased militarism (16%).

In another study which the author conducted among thirty (30) students from the University of the Philippines showed views on various aspects of Japan and the Japanese. Results showed that as a people, the Japanese were generally viewed positively, with “hardworking” as the most dominant trait. This was also the major characteristic describing the Japanese worker. The study also revealed a negative view of the Japanese male and businessman and tourist. The Japanese businessman was usually associated with Yakuza, being sex-minded, rich and wearing a suit. Japanese tourists were seen as basically sex-oriented. The Japanese male was stereotypically characterized as short, chinky-eyed and bowlegged. The Japanese female, was however, frequently associated with the Geisha. She was characterized as exotic and submissive.

Japanese products such as cameras, cars and electronics were generally seen positively as durable, advanced, using high technology. The Japanese company was viewed as big, rich and progressive. At the same time, it was also seen as manipulative, demanding and exploitative.

Another study looked into the impressions of Filipino students who served as hosts of Japanese participants in the Iwate Cruising Seminar (Cruz, 1989). The age range of these students was 17-29. Some of the characteristics of the Japanese that were most liked by Filipinos were: politeness, generosity, thoughtfulness, simplicity, cleanliness. Those they did not like at all were: the low
regard for women, lack of effort to learn and speak English, the men smoking a lot, and their materialistic orientation. The Iwate guests were seen as polite, respectful, group-oriented, friendly, generous and reserved.

Two studies deal with the attitudes of participants in the 21st Century Friendship Program (Santamaria, 1989; Samonte, Santamaria, et al. 1990). The first study, which compared participants' views with non-participants, showed differences in perception along several characteristics. Participants viewed the Japanese to be less competitive and less serious. As a nation, they saw Japan to be more philanthropic than did the non-participants. Comparing the different types of participants with the non-participants, those who were government employees saw Japan as more autocratic. Students showed the greatest differences in perception, compared to non-participants; teachers showed the least.

The second study was a content analysis of 35 essays. Of a total of 423 statements, the majority (75.65%) referred to Japan while the rest referred to the Friendship Programme. The most dominant aspect of Japan was the impressions of the Japanese people which constituted 37.59% of all statements regarding Japan. Frequently mentioned characteristics of the Japanese were: disciplined, hospitable, sincere and honest, good leadership, united, respectful of elders, efficient and hardworking.

As a country, Japan was seen to have a stable government. Moreover, Japan was seen as modern, powerful force, beautiful, adaptable and compassionate.

Needless to say, the essays consisted of glowing, positive impressions with only a few descriptions that one could categorize as negative (materialistic tendencies, youth-carefree attitudes and unaware of Japan's efforts, timid, slaves of man). The Programme which consists of a one-month-all-expenses-paid tour of Japan has done a lot, as based on the statements of participants, to work towards improving Japan's image. Whether it has achieved its goal of forging close relationships and fostering true friendship between Japan and ASEAN countries remains to be seen. But to start off with, Japan has established itself as a role-model, as seen in the participants' statements as: "we need to learn a lot from Japan; we need to change." Japan is now the standard against which the participants measure themselves and their own country.

In contrast to such a positive view of Japan, students who live longer in Japan, however, seem to develop a resentment and dislike for the Japanese. As one student puts it, "the longer you stay in Japan, the more you dislike the people..." By staying longer among them, "one sees their true colors." These are sentiments which need further investigation.
Filipino-Japanese Couples

The number of Filipino-Japanese couples has been increasing. Applications from Japanese men for certificates of eligibility to marry have been steadily increasing: from 654 in 1986 to 3,287 in 1988 (The Manila Bulletin, June 18, 1989: 18).

A study on Communication and Marital Satisfaction of Filipino-Japanese couples which I conducted five years ago showed that Filipino wives living in Japan indicated greater marital satisfaction than Filipino wives living in the Philippines. One area of high satisfaction was family income.

Philippine-Japan Economic Relations

Perceptions of the Philippine-Japanese economic cooperation are derived from three surveys. The first was a study commissioned by the Japan Centre for International Exchange (Villacorta and Bautista, 1982). The attitudes of 40 government officials, university professors and leading businessmen and civic leaders were gathered. Basically, the findings show that the respondents perceived trade with the Japanese as favoring the Japanese. They felt there was a need for more mutual benefits and better prices for Philippine products. Japanese businessmen were also found to be “ruthless, shrewed, profit-motivated and evasive.” They were also seen as “aloof to rank and file, less communicative and less open-minded than their counterparts and unable to adjust to the local way of life.”

The second survey of 162 middle class respondents was commissioned by the Institute of Developing Economies (Villacorta, 1982). In this survey, majority of the respondents (consisting of sales executives, practising professionals, academic people and businessmen) agreed that it was good for the Philippines to have Japan as an economic partner.

In the third survey, this time of 251 middle class respondents, Japan was frequently named a model for development, along with the U.S. As to the three Asian countries with whom the Philippines should develop close friendship, Japan ranked first, followed by China and Singapore (Villacorta, 1984).
Perceptions of Japan in the Press and the Political Sector

In the study of Terami-Wada (1984) cited previously, postwar images of the Japanese in the short stories showed that the image of Japanese women remained the same. The male Japanese was portrayed, until 1960, as asal halimaw (beastly in character), brutal and uncouth. However... in the 1946-1950 period, some stories included a good Japanese officer who was sympathetic to his Filipino friends of pre-war days. After 1960, the derogatory expressions disappeared but memories of the war lingered as themes.

Two themes on Japan are given coverage in the Filipino press: 1) Japan’s economic assistance to the region, and 2) Japan’s defense build-up plans (Villacorta, 19?). The U.S. military bases agreement being a hot issue, Japan, being a strong ally of the U.S. also becomes the perfect target of the Filipino nationalists’ ire.

In an article of The Daily Yomiuri on April 2, 1990, top-ranking communist guerrillas were said to have warned Japan against “giving official development assistance to projects which aid the Philippine government’s counterinsurgency program... and projects that pollute the environment and deny farmers their land.”

Filipino politicians, particularly the opposition, have tried to tell Japan not to extend any economic help to the Philippines as they “tend to lengthen the life of the government and prolong the people’s suffering” (Bulletin Today April 27, 1984).

Only a few protest rallies have been directed towards the Japanese, however. A rally denouncing the Nakasone visit as the “second invasion” of the Philippines and Asia (Japan Times May 8, 1983) is one of them.

Socio-psychological Analysis

An examination and comparison of attitudes of Japanese and Filipinos regarding each other yield the following results:

There is a preponderance of stereotypes of both countries and people. Japanese were seen to be industrious and efficient while Filipinos were lazy and incapable. Stereotypes, which are natural categories used in social cognition, are intrinsic, essential, and a primitive aspect of cognition. Although ideally, one would want to avoid perceiving people in such a simplistic way, such a tendency is an integral part of cognition. When there is a lack or vagueness of information, the tendency is to adopt the prevailing attitudes. It must be noted that favorable
the tendency is to adopt the prevailing attitudes. It must be noted that favorable impressions of Filipinos and Japanese of each other come from those who have experienced the country for just a short time—from a few days (e.g., Iwate Cruising Seminar participants) to a month (e.g., 21st Century Friendship Programme). Interestingly, those who stay longer in each other’s country seem to have less favorable impressions. The variable of time must be taken into consideration when studying such attitudes. Moreover, the types of people encountered and experiences one had must also be taken into consideration.

Much of the content of stereotypes is ethnocentrically evaluated, i.e., judged by the standards of the in-group (Brown, 1986:591). Thus, in the case of the Japanese, having categorized Filipinos as Oriental, therefore, they needed to behave like the Japanese did. Filipinos had to work hard as they did. Despite differences in historical background (e.g., Spanish colonization and oppression), climatic conditions (it is colder in Japan than in the Philippines where it is summer almost the year round), geographic and topographical characteristics, etc. the output as well as manner, attitude towards work were expected to be the same. Moreover, even though their religious affiliations were different, Filipinos were still expected to display somehow the Buddhist philosophy, as seen in Miki Kiyoshi’s effort to interpret Filipinos’ behavior. Tsurumi Yusuke’s view that the Filipinos’ preference for glaring colors like red did not fit in with the Japanese’ preference for more subdued colors led him to conclude that Filipinos did not have a proper sense of color and beauty.

Stereotypes are also a reflection of political and economic relations at any given time (Ibid.; 596). During the pre-war days, it must be remembered that the Japanese had vested interests in the Philippines. Many of its people had come to the Philippines in search of a better life. As they began to establish themselves, to a point where even Davao was called “Davaokuo” (Dakudao, op.cit.), they began to attract more attention. As they acquired more land and property, some tension and uneasiness were engendered on the part of the government and tribal groups like the Bagobos. The American government, at that time, started restricting immigration and the Japanese felt personally threatened by such a restriction. Such reactions prompted them to justify their presence in the Philippines and defend their economic interests.

To justify their presence, they pointed out that the Philippines was a “jewel that needed to be polished but did not know how” and Japan had the skills to teach Filipinos to accomplish this. They emphasized the Filipinos biological incapability (premature aging making them lose their smartness by age 17 or 18), lack of racial and cultural unity, a weak economy, etc., so that Japanese could take on its matriarchal role and take care of the Philippines, guiding its people and showing them how to accomplish their goals. Moreover, they described the Philippines as vast and unpopulated, needing manpower to develop
in the early 1900's was only 200,000) (Mizuno and Shimamura, 1987) and the inflow of Japanese immigrants should not have posed as a threat to the country.

Defending their economic interests, they phrased their good intentions in terms of altruism, that is, by developing such virgin lands as Davao and making full use of its potentials, the country would profit in the long run. At that point, however, the fact that both parties were mutually benefitting from the relationship made the symbiotic relationship quite an agreeable one.

However, the attempt to propagate the greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, Japan's imposition of its perception of how Asia and the Asians should be, and its aggression against and occupation of the Philippines and other Asian countries during the war became a turning point in Philippine-Japan relations. Whereas before the war, Japan was perceived as ally, (as she was sympathetic to the Filipino cause for independence), she was perceived to be a traitor mainly due to the above-mentioned moves. Good relations turned sour. The war caused chaos, damage to life and property and to the essential ingredient of human relationship, that is, trust.

It is not surprising, then that the once-neutral connotation of “chinky-eyed” was drastically transformed into something negative. Even at this point in time, a description of the typical Japanese as singkit at sakang (chinky-eyed and bow-legged) gives a more negative than positive connotation. It often goes with other negative characteristics such as “short, rough with women, and sex-starved.” Following the principle of evaluative consistency, which states that good traits imply one another and bad traits likewise, such an association is expected.

The effects of the war is also seen in the study of school children (Tsujimura, Furuhata, Akuto, 1987) which showed the image of the Japanese to be the lowest for Filipino children. The exposure to reading material which describes the atrocities of the Japanese during the war gives support to the observation that even without direct experience, individuals hold stereotypes of other people. These stereotypes are usually gathered from the media. Could the Japanese media also have contributed to the Saitama high school students’ perception that Filipinos were “practical, arrogant and pioneering?”

The role of media cannot be underestimated. The play-up in the Japanese media of Filipino illegal workers sustain the negative image of Filipinos. A cursory review of newspapers, comics, magazines and TV program shows the Filipinos as sex objects, gun-runners, kidnappers, coup plotters, Smokey Mountain garbage pickers, and illegal workers. For the three months that the author was in Japan, the articles on the Philippines in the various dailies in Japan focused on negative issues: airplane crash, kidnapped/killed Japanese, discord over military bases, drought and brown-outs, and diminished economic growth.
This has sustained the negative image of the Philippines.

Using the resource theory of power, now that Japan has established itself as a formidable economic giant (enough to threaten the U.S. and make them engage in Japan bashing), she, in effect, is seen to call the shots. She has the economic might and the power to dictate on other countries. The tables have turned. Whereas, before, Japanese migrant workers came to the Philippines to better their lives, now Filipinos are coming in droves to seek their greener pastures in the Land of the Rising Sun and Yen. The Philippines, whose GNP has put it in the lower ranks among the ASEAN countries, now projects a beggarly and sorry image. Even immigration police and the so-called Japanese Catholics are “afraid of catching something” if they associate with the Filipinos just as anyone would probably wince if a “dirty, emancipated and stinking beggar” approached him for a dole-out. Filipinos are maltreated, abused and perceived as people who would do anything for money and who can easily bought. In many instances, they keep their silence as their agenda in Japan is to earn the much-needed Yen to send home. They engage in masking and rationalization, such as interpreting “bakayaro” as “baka” by changing the negative connotation into something positive.

Just as Filipinos were blamed during the pre-war for their inadequacies, they are again blamed for their plight in Japan. Minister Aoki’s view that it is the fault of the “Filipina girls who travel in the guise of tourists” is an example of actor-observer differences in explaining a situation. Minister Aoki fails to cite the recruiters’ (in many cases they are Yakuzas) role in the whole tragedy. He also fails to point to the push factors (worsening economic conditions in the Philippines, family’s interdependent structure, value of service to the family, etc.) as well as the pull factors (the high wages in Japan, the “promise of a better life”) that contribute to the final decision to take the risk of coming to Japan illegally and be an illegal worker. In attribution theory, the observer is less aware, if at all, of circumstances and processes involved in a particular behavior and is apt to judge the behavior by attributing it to internal characteristics of the “actor.”

It must be noted that first impressions count a lot. The principle of primacy usually plays a part in the processing of subsequent information about a person. This principle states that later characteristics are fitted to the given direction of the first impression (Brown, op. cit.) Although many Japanese have gone to the Philippines, there are still many more who have not experienced the Philippines personally. Their first exposure to the Philippines is, most probably, to media which paint a negative picture of Filipinos.

Stereotypes, although responsive to changing political and economic relations, also tend to have a stability over time. From the list of adjectives
describing the Japanese, there remain characteristics which have remained the same: industrious, efficient and progressive. Studies done in the U.S. in 1933 (Katz and Braly), 1951 (Gilbert) and 1967 (Karlins, et.al.) also show that the Japanese have been consistently described as intelligent, industrious, progressive, sly and shrewd. One can still see such adjectives in many books written about Japan. The Filipinos, on the other hand, have been consistently seen as musically talented, hospitable, emotional, lazy and lacking unity.

Beliefs about groups affect the treatment of individuals. The Asians, as a group, have been identified more and more as a migrant-worker group and as such are regarded as inferior to the Japanese. Even when encountered as individuals, reaction is initially colored by one's previously-held stereotypes. Many a travelling Filipino (the legitimate ones) has had to suffer through the thorough questioning and investigation of Immigration and Customs officers. One is presumed to have either a fake passport or the intention to stay longer than is allowed.

The Filipinos, in particular, have been particularly stereotyped to be either entertainers (or prostitutes), domestics, Japanese spouse, or construction workers (in the case of males). It is not surprising then that many a Monbusho (Ministry of Education) student has been approached by Japanese and mistaken for an entertainer or a domestic. However, experience with individuals can contribute to a change in perception. That is, given individual diagnostic information can lead one to disregard traditional stereotypes. Thus, we have the views of the 15 entertainers who generally held a positive view of the Japanese. From their own experience, they had seen changing values in Japan where women are becoming more assertive and more visible in public life. In constrast, the once “promised land” had turned into a nightmare for people like Ann-Ann.

The evaluation of one’s experience with the other is also critical. If one can generally evaluate one’s experience with the Japanese as “good,” using the weighted averaging model, the “good” evaluation outweighs whatever not so good experiences one has had. Expectations play a big role in this. If certain aspects are given more weight and these expectations are fulfilled, then the result is positive. This can be seen in the case of the participants of the 21st Century Friendship Programme.

Moreover, in the context of Filipino values, being a recipient of a one-month all-expenses-paid tour of Japan surely engenders in the Filipino participant a feeling of gratitude. Just as there are the concepts of **quitan and giri** in Japan, there is also **utang na loob** in the Philippines which underscores the gratitude of one for a favor or kindness received. Japan is then seen as generous. For the material resources that Japan gives, she receives the praise, honor and gratitude of the Filipinos. This is very much in line with the **social exchange theory**.
It cannot be denied that there are strong economic underpinnings in Philippine-Japan relations. It is ironic to note, however, that whereas in the early 1900's, manpower migration flow was from Japan to the Philippines, now it is the reverse. Before the war, the gains of the Japanese and the Filipinos in the Philippines seemed to be mutual. Natural resources were developed, there was economic progress in such areas as Davao, and both Filipinos and Japanese lived peacefully with each other. The Japanese, except perhaps for certain working groups such as the prostitutes and the vendors, were regarded highly by the Filipinos. Presently, with the situation reversed, the perceptions also seem to have suffered a reversal. This, of course, is partly due to the fact that many of the Filipinos working in Japan are staying illegally. But more importantly, the attitude of Japanese towards Filipino workers reflects the power dynamics. Unfortunately, despite their number, the legality of their status is a problem which puts the Filipino workers on the non-bargaining end. Their options are curtailed and they have to "dance to the music."

But as one Filipino worker questioned, why is there differential treatment as far as justice is concerned. A documented study of a white illegal worker shows that he was quickly pardoned by the Japanese courts, while the Filipino was not. Is the hakujin complex still valid in this day and age? It would seem so. Many homestay program shows the difficulty in finding homes for non-white participants. Experiences of Filipinos and other non-whites with the Fudosan-yan san (Housing Agent) shows the same differential treatment. There are housing offices which screen out darker-colored gaijins (foreigners).

Despite the campaign for Japan to internationalize, it remains a question as to whether the people, in general, are disposed towards such a move or are they still wary about opening their doors to all foreigners, regardless of race, color or creed?

There are many things in the history of Philippine-Japan relations that maintain current attitudes. Japan, though an Asian country, has shown to the world that she has made it to the top. She now sits in summits where the leaders of the Western World give her due recognition as being "one of them." This prestigious position has, no doubt, given her much confidence. But it seems that, in turn, she has taken on the attitude of the "high and mighty" and now looks down on her not so economically successfully Asian neighbors. The "closed-door policy" and the insular thinking of the ordinary citizen presents itself as a stumbling block in her relationship with her poorer neighbors. If she maintains this stance, despite her financial magnanimity, she will still be regarded with skepticism and distrust.

It is hoped that with some of the dynamics in the relationship identified and explained, the awareness can encourage more openness and critical analysis of
information about one another. In other words, the Philippines and Japan can choose to see what they would like to see. Given the already difficult economic imbalance in the relationship, perhaps they should turn to other factors that can help them understand each other in context. Hopefully, they can go beyond the borders of narrow stereotypes and develop a better appreciation of each other.

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