

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to All!!!



Philippines-China CHRONICLE



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12th Protocol on cultural exchange signed

The 12th Protocol (2002-2004 Executive Program) of the Philippines-China Cultural Agreement was concluded and signed in Manila on 17 December 2002.

Mr. Li Xin, Deputy Director-General of the Bureau of External Cultural Relations of the Chinese Ministry of Culture represented China, while Ms. Evelyn Pantig, Chairman of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), signed for the Philippines. The NCCA hosted the Chinese delegation led by Deputy Director-General Li Xin.

The 12th Protocol features the following:

1. cultural and arts exchanges between experts of ancient art conservation and restoration, members of chamber ensemble and stage plays, writers, students and teachers of ballet, language teachers and researchers, and others;
2. scholarships covering study at the undergraduate, graduate and advanced levels, exchange of scholars and experts;
3. exchanges of books, publications, and other information materials;
4. holding of film festivals in each other's country;
5. non-governmental cultural exchanges.

The two sides agreed that the activities in the 12th Protocol will be implemented in three years, 2002 - 2004. This is a change from the previous protocols which were implemented within two years.

The Philippines-China Cultural Agreement was signed on 8 July 1979. The first Executive Program was approved in 1980. Since then, eleven protocols have been implemented, making the Philippines-China Cultural Agreement one of the most active bilateral cultural agreements the Philippines has with other countries.



**VISIT
PHILIPPINES**
探访菲律宾 2003

Her Excellency's Christmas Message to all Filipinos overseas



On behalf of your countrymen in the Philippines, I convey my warmest Yuletide greetings to all the Filipino communities abroad.

Christmas is a time of reminiscing the birth of our Savior and all the blessings we have received. Christmas for us Filipinos, wherever we may be, also means celebrating the holidays with our loved ones, family and friends. It is in this light that we give special regard to our countrymen abroad who, despite the distance, maintain strong ties and share their blessings with people in the Philippines.

May your thoughts this Christmas be focused on the continued welfare of your countrymen back home, especially those who have less in life. I enjoin you to continue to send assistance for the development of your communities, and in supporting our government and all our people in building a strong Philippine Republic. In turn, rest assured that your efforts continue to be appreciated and that your well-being will be foremost priority.

May you find inspiration from your unity and shared identity to make this Yuletide Season a most meaningful and memorable celebration.

Merry Christmas to all of you! *Mabuhay ang Sambayanang Pilipino!*

MANILA
25 December 2002

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

Chinese journalists tour the Philippines

A group of eleven journalists based in Beijing went on a familiarization tour of various tourist attractions in the Philippines on 12 - 19 December 2002. Besides Manila, the media people were brought to such places as Boracay, Cebu, Iloilo and Tagaytay.

The group was composed of Ms. Gao Shan (*Beijing Youth Daily*), Mr. Guo Qiang and Mr. Chen Yuanding (*Beijing Evening News*), Mr. Ma Xiaodong and Mr. Gong Beiqing (*Traveler Magazine*), Ms. Liu Ying and Ms. Zhang Jianru (*Travel and Leisure Magazine*), Mr. Yi Xianfeng and Ms. Liu Tong (*The Economic Observer*), Mr. Jia Liqiang and Mr. Li Jinhua (*China's Talents*).

In Manila, a tour of the newly-opened "Bahay Tsino'y" museum in Intramuros captured the interest of the Chinese journalists. The modern museum features the role and

contribution of Chinese-Filipinos to the growth and development of the Philippines.

The familiarization tour was jointly organized by the Philippine Embassy in Beijing and the Department of Tourism as a follow-up to the visit to China of Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon last September.

There has been a marked increase in the number of Chinese tourists visiting the Philippines recently, and it is expected that more will travel next year in time for "Visit Philippines 2003".



Chinese journalists pose at the Rizal Park in Manila.

DIPLOMATIC NOTES

2002 YEAR-END NOTE

By Ambassador Josue L. Villa



Through the year, the relations between the Philippines and China have grown and intensified.

We look back to another year full of meaningful events. Whereas in 2001 high officials from the Philippines led by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo made visits to China, in 2002 Chairman Li Peng of the National People's Congress, Defense Minister Chi Haotian and other high officials in turn visited our country.

We saw the establishment of the Philippine Consulate General in Shanghai, China's economic and financial center.

The volume and value of our bilateral trade have never been so high, despite the downturn in the regional and world economic scene. Likewise, in the field of foreign investments, a number of Chinese missions have gone to the Philippines looking at business opportunities. Chinese companies are now engaged in a number of major infrastructure projects.

Tourism has shown positive developments. Records indicate that the number of Chinese travelers who visited

the Philippines has markedly increased in the last two quarters of 2002 following the lifting of the travel advisory and the easing of travel requirements. In September, the two countries signed a tourism agreement.

Our cultural exchange program remains to be a model for others. It has benefited both sides, promoting more understanding, good will and friendship between the Filipino and Chinese peoples. In December, the two sides concluded and signed the 12th Protocol of the Philippines-China Cultural Agreement.

Closer political relations have been strengthened not only through the exchange of bilateral visits at the highest levels of political and government leadership; these have also been promoted through the meetings of leaders and other officials within the framework of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and other forums.

The Philippines and China are now joined together in the campaign against terrorism, through the United Nations, in APEC and ASEAN.

We look at China with much respect and admiration for its many achievements and its contribution to regional stability and world peace. We wish the Chinese people continued peace and prosperity.

Mabuhay to Philippines-China friendly relations! May they last a thousand years!

新年快乐!

Commercial Express features the Philippines

The October-November 2002 issue of the *Commercial Express of Embassies and Overseas Agencies* featured several articles concerning the Philippines. The cover story is entitled "Ramos' Impression," which drew attention to the press conference held by former President Fidel V. Ramos at the conclusion of the Bo'ao Forum for Asia in Beijing. The former President talked about the economic conditions and reforms taken in the Philippines, and the actions the government is taking to counter terrorism.

The *Commercial Express* also featured an interview with Ambassador Josue L. Villa. The ambassador talked about the friendly ties between the Philippines and China, Philippines-China trade, Chinese investments in the Philippines, and the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area. He also talked about measures the Philippine government is taking, in cooperation with other countries like the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United States, to combat terrorism. He expressed his views on the success of the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China.

The monthly magazine also included an article on "Investing in the Philippines," providing details on investment opportunities for Chinese and other entrepreneurs. Another article was entitled "San Miguel Beer: Old Brand, Young Blood; Feel the Glamor of San Miguel's Corporate Culture."

San Miguel Corporation maintains three plants in China, including one in Baoding City near Beijing, and one in Hong Kong.

UP Los Baños Dean elected Chairman of APCAEM Governing Board

The Asian and Pacific Center for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery (APCAEM), one of the institutions under the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), held its opening ceremonies and the inaugural meetings of its Technical Advisory Committee and Governing Board in Beijing on 25-27 November. Dr. Reynaldo I. Acda, Dean from the University of the Philippines in Los Baños and Minister Ruth Morales Prado of the Philippine Embassy represented the Philippines at the meetings.

The Philippines was unanimously elected as Chairman of the Governing Board. Dr. Acda's active involvement in the work of the Center since its inception contributed to the election of the country.

Vice Premier Wen Jiabao, at the opening ceremonies, expressed the hope that the Center would promote Asia-Pacific cooperation in agricultural engineering and machinery, and boost regional agricultural development as a whole. Vice Premier Wen, and Mr. Kim Hak-Su, Executive Secretary of ESCAP, jointly unveiled the APCAEM plaque.



Chinese Court Official visits Manila

Honorable Jiang Xingchang, Vice President of the Supreme People's Court of China, led a six-member delegation to the Philippines in November. He met with Chief Justice Hilario G. Davide, Jr. and Foreign Affairs Secretary Blas Ople.

During his call on Secretary Ople, Vice President Jiang assured the early release of Rizaldeo Astrolabio, who had been under detention in Tianjin since 11 February 1999. Astrolabio was released on 23 December 2002, and returned to the Philippines in time for Christmas.

Astrolabio was sentenced to ten years in prison after he accidentally killed one of four Chinese who ganged up on him during a dispute in 1999. His sentence was reduced by ten months for good behavior. The Philippine Embassy sought his early release after it found that his health was deteriorating. Astrolabio's early release was made on account of the good relations between the Philippines and China and for humanitarian reasons.



Philippine Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide, Jr. and Vice President Jiang Xingchang of the Supreme People's Court of China exchange presents during the latter's visit to Manila. Also shown in photo (second from left) is H.E. Wang Chungui, Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines.

Ambassador Villa speaks at CASS about terrorism

At the inauguration of the Southeast Asian Research Center of the Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) on 7 November 2002, Ambassador Josue L. Villa and Indonesian Ambassador Aa Kustia were invited to talk about the experiences of their respective countries in combating terrorism.

Ambassador Villa said that it was President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo who established a link between terrorism and poverty in the Philippines. He stated that poverty breeds new recruits to terrorist groups in the country. He elaborated on Philippine initiatives and actions in its anti-terrorism campaign, including proposals the country has made in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and in the United Nations.

Ambassador Villa said that although the war against terrorism is far from over, activities of terrorist organizations will be restricted, if not totally eliminated, through the concerted action of the community of nations.

It was the second time Ambassador Villa had been invited to speak at CASS.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

PROFILE

Mrs. Bernadette Therese C. Fernandez Second Secretary and Consul Philippine Embassy, Beijing



(This is the 10th of a series of features on Philippine diplomats in China.)

Mrs. Bernadette Therese Fernandez was born in 1969 in Manila to parents of ethnic Chinese parentage.

She received her elementary and high school education at the Immaculate Conception Academy in Greenhills. In 1991, she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology at the Ateneo de Manila University. She completed all academic units and passed the comprehensive exams for a Master of Science degree in Industrial Psychology at the De La Salle University.

Mrs. Fernandez joined the Department of Foreign Affairs in February 1995 after passing the Foreign Service Officers' Examinations. Soon after completing the cadetship program, she was assigned to the APEC National Organizing Commission as Coordinating Officer, then Special Assistant to the Director General. After the successful hosting of APEC Philippines in 1996, she was assigned to the North Asia (China) Division of the DFA's Office of Asian and Pacific Affairs as Assistant Director and later as Acting Director. In 1997, she was assigned as Third Secretary and Vice Consul, later Second Secretary and Consul, at the Philippine Embassy in Beijing. She is responsible for the Embassy's culture, education, sports and public health affairs, ASEAN-China relations (including ASEAN Committee, Beijing and the ASEAN Ladies Circle), gender and development, and women and children concerns.

Prior to joining the foreign service, she worked as Assistant at the Philippine Bank of Communications' Human Resources Department and Customer Service and Remittance Department. Even prior to her stint at the bank, Mrs. Fernandez taught Christian Life Education to grades 5 and 7 students at her alma mater. She is proud of the fact that her students have already completed their undergraduate studies. She has renewed ties with some of them who are now in Beijing to study the Chinese language.

Bernie is happily married to Atty. Francisco Noel R. Fernandez and they are blessed with two children.

Filipino teachers in China

An increasing number of Filipino teachers in English have been coming to China. Unlike regular foreign employees, teachers are required to apply for their residence permit with the State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs (SAFEA). SAFEA issues an "Experts Permit" which serves the same purpose as the regular residence permit issued by BEEA. Filipino teachers who have not obtained their Experts Permit should remind their employers to assist them in securing the Experts Permit from SAFEA in order to avoid any violation of Chinese immigration regulations.

Photocopy of Passport

It is suggested that Filipinos residing in China keep a photocopy of their passports and place the photocopy in a safe place. This will facilitate the application for a new passport should the passport be lost or stolen. The photocopy would also be useful for the Embassy as it verifies the authenticity of the lost or stolen passport with Manila.

Filipino Community celebrates Christmas

Bringing the Philippines closer to the hearts of the Filipinos in Beijing, the Philippine Embassy organized a Christmas party on Sunday, 15 December 2002 at the Social Hall of the Embassy. Attended by more than 300 members of the Filipino community, the event started with the celebration of the Holy Mass officiated by Fr. Joyalito Tajonera and Fr. Frank.

The Mass was followed by lunch which featured Philippine dishes such as kalereta, adobo, pancit, and the traditional "lechon" which was roasted in the backyard of the Embassy. There was more than enough supply of the world-famous San Miguel beer.

With Mr. Omar Lacap, Janneth (Jeth) Candor and Bona Banaag as emcees, the afternoon program lasted more than three hours, with special song and dance numbers from members of the Filipino community and Embassy staff.

The Embassy choral group, with piano accompaniment by Ambassador Josue L. Villa, sang the joyful "Angels We Have Heard on High," the wishful "O Holy Night," and the popular carol "Pasko Na Naman" by Felipe de Leon, to the delight of the audience.

The famous 6-member Fortissimo Band led by Rodolfo Alfonso of Hyatt Beijing entertained the audience with three musical pieces rendered in the band's unique classical style.

A mixed quartet led by Claire Fababaer came up with the gospel song, "Undivided".

Filipino employees of the Canadian Embassy performed a lively dance number, while the Philippine Embassy ladies contributed two dances choreographed by Jeth Candor. Another dance hit was performed by the small children of the Philippine Embassy staff.

Dozens of door prizes were given out. Prize donors included Jaime FlorCruz, Chito Sta. Romana, Ericson Baculinao, Vlad Reyes, Rafaela Chen, Tina Castillo, Judith Los Baños, Rudy and Rose Ignacio, Jeth Candor, Bona Banaag, Rosalina Santiago, Jose Go, Dorothy Tan, Filipino employees of the Canadian and US Embassies, Filipino employees of Proctor and Gamble, the Filipino Club - Beijing, and many others.

The entertainment band "NYC" composed of Greg Antonio, Seberiano Abuli, Johanna Montealto, Sonny Reyes and Jennifer Barsales performed the final musical numbers which led to spontaneous floor dancing.

Rico Manaloto and his team of technicians made sure that the music and sound system did not break down.

A couple of Filipinos doing time in China remarked that it was the merriest Christmas party they have attended, as they went home that evening with the first snow of winter falling gently over Beijing and the first day of Christmas 2002 about to break.



The Ambassador with Mrs. Villa takes a slice of the "lechon" shared by the Filipino Club-Beijing.

LEGAL CORNER

Pedro and Darna are both 19 years old and studying at the Santol College of Agriculture. Their friendship bloomed into love and they decided to seal this love by getting married. The parents of both Pedro and Darna refused to give their parental consent, reasoning that they should finish their studies before getting married. Pedro and Darna, however, both defied their parents and boarded a plane for Beijing where one of their townmates, John Ne, is working as a clerk in a foreign embassy. John Ne suggested to Pedro and Darna that their marriage could be officiated by one of the diplomats in that foreign embassy. Pedro and Darna were thereafter wed by the foreign diplomat inside the foreign embassy in Beijing. They were given the marriage contract which they submitted to the Philippine Embassy in Beijing for registration. The parents of Pedro and Darna learned about their marriage in Beijing and they immediately wrote a letter to the Philippine Embassy requesting that the marriage not be registered since the marriage could not validly take place without their consent. The parents also mentioned that Pedro and Darna did not secure any marriage license before their marriage in the foreign embassy. The foreign embassy where the wedding took place informed the Philippine Embassy that the marriage of Pedro and Darna is valid under their law and that there was no need for them to secure a marriage license.

Q: Is the marriage of Pedro and Darna valid and recognized under Philippine laws?

A: Article 26 of the Family Code recognizes the validity of a marriage solemnized abroad in accordance with the laws in force in the country where the marriage was solemnized. However, the marriage of a Filipino below 18 years old; or a marriage which is bigamous, incestuous; in violation of Philippine public policy (enumerated in Article 38 of the Family Code); contracted under a mistaken identity of the partner or whose partner is psychologically incapacitated; or a second or more marriage for one of the partners who has not settled the disposal of properties in the previous marriage, cannot be recognized by Philippine laws even if the marriage is valid in the foreign country where it was solemnized.

The premises of a foreign embassy are considered territory of the country that established that foreign embassy. Hence, the laws governing the activities of personnel in a foreign embassy are the laws of the sending country, not the host country. A review of the facts attending the marriage of Pedro and Darna shows that their marriage is validly contracted under the laws of the foreign embassy where they were married, as confirmed by the foreign embassy to the Philippine Embassy. Neither does the marriage fall under any of the exceptions provided under Article 26. It is irrelevant that Pedro and Darna failed to secure the consent of their parents to their marriage, or that they did not possess any marriage license before their wedding was solemnized. There is, therefore, no legal impediment for the registration of the marriage with the Philippine Embassy in Beijing.

Obtaining a Work Visa

Filipinos who are employed with a company based in China are requested to secure the necessary work visas (type "Z") in order to avoid any violation of Chinese immigration rules. The following procedures would guide OFWs in securing the work visas:

a. If the OFW is already in China, the employer shall submit a request in writing to the Ministry of Labor and Social Services (MLSS) requesting approval to hire the OFW. MLSS will issue an alien employment permit if the situation supports the hiring of a foreign employee by the employer. The OFW will present the alien employment permit to the Bureau of Exit-Entry Administration (BEEA) and apply for the conversion of the tourist (L) or business (F) visa into a work visa (Z). Upon the issuance of the work visa (Z), the OFW must obtain the residence permit (green card) from BEEA before continuing with the employment.

b. If the prospective OFW is still in the Philippines, the employer submits a written request to MLSS requesting approval to hire the OFW. MLSS will issue an employment license to the employer. The employer sends the employment license and an invitation letter to the OFW in the Philippines who will present the documents to the Visa Section of the Chinese Embassy when s/he applies for a work visa (Z). Upon arrival in China, the OFW submits the employment license and the passport containing the work visa. MLSS issues an alien employment certificate to the OFW. The alien employment certificate is submitted to BEEA, together with the passport containing the work visa. BEEA issues the residence permit.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE



Mga minamahal kong kababayan:

Christmas invites us to count our blessings.

It is easy for us to be seized

by resentment and anger,
by grief and pain,
by anxiety and fear,
by despair.

It is easy to blame others, including God,
for problems unresolved and plans unachieved,
for aspirations unfulfilled and hopes unattained,
for apparently insurmountable sufferings
that affect us individually, as a nation,
and as members of the international community.

It requires more effort -- all of it worthwhile --
to examine what we have done,
and determine what more we could do,
to solve problems, achieve plans,
fulfill aspirations, attain hopes,
ease suffering --
ours and those of those we love,
at home and abroad.

And in doing all this,
we should pause to count the many blessings,
big and small that God has given us,
including that of being alive,
that of being able to live and work in foreign lands,
and that of being able to share our blessings,
not only with our families,
but with all our people,
whose quality of life we are helping to raise,
for such sharing indicates a profound capacity
to serve and to love.

Let us, count our blessings, with gratitude, this
Christmas;
and in the new year, let us build on them
to give ourselves and our world a little more of good
will,
a little more of love, a little more of joy, of peace
and of hope.
for true beatitude exceeds the sum of its parts.

*MALIGAYANG PASKO AT MANIGONG BAGONG
TAON!*

BLAS F. OPLE
Secretary of Foreign Affairs

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CPC Vice Minister Cai Wu in Manila

Vice Minister Cai Wu of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) led a 6-member delegation to Manila on 26 November at the invitation of Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats (Lakas-CMD) National Co-Chairman Speaker Jose de Venecia. The objective of the visit was to strengthen party-to-party relations between the CPC and Lakas-CMD, and contribute to state-to-state relations between the Philippines and China and the peoples of both countries.

Mr. Cai met with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Foreign Affairs Secretary Blas Ople. Secretary Ople congratulated the CPC for the success of the recent 16th National Party Congress in Beijing, pointing out that the smooth transition in leadership speaks eloquently of China's stability.

Mr. Cai spoke highly of the friendly relations between the Philippines and China, and how ties between the two countries are gaining in strength.

He said the 16th National Party Congress succeeded in defining China's vision of "building a well-off society in an all-around way", as it seeks to quadruple China's GDP per capita from the current US\$800 to US\$3,000 in 2020.

Mr. Cai also briefed Secretary Ople on his visit to Bangkok to attend the Second International Conference of Asian Political Parties, which reached consensus on key issues such as peace, economic development, poverty alleviation and political stability. He noted that the forum owes its success to the First Congress that was held in Manila in 2000.

Philippines "WOWs" Beijing in tourism exhibition

The Philippine Embassy in Beijing, in coordination with the Office of the Tourism Representative in Hong Kong, participated in the 2002 China-Beijing International Tourism Exhibition from 22 to 24 November 2002 at the Sun Dong An Plaza, Wangfujing Street, Beijing.

The Philippine booth showcased the various tourist attractions in the country, particularly those that are Warm over Winter (WOW). The Embassy's participation also raised awareness and interest among the Chinese to Wander our Wonders, Walk our Walls, and Wear our Wears.

Also participating in the exhibition were the Embassies of Iran and Sri Lanka, the tourism authorities of Malaysia, Thailand, South Korea, Japan, Egypt, Hong Kong, Macao, Canada, Italy, Mauritius, Malta, Vietnam Airlines, and some Chinese travel agencies. The Beijing Tourism Administration organizes this yearly event, specifically encouraging the increasingly wealthy Chinese to travel during the cold winter months.



The Philippine booth at the 2002 China-Beijing International Tourism Exhibition with Ambassador Villa, Consul General Ruth Prado and other embassy personnel.

Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon urges Asia to bring down tourism barriers

Speaking before delegates of the Bo'ao Forum for Asia - Tourism Conference held in Guilin, China, Department of Tourism Secretary Richard H. Gordon encouraged his counterparts to "bring down the barriers of tourism" and give affected countries the chance to restore confidence in their travel destinations. He encouraged Asian countries to work together in the battle against terrorism emphasizing, "We are a big integrated family in which a tiny hurt on any member will unavoidably influence the whole."

Secretary Gordon, incoming Chair of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) for 2003, also called for more balanced, careful and concise travel advisories so as not to elicit negative effects to the tourism industry of countries. Tourism ministers from other countries such as Indonesia and Sri Lanka echoed Secretary Gordon's call for closer cooperation and a unified stance against terrorism.

For his part, Director He Guangwei of the China National Tourism Administration said China will develop closer cooperation in the field of tourism with all Asian nations. He said cooperation will focus on developing the tourism market, related products and communications as well as improving safety in the industry.

The Guilin Declaration was adopted at the end of the three-day conference on 20 November. The Declaration, being a set of initiatives and measures aimed at addressing the problems and issues confronting the tourism industries of Asian countries, focused on Asian regional tourism cooperation and development, new tourist products development, sustainable tourism growth, and more socio-economic contribution to the tourism sector.

Manila high school students bring home silver in International Robotics Olympiad

The high school team from De la Salle-Santiago Zobel composed of Adrian Owyong, Erbert Anton Vergara, Ricardo Ortuoste and their coach, Mr. Ezrel Alucilja, won the silver medal in the Line Tracing Category in the 4th International Robotics Olympiad held on 2-3 November 2003 at the Western Academy of Beijing.

In addition to the team from De la Salle-Santiago Zobel, the Philippines was represented by teams from the University of the Philippines-Integrated School (UP-IS), Philippine Science High School, Grace Christian High School and First Asia Institute of Technology and Humanities (FAITH).

It was the first time for the Philippines to join the robotics Olympiad. Other countries participating in the competition were China, China-Taiwan, China-Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand and South Korea.



The winning team!