

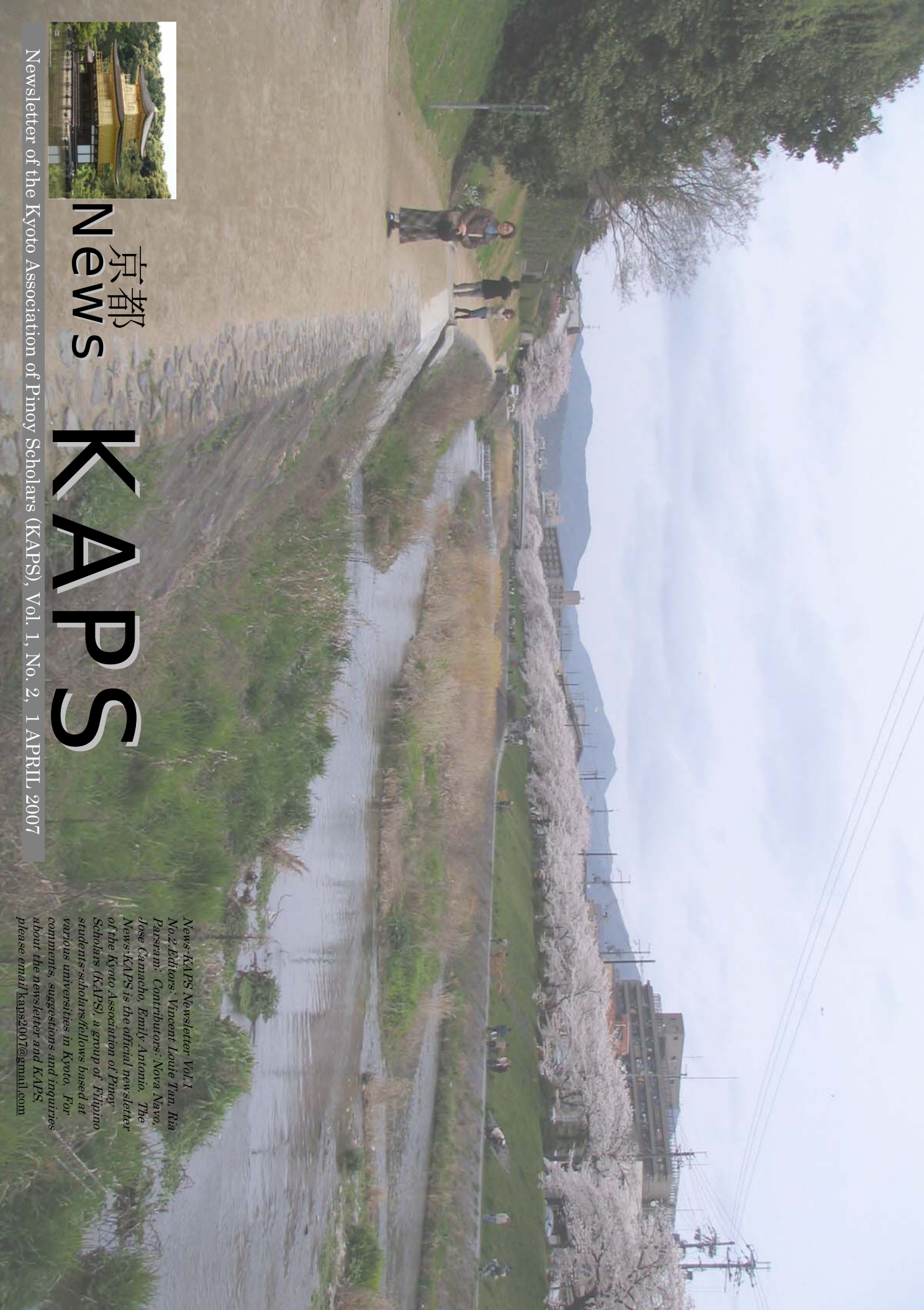


京都  
News

# KAPS

Newsletter of the Kyoto Association of Pinoy Scholars (KAPS), Vol. 1, No. 2, 1 APRIL 2007

*News-KAPS Newsletter Vol.1  
No.2, Editors: Vincent Louie Tan, Ria  
Pararam; Contributors: Nova Navo,  
Jose Camacho, Emily Antonio. The  
News-KAPS is the official newsletter  
of the Kyoto Association of Pinoy  
Scholars (KAPS), a group of Filipino  
students-scholars/fellows based at  
various universities in Kyoto. For  
comments, suggestions and inquiries  
about the newsletter and KAPS,  
please email [kaps2007@gmail.com](mailto:kaps2007@gmail.com)*





# KAPS co-sponsors seminars on Migration, Philippine Elections and Peace in Mindanao

*“Women remit more than men...Altruism is a strong motive for remittances, and this, in turn, is affected by wage rate, personal attributes, destination and position in the household.”*

These were among the main findings of Dr. Ruth Carlos in a paper she presented at a seminar entitled *“Transnational Approach to International Migration: The Case of the Philippines”* that was held at Ryokoku University, Fukakusa Campus on February 15, 2007. The seminar was sponsored by the Afro-Asia Centre for Peace and Development Studies of Ryokoku University, in collaboration with the Kyoto Association of Pinoy Scholars (KAPS). She was joined by Dr. Ma. Rosario P. Ballescas, a professor at the University of the Philippines-Visayas and currently a visiting researcher at the Japan Institute for Labor and Policy Training, and Dr. Jorge Tigno, an associate professor at College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of the Philippines-Diliman and presently a Japan Foundation Visiting Fellow at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University.

Using microdata from the Survey of Overseas Filipinos for the period between 1997-2002, Dr. Carlos, an associate professor of economics at Ryokoku University and KAPS adviser, also concluded that “remittances increase at first, reaches a peak and then declines as the number of months of migrant worker’s stay abroad increases. Furthermore, remittances are a stable source of financing as the peak is reached after the migrant worker had finished his contract.”

*(cont'd SEMINAR, p.2)*

## SPECIAL FEATURE

### A Word from an OFW: What New Skills?\*

P.N. Abinales

*Apart from their being poor or part of the middle class, the majority of those who leave the country for work abroad have two other outstanding characteristics: they are apolitical and they know that they are overqualified for the jobs that await them.*

They do not care much for today’s political circuses as they see no distinction at all between those in power and their protagonists. The sight of Cory Aquino linking arms with Imee Marcos and Ping Lacson, or Satur Ocampo’s henchmen and Gloria Arroyo’s lackeys trading votes in their respective bailiwicks — all these simply confirm that “pare pareho lang na silang tanan.”

In their home provinces, there is more reason not to get embroiled in politics. For now it is the son’s turn to run for congress or the mayor’s seat, as the ageing warlord and his (first) wife retire to tend to the orchids and the grandchildren. Clan power continues with its parasitical ways and even the local NGOs and media are compromised. And the NPA, well, they too are caught in the politics of extortion and compromises — selling voting bailiwicks to the political clans for money,  
*(cont'd OFW,p.4)*

## Yokosou...Incoming KAPS-pamilya/KAPS-puso...

Cerrone S. Cabanos  
*Food Science/Biotechnology*  
U.P. Manila, P. Faura St., Ermita, Manila

Laarni S. De La Cruz  
*Applied Mathematics*  
Brgy. Holy Spirit, Quezon City

Benedict A. San Jose  
*Materials Science/Engineering*  
Tandang Sora, Quezon City

Noralene M. Uy  
*Environmental Management*  
Concepcion Uno, Marikina City

Noelyna M. Ramos  
*Geophysics*  
Duquit, Mabalacat, Pampanga

Jorge H. Primavera  
*Economics*  
Arevalo, Iloilo City

Melvin K. Cabatuan  
*Computer Science/Information Management*  
Toledo City, Cebu

Olivia Ang  
*Linguistics*  
CALUP Diliman

(SEMINAR, from p.1)

Dr. Ballescas, on the other hand, presented an exploratory analysis of Filipino migrants in Japan based on global householding framework. In her paper entitled *“Home Beyond Home: The World Of Filipinos in Japan”*, she explained the roles of the state and businesses that guard, regulate, and facilitate or obstruct global householding and transnational migration. She further opined that “transnational migration, gender and age continue to be closely linked together with globalization within a persistent world economic system.”

Meanwhile, Dr. Tigno, in his paper titled *“Necessary but not Sufficient: Overseas Absentee Voting in the Philippines”*, explained the circumstances and “extent to which Filipinos living and working outside the Philippines can comprise a viable and effective electoral force that can bring about some degree of regime change and political stability for the country”. He argued that “a move away from traditional (often conflict-based and conflict-prone) closed electoral proceedings toward alternative mechanisms that allow for a broadening of the electoral base may ensure the survivability and viability of democratic institutions and processes provided that other conditions are institutionalized as well such as the emergence of consociational politics to allow for effective power sharing among groups and elites.”



Prof. Ruth Carlos, Prof. Jorge Tigno and Prof. Cherry Ballescas presenting their papers during the Ryokoku University-KAPS sponsored seminar on Transnational Approaches to Migration: The Case of the Philippines, held on February 15, 2007 at Ryokoku University, Fukakusa Campus.

## The Seminar on Philippine Election and Peace Prospects in Mindanao

KAPS co-sponsored a seminar with the Kyoto University's Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) with the theme “The May Elections and Peace Prospects in Moro Mindanao”. The seminar, the second in a series to celebrate KAPS first anniversary, was held on 21 March 2007, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at CSEAS, East Building Room 207. The panel of speakers included Mr. Ricardo Reyes, former secretary-general of the Philippine party-list group AKBAYAN; Dr. Nathan Gilbert Quimpo, associate professor at Tsukuba University; Prof. Rufa Guiam, CSEAS visiting fellow and associate professor at Mindanao State University; Prof. Jorge Tigno, associate professor of political science at the University of the Philippines and CSEAS visiting fellow; and finally, Dr. Patricio N. Abinales, CSEAS associate professor and KAPS adviser.



Prof. Rufa Guiam replies to a question while participants listen, during the Mindanao session of the CSEAS-KAPS Seminar on Philippine elections and peace prospects in Mindanao held on March 21, 2007 at CSEAS, Kyoto University.

## Two Japans in a Foreigner's Mind

by Vincent Louie Tan

Before I ever studied art history, I could not tell the difference between Japanese art and Chinese art. In my eyes, they were the same, virtually indistinguishable from one another. I did not know the context of these types of art. I understood none of the philosophy behind them, their particular styles, their messages and the nuances contained within them. Before, anything that was painted on a scroll or a folding screen was immediately Chinese to my eyes.

The only time I can actually distinguish between Chinese art and Japanese art was through the clothes that the people portrayed in the works wore. The obvious distinction between the clothing styles of the two countries made it easy for me to tell the artwork's origin. It is a good thing that as time went on, I was able to study Japanese art little by little, although, I have to admit that I still have a long way to go. The history of Japanese art is long, rich, complicated. And its printed materials are varied and numerous.

*(cont'd TWO JAPANS, p. 7)*

*(OFW, from p.1)*

or threatening businesses with destruction if they do not pay the revolutionary tax, and entering into tactical electoral coalitions with the very regime it wants to overthrow.

Does it come as a surprise then that the group Migrante could hardly muster even 000.01 percent of the masa it claims to represent?

A substantial number of OFWs have at least finished high school or are in their first two years of college before leaving. These are not the illiterate folks who scrambled their way to Mindanao in the immediate post-war period; nor are they the Pinoys who slaved in California's and Hawaii's plantations at the turn of the 20th century.

But they end up with jobs that they normally would not take in Manila, Cebu or even Davao: nannies, cleaners, haulers, truck drivers, etc. Some — especially women — sink deep into the dark side of the informal economy, competing for jobs that the lower classes of those countries would even shun. (On such experiences, the novels of Rey Ventura about being an illegal worker in Yokohama are quite instructive. Ateneo de Manila University Press has reprinted the first and will be coming out with the second one soon.) With nothing else to do and immediately caught up in the humdrum of an alienating everyday life, they prove quite adept at their “new jobs.” But as time goes by the skills they learned in school suffer and gradually atrophy.

Of course, there are exceptions. Nurses and public school teachers have better opportunities to rise to ranks higher than where they began. But such situations are not universal: only in the United States, Canada and perhaps in England are such chances available. In other places, many languish—sometimes for life—with the job they began with. But the most ideal escape is to get married to a citizen of the hiring country. Once that visa status changes to permanent resident, then new pathways open up. The Japayuki becomes the club manager; the nanny can now teach in the local public school; the delivery man gets promoted to product manager. Success stories abound — the most bizarre of late is a former Dabaweno striptease artist vowing to run for governor of Arizona. Still these are a minority; many never transcend the work they were hired for.

Some Filipinos abroad live in enclaves relatively isolated from the societies that employ them. They are alienated from their labor, but so immersed in it that they do not even have the appropriate leisure time to sit back and reflect on their condition. Already estranged from the Philippines (and their home provinces), their alienation deepens as they see no value in participating in the crafting of its future (or resolution of its crisis).

The unfortunate thing is that this is what the state wants the OFW to become. For it needs the OFW's money to pay the enormous external and internal debt and for its leaders to steal a couple of millions along the way. The state sees no need to develop new skills or create jobs we are all qualified for within the national economy. Why upset a bountiful racket?

And even if the state does give attention to new skills training, this does not necessarily open up a wider array of jobs. Hiring countries do not bring in foreign workers to compete with local hires; foreigners are brought in because the work they will be handling is that which the country's own citizens refuse to do. These are either the blue-collar jobs which are back-breaking and low-waged, and which demand long hours, or those trades that thrive in the informal sector.

This is the curse that OFWs will have to live with, in this generation and those who will follow their mothers and fathers to Tokyo, Dubai, Rome, Hong Kong, Singapore.

*[Author's note: P.N. Abinales' route to OFW-hood began with the UP regulation prohibiting research associates pursuing graduate studies from going on leave-without-pay beyond a 2-year limit. He was ordered to report back to his post at the Third World Studies or be dishonorably dismissed from the rolls. He chose to resign. He is presently associate professor at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University. His latest book is State and Society in the Philippines, jointly written with Donna J. Amoroso, and published by Anvil Publishing in the Philippines and Rowman and Littlefield in the United States.] \*a reprint, with permission, from UP Forum, Vol. 7, No. 4, July-August 2006 (<http://www.up.edu.ph>)*

# Jumbo Box

ni Emily S. Antonio

Agusto 24, 2006. Ito ang araw ng aking pamamaalam sa Obaku at sa Kyoto. Unang linggo pa lamang ng buwang ito nagsimula na akong nag-impake. Una, inihiwalay ko ang mga gamit na dapat ipadala sa Pilipinas. Karamihan nito ay mga pinamili ko sa *flea market* o *bazaar*. Pagkatapos, nilagyan ko ng pangalan bawat isa, kung para kanino ayon sa hilig ng pagbigbigyan ko. Naku! Wala pa para sa mga lalake – para sa daddy ko, lalaking kapatid, uncle at mga pinsang lalake. Halos pambabae pala lahat ang napamili ko. Ang hirap naman kasing pumili para sa mga lalake. At kadalasan ang mamahal pa. Kaya, pagdating ng Linggo hanap ako sa *recycle shop*, isang mukhang bagong bag na panglalake lang ang nabili ko. Kaya pumunta ako sa Teramachi, isang *shopping arcade* sa Kyoto, at ayun, may sale sa *Giordano*. Check ko ulit listahan ko, dapat walang iiyak pagdating ng jumbo box sa amin. Hala! Wala pa pala para sa mga mala-donya kong aunties. Dapat makabili rin dahil kung hindi... lagot! Gusto ko sanang ibili sila at ang aking mahal na nanay ng pamaypay ng Hapon na gawa sa papel at may *hand painting* na dekorasyon. Kaso, napakamahal pala ng mga 'yon! Tapos parang napakaselan, mukhang madaling masira, ang init pa naman sa Pinas. Kaya Japanese bowl at tray na lang. Mas malaki at mabigat nga lang.

Nasa pang-apat na palapag ang aking silid. Sa sobrang laki at bigat ng kahong ipapadala ko baka di na kunin pag dito ko pina-*pick-up* sa 4th floor. Kaya dapat sa lobby na ako mag-impake ng jumbo box na'to. Wala pa namang elevator sa dorm ko, kaya pagsapit ng hating gabi, habang tulog ang lahat, dahan-dahan akong naghakot pababa. Di ko mabilang kung nakailang balik ako, akyat at baba ng hagdan. Nang naibaba ko na lahat, ang pagkakalagay naman sa kahon! Dapat kasi walang space para kahit itapon-tapon siya, di mapurnada ang laman. Ang mga babasagin at maseselan, inilagay ko sa gitna ng mga damit at kumot. Ang maliliit na butas sa pagitan ng mga gamit ay nilagyan ko ng *napkin* (syempre iyong hindi pa gamit) at maliliit na tuwalya o makakapal na papel bago nilagay sa sariling karton. Tapos, saksakan uli ng papel para di kakalog-kalog. Mabuti na lang at may *gift shop* ang lola ko sa amin. Iba talaga pag may konting *training* sa pag-iimpake (pero di naman kami gumagamit ng *napkin*). Akala ko nga dalawang karton ang kailangan ko. Aba, napagkasya ko lahat sa isa lang! Galing ko!

Lumipas ang isang linggo, di na ako mapalagay. Dapat mapadala ko na ang *jumbo box*, kompleto man o hindi. Kaya, tawag na ako sa kompanya para kunin ito. Sabi sa *ads* nila sa net 14,000 yen daw makakarating na sa Mindanao sa loob ng isang buwan kasi kasosyo nila ang LBC sa Pilipinas. At ang maganda pa nito, malaki (*jumbo* nga) at "*unlimited weight!*" Kaya dapat ilagay na ang pwedeng mailagay. Mga pamigay, mga di na kasyang damit (tumaba ako? di na kasi pwedeng tumaas), tsokolate, iba't-ibang noodles, tsaa, mga gamit pang-kusina, unan, kumot, laruan, sari-saring *electric wires* (mura kasi sa recycle shop at magandang klase), koleksyon kong *Japanese dolls* at iba pa. Ang dami ko palang naipong gamit sa loob ng isang taon. Karamihan nito ay galing nga sa *flea market*, *recycle shop*, binigay, binili o di kaya ay mga napulot sa labas ng dorm. Iyong mga umaalis na estudyante iniwan ang ibang gamit nila na hindi na kayang dalhin, Sayang, bagong-bago pa! Pero, parang di malayong gagawin ko din yan sa pag-alis ko.

(cont'd JUMBO, p. 6)

## “What’s the title of your research work?”

I am very sure you were asked this question during your interview for a scholarship grant. Then you were asked to elaborate its significance, the techniques or methodology to be employed and perhaps, the research hypothesis. When the panel members were not convinced with your presentation, you were further bombarded with more “how” and “why” questions to clarify your arguments.

The research title is also an essential item of an application form for admission into a graduate program, especially in Japanese schools and universities. In most cases, from the title alone, one is judged whether an applicant has the academic preparation, skills and competence to perform the research project. It is also based on this premise that the student-applicant will be matched with potential research professors, based on the professor's academic expertise and area of specialization.

Listed below are the titles of research being carried out by KAPS members, including their university affiliation and field of specialization. You might wish to contact them to forge future research collaboration and/or academic linkage.

*Rhoda P. Agdeppa-- Namoco*, rpagdeppa@yahoo.com

Kyoto University; Field of specialization: Applied Mathematics/System Optimization

Research title: The Traffic Equilibrium Problem with Nonadditive

Costs and Its Monotone Mixed Complementarity Problem Formulation

*Emily S. Antonio*, emily@kais.kyoto-u.ac.jp

Kyoto University; Field of Specialization: Applied BioScience/Marine Biology

Research Title: Benthic Ecology of Yura River and its Coastal Waters

*Ryan G. Banal*, rgbanal@yahoo.com

Kyoto University; Field of Specialization: Electronic Science and Engineering

Research title: Compact (Ultraviolet) Laser and Light Emitting Diodes:

Alternative to Toxic Gas Lasers and Mercury Lamps

(cont'd LIST, p.3)

(LIST, from p.2)

*Roderick C. Bugador*, nurbugs@hotmail.com

Kyoto University; Field of Specialization: Marketing/Business Administration

Research Title: Organizational Orientation and Performance in Japanese Consumer Cooperatives

*Jocelyn Cabrera*, jocelyn\_2179@yahoo.com.ph

Kyoto University of Education; Field of specialization: Secondary Education

Research title: IT Integration In Physics Education in Selected Schools in Kyoto, Japan

*Jose V. Camacho Jr.*, anjoecon@yahoo.com

Kyoto University; Field of Specialization: Economics of Education/Labor-Human Resource Econ

Research title: Why Skills Matter? Essays on Skill Formation in the Philippines

*Candy Chiu*, candyonthecover@yahoo.com

Kyoto University; Field of Specialization: Contemporary Economics/Business Administration

Research Title: The Philippine Automotive Industry

*Nicolle B. Comafay*, nicolle@comafay.com

Doshisha University; Field of Specialization: Sociology

Research Title: Immigrant Church and Community of Filipinos in Japan:

The Case of Kyoto Pag-asa Filipino Community

*Karen B. Jago-on*, karenjagoon@yahoo.com

Hiroshima University/Research Institute for Humanity and Nature, Kyoto

Field of specialization: Development/Environmental Economics, Urban/ Regional Planning

Research Title: Urban Development and its Impact on Subsurface Environments in Selected Asian Cities

*Consortio S. Namoco Jr.*, csnamocojr@yahoo.com

Kyoto Institute of Technology; Field of specialization: Metal Forming

Research Title: Improvement of Strength and Formability of Sheet Metal

By Embossing and Restoration Process

*Nova Z. Navo*, nova\_z\_nav@yahoo.com

Ritsumeikan University; Field of Specialization: Policy Science

Research Title: Political Stability and Development at the City Level: The Philippine Experience

*Jose C. Pamittan*, jopam95x@yahoo.com

Ritsumeikan University; Field of Specialization: Policy Science

Research Title: School-Based Budgeting: An Assessment of the Direct Release System in the Department of Education, Region 2, Philippines

*Ria C. Parsram*, rparsram@gmail.com

Ritsumeikan University; Field of Specialization: Sociolinguistics; Foreign Language Education

Research Title: Code-switching and Humor: An Analysis of Filipino Comic Strips

*Erec C. Rana*, ranma1266@yahoo.com

Ritsumeikan University; Field of Specialization: Policy Science

Research Title: Convergence/Divergence Between Philippines and Japanese Social Security Infrastructure: A Comparative Study and Strategy for Global Security Action

*Janette J. Simplina*, janette@kugi.kyoto-u.ac.jp; jan.simplina@gmail.com

Kyoto University; Field of Specialization: Geophysics; Seismology

Research Title: Deep Earthquake of 5 February 2005 under Mindanao, Philippines:

Source Process and S-wave Waveform Anomaly Detected in Central Japan

*Vincent Louie Tan*, vincent.villaescusa@gmail.com

Kyoto Institute of Technology; Field of Specialization: Art History; Interior Design

Research Title: The Exhibition of Japanese War Record Paintings in Japan During World War II

*Mae C. Yap*, maeyap11@yahoo.com

Ritsumeikan University; Field of Specialization: Policy Science

Research Title: Performance Management System (PMS) Based on Organizational Performance Indicators Framework: The Case and Experience of DSWD, Philippines

(JUMBO, from p.5)

Nang tumawag na ako sa kompanya, aba, di sila marunong mag-Ingles, at hindi din naintindihan ang limitado kong Nihongo. Kaya pa-*rescue* ako sa Intsik kong kapitbahay na ang major ay Nihongo. Dumating nga ang truck, nang makita ng mama ang box, umurong! Imposible daw na 14,000 yen lang ang babayaran ko, tapos umalis agad? Teke, teke, yon ang sabi sa ads niyo ah? At ito din ang rekomendasyon ng ibang Pinoy na nagpapadala ng sangkatutak na gamit nila pauwi. Matawagan nga ang reyna ng bazaar... Nge... Sa maling kompanya pala ako tumawag! Kaya pala di nagkaintindihan.

Hay, sa wakas, dumating din ang tamang truck. Nagtatoka lang ako bakit isang tao lang siya, wala pa siyang gamit pambuhay, gloves lang? Paano kaya niya makakaya ang napakabigat na karton at mai-akyat sa *truck*? Hmnnnn... may dala siguro syang maliit na *high-tech* na instrumento. Aba! Binuhay lang ng dalawang kamay niya? May pagka-*Superman* yata ito ah. Kinaya! Binuksan ko ang pintong nakanganga dahil sa mangha sa tindi ng *powers* niya at natatakot din baka kasi mabitawan niya ang box at makita lahat ng gamit ko! Buti na lang... Syempre para maganahan siya, clap kunwari ako at sabay sabing "*Sugo!*" (Ang galing!)

Makalipas ang tatlong linggo, nang tumawag ako sa amin kagaya ng kinagawian, sinabi ng aking mommy na dumating na ang jumbo box na pinadala ko! Galing ah! Wala pa ang isang buwan. Sa sobrang laki nito, hindi din maiakyat sa bahay. Kaya ang nangyari, binuksan sa tindahan ng lola ko at tsaka hinakot paunti-unti sa bahay! Ha,ha,ha... Pero dahil excited sila, napakadali daw nilang naiakyat! Siyempre, doon naman nagkaroon ng *flea market* sa amin nang araw na yon! Sabi pa niya, iyong mga walang pangalan, nag-uunahan daw ang mga pinsan at mga tita ko kung kakasya sa kanila. Ang saya-saya daw nila, parang may *ukay-ukay* pag *market* day sa amin.

Ang sarap pala ng feeling kapag nakapagpadala ka. Na-*feel* ko talaga na nasa abroad nga ako! Kahit na di mamahalin, basta galing *abroad* alam mong masaya na ang pamilya, kamag-anak, kapitbahay, inaanak at kaibigan mo. Lalo na pag-*ini-imagine* mo kung paano nila pinag-piyestahan ang padala mo. Pero hmmm.... Ngayon napa-isip ako. Siguro kung doon ako bumili sa amin ng mga bagay na yon, mas mura siguro kaysa sa binayad ko sa pagpapadala. Makakatulong pa ako sa ekonomiya ng Pilipinas, kasama ko pa silang mamili. Pero hmmm... baka marami ring ituturo, baka mapamahal din. Ewan ko ba.

Nasasayangan talaga akong magtapon ng gamit, kahit pa mura lang ito noong binili ko, bigay o napulot lang. Kapag nakaranas ka nga naman ng hirap, talagang masayang mag-*ipon* at magbigay ng gamit. Pero kung tutuusin hindi naman talaga kailangan ang iba doon. Gaya ng unan, kumot, pinggan, baso, kutsara, sandok... Meron na kami noon sa bahay ah! Kaya, sigurado akong hindi din magagamit, dahil yung luma din ang gagamitin nila. Kasi nga sayang yong galing abroad. Dekorasyon o pa-alikabukan lang sa kabinet? Parang feeling ko tuloy nagpadala ako ng basura sa amin. Ano ba? E paano naman kasi feeling ko kapag nasa abroad ka parang expected ng mga tao sa inyo na may-*package* silang matatanggap galing sa'yo. Sabi nga ng mommy ko, baka di na raw ako kumakain para lang may maipadala. Bakit kaya niya nahulaan? Kaya, isip-isip...

## KAPS at the *Pistahan sa Kyoto*

KAPS presented a booth that showcased Philippine culture and sold Filipino food and native products during the celebration of the Philippine-Japan Friendship Forum: *Pistahan sa Kyoto* held on 3 November 2006 at Kyoto Campus Plaza. In the same activity, the group also coordinated a panel discussion on Filipino professionals and students in Japan and a symposium on Philippines-Japan development cooperation. More details about the activities held and photos taken during the event can be found at this website <http://www.geocities.jp/piyestasakvoto>



1. KAPS members at *Pistahan sa Kyoto*
2. Consul-general Lourdes Ramiro-Lopez while viewing the KAPS booth.
3. KAPS officers Roderick Bugador, Vince Louie Tan, Jose Camacho, and Dr. Shirley Agrupis with the *Pistahan sa Kyoto* guest speaker, former senator and national defense secretary Orly Mercado, currently a professor at Kobe College
4. KAPS members selling ethnic Philippine crafts

*(TWO JAPANS, from p.1)*

Given its historical length, degree of sophistication and depth of printed literature, I cannot help but feel at awe at the cultural achievements of Japan against that of my country, the Philippines. Perhaps it is not really primarily the “advancement” of Japanese culture that makes me at awe of it but the degree of documentation it has. Fortunately for Japan, it has many documents that relate to its history and culture. This makes it easier for her to write her history because the discipline of history is, after all, primarily a written-documents driven discipline. It is amazing how some of Japan's historical documents are more than a millennium old. And they are not even archaeological artifacts. They are actual documents preserved from generation to generation

However, when one starts to read and learn about Japanese art, one will encounter many problems and contradictions with it. Or at least, problems and contradictions within one's preconception of on what is Japanese art.

For most foreigners, Japan will always be the land of old temples and shrines, delicate geishas and noble samurais. In other words, the Japan of old, the exoticized Japan that enthralled the West when Japan first opened its doors to them, the old Japan. On the other end of the spectrum, we have the Japan that is the land of the “corporate warrior.” A land of towering skyscrapers equipped with the latest advances in technology. A country where almost everyone owns the latest in high fashion and high technology. A land of robots, fast cars and high efficiency. In other words, there are two Japans in a foreigner's mind. The Japan of old and the Japan that is poised to take on the future with all of its advanced technology. This dichotomy of the two Japans is puzzling to most foreigners, I believe. This is because between the two Japans inside a foreigner's mind, how does one connect the two? Where is the Japan that is or was in transition, the Japan that went from the Japan of old to the Japan of the future?

Perhaps this has a lot to do with the way that Japan represents itself to the world. A person's perception of something, after all, is pretty much based on how the thing being studied wants to be seen. In a way, Japan, for the most part, capitalizes on the foreigner's preconceived notion of what it is, especially for tourism purposes.

Tourism, especially cultural tourism, is basically using one's culture for the sake of financial gain. For countries around the world, tourism is a major contributor to its coffers. Until a few years ago, Japan decided to capitalize on peoples' fascination with her culture and headed on full speed in making Japan a major tourist destination.

There is no doubt in anyone's mind that the reason why so many people are enticed to come to Japan is because of its culture and arts. Even after more than a century of being “open to the outside world,” Japan is still a land of mystery for most people. I believe this is primarily because of the fossilization of Japanese culture in the minds of foreigner, like what I have described above. For the most part, Japan is like a giant theme park, a fantasy world or a world where time stood still in some places, while in other places time times rushes on in break neck speed.

To cater to this need, this fantasy of the “dual Japan” is reinforced or recreated to readily served the expectations of tourists. Thus, in any brochure being handed, even in the smallest of tourist destinations, one will find listings for the local temples, art museums, hot springs and other places of historical note. Then, as a matter of counterpoint, there are the museums with their gleaming Modern buildings, the technologically advanced amusement parks and other places of high technology.

To outsiders (in Japan, anyone not Japanese is automatically an outsider), Japan is the mysterious geisha of the Far East, perpetually hiding behind a thick layer of face powder, exposing only the slightest glances of skin, the faintest of smiles. She is a country that beguiles yet hardly lets anyone become intimate with her. I believe that it is even worth asking if it is ever possible for a foreigner to get to know Japan the same way that the Japanese know their own country? Or do the Japanese know their own country well enough to be able to show its true face to the world?

---

## Musings

by Nova Navo

“Maraming nag-iisa rito.”\*

Ilang araw na naman akong nagkulong sa makipot  
kong kwarto-  
gayong ang lawak ng mundo.

Maamo sa lahat maliban sa sarili.

Gayon nga.

*\*Banggit ng isang fellow hinggil sa kalagayan ng lipunan sa Japan.*

Omedetou gozaimasu!!!

KAPS graduates

M.A.: Ria C. Parsram; Nicolle B. Comafay

Ph.D.: Gerard Bengua; Mingus Malle

