



# Expanding Circles of Goodwill: A Study of Social Capital in a Filipino Community In Kyoto, Japan

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## Introduction

Expanding circles of goodwill is about social capital. It is about trust and the successful pursuit of the common good by individuals working together in a group linked to other individuals in a network of groups. It is all about the importance of reaching out to others in order to turn possibilities into realities. John Field (2003) eloquently summarizes the salience of social capital:

“...Relationships matter. By making connections with one another, and keeping them going over time, people are able to work together to achieve things that they either could not achieve by themselves, or could only achieve with great difficulty.”

This piece examines social capital in a Philippine context. The Philippine context specifically discussed in this brief paper revolves around the activities of *Kapatiran-Kyoto*, an informal organization/network of Filipino scholars, professionals and residents in the setting of Japan’s cultural capital. This paper narrates the history of *Kapatiran-Kyoto*, discusses the core beliefs that are shared by its members and presents its basic organizational structure. It looks at the types of annual events held by the

group for the purpose of fund-raising for various causes. It attempts to explain the *Kapatiran-Kyoto* experience in terms of Pierre Bourdieu's view of social capital as "the sum of resources... that accrue to an individual or group," a factor that eventually influences capability-building. The paper discusses the importance of structure as well as the importance of the nature of structure of *Kapatiran-Kyoto*. It examines context specific factors found in the site of Kyoto City and relates this to social capital formation among its Filipino residents.

### The Birth of *Kapatiran-Kyoto*

In 1991, Mt. Pinatubo erupted. It buried towns in the area of the Provinces of Zambales and Pampanga, displaced indigenous groups and hundreds of other communities living underneath its shadow, booted the Americans out of the Philippine military bases (a physical result which was followed by a legal one through the abrogation of the bases agreement by the Philippine Senate), and temporarily put a halt to global warming. In this not too unfamiliar milieu disaster, *Kapatiran-Kyoto* (a.k.a. Nihon-Firipin Koyu-Kai) was born. Like many wonderful Philippine ideas, *Kapatiran* started in a dinner setting in the company of friends. Matthew C.M. Santamaria<sup>1</sup> suggested to Casilda Luzares<sup>2</sup> to organize a "small" charity party for the victims of the volcanic eruption. Word got around to students such as Jack Malamug, at that time a doctor's degree student at the Faculty of Agriculture, who alerted other "old time" students based in Kyoto University about the project. The "small" project eventually became a "medium-sized" one with members Filipino Catholic *Pag-asa* Community joining the project as volunteers. By the end of the month, the core group of 30 became a network of about 100 people. From a starting budget of zero in 1991, the group was able to set aside US\$3,000 for its initial event funds in 1997 (*Kapatiran-Kyoto* Financial Reports). The group's record in fund raising also grew from US\$5,000 in 1991 to US\$30,000 in 1997. The story of *Kapatiran-Kyoto* is the story of nurturing social capital through expanding circles of goodwill. The first expression of goodwill came in the form of one-thousand yen bills, coins and

promissory notes that were handed to Luzares, the convenor-by-fact on that day when a “party” became a “movement,” a group of like-minded people conscious of its goals and its self-defined role and determined to face the challenges that bear upon them. From then on, accumulating gestures of goodwill became the life force of the group. These gestures repeated in regularity over time and ritualized in a yearly event that celebrated charity through the sharing of Filipino culture became the bedrock of Filipino social capital in Kyoto.

Robert Putnam refers to social capital as “...features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the *efficiency* of society by facilitating coordinated actions” (Putnam, 1993, italics ours). Trust, norms and networks are important variables that must be examined in order to understand the success of *Kapatiran-Kyoto* as an active actor in nurturing social capital among Filipinos, Japanese and other nationalities for the purpose of making a difference in the lives of others in need through yearly collaborative events that seek to raise funds in a sharing of culture.

In 1991, the year of Mt. Pinatubo’s eruption, the core members of *Kapatiran-Kyoto* decided to embark in a do-able charity event. Since parties were rather frequent among Filipinos in Kyoto, it was decided that the event will take the form of a charity party that later on was called “Fiesta Filipina.” The Fiesta Filipina recreated the town festival in the spacious Luzares backyard in the Kamigyo-ku district of Kyoto City just northeast of the Imperial Palace. Committees for physical arrangement, food, publicity and finance were promptly organized and manned by Filipino, Japanese and American friends. The activities seen in this initial *Kapatiran-Kyoto* event were rather simple and straight forwards. They constituted selling Philippine food and native products, conducting Filipino fiesta games, presenting and annotating Filipino songs and dances and distributing donations for collection.

Not surprisingly, the event went rather well. The fiesta, after all, was simply an extension of our usual party. Funds were raised and turned over to Philippine agencies and organizations dealing with two major concerns:

1) victims of the Mt. Pinatubo eruption, most specially the *Katutubo* indigenous groups of the affected region, and 2) street children of Manila. Great fun led to great relief. *Kapatiran-Kyoto* passed its first test. The feeling of trust and familiarity that developed among the volunteers who worked closely during the planning and the execution of the event were seen as happy bi-products. Apparently, trust in the group to come up with a good cultural program was also developing among our institutional partners such as the Catholic and the Protestant Church leadership Kyoto, corporate sponsors, and fiesta visitors. However, no one knew at that point in time that organizing could be habit forming and that over time, a habit may turn into a norm.

Responsibility leads to other responsibilities. Having seen success in 1991, the core members decided to repeat the event in 1992, 1993 and 1994. They were encouraged by those who saw the first Fiesta Filipina, by institutional partners in the Catholic and Protestant Churches, sponsors like the Philippine Tourism Office and the Japanese Telecommunications Giant, the KDD, Filipino residents who see “home” in the fiesta and many others. Aside from encouragement, contact with Philippine organizations working with the Mt. Pinatubo eruption victims and the street children of Manila impressed upon *Kapatiran-Kyoto* core members the need for continuous engagement.

A one-shot deal is not only meaningless—in the context of “good life” in Japan, it could very well be cruel in its detachment from continuing social realities. And thus, the fiestas came year in and year out and *Kapatiran-Kyoto* served, in a certain sense, as an effective conduit between the members of the civil societies of Japan and the Philippines. Resources in cash and in kind moved between the two spaces of social meaning, institutional partnerships with the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines, the Laura Vicuna Foundation and others were nurtured by *Kapatiran-Kyoto’s* yearly social engagement. These partnerships in two social spaces, Japan and the Philippines, indicated maturity. The organization was no longer concerned solely with its members or individual donors. Its leadership became aware of partner organizations whose cooperation

through the years would be a most consistent source of strength, to go back to the drawing board every year and to plan an event once again. Indeed goodwill grows. This idea is not far from the conception of social capital presented by Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) which states:

“Social capital is the sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.” (underscoring ours)

1995, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the End of World War II, brought to *Kapatiran-Kyoto* a challenge: Will this year’s event take the usual form or will it be of more substance? The core members of *Kapatiran-Kyoto* were now discussing possible roles for the group to take in engaging the Japanese public about a social and political issue. The amount of trust, confidence and the sense of responsibility shared by the members of the group reached a higher level. The group decided to produce “In My Father’s House,” Elsa Cosculuella’s play about the Japanese Occupation. It was directed by Professor Josefina Estralla, now the Artistic Director of the *Dulaang UP*. It was most fortunate that in that year, Estralla was scheduled to do studies in the Noh Theater in Kyoto.<sup>3</sup>

By departing from its usual framework and by asking questions related to social concerns, *Kapatiran-Kyoto* entered a process of defining a social role, a function for itself vis-à-vis its host society. *Kapatiran-Kyoto*, upon its decision to reach out to a Japanese audience, to talk about war, and yet still raise funds for its social concerns in the Philippines, has moved to a higher level of existence—one that defines for itself a specific function and, therefore, a place in Japan’s world of social and political discourses. James Coleman relates social capital to function (1994):

“Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure.”

Through the production of "In My Father's House," the Filipino individual intent, desire or need to express views on war was given voice, form and performative persuasion. Through it, the abstract became concrete. The distance from a past, mostly forgotten by younger generations of Japanese, is made proximate and made to live in the present through a re-telling and re-enacting of past events by the real and affected bodies and minds of *Kapatiran-Kyoto's* cast of actors. *Kapatiran-Kyoto*, through theater, was able to transform motley group of Filipinos—professors, students, consulate employees, cooks, construction workers—into a powerful symbol of not only a Filipino but a human voice and consciousness wanting to speak and wanting to be heard so that the darkness of war may not every be repeated. By this time, *Kapatiran-Kyoto's* volunteers included Filipinos, Japanese, Americans, Germans, and a Burmese scholar who insisted in joining the play because of his personal conviction of opposing war.

Since the theme was rather political, some of *Kapatiran-Kyoto's* partners opted to distance themselves from the production. At the end of the production, financial statements revealed that funds still increased. Fund-raising though most important, however, was not the primary concern during that year of reflection. Driving the message about the infinite cruelty of war was the main concern. And driving the point *Kapatiran-Kyoto* did most well in this play. It touched raw nerves (and it had to do so in order to be effective). A former member of the imperial army watched the play and stormed out of the venue shouting, "The Japanese army did not rape women." A former member of the USAFFE (United States Armed Forces in the Far East) watched the play in tears and related how the play made him remember the agony of seeing friends die in the "Death March." Both cases poignantly and eloquently speak of individual frailty, the precariousness of the human condition, and the need to remember.

Complementing memory-making is reflection. The Japanese youth who watched the play were made to reflect on their history—a shared history that is dark but not an insurmountable barrier to friendship. No price can be placed on the results of their individual processes of reflection. As in many

other aspects of social capital, exact quantification of its effect on the common good of society is a near impossibility. Their raw comments however reveal their importance. The following are some comments excerpted from essays written about the play: (*Kapatiran-Kyoto* Files: Document annotated: In My Father's House [staged October 20, 21,22,27,28, 1995]—excerpts from student reports [first year English Department, Doshisha University], selection and recording by Casilda Luzares)

- A war breaks out because the rulers of the countries struggle for power. (The ordinary citizens are not) responsible for it but it is they who have the most bitter experiences during war. Every time I hear (about the cruelty done by the Japanese) to many peoples in Southeast Asia, I feel ashamed for my country. We should tell our children about the war.
- When I watched the play I could no longer hold back my tears... In a war people are no longer human. They could not think what was right and what was wrong. If I were a comfort woman, I would choose to kill myself.
- If I was a part of this family, I would not hate the abstract thing called war but the Japanese, (if) I was forced to serve as a comfort woman, I might choose to kill myself. It is an abominable crime to women. In the face of war, human beings mean nothing. We should hang our heads in shame.
- War isn't only momentary. The mental injury will remain for a long time...I keenly felt that the "war of the past" was still alive through this play.
- I think war is hate itself. War produces only destruction—of the social order, morals, law, human happiness and even lives... I had a strong prejudice towards Filipinos before the play because Japanese media broadcast the wrong sides—poverty, the big gap between the rich and the poor, hard work etc. Recently, I have noticed my prejudice and realized the universality of human beings every time I watch documentaries like your play. I want to watch, and listen to many documentaries and correct my prejudices throughout my life.

The selected comments reproduced above reveal processes of revelation, changes in attitude and perception, and a commitment to the idea of respect for humans. These expressions of cognition, awareness of a shift from one level of consciousness to a higher one, statements that uphold values and, more importantly, pertaining to the right to life underscore the value of theater as a tool of education—a means of self-liberation from ignorance and a most effective mode of socialization. “In My Father’s House” emphasized the value of human life, the power of kindness regardless of its source and the resilience of the soul to understand and to forgive. *Kapatiran-Kyoto*’s decision to produce a play about the Japanese Occupation in the very site or production venue within Japan was a deliberate and courageous move to portray the hideous face of war and to stress the value of human life. This move brought about expressions of support from members of United Church of Christ Japan (UCCJ). It appears that the play helped to express what *Kapatiran-Kyoto* is all about and what it wants to do as part of the Filipino presence in Japan. What words and incoherent translation failed to express, performance did to maximum effect. The following letter from Reverend Yukio Saeki of Doshisha Church encapsulates an understanding that *Kapatiran-Kyoto* did not quite expect and could not have verbalized for itself:

Dear Dr. Ms. Casirda E. Luzares

Mr. Matthew Santamaria

I praise the name of God. Thank you for your greeting about “In My Father’s House.”

I think that the play is really a wonderful plan and the context of the play is great. I came to have a deep respect for you. Thank you very much. I was very glad to hear that the play was really impressive from many friends at the church and the school.

I also glad to obtain deeper understanding, exchange, and confidence between people through my small support to the play.



I am very sorry that I did not understand enough what you and Mr. Matthew would do from your present position.

I would like to understand and support what you will to do as much as I can.

I pray for my missionary work and the happy Kyoto life of the Filipino living in Kyoto. I also pray for you working for the world peace.

I am looking forward to seeing you in the church.

Yours sincerely,

Yukio Saeki

Nov. 21 1995

Respect, understanding, confidence, support, happiness and world peace...the Reverend Saeki effectively wrote a vision mission that was deep in hearts of *Kapatiran-Kyoto* members but not contained in any of its documents. From then onwards, UCCJ's support to *Kapatiran-Kyoto* became even more generous and unconditional. The circle of goodwill has once again expanded and its roots in mutual understanding, love and respect has grown even deeper.

Michael Woolcock (2001) explains the following three types of social capital:

- a) "bonding social capital, which denotes ties between like people in similar situations, such as immediate family, close friends and neighbors;
- b) bridging social capital, which encompasses more distant ties of like persons, such as loose friendships and workmates; and
- c) linking social capital, which reaches out to unlike people in dissimilar situations, such as those who are entirely outside the community, thus enabling members to leverage a far wider ranges of resources than are available within the community."

*Kapatiran-Kyoto* was conceived out of the bonding capital that formed among friends in the countless parties done to celebrate birthdays and graduations, to welcome new students, a newly married Filipina and visiting professors, to bid farewell to those who are about to leave for the Philippines and for all sorts of reasons. The bridging of acquaintances, friends of friends and even casual visitors to Kyoto or even passers-by happened in the Fiesta Filipina series. "In My Father's House" provided *Kapatiran-Kyoto* the opportunity to link "unlike people in dissimilar situations." The opinions on World War II expressed by former soldiers belonging to warring sides effectively linked two perspectives in one event. In this particular case, the processes of memory making and reflection prodded by the production are as important as the unfinished issues of war such as compensation for the victims of forced labor and the comfort women issue. Set against the studied silence of the polite but still conflicted society of Japan, outbursts that reveal true feelings could only be helpful and most welcomed.

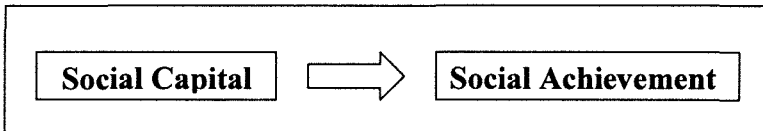
In the case of the young Japanese commenting on an event that they themselves have not personally experienced, the play appeared to have help raise questions relating self to nation, the past generation and one's own, and the interrelated suffering of the whole of humanity in times of war. With these results, it is safe to say that *Kapatiran-Kyoto* in the year of memory, 1995, helped in its own small way steer social agenda in Japan. By that time, *Kapatiran-Kyoto's* Japanese name, Nihon-Firipin Koyu-Kai, or as literally translated, the Japan-Philippines Friendship Association, was already long obsolete. In the 1997 production of "Alay at Alaala" (Offering and Remembrance), dubbed as *Kapatiran-Kyoto's* pre-centennial celebration of the Philippines' declaration of independence from Spain, membership across nationalities in this decidedly "patriotic" or "nationalist" cultural production ironically expanded to included Filipino, Japanese, American, German, Chinese, Taiwanese, and Russian volunteers. Filipino social capital formation is indeed color blind. This inclusiveness may very well be a distinct source of strength in mobilizing resources. It deserves deeper examination and perhaps a greater

understanding of this source of strength may be achieved through a comparative study of the global Philippine diaspora.

### **Correlates of Filipino Social Capital: an Exploratory Discussion of Variables**

The first parts of this paper have discussed the relationship of social capital to social achievement. (Please refer to figure 1) Social capital seen in the form of individual propensity to join associations or networks is linked to the relative ease in achieving declared goals. This ease in achieving goals has been observed to improve over time when social engagement is sustained. This correlation is confirmed in *Kapatiran-Kyoto's* experience in terms of expanding membership and expanding capital gains, that is, amount of funds raised, during its active period from 1991 to 1997. A discussion of social capital among Filipinos however will not possess much relevance if limited to this basic equation. Other variables need to be entertained and specific contexts need to be examined in order to draw lessons or meanings from the *Kapatiran-Kyoto* experience and to render it, at the very least, academically relevant.

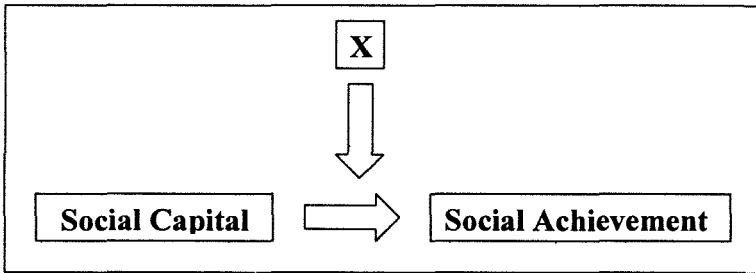
**FIGURE 1**



At this juncture of the discussion, two alternative ways of viewing social capital among Filipinos come to mind. The first alternative possibility is Filipino social capital in a milieu characterized by the presence of a strong intervening variable that either hastens or hinders the realization of social achievement. (Please refer to figure 2) For instance, on one hand, the presence of an efficient and non-corrupt government or regime is an example of a “positive” intervening variable. On the other hand, an ongoing war or insurrection is an example of a “negative” intervening

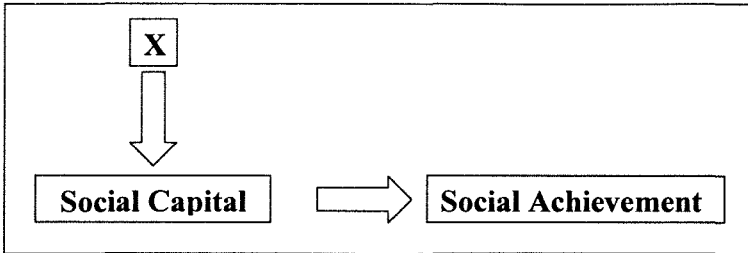
variable of this type. Although not a major variable examined in this paper, the prevailing milieu of peace and order accompanied by the presence of an efficient and non-corrupt government that is quite open to fund-raising activities of its foreign residents must be credited for some of the achievements of *Kapatiran-Kyoto*. The virtual absence of regulation or red tape in this sphere of activity produced working conditions that were conducive to the organizing of events. *Kapatiran-Kyoto* was therefore able to sell Philippine food and products, to print tickets and to collect entrance fees, to accept donations, and to issue receipts during many of events that it organized without having to register with a government agency or a regulatory board like the Philippine Securities and Exchange Commission. This clearly unregulated area in Japan's highly regulated society gave *Kapatiran-Kyoto* space for its activities and allowed it to preserve its informal character that is seen to be its source of strength and flexibility in its seven years of active existence.

FIGURE 2



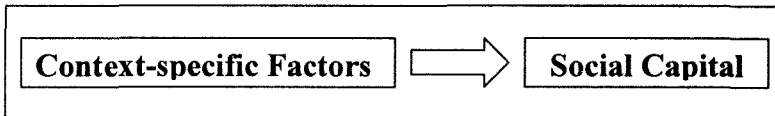
The second alternative in viewing social capital among Filipinos in Kyoto relates to factors that contribute to emergence of social capital itself. (Please refer to figure 3) This perspective draws attention to other independent variables that lead to the formation of social capital. This view leads to questions concerning enabling factors. Simply put: What factors contribute to an individual's propensity to join associations or networks?

FIGURE 3



The above-mentioned considerations turn social capital into a dependent variable that is largely shaped and colored by context-specific factors. (Please refer to figure 4) In the case of this study, context-specific factors give focus to Filipinos as specific actors in the specific social space of Kyoto. As such, they point to qualities, peculiarities or conditions that arise from the confluence of actors and spaces. The context specific factors deemed to be of significance in this study are: socio-geographic factors of Kyoto City, the composition of the Filipino community, and spaces of engagement existing in the site. (Please refer to Table 1).

FIGURE 4



The salient geo-social factors examined in this study relate to geographical features of Kyoto City and to the physical attributes it possesses that influence social action, most specially processes of group formation and interaction. First of all, Kyoto is characterized by a high degree of accessibility of neighborhoods and other sites. This is primarily due to its a relatively small size. The relatively flat topography of the city is bounded by the mountain ranges of Kitayama to the North, Nishiyama to the West and Higashiyama to the East. Usage of the grid system in the

urban planning of Kyoto City, supposedly copied from the ancient Chinese City of Xian, makes it even more “user-friendly.” Bisecting Kyoto City is the Kamo River. It drains off to the South joining the Yodo River in Osaka Prefecture. Its banks serve as parks for leisure and alternate bicycle routes for residents who wish to avoid the city’s “incidental” traffic. Filipino residents call Kyoto City a “bikeable” place—all of its major residential and commercial areas may be reached by bicycle. Although Kyoto City’s transport network of bullet trains, rapid railway systems, tram cars, and buses compare very well to Tokyo and Osaka, bicycle owning residents need not depend on them due to the city’s relatively narrow geographical spread. Filipino residents of Kyoto therefore are not ordinarily plagued by the “last train” syndrome<sup>4</sup> and can continue to engage in either late night revelry or overtime work for community endeavors such as those sponsored by *Kapatiran-Kyoto*. Secondly, the city plays host to a number of prestigious universities and research institutes such as Kyoto University, Doshisha University, Ritsumeikan University, Seika University and many others. Together with schools of traditional arts such as the Urasenke School of Tea Ceremony, the Kawashima Textile School and the Ikenobo School of Flower Arrangement, these institutions bring together a critical mass of Filipinos coming from cultural and intellectual elite backgrounds. Geo-social factors that combine a significant Filipino elite presence and easy access to each other makes Kyoto City, at least in terms of potential, a fertile ground for the cultivation of social capital among Filipinos.

The variable of composition of the population relates to qualities held by the Filipinos in Kyoto in terms of age, educational attainment, occupation and degree of affiliation or integration with the local population. The presence of prestigious research centers and academic institutions of higher learning mentioned earlier brings to Kyoto Filipino intellectual and cultural elite whose members gravitate towards each other and eventually find themselves to a certain degree bound by common background, values and social interests. It is not rare to see members of this group frequenting the same restaurants and art film movie houses in downtown Kyoto after Sunday mass. Members of this group also regularly

take advantage of city or civic groups-sponsored cultural events such as trips to temples and shrines, tea ceremony events, kabuki and noh performances. The core members of *Kapatiran-Kyoto* are drawn mostly from this elite group. Their statuses as Mombusho scholars (Japanese Ministry of Education scholars), research fellowship grantees, visiting professors and highly compensated professionals, comes with the luxury of managing their own time schedules and free them from the necessity of focusing on economic activities.

**TABLE 1** Context-specific Factors Influencing Filipino Social Capital in Kyoto

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Operational Definition</b>             | Geo-social factors<br>Geographical features of Kyoto City; its physical attributes in terms of major facilities found within its boundaries that influence the movement and interaction of people. |
| <b>Composition of Filipino Population</b> | Population variables such as age, educational attainment, occupation and/or affiliation with local population.   |
| <b>Social Spaces</b>                      | Places of regular or frequent encounters that help create a sense of community and reaffirm identities.  |

These cultural and intellectual elite are joined by middle-class and affluent Filipino-Japanese families whose engagement in *Kapatiran-Kyoto* activities is usually prodded by the Filipina mother/wife component. The background of those who make up this component is quite uniform. They are usually college graduates coming from middle class families. Some

are professionals with established careers in the Philippines before they decided to join their husbands in Japan. From *Kapatiran-Kyoto's* experience, once the wife/mother decides to join an undertaking, one can expect the whole family to be likewise mobilized.

Missionaries comprise a small but very important group in Kyoto's Filipino community. At one point during the 1991-1997 period, Kyoto hosted two Filipino Catholic priests, two nuns and two Protestant missionaries. Members of this "spiritual" component tirelessly work together to help many Filipinos solve their myriad of problems. They serve in many occasions as unofficial conduit between Filipino migrant workers and the local government, Japanese cause-oriented groups and the Philippine Consulate in Osaka.

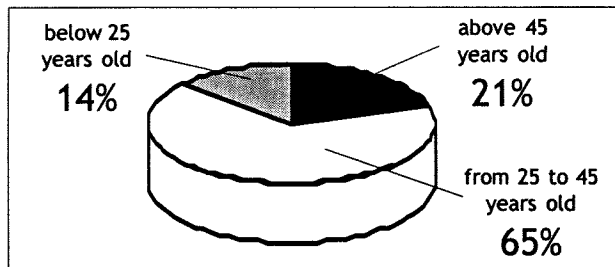
Migrant workers comprise the largest group of individuals in Kyoto's Filipino community. This is a highly heterogeneous group in terms self-appellation, job description, visa status and income. There are "Japayuki" hosts and hostesses (who sometimes fancy calling themselves "justices"), musicians, cooks and construction workers. There are veterans who are in Japan for the "fifth time" or more. These are more economically secure workers compared to the so-called "first-timers." There are those who have married Japanese (and the "second" or "third time" is not rare) but continue to practice the mizu shobai (literally: water trade, figuratively: entertainment trade in nightclubs). One regular and highly reliable Filipina volunteer runs a club of her own and was into her third marriage in 1997. There are those who have overstayed their visas and therefore refer to themselves as "bilog," a Filipino euphemism for "zero" or no visa. They take on the so-called "3K" jobs (from the Japanese words kiken, kitanai and kitsui: dangerous, dirty and difficult). Occupation, marriages and visa statuses aside, members of this group find themselves drawn into *Kapatiran-Kyoto* activities through contact with its members through the Pag-asa Community. The Pag-asa Community a bigger, albeit also looser or more fluid, organization based in Kyoto. It mainly looks after the needs of Catholic Filipinos by organizing the Sunday afternoon mass held either at the Kawaramachi Catholic Church or in the nearby *Shin-ai* Yochien, a



Catholic Church-run kindergarten. This fortunate overlap of Filipino groups has undoubtedly contributed to the growth of social capital. The meeting of intellectual-cultural elite with other groups of Filipinos happens in this space. This will be discussed in the next section of this paper.

Interestingly, an examination of the age composition of the age distribution of the Filipino participants in the 1997 *Kapatiran-Kyoto* production of “Alay at Alaala” reveals that the majority (22 individuals or 65%) comes from 25 to 45 age grouping. (Please refer to figure 5). Four individuals come from the below 25 age grouping and six from the above 45 age grouping. The “not too old and not too young” majority may also have influenced group dynamics and eventually the creation of an environment that nourishes social capital. This age distribution is in stark contrast to that of the general Philippine population where persons below the age of 25 comprise the majority. It seems that this “late youth” to early middle age distribution is also reflected in the general population of Filipinos in Kyoto.

**FIGURE 5**  
Age Distribution of Filipino Participants in the  
Year 1997 Kapatiran’s Production



N = 32 (<25= 4, 25 to 45 = 22, >45= 6)

In terms of occupation, among the 32 Filipino participants in the same event, there were 2 professors, 2 missionaries, 7 scholars or research grantees, 15 Filipinas married to Japanese men, 3 children coming from Filipino-Japanese families and 3 migrant workers (one construction worker

and two entertainers). This occupational distribution indicates that with the exception of the migrant workers, the participants had relatively long-term and secure visa statuses in Japan. This also means that their expected stay in Japan, theoretically, can be extended for several years. The potential for social bonding is therefore higher and also quite conducive for the development of social capital.

Social spaces refer to sites of regular or frequent encounters that help create a sense of community and reaffirm identities among groups of people. Among Filipinos in Kyoto, the number one site of social engagement that brings together the most number of individuals of the most varied backgrounds is the site of the Bi-lingual (Filipino and English) Sunday mass at the Kawaramachi Catholic Church compound.<sup>5</sup> It is not overly bold to say that the widely shared and regularly held ritual of the Catholic mass does much for the formation of social capital in Filipino communities across Japan. The presence of a critical mass of Filipinos meeting in one place every week draws even the non-Catholics to the site.<sup>6</sup> Along with the attracting force of being with Filipino company comes news from home, native cuisine and delicacies, video and music tapes and many more. Indeed, the Sunday habit inarguably makes Filipino communities the most active and visible foreign diaspora groups in Japan.

Another social space with religious affiliation frequently used by Filipinos, more particularly the members of *Kapatiran-Kyoto*, is the Clapbard Inn. The site is a missionary house owned by the United Church of Christ of America and is the official residence of Professor Casilda Luzares-Nebres.<sup>7</sup> It is conveniently located North-West of the Imperial Palace near Doshisha University. From the Clapbard Inn, it takes only about three minutes to reach the Karasuma-Imadegawa station of the Kyoto Subway on foot. Kyoto City buses also pass by the busy intersection of Karasuma and Imadegawa Avenues which is literally a stone's throw away from the residence. The Clapbard Inn has a huge garden of about 800 square meters and a living room/multi-purpose hall with a fireplace and piano at ground level. The size of the compound, its convenient location and its Filipino residents made it a "natural" congregating spot

for many Filipinos. The site has seen so many welcome and *sayonara* (farewell) parties. It also became the site of *Kapatiran-Kyoto's* first two "Fiesta Filipina" fund-raising parties in 1991 and 1992 and its backyard was transformed into a garden theater for the group's production of "In My Father's House" in 1995.

For Filipino students, Kyoto City's the various *ryugakusei ryo* (foreign student's dormitories) constitute alternative sites of social encounters that bear some degree of significance to the formation of social capital. One of the most important dormitories is the *Kyoto Daigaku Kokusai Koryu Kaikan* (Kyoto University International Exchange Hall). This facility was constructed mainly for the foreign students and visiting scholars of Kyoto University.<sup>8</sup> The facility features studio-type apartments with shared kitchens and laundry-rooms for each floor and self-contained two-bedroom units designed for families. It also has a piano room at ground level and a huge reception space at the second floor that can accommodate 200 people. Another dormitory of importance is the *Yamashina Ryo* (Yamashina Dormitory) run by the *Kokusai Gakuyu-Kai* (The International Students' Friendship Foundation).<sup>9</sup> Yamashina is important for two reasons. First, it allows students from different universities to live together in the facility. Second, its admission rules of five- student slots per country including Japan make it a true place of "internationalization."<sup>10</sup> Compared to the Kyoto University dormitory, Yamashina dormitory hosts more activities for its residents. The dormitory actually has a cultural program consisting of lessons in traditional flower arrangement, painting and the like. It is during these administration-sponsored activities that Japanese, Filipino and students from other countries get to know each other. Much smaller in scale yet possibly as busy an environment as the Yamashina dormitory is the all-male Swiss Mission dormitory located near Kyoto University. This facility was established by Swiss missionaries for Japanese and foreign students. A family-like atmosphere is created by the living arrangement that gives the students responsibilities in running the dormitory. Weekly common dinners and monthly consultations further strengthen in-house processes of bonding of this historical institution. "Graduates" of this

dormitory are unsurprisingly very close to each other. Many continue communication with the residents long after they have returned to their respective countries.<sup>11</sup>

Although not as “regular” as the above-mentioned sites of social encounters, other important spaces that ought to be given attention for their un-quantifiable contribution to social capital formation are as follows:

- The *Kyoto-shi Kokusai Koryu Kaikan* (Kyoto City International Community House) located near the Heian Shrine and Nanzemji Temple compound is a spacious government-run facility that houses a library with newspaper subscriptions from all over the world. Filipino students regularly take advantage of this facility to attend lectures on culture, to use its library or to search for part time jobs via its information desk. Its auditorium was the venue for Kapatiran-Kyoto’s 1997 “Alay at Alaala” production.
- The *Kyoto Gaikokugo Daigaku* (Kyoto Foreign Language University) campus is the annual site of the *Ryugakusei Matsuri* (Foreign Students’ Festival). This event provides funding and production work in order to bring together foreign students for cultural interchange in the form of a full afternoon concert of song and dance. This event “forces” Filipino students to come up with a production number every year.
- The homes and meeting sites (held in various kinds of spaces such as hotel convention rooms, parks, museums, factories, etc.) of the members of Kamogawa-Kai, a multi-awarded Kyoto local organization and the Asia-Pacific Organization for Friendship likewise constitute places where bonding among the Japanese, Filipino and other foreign residents of Kyoto happen. These two organizations have regularly participated in Kapatiran-Kyoto activities.
- Mabuhay Restaurant and Club Kookie serve as alternate sanctuaries for Filipinos who yearn for home and home cooking. These two economic establishments regularly advertise Kapatiran-Kyoto activities.<sup>12</sup> Eventually, many of

their clients come to *Kapatiran-Kyoto* events and become regular sources of funding support for the organizations projects back home.

Based on the *Kapatiran-Kyoto* experience, it seems that the combined variables of geo-social factors, the composition of the Filipino population, and the existence of social spaces helped determine the emergence of social capital among Filipinos in a given period of time (1991 to 1997) in Kyoto City. The respective salience of these variables should be examined in other Filipino diaspora communities in Japan and other parts of the world in order to understand how the formation of social capital works. It must be strongly pointed out that the presence of the above-mentioned variables, by themselves, does not necessarily determine the formation of social capital among any group. What this brief study wishes to underscore is that these variables seem to have facilitated the formation of social capital among Filipinos living in Kyoto from 1991 to 1997. It should be noted that these variables are not constant and that changes in terms of quality and quantity in each variable may also affect social capital formation. While noting the importance of geo-social, factors, population composition and social spaces, this study must emphasize that social capital cannot be fully understood without studying social behavior and social action.

### **Contextualizing Philippine Social Capital in Behavior and Action**

A call for action started *Kapatiran-Kyoto*. If a recollection of *Kapatiran-Kyoto* were to be done by its charter members, many if not all will state that a decision to act on a crisis, the Mt. Pinatubo eruption, started it all. Most interestingly, the shape that “action” took is most traditional. A fiesta for the purpose of raising funds was organized. The fact that “action” took the shape of a “fiesta” should not be taken for granted. Although now transplanted in a diaspora community far from its place of origin, the symbols, meanings and social significance of the fiesta

to the Filipino still bears some importance in influencing social action. A re-examination of social capital in the framing context of the fiesta may help uncover some patterns and techniques that may account for the success of *Kapatiran-Kyoto* in mobilizing Filipinos in the city.

*Fiesta and Conviviality.* The Philippine fiesta, as a social event repeated every year, is a high point in the Filipino practice of conviviality. Perhaps one of the most important guiding principles in living the good life in the Philippines is found in the notion that it makes most sense when shared with members of the community. Taking off from this basic idea, the conveners of *Kapatiran-Kyoto* have exerted much effort in ensuring that this spirit of conviviality is present through the more than generous provision of food in all of its meetings and setting up operations for its events. This reputation for always serving good food has done much to assure consistently good attendance in all of its affairs.

*Fiesta and Inclusive Accommodation.* The Philippine fiesta observes the practice of inclusiveness in terms of participation. Outsiders are treated equally as insiders. Complete strangers are invited into ones abode to imbibe seemingly infinite amounts of food, drink and good company. During the fiesta, participation in rituals such as religious parade, Catholic mass and competitions (such as the choreography contests of the Sinulog of Cebu) is likewise open to all. Since the symbolic foundations of the fiesta embraces inclusiveness and eschews exclusiveness, its adaptation by *Kapatiran-Kyoto* to guide its event themes and the means of community participation is indeed most strategic in effecting maximum involvement. Social capital can therefore be seen, in this example at the very least, as a function of organizational openness and inclusive accommodation.

*Fiesta and Established Modes of Action.* It may be said with a great degree of confidence that the fiesta awakens in most Filipino members of *Kapatiran-Kyoto* some form of kinetic memory related to the assignment and execution of tasks. Almost automatically, the men took over the unction of “physical arrangement” (read: sprucing up the venue, arranging chairs and tables, doing some form of light construction) and the women took over publicity (read: spreading the news over the phone and the usual

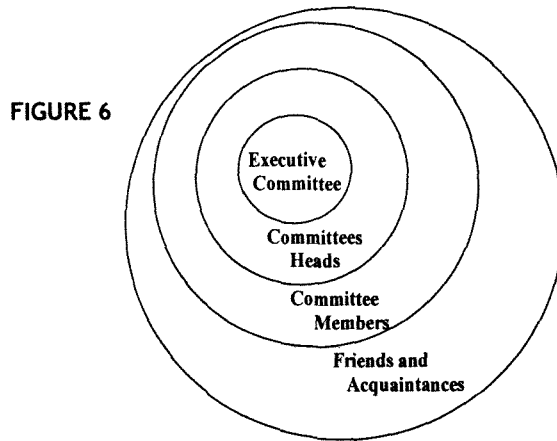
grapevine) or marched to the kitchen to share their culinary expertise. The Philippine fiesta invariably brings about a scheduled explosion of voluntarism for a cause above one's self and the accompanying time honored assignment of tasks, a division of labor that in its regularity of performance exhibits a quality of naturalness that is only unquestioned but in fact met with much pleasure on the part of the invited participants. In some cases the assignment of tasks are fought over and in some cases of oversight, the uninformed and therefore un-tasked takes issue and views the absence of calls for participation as a social affront. Such cases were encountered by the conveners of *Kapatiran-Kyoto* events. The usual *tampuhan*, a slight feeling of being aggrieved exhibited normally by distancing or absence, were encountered and the usual dose of cajoling undertaken to cure it were prescribed and effected. Unwittingly perhaps, the core leaders of *Kapatiran-Kyoto* unleashed a reservoir of social capital already possessed by the culturally embedded Filipino undiminished even in a foreign setting. The utilization of the fiesta as a framework for organizing an event seemed to have recreated the same conditions seen in the social capital-rich Filipino locale, the hometown village or community, in the Filipino diaspora community in Kyoto. The experience of *Kapatiran-Kyoto* illustrates that given certain conditions aspects of Philippine culture, particularly in terms of social behavior, can travel well and can flourish in distant places.

*Fiesta and Hierarchy.* Similar to patterns observed in Filipino town fiestas, the *Kapatiran-Kyoto* experience strongly affirms the culturally embedded norm that links task to status. In the Filipino locale, the impending fiesta illustrates a very stable order of leadership and follower-ship. At the extended household level, the following pattern may be observed: the *lelang* (diminution of the Spanish word *abuela* or grandmother) preside over a platoon of *manang* (older women, literally older sisters) who take over the kitchen assisted by *dalagita* (unmarried young women) and even young girls. The *lelong* (diminution of the Spanish word *abuelo* or grandfather) watch over, admittedly more symbolic than functional most of the times unless the lelong is still an active and undisputed patriarch or even the *patron* of a

*hacienda* (the head of a traditional agricultural estate), the *manong* (older men, literally older brother) who command a group *binatillo* (young unmarried men) doing all sorts of menial tasks. In the case of *Kapatiran-Kyoto* events, hierarchy seems to be affirmed by an unwritten code of conduct that accords respect, authority and even reverential fear to persons of high social status. Social status seems to be dependent on two things: seniority and occupation. Seniority not only refers to age but also to length of stay in Kyoto. In terms of leadership in *Kapatiran Kyoto*, the two variables appear to be linear in relationship. The function of the convener was never subjected to any challenge. The call for organizing the yearly events consistently, unquestionably, and “naturally” fell on a person who is relatively senior to most of the members of the community and who practices a profession in Kyoto.<sup>13</sup>

The “naturalness” of *Kapatiran-Kyoto* leadership formation seems to follow the same pattern of leadership in fiesta settings: members of the community look toward individuals who are relatively senior in age, possess a certain degree of social achievement or hold prestigious occupations to take on crucial tasks in organizing events. This traditional form of leadership is further strengthened and transformed through a declaration of support during a general assembly of volunteers held in preparation for the yearly major event.<sup>14</sup> The declaration of support is requested after a presentation of plans made by the convener and two or three long-time members of *Kapatiran-Kyoto*. These members eventually make up Executive Committee whose members work closely with the convener towards realizing the annual event. The declaration of support for an activity is immediately followed by the selection of committee leaders whose acquiescence forms the first concentric circle of support for the convener. Upon the naming of respective committee heads, the other members present in the general assembly are asked to “register” themselves in one or two committees thus constituting the second layer of support. These members then ask friends and acquaintances to join in the production of an event or to support it by their attendance and through donations in cash or in kind. (Please refer to figure 6)





This article has presented the experience of *Kapatiran-Kyoto* in organizing charity events from 1991 to 1997. Apart from the informal organizational structure of the group, geo-social factors, the size and composition of the Filipino population in Kyoto, the presence of social spaces and other factors were examined in terms of their relative salience in helping establish, harness and nurture social capital. It pointed out that *Kapatiran-Kyoto* realized much success in terms of increasing ability to raise funds for its Philippine social projects, increasing number of participants across various nationalities, increasing institutional support through networking with organizations in Kyoto, and increasing ability to organize events of increasing complexity. It explained how the strategy of using the Filipino Fiesta framework worked to its advantage in mobilizing support for its charity events. In turn, this reinvests social capital and further contributes to bonding among Filipinos in Kyoto, bridging the cultural divide between members of the expatriate and the host community, and linking minds across geographical and psychological distances through expanding circles of goodwill.

### Notes

- 1 Santamaria was then a master of law student at the Kyoto University Graduate School of Law.
- 2 Luzares was then a missionary for the United Church of Christ of America sent to teach at Doshisha University.

- 3 No fee was charged by the generous director. Kapatiran-Kyoto offered free board and lodging in exchange for the headache of directing a mostly amateur cast in a most serious play.
- 4 This refers to attacks of anxiety over making or not making the last train heading home usually observed among residents of mega-cities like Tokyo or Osaka.
- 5 The English-Filipino mass has recently been transferred to the Sai-in Church located in the Western part of Kyoto City.
- 6 The authors of this piece are non-Catholic “members” of the Pag-asa Community. MCM Santamaria, in factor, played the piano for the weekly Sunday masses for about five years.
- 7 Professor Luzares initially went to Japan as a missionary of the UCCA. She later took on an appointment as Professor of English Literature at the Doshisha University. From 1993 to 1999, MCM Santamaria occupied the first floor of the Clapbard Inn serving as an unofficial administrator of the space which was used by the United Church of Christ Japan-Kyoto as an activity center. The Clapbard Inn was named its first missionary residents: Ms. Clap, Ms. Hibbard and Ms. Gwinn.
- 8 The families of Professor Philip Medalla, Professor Ruperto Alonso, Professor Raul Fabella, and Professor Rey Ileta are some of the families who have resided in this facility. As for the students at that time, Nick Guanzon and Matthew Santamaria have also stayed the place.
- 9 Some of the long-term Yamashina residents among Filipinos are Felix Quimbo, Mildred Duero and Matthew Santamaria who transferred to this facility after his one-year residence at the Kyoto University International Exchange Hall.
- 10 Alas, Kyoto University International Exchange Hall does not allow Japanese residents. In a sense, international exchange and social capital formation is therefore limited to foreigners thereby not “truly” contributing much to Japan’s “internationalization.”
- 11 Leo Gerardo Leonardo was one of the long-term residents of the Swiss Mission dormitory.
- 12 The two establishments also regular advertise in Kapatiran-Kyoto souvenir programs.
- 13 Note from MCM Santamaria: Dr. Casilda Luzares slid into the role of convener in a most natural manner. Natural in this case may be operationalized by consensus, meaning no opposition or challenge to her role was voiced or acted upon, no other individual presented a desire to lead, and more importantly support from all sectors of the Filipino community to Kapatiran was declared and given with the underlying or implicit condition that she takes the lead. Her occupation as a professor at the Doshisha University and her affiliation as a missionary of the United Church of Christ in America sent to work with the United Church of Christ in Japan define her high social status in terms of admiration, trust and respect.
- 14 Note (MCM Santamaria): The unofficial Filipino title received by Dr. Luzares from several charter members of the group is *Suprema*, adopted from the label given to Andres Bonifacio, the head of the Philippine Katipunan movement. Informally however, in deference to her status in the Filipino community, she eventually is referred to as “Madame.” (Pronounced in the Filipino manner with the accent at the last syllable).

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