

(REVISED)

**HONG KONG EMPLOYERS OF OVERSEAS DOMESTIC HELPERS ASSOCIATION:  
SUBMISSION FOR REPORT BY HKSAR TO INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON ELIMINATION  
OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION**

The ascribed institutional 'discrimination' and various claimed personal abuses/slights of FDH (Foreign Domestic Helpers) in HK, serious or otherwise, are manifestly an immigration labour-control/ labour-relations issue, appropriate for bargaining only in the labour relations/trade union forum, and totally inappropriate for this forum, for the following reasons:-

1. **THE TWO-WEEK RULE.** This is a purely immigration control measure to prevent abuses of the FDH Scheme which is a special labour import scheme that places no time/numbers restriction, but only job type restriction ie full-time domestic work. When Mainland Chinese maids eventually enter this Scheme, this Rule will apply equally to both the Chinese and South Asians. Under HK's other Imported Labour Scheme which includes Chinese Mainland workers, the restrictions are even stricter. Professional expatriate migrants are a different immigration category - they are here for settlement (unlike FDH and imported workers) and have to fulfil strict eligibility criteria before admission ie experience/qualifications/no local workers available. Many non-whites are expats, including those from India, Philippines.

Without the two-week rule the FDH Scheme becomes untenable. Other changes will have to be brought in to prevent immigration and unfair contract abuses by FDH. The minimum wage for FDH would need to be abolished to allow different pay scales for the widely different workload/responsibilities in domestic work. Otherwise FDH will be continually job-hopping in search of their ideal, the bachelor employer, while shunning households with babies/children/elderly. This would defeat the primary purpose of this Scheme, which is to enable HK women with family responsibilities to work, not to provide unemployed workers from surrounding developing countries guaranteed jobs in HK.

The already serious problem of illegal working and illegal overstaying would worsen considerably, as FDH will no longer have to have a work "sponsor" in Hong Kong, in effect becoming a local worker, albeit surreptitiously. Taking their time "looking" for a new domestic employer, they will form a huge underground workforce in their preferred jobs as part-time workers, backroom personnel etc, easily escaping detection under human rights/privacy protestations against already undermanned/overburdened immigration enforcement officers. This would cleverly circumvent the domestic work restriction on FDH which was to prevent FDH taking jobs of local workers. Particularly since with economic restructuring, more lower skilled workers will continue to lose jobs, such a fundamental change to FDH Scheme would not be responsibly agreed to by local trade unions concerned with unemployment.

Even with the Rule, Immigration officers have exercised it flexibly and compassionately, allowing over 90% of terminated FDH to change jobs. The Rule is judiciously used to deter only the most blatant of job-hopping abuses and does not make FDH vulnerable to abusive employers. With all employers not eligible for legal aid unlike their FDH, the vulnerability is the other way round, with HK employers and children in maids' care suffering unfairly from unequal access to justice. FDH enjoy extra contract protections (minimum wage, medical care, travel) above the Employment Ordinance as well as help from hundreds of church and public-funded agencies.

2. A recent Home Affairs Bureau grant film documentary "Invisible Women" by lecturer Tammy Cheung found the worst claimed employer abuses of maids in HK were of Indian maids by their predominantly Indian employers. Recruited through family/village links in India, these maids fear retribution for their families back home if they avail themselves of the strong employment protection rights and generous legal help available to FDH in HK. The Indian culture of subservience of servant to master indicates a class problem rather than race. The abolition of the 'two week rule' will be of no help against abuses of this truly disadvantaged FDH group, tied not by the HK rule, but by language/cultural isolation and feudal/family sanctions back in India. They need protection not from the HK Chinese but from their

own race employers. This case clearly demonstrates that claimed abuses of FDH by employers in HK are class and communications/information based, and have nothing to do with race. In fact many Filipino employers in HK have the bitterest complaints against their own race maids, saying that they would not have "dared do back in the Philippines what they do here against their employers".

3. This Indian Sub-Continent case shows a schizophrenic situation of a community in HK that simultaneously claims racism while accused of cruelly mistreating its own. Too many pointing of fingers in all directions here. Perhaps more appropriate would be to point at ourselves, a self-examination of how own behaviour and attitudes are responsible for others' perception/reaction, rather than simplistically accusing others of prejudice, founded or otherwise. Obviously problems of language, interpersonal relations, communication, business competition to be solved in other forums than this race forum. [ Ref annex (i) ]
4. The same situation of OVERIDENTIFICATION is the case with Philippine, Thai, Indonesian FDH in HK. Different cultural, agrarian work attitudes transplanted into HK's confucian, businesslike, fast-paced life are bound to generate friction. Lack of language/communication/interpersonal skills create further personal conflict and misunderstanding. From Filipino Magazine self-admission articles, it had been realised that FDH's observed/actual behaviour (not simply prejudice) had justifiably earned them a negative reputation and loss of respect. [refer annexes (ii) - (vii) ]
5. Even more fatuous and ill-judged is the claim by a Frontier Legislative Counsellor activist that Shanghainese are badly treated by HK taxi-drivers because of their race. This Chinese dialect group are distinguished as the best lookers, sophisticates and top-dogs in HK, otherwise non-differentiable, once out of their Rolls-Royces, when speaking in Cantonese. Can officials check with Tung Chee Hwa, Anson Chan, David Li and Gong Li about racial discrimination against them. The Counsellor was similarly confused by the 'discriminatory' loss of voting rights by FDH, failing to understand the subtle difference between being a colony and being part of a sovereign state, between temporary and permanent resident/citizen rights.
6. Movement Against Discrimination official was similarly misinformed, thinking that FDH had lost their eligibility to right of abode when they never had it even pre-1997. FDH immigration contracts clearly stated "not for settlement", otherwise they would not have had been admitted in such large, unrestricted numbers, with no maximum stay period, without trade union opposition. The credibility of these so-called anti-discrimination champions and the validity of their claims of discrimination in HK are shown to be non-substantial.
7. There have been no known race hate campaigns or actions in HK, no ethnic ghettos, with non-Chinese (including Philippine/Indian non-domestic) employees earning as much, often more than locals, no substantive unequal access to services/facilities (Philippine professionals have no complaints). HK is a remarkably racially tolerant and accommodating society by Western/international standards and definition of the term. Indifference, cultural uneasiness/pride and resultant misunderstandings should be dealt with by education/cultural exposure, not with the inappropriate, divisive, coercive, intrusive sledgehammer of anti-race hate law.

Encl: Annexes (i) - (vii)

Susan Chen  
SECRETARY  
10/01/2000

# HIDDEN FROM SIGHT

A documentary sheds light on the lives of Hong Kong's Indians

By YENNI KWOK HONG KONG

Roshni came to Hong Kong from Bombay in 1993 to work as a domestic helper with an Indian family. Her day starts at six in the morning and can go on until two the next morning. She cooks four meals a day for the eight members of the family, with five or six dishes for lunch and dinner. She also prepares food for a relative living nearby. On top of this, she cleans the home and does the laundry (the ironing takes almost four

hours a day). On special occasions such as festivals, she sometimes has to stay up through the night preparing sweets. Her greatest worry in life? That she will fall sick and lose her job. If she does, she will no longer be able to support her family back in India.

It was stories such as Roshni's (not her real name) that caught the attention of Hong Kong film lecturer Tammy Cheung Hung. The result: *Invisible Women*, a 30-minute film documentary that portrays the lives of three Indian women in Hong Kong. Preeti and Rekha are domestic workers from Bombay; Vandana Rajwani is a Hong Kong-born barrister. Together, their stories

relate a schizophrenic tale of a community that suffers racism from Hong Kong Chinese and others while sometimes mistreating its own in a fashion bordering on cruelty.

*Invisible Women*, which received a \$10,300 grant from the government's Home Affairs Bureau, started out as a racial-awareness project. Cheung, 41, wanted to show the neglect with which South Asians are treated in Hong Kong. "They walk in front of us but we don't

DIRECTOR Cheung is trying to raise awareness of racism

see them," she says. "When we talk about *yun doh yan* [Indians], for example, we mix them all together — the Sri Lankans, the Pakistanis, they are all 'Indians.' Most people don't care what they are and what they do. We ignore them."

Rajwani, 28, is sometimes treated

this way, though her brown hair and light skin can lead to her being taken for Italian or Spanish. The barrister, who is a member of the Hong Kong Against Racial Discrimination organization, says: "When I tell people that I'm Indian, they ask questions like why don't I smell? They have these stereotypes that all [Indians] are of low education and unhygienic, and not people they would like to associate with."

When the camera turns to Preeti and Rekha, the focus of *Invisible Women* switches from race to class. Cheung's technique was to listen in to the two women as they and friends gathered in public parks on Sundays. Through casually told stories, peppered occasionally with jokes and laughter, a picture emerges of a group of people victimized by India's caste system. While many Indian employers treat their domestic staff with respect, Preeti, 22, is badly underpaid, receiving just over half the legal minimum monthly wage of \$495. She says she is not properly fed and is subject to intrusive discipline, including not being allowed to use the phone. Rekha, 23, is paid a little better, but still well short of what the law stipulates. Other helpers talk of working seven days a week, or being given only a few hours'

intercepted, or sleep on the floor in the kitchen or in a corridor. There are cases of workers being locked in the house while their employers are out of town. Says Cheung, who teaches film at the Hong Kong Arts Center: "These people are at the very bottom of the social hierarchy."

any kind of communication with other workers or support groups. This way, they never learn their rights. And even when they do, they may be reluctant to lodge a complaint for fear of being branded a trouble-maker and becoming unemployable in a community where many families

know each other. "It is part of Indian culture that a servant has to be subservient to the master," Keezhangatte says.

The Indian consulate general agrees that the exploitation of domestic helpers is "very disturbing." But it says filmmaker Cheung's listening-in technique risked not giving the full picture. "To project a delicate issue like this would warrant detailed research," a spokesman says. "Without adequate research, [the film] could project a very negative, stereotyped image of the Indian community as a whole. This may be unfair as there are lots of Indian families which do

treat their maids very well."

Cheung says she hopes *Invisible Women* will bring Hong Kong Chinese face to face with the problems affecting the Indian community in general and its domestic helpers in particular. But she acknowledges that none of her friends understood why she chose the topic. Some told her she was wasting her time. And the Chinese press has shown little



INVISIBLE? Indian domestic helpers gathered in a park on Sunday

James Joseph Keezhangatte, a volunteer with the Indian Domestic Workers' Association, says the helpers are from an economically lower class and caste, making them vulnerable to exploitation. "Nearly all of them have no proficiency in English, the language in which all documents pertaining to their work are signed," he says. Keezhangatte talks of a "ring of isolation," where some Indian employers

Annex (11)  
Sunday Post 27/7/97

# Communications hold key to home-helper relations

THE nanny shared a bathroom with the kids, and her personal problems with their mother.

It was all a bit too intimate for Victoria Elegant, the mother. But, in the best interests of the children, she forced herself to lend a sympathetic ear. "You can't say, 'I'm not interested'," said the family physician, who had brought the nanny to Japan from England.

After going through three nannies, Dr Elegant, who now lives in Hong Kong and has a Filipino domestic helper, learned to approach her helper as an employee, not a friend, and to deal with issues as soon as they came up, just "like working with people in an office".

Discussing things is crucial. After all, your employee can't do her job if she doesn't know what it is. Simple things - like telling the helper not to throw away the newspapers until asked to do so - can help keep the household running smoothly.

"You start to feel out of control unless you have a really good communication system," said Marnie Rummier, a housewife, who has had the same helper for almost three years.

Thinking of your domestic helper as an employee might seem hard at first, but running your home more like your office can make things easier for everyone in the long run. This paradox is a daily fact of life in Hong Kong, with its legions of maids:

The Special Administrative Region had 166,400 registered domestic helpers at the end of April. Of these, more than 80 per cent came from the Philippines, 13.5 per cent from Indonesia, and 3 per cent from Thailand. Mainlanders were not allowed to work as domestic helpers because the Government feared people would bring in relatives this way, said Alvin Tam Ho-man, an Immigration Department information officer.

Child care seems to be the primary concern of employers and employees.

Discipline is always a problem. Mrs Rummier said her helper inadvertently undermined parental authority by being too easy-going with her son. For example, she would like the boy to pick up after himself, but the maid's first instinct was to do it for him.

By ALYSHA WEBB

Dr Elegant said her hardest task was to plan activities for the helper to do with the children so they did not just sit around during the day.

Domestic helpers have a somewhat different view.

The biggest problem was taking care of children, according to a group of off-duty helpers relaxing near the Central post office last Sunday. Several said their young charges made up things about them.

A young woman who identified herself only as Lisa said she had to mind "a terrible child" after arriving from the Philippines. He did not speak English and would run away from her whenever they went out. Confronted with the problem, the boy's grandfather dismissed it as "part of growing up".

Cultural differences can lead to miscommunication. To head off such problems, the Caritas Filipino Social Service Project provides in its newsletter a list of Lunar New Year taboos and other tips. Caritas also offers Cantonese classes.

Some employers find cultural differences threatening. A helper named Emma said her employer forbade her associating with other Filipinas, saying they would teach her to argue with him.

"They don't want you to know your rights," Emma said of employers.

There are also issues of trust. Lisa said her employers locked their bedroom door whenever they left the house, and other domestic helpers said their employers refused to give them house keys - and even kept count of fruit left on the table.

Working hours are another sticky issue. Some employers assume their live-in helpers are on duty 24 hours a day.

Emma said her employers did not like her to use the phone because it took away from her work time.

Despite the horror stories, many helpers approach their jobs quite professionally.

Jane, for example, described hers as just "a matter of adjustments and interpersonal relationships".

"Besides," she added, "it all comes down to the money."



●TWO-WAY STREET: Domestic helpers say they deserve better treatment in view of their long work hours and responsibilities. SMP Picture

## Employers' responsibilities

SO you're ready to be an at-home employer? Here are the responsibilities you will be taking on.

Domestic helpers receive a minimum monthly wage of \$3,860 and sign contracts prohibiting them from doing any other kind of work.

Employers must provide housing and food, or a food allowance, and medical care, including dental expenses.

The maximum fine for hiring illegal workers is \$350,000 and three years in jail; the maximum fine for working illegally is \$50,000 and two years in jail. In the first four months of this year, 157 employers and 1,069 workers were prosecuted.

Domestic helpers are entitled to 13 statutory holidays, plus two floating

holidays. Those employed for at least 40 weeks receive 10 weeks of maternity leave at two-thirds salary.

A domestic helper may be dismissed summarily for disobeying orders, fraud and habitual neglect. If dismissed, a worker must be given a month's notice or a month's salary, plus a ticket home. Domestic helpers dismissed without reasonable cause are due long-service payments after two years of service.

Domestic helpers can charge employers with maltreatment, underpayment or illegal work. Last year, helpers filed with the Labour Department 2,052 claims, mostly for wages, of which 1,467 went to trial and 71 per cent found in favour of the helper.

Academy for 'Amahs'

# Getting the feel for work in Hong Kong

"MIGRANT workers are the main export of the Philippines and amahs who bring their domestic skills to Hong Kong are now "graduates" of special training schools."

"You have to learn how the Chinese speak English," an instructor tells a classroom full of young Filipinos who within days or weeks will board planes for Hong Kong to begin new lives as maids. "When they speak, don't mistake frying pan for fountain pen, or bag for beg."

The instructor recalls the story of one maid who had difficulty understanding her Chinese employer. "Please serve the chicken for dinner" was mistaken for "please soap the chicken for dinner." When dinner time arrived, the employer erupted in anger when he found the chicken sitting in a basin covered with soap.

"These are true-to-life stories referred to us by employers. It's really common," instructor Carmelita Dimzon told the crowd of chuckling students attending a one-day pre-departure seminar at the headquarters of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.

Another story popular at the classes is about the maid who ran away from her Hong Kong employer because she thought he was Dracula. "The blood she was seeing coming out of her



Trainee amah Sonia Alcalá learns the ropes.

said Roberto Bolanos, of Executive Technical. "Most of our students come from the provinces and are not familiar with modern appliances."

In the nondescript house, across the lane from Bolano's offices, is a mock-up of a typical Hong Kong flat. Thousands

says. "The employer spends a lot of money... it is a lot of hassle for employers to employ a domestic helper."

One difficulty is teaching the students to adapt to the Hong Kong concept of time. In the Philippines, being on time, often means showing up one hour

wife, not the husband. Ordinarily, the husband will be friendly. It will be a big mistake to become friendly with the husband.

Because the wife is the commander-in-chief as far as the family is concerned. It's true. This is human nature.... I'm not joking. Cultivate the friendship of the

HK\$20,000 telephone bill. "How do we answer that?" de Lira screams as the students look on in shocked silence. "Don't use the phone unless you have the unsolicited permission of the employer."

Much of the seminar is spent inculcating good work ethics into the students, many of whom come from remote provinces and are about to take on their first formal job. De Lira is frank when handling out advice and information to the novice maids.

"We are leaving the country to go to Hong Kong for overseas employment. The problem with many of our kababayans is that they go to Hong Kong to shop. We need the right attitude. We are going there because we like to work."

The seminar leaders strive to convince the women that their stint in Hong Kong will not be a holiday. The flats are small, the employers hard working and demanding and there will be loneliness.

"You've all seen pictures from Hong Kong and your cousins and friends laughing and smiling in Statue Square, all in nice clothes," de Lira says. "This is all very impressive but have your friends and cousins sent you pictures of themselves crying, lonely, almost desperate? Or doing their work?"

Moral advice

Anex (11)

employer's mouth "everyday turned out to be betel nuts. She couldn't sleep, so she ran away."

Then there was the Filipina maid working in the New Territories who thought her employer was trying to poison her. "The girl experienced tremendous shock. She was asked to drink a yellow, bitter liquid every morning. All day long she would smell a funny odor. The liquid turned out to be Chinese tea and the strange odor was incense."

The agency's one-day seminar is the last step in the arduous process of obtaining the Overseas Employment Certificate.

#### Arduous process

Would-be domestic helpers bound for Hong Kong must also obtain visas from British Embassy, a medical certificate, a Philippine passport and a certificate from a training school.

Before formal training begins, students — sent by one of the 130 recruitment agencies in the Philippines — are given an aptitude test to determine if they are suitable for work abroad.

Executive Technical Consultants, housed in the Santa Ana district of Manila, is just one of the 114 training schools in Manila where men and women learn how to become domestic helpers.

For about P800 (about HK\$250), students spend six days learning a wide range of skills, from cooking and cleaning to handling modern appliances and beds. Tips are also given on time-budget skills and household emergencies procedures.

"We don't make international cooks out of the people,"

of students have passed through its cramped corridors since the classes started ten years ago.

A ground floor kitchen has been crammed with 25 different types of appliances; it is a hub of activity, with classes in Western and Chinese cuisine. The menus taught to Hong Kong-bound amahs include such dishes as chicken with oyster sauce, chicken with lemon sauce, corn soup, chicken soup, fried rice and half-cooked vegetables.

After they have successfully completed the course, the would-be migrant domestic helpers have just one last hurdle to vault in a bureaucratic steep climb: the processing centre of the Overseas Employment Agency. Then they will be ready to scrub the floors and toilets of people they have never met. The processing centre is in one of the most auspicious locations in Manila: across the street is the shrine dedicated to the heroes of 1986 "People Power" revolution.

Seemingly oblivious to the historical importance of the area, crowds of young Filipinos wait excitedly in the oppressive heat on the ground floor to have their turn with a processing officer.

Back upstairs, Carmelita Dimzon continues to drill good manners and work ethics into the heads of her students. Many scribble notes furiously into cheap notebooks.

"You are very lucky. You are a domestic worker that will be working in Hong Kong. There are thousands that want to go to Hong Kong," Dimzon

#### Time is good

"Remember — to the employer time is very important, time is gold. People in Hong Kong don't walk, they run. They run to catch the MTR, they run to catch the taxi and they run to go to work. You can't say you are late because you were stuck in traffic."

The one-day seminar begins with the screening of a short film on Hong Kong; it depicts a Filipina domestic in Hong Kong writing to a friend in Manila about her experiences overseas.

A short while later, the former Philippine labour attache in Hong Kong, Arturo de Lira, takes the stage. In an evocative presentation, spiced heavily with humour and incredible anecdotes picked up during his three years in the territory, de Lira dispenses useful advice on how to survive as a maid in a Chinese home in Hong Kong.

Early on, he delivers one of his most important tips: "Try to develop the friendship of the

During the course of the day, de Lira and other experts volunteer dozens of invaluable tips which, if followed, will keep these amahs out of trouble once they reach Hong Kong.

For those who believe they have been victimized by their employers, de Lira — who has probably come across every type of abuse case known to man — urges the maids to make sure they have evidence before complaining to the police or the Philippine consulate-general in Central. The women appear taken aback when de Lira explains the size of a typical Hong Kong flat. "Don't mistake square feet for square meters... a common flat is about 500 square feet, if your employer is not rich. Use a public phone. Don't over use the phone of your employer. We are very notorious in Hong Kong for our habit of abusing the telephone."

He recalls the time when, as labour attache, he was confronted by an irate employer who was left with an unpaid

Not that all advice is sombre. The audience exploded in laughter as one lecturer pointed out that during his first trip to Hong Kong the one thing that struck him was that the police do not have protruding bellies like their counterparts in Manila. That leads nicely into advice on how to avoid trouble with the police — telling recruits that they must carry an ID card at all times — and the haunts to avoid.

"In Wan Chai you have many disco houses... the name of a Filipina is somewhat strained," said the lecturer. "I know this because I have seen this. When you are in Hong Kong it's part of your responsibility to protect the good name of the Filipina."

When Dimzon asks how many teachers and graduates are in the classroom, several women sheepishly raise their hands. Of about 100 female domestic helpers, four are teachers and five graduates of high school. Dimzon advises the teachers that one of the most difficult adjustments they will face is learning how to obey orders instead of giving them.

One of the teachers is 24-year-old Emily Garcia, who is about to embark on her second Hong Kong adventure. Almost four years ago, Garcia left her P3,000 a-month school job to make the equivalent of about P11,500 in Hong Kong as a domestic. Some of the money will be used to build a new house in her home province of Pampanga. This time around, Garcia is expecting a better stay

Respect, and a bad reputation are both earned and deserved

Ana & Lisa



Cooking is part of the training.

Continued on page 6

Dear Sister Noime and Rev. Ed,

Sana nasa mabuti kayong kalagayan palagi upang ipagpatuloy ninyo ang pagtulong sa amin at ang Diyos ay laging pumatubay sa inyo.

Ako po ay may asawa at apat na anak. Sa Cebu ang probince namin. Nandito po ako sa Hong Kong bilang isang domestic helper at nag-umpisa po ako noong July 22, 1993.

Narito po ang aking katanungan:

1. Ano po kaya ang gagawin ng aking asawa sa kalagayan namin?

2. Magtatagal kaya ako sa aking employer?

3. Makababayad po ba ako sa aking utang?

4. Sino po ang makakatangulong sa akin sa apat kong anak?

5. Anong taon po kaya ako makapagpapatayo ng bahay?

6. Nanaginip po ako na ako raw ay lumilipad.

7. Ano po kayang negosyo ang bagay sa akin?

Maraming salamat po at

## Discerning with TF Balita

naway masagot po ang lahat na aking katanungan. More power to your column.

Ang namamanhik,  
Mrs. Liz Gonzales  
Clearwater Bay, HK

Sa iyo Liz,

Peace be with you. Nagkaroon ako ng discerning sa buhay mo na kayo ng asawa mo ay humiwalay at siya ay may bago nang kinakasamang babae ngayon. At hindi siya makaiwas dahil may dalawa na siyang anak sa babae at binabantaan pa siya ng pamilya nito, kaya huwag mong bigyan ng puwang sa kaisipan mo ang iyong asawa. Darating ang panahon na magkakabalikan kayong muli. Tungkol naman sa iyong employer, na-discern ko naman na gusto ka nila at kapag hindi ka nagbago ng ugali at kasipagan,



Rev. Ed Pahilanga

tatagal ka sa kanila hanggang gusto mo.

Makababayad ka ng iyong mga utang hanggang sa buwan ng Mayo, 1994. Tungkol naman sa apat mong anak, ang pangatlong anak na lalaki ang makakatangulong sa iyo hanggang sa

iyong pagtanda.

Tungkol sa pagpapatayo mo ng bahay, matutupad ito sa taong 1995, buwan ng Pebrero dahil malapit mo nang mabayaran ang lupang may sukat na 150 sq. meters at iyong hinuhulugan. Nababagay sa iyong negosyo ay food business at matutupad ito pagbalik mo sa Pilipinas.

Ang ibig sabihin naman ng iyong panaginip ay magkaroon ng katuparan ang iyong ambisyon sa buhay. Basahin mo ang John 15:7.

God bless you.

Rev. Ed and  
Sister Noime de Guia

Isang Imbitasyon

Subukan ang naiibang prophecy ang discerning power ni Sister Noime de Guia at dream interpretation ni Rev. Ed Pahilanga. Sila ay naiiba sa mga

psychic dahil sila ay mga Charismatic.

Doon sa mga interesado, alamin at magtanong o di kaya ay sumulat sa aming kolum, DISCERNING WITH TF BALITA dito sa Tinig Filipino, Room 1301, 13/F, Park Commercial Centre, 6-10 Shelter St., Causeway Bay, Hong Kong, upang mabatid ang mga kahulugan ng inyong mga panaginip at hula sa buhay katulad sa pag-ibig, pamilya, asawang may lihim, negosyong nababagay, mga litrato ng boyfriends, sakit, mga ugali ng amo, kalagayan sa hinaharap at iba pa.

Narito Na Sa Hong Kong!!!

Ang dalawang kilalang radio broadcaster sa DWO0 at kolumnista sa isang movie tabloid mula sa Pilipinas ang Hot Stars Daily Specials ay narito na sa Hong Kong at inyong matatunghayan ang kanilang kolum dito sa TF Balita. Sila ay sina Sister Noime de Guia at Rev. Ed Pahilanga.

### 'Amah' school

continued from page 5

in Hong Kong as she has landed a job with a British employer.

"Sometimes, British employers are better than Chinese employers. With Chinese, you

Nieves Confesor pointed out that compared with Singapore, which has no minimum wage and offers little protection to foreign contract workers, Hong Kong is a worker's paradise.

How do employers in Hong Kong get matched with candi-

ask: Why can't I read the bio-data of the employer?" said an agency official.

Finally, just before leaving the Philippines, all maids and other overseas contract workers are made to learn a code of discipline — "the duties and re-

### 'MURO-AMIS' mistreated

IT WAS learned from some members of the families of the Filipino "muro-amis" living in Lucena City that their relatives working in Japan are not work-

"muro-amis" or those who dive underneath the sea in order to rattle and scatter the fish so that they will be caught.

It was reported that the job is

Armen (10) b

Annex (V)

*Tina Filipina*  
July 1994

# That Notorious Rubbish

IN MY SEVEN years of stay here in Hong Kong, I've got a lot of good and bad experiences stored in my memory. The latest I have encountered was last May 8 at night time.

This story is ridiculous but the incident made me sleepless and made me write my reaction. All of us know that we are not in our own country. Our personnel in the Philippine Consulate try their best to uplift our reputation. They try to help us but I do hope this message will all wake us up.



Anyway, here's the story: My cousin and I were talking about the garbage while walking towards the bus stop for Happy Valley. We passed by the City Hall where a lot of Filipinas like me were gathered. I tried to call their attention to the mess around them. But to my surprise, they snubbed me with a shrug saying, "Di pulutin mo!"

The lady's response was terrible! How can they do that when from Monday to Saturday we tidy up our workplaces as neat as we can?

On Sundays, name a strategic place in Central and you'll be sure to find out that they're our compatriots' hang-out. My group and I have our hang-out too, but we see to it that there's

not only for you! Why don't you go back to your own country?"

I felt so embarrassed hearing what he said. I can't fully blame him for being rude. I knew why he acted that way.

Now, do I have to say, "Please contain yourself, lower your voices, clean up your mess, etc., etc." It's annoying. Please try to lift up our image, since it won't only be you who will get embarrassed but also our country.

We're here to find greener pastures and not to ruin our name and reputation. Changes and control are yours, kaibigan.

Patti Villalon

## Hong Kong police arrest four pimps, 10 Filipino women

*Tina Balita* June 94

HONG KONG POLICE said it had "neutralized" a prostitution syndicate with the arrests of four local pimps and 10 women from the Philippines.

Police said the pimps and the 10 prostitutes were rounded up during a raid at a restaurant and three premises in the Hung Hom district as part of a series of anti-vice operations.

A police spokesman said the 10 Filipino women would be handed over to the immigration department for deportation after police enquiries.

In recent years, in line with Hong Kong's rapid development and affluence, there has been an influx of foreign prostitutes into the colony.

The number has risen further with the closure of US military bases in the Philippines and a vice crackdown in Manila, police sources said.

Last year, some 1,200 foreign prostitutes, the majority from the Philippines, were arrested, up 40 percent from a year earlier, according to police figures.

Many of these foreign women came to the territory as tourists or brides of locals under

## Employers flat turned into a gambling den

*Tina Balita*  
*May 94*  
A DOMESTIC helper turned her employer's flat in Stubbs Road into a gambling establishment when her employer was away in Europe last month.

Marciana Biason pleaded guilty to operating a gambling establishment and, as the person in charge, allowing a premises to be used as a gambling establishment especially on Sunday.

She was fined HK\$7,000 while fourteen Filipinos — were each fined HK\$500 after they admitted gambling. Another Filipina, Leonila Briones, 43, also faces a gambling charge. She was remanded in police custody for further inquiries.

*Tina Filipina*  
*Magazine 1994*



## A MORAL RECOVERY PROGRAM:

# Building a People -- Building a Nation

### *Weaknesses of the Filipino Character*

#### Extreme Personalism

Filipinos view the world in terms of personal relationships and the extent to which one is able to personally relate to things and people determines the recognition of their existence and the value given to them. There is no separation between an objective task and emotional involvement. This personalism is manifested in the tendency to give personal interpretations to actions, i.e., "take things personally." Thus, a sincere question may be viewed as a challenge to one's competence or positive feedback may be interpreted as a sign of special affection. There is in fact some basis for such interpretations as Filipinos are quite personal in criticism and praise. Personalism is also manifested in the necessity for the establishment of personal relationships before any business or work relationships can be successful.

Because of this personalistic world view, Filipinos have difficulty dealing with all forms of impersonal stimuli. It is for this reason that one is uncomfortable with bureaucracy, with rules and regulations and with standard procedures, all of

which tend to be impersonal. In the face of these, we ignore them or we ask for exceptions.

Personal contacts are involved in any transaction and these are difficult to turn down. Preference is usually given to family and friends in hiring, delivery of services and even in voting. Extreme personalism thus leads to the graft and corruption evident in Philippine society.

#### Extreme Family Centredness

While concern for the family is one of the Filipino's greatest strengths, in the extreme it becomes a serious flaw. Excessive concern for the family creates an "in-group to which the Filipino is fiercely loyal to the detriment of concern for the larger community or for the common good.

Excessive concern for family manifests itself in the use of one's office and power as a means of promoting the interest of the family, in factionalism, patronage and political dynasties, and in the protection of erring family members. It results in lack of concern for the common good and acts as a block to national consciousness.

#### Lack of Discipline

The Filipino's lack of discipline encompasses several related characteristics. We have a casual and relaxed attitude towards time and space which manifests itself in lack of precision and compulsiveness, in poor time management and in procrastination. We have an aversion for following strictly a set of procedures and this results in lack of standardization and quality or reward, resulting in the use of short-cuts, in skirting the rules (the palusots syndrome) and in foolhardiness. We are guilty of *ningas cogon*, starting out projects with full vigor and interest which abruptly die down leaving things unfinished.

Our lack of discipline often results in inefficient and wasteful work systems, violations of rules leading to more serious transgressions and a casual work ethic leading to carelessness and lack of follow-through.

#### Passivity and Lack of Initiative

Filipinos are generally passive and lacking in initiative. There is strong reliance on others (e.g., leaders, government) to do things for us. This is related to one's attitude towards authority. Filipinos have a need for a strong authority figure and feel safer and more secure in the presence of such an authority. One is generally submissive to those in authority and is not likely to raise issues or to question decisions.

Filipinos tend to be complacent and there rarely is a sense of urgency about any problem. There is high tolerance for inefficiency, poor service and even violations of one's basic rights, easily resigned to one's fate.

(To be continued)

## Seeking Help?

**\*\* Immigration Department.#7**  
Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, HK. Tel. 2824 6111. (Information) Processing applications for employment. Processing visas.

**\*\* Labour Department.** 12/F, Harbour Bldg., 38 Pier Road, Central, HK. Tel. 2852 4065. Consultation and conciliation.

**\*\* Legal Department.** 24/F Queensway Gov't Offices, 66 Queensway, HK. Tel. No. 2869 0869.

**\*\* OWWA Centre.** 6-8 Pak Lee Bldg. 2D, 2/F King's Road, North Point, HK. Tel. No. 2571 4129. Provides shelter for terminated, those who have broken their contracts or undergoing court hearings.

**\*\* Philippine Consulate-General.**

6/F United Centre, 95 Queensway, HK. Tel. No. 2866 8738. Fax 2866 9885. Authentication of employment contracts, counselling.

**\*\* Asian Migrant Centre.** 2 Jordan Road, Kowloon, HK. Tel. No. 2312 0031, Fax 2367 7355. Assistance and counselling on work-related problems. Dissemination of information regarding Asian migrants.

**\*\* Mission for Filipino Migrant Workers.** 2 Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong. Tel. No. 2522 8264. Counselling and assistance on work-related problems.

**\*\* Helpers for Domestic Helpers.** St. Andrew's Church, 138 Nathan Road Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon. Tel. No. 27396193

**\*\* Asian Domestic Worker's Union.** (ADWU). Flat B, 5/F, Yen Yin Mansion, 7-10 Ferry St., Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon. Tel. 2359 4743 or 2359 4965. Counselling and assistance on work-related problems. Accepting membership and providing activi-

ties for Filipino migrants.

**\*\* Bahay Natin, Sai Kung.** c/o Sacred Heart Church, 26 Pak Sha Wan Road, Sai Kung, N.T., HK. Provides shelter and activities for terminated, finished or broken contract Filipino migrant workers. Tel. No. 2719 0638.

**\*\* Bahay Natin, Yuen Long.** c/o St. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Shui Pin Wai Village, Yuen Long, NT, HK. Tel. No. 2475 4506. Provides shelter and activities for terminated, finished or broken contract OFWs.

**\*\* United Filipinos.** 8/F, Chung Ah Bldg. 358-366 Des Voeux Rd. West, Central, HK. Tel. No. 2549 0154. Provides shelter and counselling for Filipino OCWs.

**\*\*Rep. Omar Fajardo,** Rm. N-608 Batasan Hills, Quezon City, Philippines. Tel. No. (632) 931-5001 loc. 7427 (632) 931-4614

OWN WORDS | WITNESS

# Living in Israel, the Holy Land

*Filipinas are known for being conservative and culture moulded in a Christian way. Nevertheless, there could always be exception to the rule. But what excuse or acceptable reasons could there be when it comes to the immoral way of life's pattern?*

Israel is the Holy Land, if one is to expect about the culture and how people behave here, in the perspective way, one would come up with a conclusion that women or people in general, behave more feminine, more conservative than Filipinas do.

Well then, it's very ironic indeed, that they think, act and dress more liberated than we do. Actually, while we don't agree with divorce and live-in, pre-marital sex and free sex, here, these things are just natural consequences or events.

They even allow teen-agers at the age of 12 for girls to use pills and exercise free sex at the age of 13. It's the Holy Land and yet the culture and practices are out of the word, holy.

They actually pattern their lives in accordance with the lifestyle of Western people. Israel is called *The Little America*.

This is my first life abroad and I've always learned and lived with what my parents or other parents tell their children - never talk to strangers. But then again, being in a foreign land, one would or never could stick to that thing, not even me.

Life abroad always involves parties, stroll in the malls and parks and barbecue picnic in beaches. Those events are the only way for us to fight homesickness and no one could decline an invitation for that matter.

Others would prefer going to disco houses, to mingle with other people but wouldn't it be a better idea if you choose going to the Mass.

Here in Israel, foreigners of all kinds identify Filipina as easy-to-get. They even have the impression that it's okay with us to go with married men, go into one relationship to another even if way back home, we are already married or committed. They have that judgement that we will choose money and physical needs over honor and dignity.

I'm not saying that nobody does these things. For the truth is, they are existing. Not because we are in another

country and that people here are liberated; not because we are labeled with names already or that we have problems or we feel homesick that we have to excuse ourselves from doing such. Or that because we are known for being *easy-to-get* that we have to behave like one. Always remember, "the good motive doesn't justify the evil end."

Yes, it's degrading and really devastating to be treated like whore or easy-to-get by other foreigners but what could be more degrading and devastating than to be judged as such by your fellow Filipina? What do I mean by this? Let me share you an incident that I've experienced last year:

I met this certain Filipina when we transferred to a new flat. She just got married and had her first child. She asked me if I already had a boyfriend. I said, "Yes, but he is in another country." Her next question was, "So, do you also have another boyfriend here?" This truly took me by surprise. I didn't know how to react to her question but I felt that she didn't mean to offend me in any way. I said, "no, I don't have another boyfriend because I love him and I'm already committed to him.

"It's not also right for me to do such for I don't want him doing that to me either." She smiled and said, "Well, it's how life goes here. Use ang *kabit* dito at dala-dalawa pa ang pamilya o 'di naman kaya ay dalawa ang boyfriend o girlfriend. Huwag ka nang magtaka kung iisipin ng ibang tao 'yon sa 'yo."

I smiled back and said, "it really doesn't matter kung ano'ng isipin ng tao as long as I'm not doing anything wrong and if ever na makahanap man ako ng iba rito, I think it would be better to be honest with my boyfriend."

Now, I've been here for one and a half years. I am more exposed now to life abroad, the real life. It's now that I realized that those incidents are really happening and the woman was right. May asawa at anak sa Pilipinas ay ganoon din dito; may kalive-in dito pero may boyfriend o girlfriend sa Pilipinas (ang masaklap, ang



ka-live-in ay may asawa sa Pilipinas); ang asawa ng kaibigan ay kinaibigan naman; si kumpare ay hindi kumpare na lang.

So now, could you really blame those other foreigners or even our countrymen to judge us as whore or easy-to-get? How could we blame them from making that general impression when we are behaving like one? Pity those who are not, because the label is already there but I'm not encouraging you because the final judgement hasn't been passed.

Go on living the right way and for those who have been there and got over it, move on. You're doing the right thing. For those who are still blinded from the truth, it's not yet too late. You've made your own mistakes, recognize them, start your life and learn from your mistakes. It's not how many times you fail to do the right thing. It's how many times you accept you were wrong and stand, learn from those mistakes.

*Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or seat in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord. (Psalm 1:1-2).* ■

Raven  
Tel-Aviv, Israel

Tinig [redacted] Filipino

*Impression formed from observation of behavior - is this racial prejudice or false informed opinion?*

ETARAK  
BAD  
REPUT  
TION