

# Understanding the Korean Diaspora in the Philippines

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Almost all the fora on migration in the Philippines in the last two decades or so focused on the well-established movement of Filipinos overseas. Given the longstanding problems of the Philippine economy—chronic unemployment, persistent poverty and other sociopolitical instabilities—most Filipinos could not imagine the Philippines ever becoming a place of destination for other peoples and nationalities. Even in terms of tourism, the Philippines remained a laggard at the height of the Asian economic boom in the early and mid-1990s when most of its neighbors in ASEAN and the wider (Asian) region experienced unprecedented growths in their tourism industries. Beginning with an outdated international airport and poor infrastructure facilities, crimes in the streets and other peace and order and security problems, it is quite clear why the Philippines has not been able to attract as many tourists as its neighbors.

National and economic problems have made Filipinos not too conscious and appreciative of foreign peoples in their midst. Except perhaps for the overseas Chinese and Indians and a few Westerners married to Filipinos who have come to settle here, Filipinos tend to dismiss the entry of foreign nationals into the country as inconsequential, believing the country possesses none of the pull-factors of migration or the power to attract foreigners to its shores.

But recent studies point to some perceptible influx of foreign nationals into the country, albeit less than consistently, given interruptions in foreign arrivals due to the economic woes caused by

the 1997 Asian financial crisis (Tigno 2001) and by the SARS and bird-flu outbreaks. This paper focuses on one of these foreign national immigration streams—specifically, that of South Koreans (heretofore referred to simply as Koreans) coming to the Philippines and whose presence has become increasingly visible and felt in several neighborhoods within Metropolitan Manila as well as in other cities in the country as Tarlac, Baguio, Dumaguete, and Cebu.

It should be noted here at the outset that most Filipinos find the entry of Koreans to the country some kind of oddity since this goes against the usual migration pattern of people moving from poorer places and countries and going to richer and more developed ones. This paper thus seeks to understand this emerging wave of Korean migration to the Philippines by examining its nature and magnitude, its causes and history as well as its repercussions and implications on Philippine-Korean relations.

In view of the incompleteness of statistical information on the influx of Koreans to the country and the limited number of studies on the topic, as well as the difficulties in interviewing Koreans in the country due to differences in our languages, the paper remains exploratory. It relies primarily on a review of existing documents and studies of Korean-Philippine contacts and relations; an examination of various trade, socioeconomic and immigration statistics collected by different departments, bureaus and agencies in the Philippines; and on a limited number of key-informant interviews with knowledgeable Koreans and Filipinos. It is hoped that the paper provides a basis for further work and for more systematic studies on Korean migration to the Philippines.

## **THE GROWTH OF KOREAN VISITS AND MIGRATION TO THE PHILIPPINES**

Various statistics indicate that Korean migration to the Philippines is a new phenomenon that began only in the 1990s. The most direct evidence of this may be seen in the increased incidence of air travel between Seoul and Manila. Today, there are three daily return flights between Seoul and Manila, one each via Korean Air, Asiana Airlines, and Philippine Airlines. In addition, Philippine Airlines also has direct daily flights between Seoul and Cebu, whereas on Mondays and Fridays, Korean Air fields a second additional flight between Seoul and Manila. In 1990, daily return flights between Manila and Seoul were fewer.

Consequently, data on Korean Visitor Arrivals in the Philippines and compiled by the Department of Tourism show these to have jumped from a mere 26,000 arrivals in 1992 to as much as 303,867 arrivals in 2003 (roughly representing more than a 10-fold increase over a decade). The data in Table 1 show some interruptions/decreases during the 1997 to 2000 period following the aftermath of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, but in what otherwise seems to be a long-term rise in Korean visitor arrivals. Beginning 2000, the number of arrivals has consistently increased, rising by almost 75 percent in the last four-year period from 2000 to 2003. It is also worth noting that Korean arrivals have been using all international ports of entry to come to the Philippines including those outside of Manila and Cebu, as Subic, Davao, Zamboanga, Laoag and Batangas. Korean arrivals now account for some 15 percent of the foreign arrivals in the country, up from only 6 percent in 1999.

Likewise, statistics on the Alien Employment Permits issued by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Local Employment (also in Table 1) show Korean nationals with these permits to have risen from 128 in 1992 to 1,881 in 2002 (or almost a 15-fold increase during this 10-year period).

**Table 1. Data on the number of Korean visitor arrivals to the Philippines (from the Department of Tourism) and on the number of Koreans issued Alien Employment Permits in the Philippines (from the Department of Labor) by year**

Year	No. of Korean Visitor Arrivals	No. of Koreans with Alien Employment Permits
2003	303,867	
2002	288,468	1,881
2001	207,957	901
2000	174,966	703
1999	133,068	599
1997	180,000	-
1992	26,000	128

Available statistics from the Office of Student Services of the Commission on Higher Education similarly reveal significant increases in the number of Korean youth/nationals who have sought admission to Philippine institutions of higher learning. The number of Korean students in Philippine colleges and universities rose from 676 in

Academic Year 1998-1999 to 1069 in AY 2002-2003. Korean students account for the largest number (22.3%) of foreign students who have enrolled in Philippine colleges and universities between AY 1998-1999 to AY 2002-2003 (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Foreign Students in the Philippines by Selected Country of Nationality, AY 1998-1999 to AY 2002-2003**

World Region	Academic Year (AY)					Total	% TOTAL
	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03		
South Korea	676	558	394	604	1069	3,301	22.3
United States	860	764	452	454	748	3,278	22.1
China	575	337	243	300	670	2,125	14.3
Taiwan	265	144	325	434	474	1,642	11.1
Indonesia	128	70	127	122	256	703	4.7
Nepal	117	138	97	113	138	603	4.1
Iran	63	81	54	122	185	505	3.4
India	83	57	66	97	184	487	3.3
Bangladesh	92	52	74	61	89	368	2.5
Thailand	107	38	32	83	108	368	2.5
Pakistan	99	41	37	68	74	319	2.2
Sudan	39	54	31	49	81	254	1.7
Japan	51	27	29	34	97	238	1.6
Canada	49	48	43	33	60	233	1.6
Vietnam	22	13	54	36	82	207	1.4
UK	67	30	29	25	48	199	1.3
TOTAL	3,293	2,452	2,087	2,635	4,363	14,830	100

Source: Office of Student Services, Commission on Higher Education

Finally, data from the Bureau of Immigration on the number of student visas that the Bureau has issued to Korean nationals lend further support to the increasing entry of Koreans to the Philippines. Between 2001 to 2003, Table 3 shows uptrends in the number of Korean students who requested and were granted an extension of their student visas, and in the number of them who formalized the conversion of their tourist visas to student visas upon their arrival in the Philippines. Data on new Korean arrivals already with student visas issued by the Philippine Embassy in Seoul however, has been going down (i.e., from 197 in 2001 to only 43 in 2003), suggesting that Koreans are encouraged to just come to the country as tourists and convert their status to students in Manila itself.

Even as various statistics point to an increasing presence of Koreans in the Philippines, the country still has no good estimate of the number of Korean nationals living within its borders. In part this owes to certain inefficiencies in the Philippine statistical system. Data on foreign nationals with resident visas are not quickly available from the Bureau of Immigration for example, and hence have not been incorporated in this paper. Too, the situation reflects the low priority that policy-makers and population experts have placed on new and varying types of population movements. Philippine social and population policy thrusts have been fixated with simply addressing issues bearing on the country's higher than replacement-level birth rates and the employment of Filipinos overseas. Policy discussions and initiatives are yet to be made on the increased variety of population movements in the Philippines or affecting the country and spawned by current-day globalization processes.

**Table 3. Data from the Bureau of Immigration on the number of Student Visas issued to Korean nationals by Year and by Manner of obtaining these visas**

Month/Year	Student Visa Extensions	Tourist Visas Converted to Student Visas	Arriving with Student Visas Issued in Korea
December 2001	979	683	197
June 2002	909		
December 2002	867	608	84
June 2003	682		
December 2003	604	298	43

But the work of Ms. Kanako Kutsumi, a Japanese scholar who has pioneered research on the Koreans in the Philippines, offers some estimates of the magnitude of Korean migration to the Philippines. In a paper in this volume, Kutsumi (2004) uses data that she obtained from the Annual Report of Statistics on Immigration and Emigration Control of the South Korean Ministry of Justice in Seoul. These are presented in Table 4 which reveal only 4,036 Korean immigrants to the Philippines in 1985; 106,519 in 1995; 149,722 in 1997; and declining after, but to a still substantial 110,535 in 1999 at the time of the Asian currency crisis.

**Table 4. Data on the Number of Korean Immigrants to the Philippines (South Korean Ministry of Justice) and on the Number of Korean Stayers in the Philippines (South Korean Embassy, Manila) by Year**

Year	No. of Korean Immigrants	No. of Korean Stayers
2001 (Jan.)	-	24,618
1999	110,535	-
1997	149,722	8,000
1995	106,519	9,708
1992	-	5,038
1985	4,036	-

Kutsumi further notes that Korean stayers in the Philippines who have registered with the South Korean Embassy in Manila numbered only 5,038 in 1992 but this number rose to 9,708 in 1995 and to as many as 24,618 in 2001. Given these and other figures from various sources, some reports have asserted that there are more Koreans living in the Philippines than the estimated 30,000 to 33,000 Filipinos working and/or living in Korea (Office of the Press Secretary 2003).

## **THE DRIVERS OF KOREAN MIGRATION TO THE PHILIPPINES**

Today's influx of Koreans to the Philippines represents a new wave or development in Korea's migration history. In an overview paper on Korea's diaspora, Yoon (2004) dates the beginning of Korean migration to other countries to the mid-19th century. The first wave of Korean out migration was from this period up to 1910 "...when farmers and laborers emigrated to China, Russia and Hawaii to escape famine, poverty and the oppression by the ruling class." The second period from 1910 to 1945 witnessed the Japan-bound migration of Korean farmers and laborers who were deprived of land and jobs and who "...moved to Japan to fill labor shortages created by Japan's wartime conditions." Yoon reckons the third period to cover the years 1945 to 1962 when "...students, war orphans, children of mixed parentage, and wives of US military servicemen migrated to the United States for the purpose of study abroad, adoption and family reunion." The fourth period is from 1962 onwards when Koreans began to leave as contract workers to Latin America, Western Europe, the Middle East and North America. This was in response to the emigration policy adopted by

South Korea in 1962 which encouraged Koreans to work and live overseas to relieve local population pressures and secure foreign exchange through the remittances of overseas Koreans. The liberalization of US immigration policy in 1965 further drew large numbers of Korean immigrants to the US in search of better economic and educational opportunities.

By the late 1980s however, Korean immigration to other countries began to decline as the number of return migrants began to increase in response to the rapid improvements in South Korea's economic conditions and standards of living. Citing 2001 statistics, Yoon writes that some 5.6 million Koreans (or the equivalent of close to 12% of Korea's national population) live in 151 different countries in the world today. Overseas Koreans are regionally concentrated in the U.S. (2.1 million), China (1.88 million), Japan (640 thousand) and the CIS (or the Commonwealth of Independent States composed of Russia and other former Soviet Republics with 540 thousand). Using South Korean statistics as well, Kutsumi (2004) notes that the Philippines ranks 10th as the country of destination of Korean immigrants.

Occurring in the late 1980s and gaining momentum only in the 1990s or after Korea's attainment of economic modernization, this paper argues that today's influx of Koreans to the Philippines represents a break from the earlier Korean diasporas that were driven by political oppression and persecutions and/or by economic hardships and difficulties. In contrast, the present migration of Koreans to the Philippines is being driven more by Korea's increasing prosperity.

Most analysts agree that Korea best exemplifies the East/Southeast Asian NIC, attaining industrialized status in barely two decades, the shortest time in history. Park (1998) writes that until the early 1960s, Korea was considered one of the poorest countries in the region and the world. But embarking on full-scale modernization through an export-led strategy, Korea successfully transformed itself from a basically agrarian society in the 1960s to a rapidly industrializing one in the 1980s when its economy grew at a high 9.3 percent per annum. By 1991, Korea's per capita GNP reached \$6,055 and by 1996, it gained membership to the select Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and is now classified as a high income industrialized country by international financial institutions.

Consequently, Korea's trade and investment transactions with other countries also grew significantly over the period. In an article focusing

specifically on Korean and Philippine economic cooperation, Kim (1998) documents how bilateral trade between the two countries grew in value from US\$396 million in 1981 to US\$2.1 billion in 1995. Korea's direct investments in the Philippines also rose in the mid-1980s as Korean companies transferred their production facilities to foreign countries like the Philippines due in part to the increasing cost of Korean labor and the appreciation of the Korean *won*. The number of Korean investment projects in the Philippines grew from only one in 1987 to 166 in 1994 with a corresponding dramatic rise in the value of investment from US\$0.55 million in 1987 to US\$4.5 million in 1994.

In turn, the advance of Korean companies in the Philippines and intensified economic cooperation between the two countries triggered today's wave of Korean migration to the Philippines, led by Korean company personnel and businessmen (Kutsumi 2004). The website of the Korean Community in the Philippines states that a large number of the Korean residents in Parañaque and Las Piñas in Metro Manila consists of those working with Korean companies in the Cavite EPZA, and their families. Relatedly, a Korean civil engineer of Hanjin Heavy Industries and Construction, one of the companies that handles the construction of Manila's LRT project shares that there also has been the movement of individual (vs. company-affiliated) Korean businessmen to the Philippines. These include businessmen who have brought outdated Korean technologies/machineries for use in manufacturing industries that they have set up in the Philippines.

The coming of Korean students, the second group of Korean arrivals in the Philippines, has also been occasioned by South Korea's increasing prosperity. According to a Korean informant who regularly comes to Manila to visit his child who is studying here and his wife who has come to accompany their child here, Korea's astounding economic progress has not only raised family incomes but has expanded the ranks of the Korean middle class who can now afford to send children and family members to learn English or to go to university in the Philippines. As in the Philippines, education is highly valued in Korea as is proficiency in English which Koreans consider the universal language of globalization. The Korean students interviewed for this paper mention that learning English is for them a "must do" since applying for a job in Korea requires them to take the TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication). Pay/salary levels in Korea are determined in part by the TOEIC scores of employees.



Developments in Korea therefore, have created a demand for learning English and for higher education which evidently are being met by the Philippines at present. While Korea's richer families have been availing themselves of the English language classes and university education offered by the U.S. and other Western countries, the availability of similar services in the Philippines at much lower costs and the proximity of the country to Korea have given Korea's middle-income families access to overseas language learning and education, formerly enjoyed only by Korea's richer classes.

But the proximity and lower cost of studying in the Philippines do not appear to be the only reasons why the Philippines has been witnessing an influx of Korean students. Many Koreans consider the Philippines as a good place to learn English and to pursue a university education. When asked how they came to choose the Philippines for learning English, our Korean informants say that for them, the Philippines is the best country to learn English as a second language. They add that many Koreans have been coming to the Philippines in previous years precisely to learn English. On their return, they continue to recommend the country to fellow-students and schoolmates or to friends and colleagues at work. One Korean student in fact says that in Korea, when one visits local websites for English language schools and facilities, Philippine-based ones are invariably mentioned/found in these.

Not a few older Koreans too, have this memory of the Philippines as being more developed than Korea in the 1960s (when the Philippines ranked as the second most developed country in the region, next to Japan) and as having universities that trained students from foreign countries. The reputation of the Philippines as having quality schools and universities seems to have persisted among older Koreans and this partly accounts for the steady entry of Korean students to Philippine universities. It may also be the case however, that entry to Korea's top universities (Seoul National University, Korea University and Yonsei University) may be more strict and competitive, and hence some Korean students may find it easier to gain entry to Philippine schools and universities. Nonetheless, the Korean civil engineer expatriate with Hanjin company who has been joined in the Philippines by his two sons, one studying at the University of the Philippines-Diliman, and the other at the De La Salle University in Manila, is pleased with the quality of education his sons are getting in the Philippines, saying he finds this

perhaps better than, or at least equal to, the quality of university education in Korea.

Other than the perceived quality of Philippine education and English language learning from the Korean's point of view, the country's warmer climate and vacation resorts serve as added attractions for Korean students to come to the Philippines. Those coming for English language lessons usually come during their summer and winter months. Some students in Korean universities use their summer vacations to learn English in the Philippines while at the same time vacationing in the country's known resorts in Laguna, Cebu, Bohol, Batangas and so forth. Their winter break provides them another opportunity to come to the Philippines to continue with their English lessons, while escaping Korea's cold winter and again enjoying a trip to a resort or the beach. Many of the Korean English language students in the Philippines are repeat travelers—the short distance between Seoul and Manila (some four hours away) allowing them the luxury to make the trip to the Philippines in the summer and winter or at other times they find convenient.

Closely following the entry of Korean businessmen, students and their family members to the Philippines, has been the establishment of ethnically Korean facilities and services other than the more ubiquitous Korean restaurants. Among these are groceries, barbershops, beer houses and KTV bars, internet cafes, travel and tour companies and Korean churches and places of worship. The establishment of all these stores and services that cater exclusively to Koreans has swelled further the ranks of Koreans coming to the Philippines at present.

Because many Filipinos are baffled by the increasing presence of Korean churches in the country, a word should perhaps be said about the coming of Korean missionaries to the Philippines. Contrary to the suspicion that they are here to "convert" Filipinos, one of our Korean resident informants mentions that Korean Christians take their religion and mission seriously. Due to the increasing numbers of Koreans in the Philippines, Korean churches feel a need to come and provide for the spiritual needs of their countrymen in the Philippines (in probably much the same way that El Shaddai, Jesus Is Lord Movement and Iglesia ni Kristo have established services for Filipino migrant workers in various countries abroad). Our Korean informant adds that in the course of their stay in the Philippines, some Korean missions may engage in

charity work with poor Filipinos (a situation that is noted also in Lorna Makil's paper in this volume).

Owing to their sizable numbers and following known patterns of migrant adaptation and settlement, there are now identifiable areas of Korean residential concentration in the country—variously consisting of rows of buildings or rows of houses, or streets or pockets of Korean living quarters within neighborhoods and villages. These are to be found in Metropolitan Manila and other cities where Korean nationals have settled. A typical example is BF Homes in Quezon City which in the last 5 to 7 years has seen an influx of Korean residents, consisting mostly of young Korean students but with also a number of business people, and Korean pastors and their families and children. After watching the World Cup on TV with fellow Koreans in the neighborhood, one Korean English student estimated that there must be at least some 300 Korean students like himself living in BF Homes. Not surprisingly therefore, Korean services and facilities have followed in the wake of the residential concentration of Koreans in the area: on the 1 to 1.5 km. main road leading to BF Homes, one can find over 20 establishments offering a full range of services for Koreans, from medium-sized language schools to smaller language centers, two churches, a dental clinic, travel and tour operators, a Korean clothes and accessories store, an exercise and fitness center, a KTV bar, and several Internet cafes and Korean restaurants and groceries.

In the study of ethnic/race relations, the residential concentration of ethnic groups is a repeated pattern among sojourners and migrants which allow them to continue speaking their own language and reproducing their own national/ethnic and cultural selves and to otherwise build their own community in the host country. The researches of Polo (1998) and Kutsumi (2004) as well as the website of Koreans in the Philippines in fact, provide descriptions or accounts of the formation of various Korean associations and groups in the Philippines which invariably lend Korean migrants a sense of belonging and security, help them adjust/adopt to the Philippines and enable them to maintain their national identity. The establishment of distinctly Korean neighborhoods and places and the formation of Korean community groups and associations in the Philippines in themselves testify to a growing Korean migrant settlement in the country today.

## IS IT A DIASPORA?

Despite the evidence of the Koreans' growing presence in the Philippines, many observers are uneasy about calling today's influx of Koreans to the country a "diaspora." That this is so is understandable, considering that the word diaspora connotes different images and evokes different meanings to different people. Some still associate the term with biblical accounts of the scattering of the Jews and hence consider diasporas to comprise of "forced migrations" or of people being driven out of their homelands. To many too, diasporas involve large-scale population movements (i.e., as that of whole nations or tribes as the Jews), whereas smaller-sized population movements would not qualify as diasporas.

The usage and meaning of the word, however, has evolved over time to accommodate the increased incidence and changing nature of latter-day population movements. Many forms of so-called "modern-day diasporas" no longer involve the forced migrations or the uprooting of people but consist of autonomous movements made by individuals and/or their families; and neither do present-day diasporas necessarily entail the movement of large numbers of people. Clearly, changing historical circumstances have altered the causes and nature of population movements and with these, also the usage and meaning of the term "diaspora."

At present and from the perspective of the Koreans, the influx of their fellow nationals to the Philippines forms part of the bigger Korean diaspora that has seen the outflow of over 5 million Koreans to different places/countries in the world. From the perspective of this paper likewise, the Philippine-bound Korean migration may be considered a diaspora for a number of reasons. One, Korean nationals in the country now account for one of the single largest groups of foreigners living in the Philippines after only some 10–12 years since the start of the current wave of Philippine-bound Korean migration. Thus, while in absolute terms, the number of Koreans in the country may not be very huge, the rapid or sudden growth of Korean presence has startled and taken many Filipinos by surprise.

Second, the Philippine-bound Korean migration appears to have developed into a "migration system" whereby two places or countries, Korea and the Philippines are now linked not only by diplomatic agreements and trade and investment flows, but by the movement or

flows and counterflows of people (primarily of Koreans to the Philippines, but also of Filipino workers to Korea). In brief, the inflow of Koreans to the Philippines now has the characteristics of an established migration stream arising from emergent needs and demands in Korea for education and English learning which are being met by (or served in) the Philippines. The migration stream has further been supported by the establishment of various networks of information and communication, travel, business and social institutions and establishments that promote the Philippines as a place of destination for Koreans, facilitate travel and visits to the country, and assist Koreans during their stay in the Philippines. Consequently, even as Koreans coming to the Philippines stay only temporarily, the flow of Koreans to the Philippines itself appears well-established and may be expected to continue well into the future.

While the Philippine-bound Korean migration stream appears well-recognized on the Korean side, this remains under-appreciated by Filipinos for reasons already mentioned in the paper. By not giving it the attention it deserves, however, the Philippines may be losing out on the new socioeconomic opportunities being opened by the Korean diaspora reaching its shores. Believing that the Philippines is not a likely place of migrant destination, the country's bureaucracy has been ill-prepared for the Korean in-flow phenomenon. Maintaining records on foreign residents is not a priority of the Philippine Bureau of Immigration and related agencies and offices, and neither is improving the system for issuing resident visa extensions and other kinds of permits/registrations for aliens. (Some Korean residents in the country relate enduring inefficiencies and confusions in government offices they have had to deal with.) Likewise, given criticisms on the deterioration of the state of Philippine education, it is understandable why Philippine embassies abroad are not staffed to promote Philippine education (as they are for promoting Filipino labor overseas), and have not been proactive in accommodating requests for student visas. Schools, colleges and universities in the Philippines too, have not taken stock of their capability to respond to an internationalizing student body and therefore do not have effective foreign student offices and other programs to assist, familiarize and integrate foreign students in the country. There are many ways in which the Philippines can probably rectify its immigration and educational services to cater to this new demand and need. By doing these, they may yet help the Philippines regain its earlier reputation as an educational center in the region.

## IMPLICATIONS ON PHILIPPINE-KOREAN RELATIONS

Finally, the ongoing flow of Koreans to the Philippines presents a new opportunity for the maturing of Korean-Philippine relations, beyond formal diplomatic and state-to-state ties and economic cooperation activities, to the level of more interpersonal relationships between Koreans and Filipinos and which may lead to a deeper kind of intercultural knowledge and appreciation between the two peoples. The progress of the two countries' state-to-state relations and economic cooperation is well documented in existing work (see the Korea-Philippines Conference Papers and Proceedings edited by Polo 1998), but the increased occasions for interpersonal contacts triggered by today's influx of Koreans to the Philippines invite new work and research by sociologists, psychologists and other social scientists.

It should be noted that similar occasions for personal contacts between the two nationalities in much earlier periods came with the transfer of Korean wives to the Philippines in the 1960s to join their Filipino husbands who had fought in the Korean war; and the mass Han-Filipino weddings sponsored by Korea's Unification Church in the late 1980s through the mid 1990s. But these involved far more limited numbers when compared to the inter-people contacts being generated by today's Korean migration to the Philippines. Among Filipinos moreover, the Han-Filipino marriages under the Unification Church sparked more controversy and animosity than harmony in Philippine-Korean relations.

Although the Philippines and Korea have been long-time allies in the Cold War and share the same commitment to democratic values and to market-oriented economies and have other parallels in their national histories, some references have been made to underlying differences in the culture, psychology and temperament of Filipinos and Koreans. In his remarks at the 1998 Conference on Philippines-South Korea Relations, Suh Yong-Hyung, Minister Counselor of South Korea's Embassy in Manila, makes mention of how Korea's colonial and war-time experiences may have developed traits of "militant aggressiveness, regimental rigidity and hastiness" among Koreans, whereas Filipinos seem to exhibit more "friendliness, flexibility and open-mindedness." Hence, even as the new Korean migration will increase interpersonal contacts with Filipinos (i.e., with Filipino tutors, teachers, class/schoolmates, landlords, business associates, etc.), this is not entirely without the potential for conflict. But given the increasing

value placed on pluralism or multiculturalism in today's globalizing societies, Koreans and Filipinos alike may find it more comfortable to be just themselves, appreciate their differences and co-exist.

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