



# Filipino mirror

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The Mirror

Volume 1

The official  
Bayanihan Center

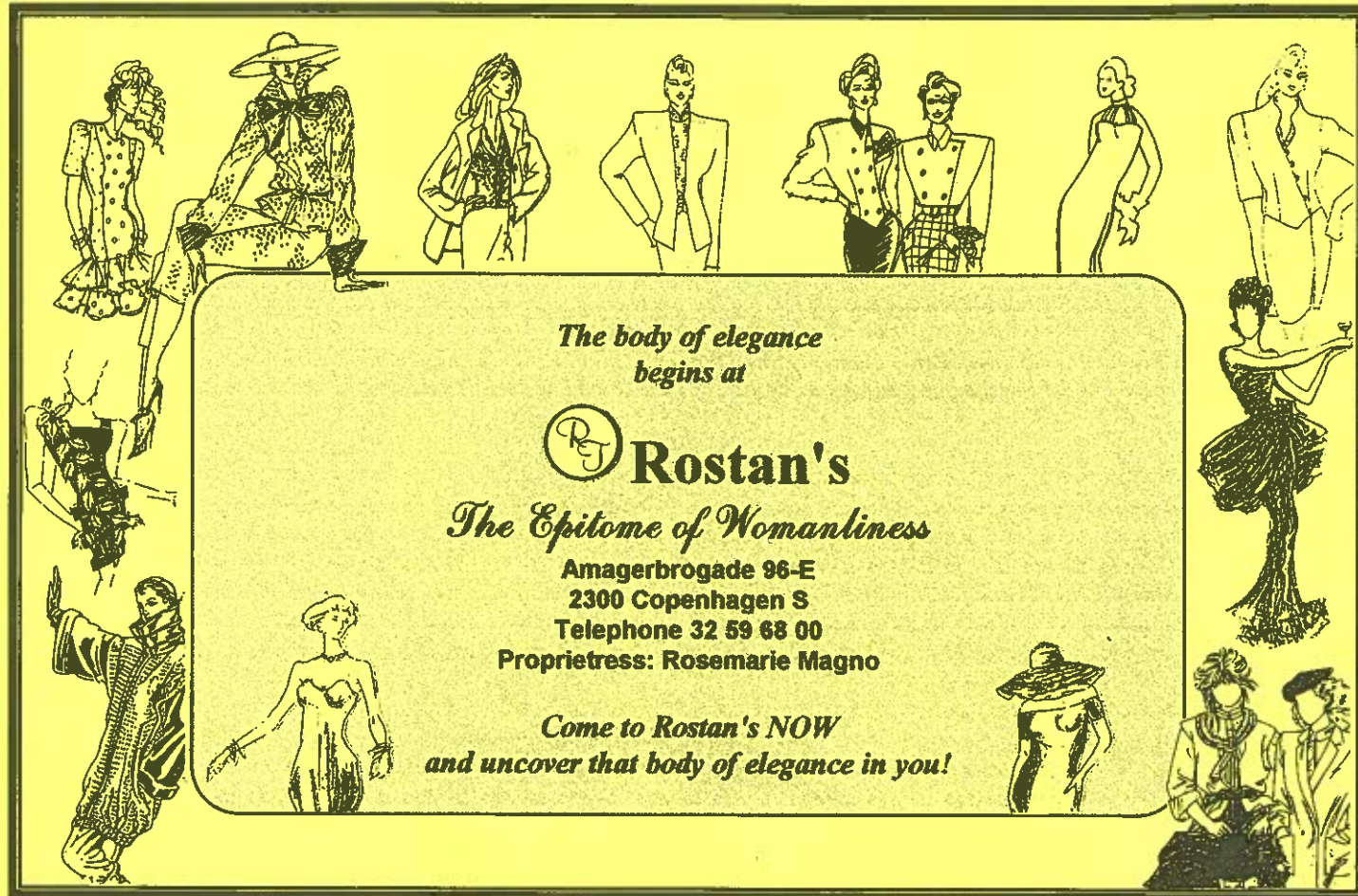
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Issue 198



TO BE OR NOT TO BE  
**FILIPINO**





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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**EDITORIAL 4**  
**From the President's Desk**  
*Identity Crisis*  
by Marc. R. Dicay

**COMMUNITY NEWS 5**  
**INS AND OUTS**  
*Centennial countdown begins*

*A Centennial Celebration!*  
**Who has moved?**  
by Fr. Carroll Parker, OMI

**Espersen attends**  
**ECMI Balik-Dasalan**

**New Philippine Tax**  
**to be implemented**

**Patrick Sheils be back Easter**  
**Ei Shaddai bound for Rome**  
**BCFM holds bingo socials**  
**Tidbits: People here and there**  
**Celebrants of the Quarter**

**COMMENTARY 9**  
**UN-TONGUE-TIED**

**Just Wondering...**  
**A Struggle for Tomorrow**  
by Oscar B. Navarro

**From Down Under**  
**To be or not to be "Filipino"**  
by Arlene Torres D'Mello

**PHILIPPINE ROUND-UP 12**  
**Bits & Pieces**  
**Election Briefs**

**A PEEK INTO THE PAST 15**  
**SPIRIT OF '98**  
**Barasoain Church**  
**Tandang Sora**

**CENTERFOLD**  
**Buklod Pilipino-Denmark Charter**

**16 TRIVIA**  
**Did you know that...**  
**Water works?**  
by Mylene Mendoza-Dayrit

**18 FOOD FOR THOUGHT**  
**Pre-Easter Reflections**  
*Complement of Sr. Ana Maria Melocoton*

**20 CALL OF NATURE**  
**Man-made Disaster**  
**Natural Resource Degradation**  
*Source: Disasters*  
*The Philippine Experience*  
*Citizens' Disaster Response Center*

**21 FIL-O-FUN**

**22 FOCUS**  
**Myths and Realities**  
**about Denmark**  
by Einer Lyduch

**23 FEATURES**  
**Babaylan: Philippine Women's**  
**Network in Europe**  
**Babaylan-Denmark Chapter**

**24 HEALTH & HOME**  
**What everybody should know**  
**about allergy**

**26 DIWA AT PANITIK**  
**Samu't Sari ni Diko**

**Ilang Teorya at Puna**  
**tungkol sa Pamumuno**  
*Pagalahad ni Dr. Jose Abueva*

**Ang Kahapon, Ngayon at Bukas**  
**ng Rebolusyong Pilipino**  
ni Pat D. Valenzuela



**the why of the cover**

"While 'being Filipino' does not seem to present an immediate concern for many of those who migrated as adults, many children who were born in Denmark or who left the Philippines before the age of five often struggle to make sense of their identity. This seems to be the universal phenomenon among children of immigrants.

How do children learn to be 'Filipino' in Denmark? This is a big task for the children considering the physical, social and cultural environments they are thrown into."



*Ang hindi marunong magmahal sa sariling wika ay higit pa sa hayop at malansang isda*" is a Filipino adage that, roughly translated, means that whoever doesn't love his native tongue is more than an animal or a smelly fish. And such is the tragedy of the Filipinos here in Denmark.

## From the President's Desk

### IDENTITY CRISIS



But first, the fact: There are seventy (70) languages and dialects in the Philippines. The official languages are Filipino and English, which is vital to our progress in the family of nations. Our national language is Filipino, and not Tagalog as often misconstrued. Tagalog was chosen by the Institute of National Language to be the basis of our national language. Statistics show that ninety-two (92) percent of the Filipinos can speak and understand Filipino while fifty-one (51) percent know English.

The Filipino language in our small community here in Denmark is in a critical situation. At most homes, only the elders speak the language with one another. When communicating with the young siblings, parents usually use Danish. Like an immature child that is not taken in hand, the language that is not given enough

attention and care will eventually grow into a spoiled brat and a damaged adult.

While it is true that our small Filipino community is in the midst of the Danish culture and is in constant interaction with it, and that there are some aspects of the Danish culture that many of us feel could enrich our culture, still the Filipino language is one important aspect that should not be neglected and should be used on every circumstance that warrants it.

It comes to mind one occasion wherein everyone present (all Filipinos at that) was genuinely astonished when handed the minutes of a meeting written in the Danish language by the association's secretary (who also happens to be a Filipino), with no English or Filipino translations. All the while during the said meeting of that particular association, the media of com-

munications used were English and Filipino.

Isn't it odd when the Filipino finds it much easier to relate to all things Danish than to preferences closer to home? Isn't the situation ironical, considering that we live in a host country where the government cares and gives attention to the teaching of our national language? *Ang wikang Pilipino ay bahagi na ng ating dila.* Why can't we not take pride at having and using a language that we could speak and write, understand and identify with?

I have come across Teodoro Locsin's article, "The Masks of the Filipino," which depicts the different masks and appearances the Filipino uses in his daily transactions. A quick look at Filipino advertisements, for instance, already betrays our Western orientation. Subdivision developers in the Philippines call their resi-

dential spaces Beverly Hills, Sun Valley, Monterey or Fairview. Business flaunt products such as "whitening lotions" and services such as noselifts and other cosmetic aids.

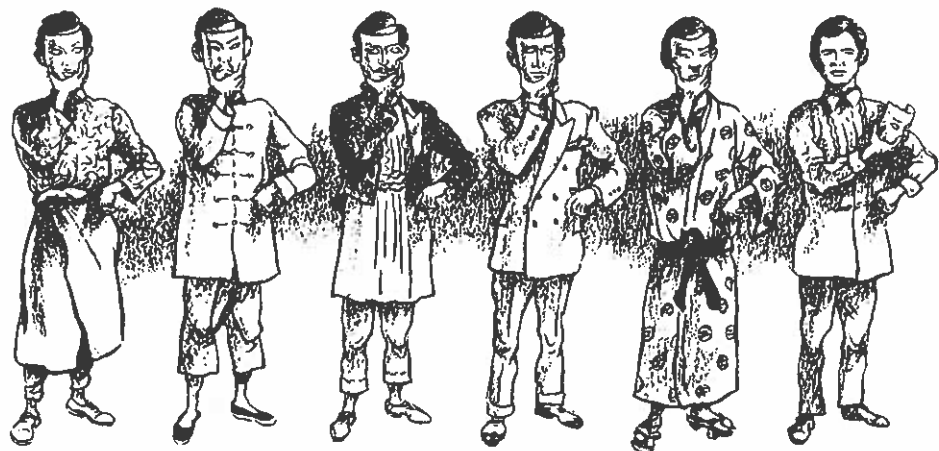
At this point, perhaps, it would be good to dwell on what makes the Filipino a Filipino. Caught up in the long and arduous journey of seeking our identity, we narrow our vision to a myopic view of Filipinism. We see our being "Pinoy" as a matter of fact and something that is natural. Yet we feel confident to face and experience other culture, exercising our rights and finding our rightful place in society.

Being "Pinoy" presupposes the embodiment of a rich and mixed heritage of many cultural and historic influences. Our language, food, faith, manners, customs, traditions and social mores reflect that we are uniquely Filipino, we are Asian and Western. And to turn our backs on our Asian roots would be just as foolish as eradicating everything Western in our psychic.

Moreover, as Einstein once said: "It is essential that one acquires an understanding of, and a lively feeling for, values... of the morally good. Otherwise, he, with his specialized knowledge, more closely resembles a well-trained dog than a harmoniously developed person."

Unfortunately, we have in our midst leaders who don't seem to be aware of such

*Continued on Page 7*



### Centennial countdown begins

The Philippine Embassy in Stockholm, through the office of Consul General Hermes J. Dorado and its locally formed federations in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland, initiated the preparations for the historic milestone.

In Copenhagen, the Centennial Committee, composed of representatives from the different clubs and organizations, met last 22 February and formed sub-committees for the grand Independence Day celebration at the Scandic Hotel in June. Instead of 13 June as earlier announced, the celebration has been moved to 20 June to enable the Philippine Embassy in Sweden to join the Filipino community here in this important event.

The different organizations reported also that they are now well under way with their own centenary projects, which in the bayanihan spirit will blend with the programme of activities planned by the local Centennial Committee.

#### BCFM

The Bayanihan Center for Filipino Migrants-Denmark will join not only with the Centennial Committee's week-long activities, but will also stage its own whole day centenary celebration billed as *Buhay-Pinoy* by Cezar Palad, BCFM Project Coordinator.

*Buhay-Pinoy* is a cultural family extravaganza to be staged for free at the *Gimle Medborgerhuset* in Amager on 15 August.

The event, which will showcase the Filipinos' various values in action, will combine the singing, dancing and acting talents of some members of the Filipino community. Negotiations are also being made on holding a mini-

concert, featuring one of the Philippines' well-rounded performers.

In an effort to educate the Filipino community on relevant topics, *Buhay-Pinoy* will also offer a seminar/open forum with resource speakers who will talk on migrant issues. Film showing will also be a part of this cultural festivities.

*Palarong Bata* is another facet of the event designed to liven up the gathering through games to be participated by the children. Food stalls will be available to everybody interested in showcasing their expertise in culinary arts.

#### MOF

The Mabuhay Organization of Filipinos, will launch a singing contest dubbed *Harana Award 1998*. According to Jun Malveda, *Harana Award* committee chairman, the title *Pinakamagiting sa Awiting Pilipino* will be conferred to the winner of the contest tentatively slated to take place on 29 May. As of this writing, the venue is still undetermined.

MOF President Mercy Nielsen said that they are also making preparations for holding a Filipino Week at the Scandinavian Hotel in Amager sometime in October.

#### SCM

A bigger, better season is in the works for the Sports Club Manila of 1995, which is our official coordinating committee in the Philippine-Scandinavia Sports League.

In a meeting held last 7 February at the SCM's club house, the Two Big Bs (Overall Sports Committee Chairmen Boyet Garcia and Bubot

*Continued on Page 6*

### A CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION! Who has moved?

An older couple was driving down a country road one afternoon. He was driving; she was leaning against the door on the passenger's side. They caught up with a very slow moving car. A young man was driving; a young woman was cuddled up next to him. Seeing them, the older woman looked across to her husband, then looked ahead toward the young couple and said: "Why don't we sit together like that anymore?" Quick as a flash, the husband replied: "I haven't moved."



Fr. Carroll Parker, OMI

This story came to my mind, when I attended the St. Valentine party at the Gimle. Seven young, beautiful ladies were asked one by one what the "centennial celebration of the Philippines" meant to them. One by one each answered, that it was an opportunity to learn about the roots of their mother and/or parents. Each had visited the Philippines only once, maybe twice, in their young lives. Each knew very little about the country and heritage from which their parents had come. Each wanted to know more. They felt themselves to be very distant and removed from the land of their parents and family of earlier generations. Truly, someone had moved.

Everytime we travel back to our home country, we find that it is the same, yet different. Truly, the Philippines has changed in many ways since we left. However, the real change is in us. We have moved. We come with new perspectives, ideas, experiences and dreams - old memories and new expectations. We see and experience our homeland with new eyes and new feelings. We have moved.

As we prepare the 100th birthday of the Philippine Constitution of 1898, let us look back with gratitude to God for all the blessings we have received from our country and our families. They have made it possible for us to be who we are and where we are today. They have believed in us, and they trusted that we in turn as Filipinos will make our contributions to the new land of Denmark, where we now live. The values given to us are not to be hoarded, but are to be passed on and especially to our children and grandchildren.

Yes, we have moved. Movement is always something good. Look back and recapture the dreams, ideals and goals which once moved us to begin something new. Look back and deepen your roots, so that you may experience new growth and life in the new land, in which you are now transplanted. The older couple of our story can not move back to the days of their first love, but they can renew and deepen new bonds of love for each other as they move on into the future. So can we.

As we prepare and celebrate the Centennial Anniversary of the Philippines, share your memories of the Philippines with your children and Danish family through stories, songs, drama, dances and the events, which demonstrate your national culture and heritage. Yours is a proud and wonderful heritage. May the Lord bless you in all your endeavors and give you His peace.

As we, Filipinos, celebrate the jubilee of our nationhood, it is but fitting to reflect on how our being "Filipino" bears on our children who are growing up in a society quite different from the one with which we readily identify ourselves. It is interesting to note that whenever I ask Filipinos here in Australia a simple question like "Why do you consider yourself a Filipino?" most are unable to answer immediately.

"Funny, I never give a thought about it!" some say, then add later on: "I am a Filipino because I was born in the Philippines" or "Because my parents are Filipinos" or "Because my culture is Filipino" or "Because I was brought up as a Filipino."

Their children's responses are quite revealing: "I am only half Filipino because my parents are Filipinos; I was born in Australia, therefore, I am Australian, too" or "I don't think I am really Filipino because I don't speak Filipino."

While "being Filipino" does not seem to present an immediate concern for many of those who migrated as adults, many children who were born in the country of destination or who left the Philippines before the age of five or seven often struggle to make sense of their identity. This seems to be a universal phenomenon among children of immigrants.

In Canada, for example, some children of immigrant Chinese feel that they are like bananas: yellow on the outside, white in the inside. A Filipina girl once wrote that the children of Filipinos in Australia often feel they are like coconuts: brown on the outside, white in the inside.

This search for their own ethnic identity often occurs when they reach adolescence, thus making theirs and their parents' life more complicated. For, at this stage of their development most, irrespective of culture, experience a strong desire to break away from the habit and mind of a child, both biologically and psychologically. This is a period when the desire to establish their own identity as individuals, quite distinct from the identity of the "family," will be increasingly felt.

The most common symptom of this 'breaking away' process is a constant and frequent rebellion against parents. Children, at this stage, see their parents as the "family" they want to break away from.

## From Down Under To be or not to be "Filipino"

by Arlene Torres-D'Mello



They feel that as long as they are referred to simply as "the son or daughter of Mr. and Mrs. So & So," they will never have an identity of their own. Since they lack maturity and subtlety that come with experience, adolescents demonstrate their sense of independence in very awkward ways.

Even in the best of situations (such as having good and loving parents), therefore, this kind of upheavals within the family will occur at this stage. In most cases, however, both parents and children are so caught up in the drama, they often forget that these are but a process within a life cycle: birth, growing, building a family, growing old, death.



For many immigrants, including Filipinos, these situations assume a "panic" proportion because many attach a "cultural" interpretation. Not a few parents, for example, take the view that their children were behaving "badly" because they have been influenced negatively by outside-the-home factors. This is

particularly true when Filipino parents want their children to observe a "Filipino standard" of behaviour, on the one hand, and children feel that this standard is too restricting, conservative, or old fashion.

(Children of immigrants generally make this judgment when they see that the children of the host society are not so restricted or controlled by their parents. It should be noted, however, that this type of criticism is not only caused by "Differences in culture" but also due to the proverbial "generation gap" syndrome.)

Consciously or unconsciously, many Filipino parents interpret "Filipino standard" as *that particular behaviour with which children are expected to be "like us," that is, "as Filipino."* It is the standard they measure their children's behaviour in the same way as their own parents measured theirs when they were young, back in the Philippines.

How do children learn to be "Filipino" in countries such as Australia or Denmark? Frankly speaking, such expectation is a big task of the children considering the physical, social and cultural environments they are thrown into.

For instance, I observed that many Filipino immigrant parents take for granted the source of their Filipino identity, as earlier mentioned. They feel that there are other more pressing concerns, like for example finding employment, buying a house or a car. Thus they spend the first five to ten years in the new country principally preoccupied with these immediate perceived needs.

Children, however, do not stop growing up and acquiring their own perspective of life while their parents are busy making a living. In fact, they are growing up so fast that parents hardly noticed they are already adolescents. Some unprepared parents could not believe that it was not long ago when these creatures were

submissive. Now, they are questioning certain rules and regulations based on the "Filipino standard." And, many parents panic. They feel that their children have lost their "Filipino values." Confused, they tend to blame the host society.

Yet, if we pause for a while and try to remember how we ourselves obtained our sense of being "Filipino," we would soon realize that we become "Filipino" in an environment permeated by things "Filipino." As we heard stories or legends of our *ninuno*, played games with peer groups, rambled through the streets of the neighborhood, participated in social gatherings, religious festivals and others, we also acquired a sense of belonging. This sense of belonging includes a point of location... a land suffused with its own history.

This 'location,' however, is not just an empty space. It is also associated with people. Along with this "people," we learned how to live together as orderly and as harmoniously as possible. So we obey rules and observed customs based on a collective sense of "what is right and what is wrong." These become the Filipino values which, in turn, become the Filipino standard of behaviour. We learned to live as "Fili-

pino." Thus, the Filipino values we bring with us to another country are treasured not only because we believe them to be good but because they link us with our past.

The children who migrated under five years old, however, will not have the same sentiments. Much less those who were born in the new country. Therefore, the values their parents hold will not have the same meaning and relevance to these children unless presented within the context of their own reality, that is, as children growing up in a society with a worldwide perhaps slightly different from their parents'.

Like it or not, these children will want to belong to this society as well because part of their identity is linked with it. Have immigrant parents ever ask themselves how their children feel when everything undesirable is attributed to this society?

Unfortunately, most immigrant parents are so preoccupied with surviving in the new country that many have not really given it a thought, and therefore have not adequately planned for their children's upbringing. For many Filipinos, "*Bahala Na!*" is usually applied as their operative philosophy even in child rearing. ❀

Arlene Torres-D'Mello, Ph.D. is a native of Guinayangan, Quezon, Philippines. Her doctoral thesis in Monash University, Melbourne, Australia is on the development of identity of the children of Filipino immigrant parents in Australia. She has also a master's degree from the University of the Philippines and a bachelor's degree from St. Paul College of Manila. In Australia, she has worked mainly with immigrant families from all over the world in the area of child care and child rearing.

RADIO from Page 6  
headed by Luchie Palad, who astounded the audience with their precise sequenced step of

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Disasters happen so often in the Philippines that they tend to be regarded as part of daily life. Year in and year out, various forms of natural and manmade phenomena befall the country, often leaving in their wake massive destruction in terms of human life and property.

Disasters arise from either natural and/or man-made hazards, although not all natural and man-made hazards necessarily result in disasters. These hazards only result in disasters when they affect people who cannot cope with their physical, economic and social impact.

Management of the country's public natural resources which include over half of the Philippine land area as well as the coastal waters is the responsibility of the government. However the management of these resources has been ineffective despite the existence of laws and regulations and an enforcing bureaucracy. Rapid environmental degradation and resource depletion continue unabated.



**Deforestation.** The country's forests are disappearing. A depletion rate of 524,160 hectares per year has been given. This means that every minute, about a hectare of forest is lost due to deforestation. Ideally, a country should have at least 54 percent remaining forest cover.

Excessive logging, commercial firewood-gathering and charcoal making contribute to forest exploitation.

**Soil Erosion.** This refers to the loss and displacement of fertile topsoil due to logging, agricultural and environmentally harmful activities.

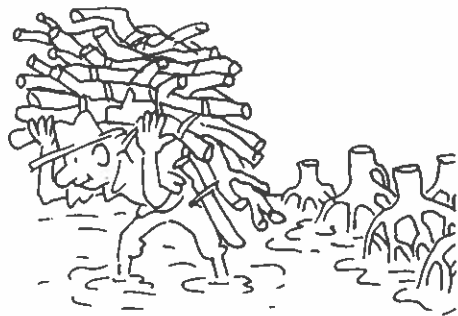
Soil productivity declines as nutrients are lost and structural properties such as moisture retention are diminished. Moreover, soil erosion clogs irrigation

## Man-made Disasters Natural Resource Degradation

Source: *Disasters: The Philippine Experience*  
Citizens' Disaster Response Center

reservoirs and channels, reducing agricultural production.

**Mangroves.** These are protective habitats and feeding and nursery grounds to fishes, crustaceans, bivalves and other marine animals. Steady and rapid disappearance is due to indiscriminate cutting down of trees for charcoal and fuelwood production and forest clearing for fish-pond establishment.



**Coral Reefs.** Coral reefs naturally protect thousands of coastal barrios from storm waves and beach erosions.

The commercial value of corals (construction/filling materials, tiles, jewelry, furniture and decorative articles) can lead to their destruction.

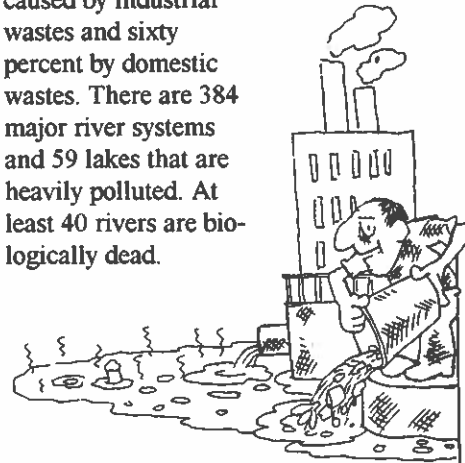
Destroyed coral reefs which dramatically decrease marine yield, take decades and even centuries to grow again.



**Land Pollution.** There are at least nine (9) huge open dumps that breed numerous killer disease-carriers. 3,400-3,600 tons of solid waste materials are

produced daily in Metro Manila.

**Water Pollution.** Most of the country's salt and fresh water bodies are polluted. Forty percent of water pollution is caused by industrial wastes and sixty percent by domestic wastes. There are 384 major river systems and 59 lakes that are heavily polluted. At least 40 rivers are biologically dead.

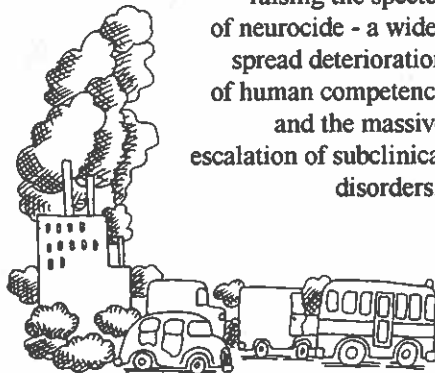


Water pollution poisons marine life and permanently inhibits marine vegetation. It causes major red tide blooms.

**Air Pollution.** This refers to the undesirable change in the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of the earth's atmosphere. It harms people, plants, animals and corrodes inanimate materials.

Combustion from motor vehicles and industrial plants is the culprit. Industrial firms and factories contribute 100 tons of pollutants daily. Constant exposure to air pollution can damage the human brain,

"raising the specter of neuroicide - a widespread deterioration of human competence and the massive escalation of subclinical disorders."



**TAIWANESE TOURIST AT US IMMIGRATION.** A Taiwanese man with very poor, practically no, English knowledge once visited the US. His name happened to be Teng Xiao Ping. At the immigration, the officer asked him a few questions to verify his true intention of coming to the US. First he asked: "What is the last name of our first President?"

Not knowing English, neither what the question was, he guessed they must have asked him for his family name. So he replied: "Wa Sing Teng" (in Hokkien: My last name is Teng). The officer heard of "Washington," so passed him of the first question.

The second question was "What do you come to the US for?" This time the Taiwanese thought he was being asked of his first name. So he replied: "Xiao Ping."

The officer heard of "shopping," so he proceeded to the third question: "What car do you drive back home?"

The tourist thought he was asked of his marital status, so he exclaimed: "Wa Bo Bo" (in Hokkien: I have no wife).

And the officer heard: "Volvo," so smiled with compliment and asked again: "Who is the most popular basketball player here in the US?"

By this time, our Taiwanese friend was getting a bit impatient and annoyed, hence shouted: "Mai Ho Wa Ja Dan (meaning: Don't let me wait here).

The officer heard of: "Michael Jordan!"

With great appreciation of this tourist's wide knowledge, the officer let him passed without further harassment.



Asked why he regularly patronizes a certain restaurant, Erap says "I like the ambulance."



TV talk show host says to Erap when he was still a Senator: "If you become President, what will you do about the abortion bill?" Without hesitation, Erap replies: "I'll pay it!"

**SENTENCES.** There was a school teacher teaching her children about the colors green, yellow and pink. She told them to go home and form a sentence using these three colors.

The next day, she asked, "Okey, children who wants to form a sentence using green, yellow and pink?"

A little boy raised up his hand, "Teacher, I want to form a sentence.

"Very good," the teacher said, "tell us your sentence."

So the boy said, "Yesterday, my mom wore a green dress to the market, and she bought a bunch of yellow bananas with a pink purse."

"Very good! the teacher said, "Who wants to try next?"

So this little girl raises up her hand and say, "Teeachher, teechher... I also want!"

So the teacher says, "Go ahead."

"Yesterday I was alone at home," the little girl says. "Then my phone rang: 'greeting, greeting...' So I picked up the phone... 'hello...' but nobody answer the phone, so I put it down... 'ping!'"

**GOOD CLEAN HUMOR.** A man marries a JEG/KFS (Joke Ethnic Group/ Known for Stupidity) woman and all is well for a time. And as such things happen, they eventually are going to have

a baby. The woman's time comes and she is taken to the operating room. She calls her husband over and says to him: "Honey, there is something I really have to tell you."

"Can't this wait?" says the husband.

"No," explains the wife. "There is a very old tradition in JEG/KFS families that the oldest living male 'always' gets to name any new children born to anyone in the family. That means my brother must name our children. I know this comes as a shock, but I couldn't tell you earlier, because I didn't want to upset you."

"But, but..." sputters the husband, "I know your brother. There is no question that he'll screw this up!"

"I'm sorry," say the wife "but that's the way it has to be."

Time is getting short and not wanting to upset his wife any further, the husband finally relents. The blessed time comes, and to everyone's surprise, the mother gives birth to a set of healthy, beautiful twins, a boy and a girl.

The father is of course delighted, but his happiness is tempered by the question he knows he must ask his wife. "Alright," he asks, taking a deep breath, "What did your brother name our daughter?"

"Denise," says the mother quietly.

"Oh," says the surprised father.

"That's a pretty name. Perhaps this won't be so bad after all. What did he name our son?"

"Denephew," says the mother.



Describing someone who is very friendly and amiable, Erap says: "He's a very nice person. He has a congenital attitude towards everyone." ❀

## Myths and Realities about Denmark

by Eimer Lyduch



POPULATION: 5.2 million

**DEMOGRAPHY:** A Danish household averages 2.23 people. The number of single parents and households without children is high. In a typical Danish household, both parents have jobs. The number of contracted marriages is rising. In Denmark, homosexuals may register partnership, which in several respects ensures them the same rights as in marriage.

**DIVORCE:** In 1989, when the number of divorces peaked in Denmark, there were three divorces per 1,000 inhabitants. Since then, the number has dropped. In 1990, there were 2.7 divorces per 1,000 inhabitants, and in 1994 and 1995 the figure stood at 2.5. A 1992 survey shows that 33.7% of couples who married in 1970 had divorced.

**OCCUPATION:** About one-third of those in active employment have jobs in the service sector, especially the public sector which employs 31% of the workforce. 36% of the economically active are in market services. The proportion of those employed in manufacturing is 20%, and thus somewhat lower than the European average.

**EMPLOYMENT RATE:** Denmark has the highest employment rate in Europe. 80% of 16 to 66 year-olds are in the labor market. This can be accounted for mainly by the fact that the employment rate for women is 76%, one of the highest in the world. The age of withdrawal from the labor market is also high. Just under half, 465 in 1991, of 60 to 64 year old men, and 42% of women between the ages of 55 and 64, were in active employment.

**UNEMPLOYMENT:** About 8% of the workforce in Denmark is unemployed

(1997 figure). Although this figure is close to the EU average, the Danish workforce is so large that the unemployment rate represents a relatively high proportion of approximately five per cent of the total population.

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING:** 30% of the Danes between the ages of 20 and 60 have received no vocational or professional training. 15% have a higher education at university level, while 48% are skilled workers or have completed other kinds of intermediate training. 78% of 15 to 19 year olds, and about 30% of the 20 to 24 year olds are currently receiving an education. Primary and secondary schools, as well as all forms of vocational training and higher education, are free, as is a large portion of adult education.

**HOUSING:** 85% of the population live in towns or urban areas. 54% of the householders are home owners. The typical dwelling is the single-family, detached house. There are roughly just as many dwellings in single-family housing as in multiple-family housing, 968,000 and 939,000 respectively. Furthermore, the number of terraced and semi-detached houses is on the rise, totaling 292,000 in 1996. The average floorage per dwelling is 107 square meters. 86% of the dwellings possess all modern conveniences.

**LIFE EXPECTANCY:** Since the 1970s, the average life expectancy has remained stagnant. The average life expectancy for men was 72 years and for women, 77.7 years.

**HEALTH:** Only a small proportion of overall health problems lead to contact with the health service. Danes contact a physician 5.7 times a year on an average. 670,000 Danes are hospitalized during a

single year and about 21,000 take anticipatory pension on health grounds. The most frequent causes of death are cancer and vascular diseases.

**LOCAL AND COUNTY (REGIONAL) AUTHORITIES:** Denmark is divided into 14 counties and 275 local authority areas. There are independent, politically governed organized units, with their own tax base. Local councils are elected at democratic elections every four years.

Local authorities also administer social pensions, sickness benefits, family allowances and cash benefits, but here there are no differences between and among authorities because these functions are run in accordance with the central government regulations. Finally, primary schools are a local authority responsibility. All authorities, regardless of size, have similar political, economic and practical responsibilities concerning the implementation of social policy. Over 50% of local authorities have population of less than 10,000. The smallest have populations of about 3,000, and the largest has a population of almost half a million. Copenhagen has approximately 480,000.

### BOWLING TOURNEYS

Come and Join the bowling of the century

**Selection Tournament**  
for the  
**Centennial Sports League**  
in Stockholm, Sweden  
Place: Bryggens Bowling Center  
Date: 23 May 1998  
Time: 14.00 hours  
Fee: 80 DKr.



**Eagle Bowling Club**  
**Annual Open Tournament**  
Place: Bryggens Bowling Center  
Date: 20 June 1998  
Time: 14.00 hours  
Fee: 100 DKr.

**Contact Persons**  
Frankie Jimenez: 31 57 28 90  
Roger Hacinas: 32 97 07 32  
Ven Velasquez: 32 52 06 83

**Our Beginning.** Babaylan - The Philippine Women's Network in Europe is an initiative of Philippine women's groups and women's desks in Europe. A result of the first Conference of Filipinas in Europe held in Barcelona on 23-26 September 1992, it is a response to a long felt need of Filipinas living and working in Europe to link together and forge unity to improve their situation and address specific issues affecting women. It seeks to develop an effective and liberating support system for Filipinas.

The Europe-wide network is aptly named Babaylan, a title given to the priestess in pre-Spanish times. The Babaylan priestess performed not only sacred rites but also exercised leadership roles in all aspects of community life. They fought alongside with the people for a peaceful and egalitarian society against the imposition of a foreign politico-cultural system by the Spanish colonizers. Though repressed by the Spanish friars, Babaylan priestesses continued to be revered and respected by the people.

We, Filipinas in Europe, want the Babaylan spirit to live on.

**Our Principles.** Babaylan believes that migration is brought about by a combination of socio-cultural, economic and political factors in the Philippines that push women to migrate as well as factors in Europe that pull women to immigrate; the unequal and unjust distribution of wealth and resources in the world; the colonial culture ingrained by years of colonization by the West; the Philippine government's failure to address decisively the problem of poverty and its policies that encourage migration; and the low value of women's work in the Philippines and Europe.

We also believe that Filipinas have common problems that confront them as women migrants in Europe. Like other black migrants in Europe, the Filipinas also experience racism and sexual discrimination.

Most Filipinas are employed in low 'reproduction work,' receive low salaries, suffer de-skilling, intellectual stagnation, unrecognized educational level, and often have language difficulties.

**Our Aims.** Babaylan aims to



# Babaylan

Philippine Women's Network in Europe

- o promote women's empowerment and full participation in development processes through sharing of our experiences, information and resources;
- o promote a liberating education programme for women to tackle issues affecting women in Europe and the Philippines;
- o Strengthen Philippine women's groups networking on the national level;
- o establish links of support with women's groups of other nationalities in Europe and in the Philippines;
- o project their voices through effective lobby work at all planning and policy-making levels and representation in the Philippine government;
- o provide channels for campaign on women's issues;
- o mobilize participation and action among Filipinas through Babaylan's biennial General Assembly meeting;
- o promote communication channels and information exchange among Filipinas in Europe and in the Philippines by setting up a data bank.

**Our Activities** include the following:

- o Facilitators Training on Women Orientation Course for Filipinas in Europe, Assertive Skills, Conflict Resolution and Management;
- o Conduct seminars and echo training on the above-mentioned topics;
- o Publish Training Resource Manuals;
- o Campaign on violence against women and against racism;
- o Publish a Babaylan Newsletter to project women's voices and experiences, as well as materials for women's education;
- o Conduct biennial Babaylan conference, symposia and information meeting on women-specific issues and other issues that affect them; and,
- o Organize and network among women at the national and Europe-wide level.

**Our Structure.** Babaylan's highest body, the Congress, is composed of

member organizations of the network and meets every two years. The second level of structure is the Council of Representatives which meets once a year, in between sessions of Congress, and is composed of a maximum of three (3) representatives from each country. It is the implementing body of the network's plan of activities. Furthermore, an Executive Committee, composed of five (5) women, are elected from the Council. It oversees the general direction and coordinates the various activities. At the same time, it acts as the network's Secretariat.

At the country level, there are Babaylan country-wide activities which are either part of coordinated Europe-wide plan or own initiatives from the national level.

Babaylan is legally registered in the Netherlands as a Europe-wide network.

### Babaylan-Denmark

Babaylan-Denmark was formed by a group of Filipinas in Copenhagen in May 1997 with the following Charter Officers:

**Filomenita Høgsholm**  
Chairman

**Gina Altamirano**  
Vice Chairman

**Gina Narvaez**  
Secretary

**Rufina Palad**  
Treasurer

**Luz Abainza-Hammer**  
Assistant Secretary-Treasurer

**Olive Medgyesi**  
PRO