

CHICAGO, Illinois (JGLi) – The celebration of the 111th Philippine Independence last week has opened my eyes that sooner or later the second generation of Filipinos in America might fast become endangered species.

It was not only me, who noticed it. Chicago-based contemporary artist Willi Buhay was fuming and dismayed that the children of Filipino immigrants are nowhere to be found in Philippine cultural events.

If I were the Philippine government, I am going to draw up a plan that will attract children of Overseas Filipinos to visit the Philippines by expanding its cultural immersion program, like offering scholarships in continuing Philippine cultural studies.

Or perhaps, encourage non-government organizations to put schools or specialized institutions of learning that will teach Filipino as a second language overseas with large concentration of Filipinos, like Los Angeles or San Francisco

,  
California  
, etc.

I remember in almost all key cities and towns in the Philippines, where Chinese business dominates the market, there are Chinese schools.

After all, if the young Overseas Filipinos would develop deep cultural ties to the native lands of their parents, it will benefit the Philippine economic and cultural relations.

In their efforts to let their children melt with mainstream America, most Filipino parents have raised their children as Americans by speaking to their children in English even at home.

## **CHILDREN CAN SPEAK MANY TONGUES**

These parents do not realize it that their children can learn the English

language in school and on the street. They don't know that very young children can pick up several languages at the same time at a fast clip.

If they teach their children with their own mother tongue, like Filipino or Cebuano or Ilocano, at home, their children will have an edge over other children because their children will be bilingual or multi-lingual speakers.

On many occasions, when I ask Filipino-American college students if they speak their parent's Philippine language, they would tell me they don't. And they will blame their parents for not talking to them in a Philippine language at home.

"I tried to study Filipino language in some foreign language schools," one of these students would tell me, "but I could not pick up the pace the way my parents speak English."

And I would tell them, "sayang" (what a waste).

And my attendance at the Filipino cultural presentation at the Daley Center  
in  
Chicago

,  
Illinois

, last June 12 Philippine Independence celebration was a stark reminder that  
the young Filipino generation is a vanishing breed.

## **MOSTLY YOUNG AT HEART**

Performers of such Philippine folk dances as Sinkil and Kapa Malong  
Malong were mostly young at heart. I did not see any young performers.

In fact, a Filipino-American columnist is being silently vilified for pointing out  
that Filipino ramp models were mostly middle aged. Because the columnist  
is not fond of publishing critical comments from his readers, his readers are  
forced to talk behind his back.

Yes, in some American universities, where there is big concentration of Filipino-American students, there are Filipino-American students associations. Members of these groups are engrossed in learning Filipino culture through songs and dances and food but they are very few compared to the total Filipino-American population in the area.

The lack of interest in Filipiniana is obvious. There are very few Filipinos, who can inspire them.

Except for superstars Manny Pacquiao and Charice Pempengco or Leah Salonga, Overseas-Filipino youth do not have other heroes or role models to look up to.

Everybody knows that Mr. Pacquiao and Mesdames Pempengco and Salonga cannot stay on the stage forever. So, an ever-growing search for more Filipino heroes is in order if the community would like to catch the attention of the young Filipinos.

Otherwise, they will be inured to patronize or idolize non-Filipinos. This is bad to the Filipino culture.

## **ATTENTION-GRABBING CHALLENGE**

And getting the attention of these youth is a huge challenge to Filipino parents, who can only do so much.

Such media as televisions, radios, Internet, newspapers, video games, etc. are something the youth cannot turn their attention away from

This is the reason why some organizations would welcome prominent guests from the Philippines to grace their events even if hosting them will cost them a fortune.

And the National Press Club of the Philippines in the U.S.A. hit pay dirt when they welcome as their guest Conrado S. De Quiros, popular columnist of the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*

, in the induction of new officers and members this coming Father's Day, June 21, at Chateau Ritz in Niles, Illinois.

Mr. De Quiros should be in the best position to re-orient the group of what is going on back home. ( [lariosa\\_jos@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lariosa_jos@sbcglobal.net) ) # # #  
[Joomla SEO powered by JoomSEF](#)