

'Racist' HK writer wants to visit RP

by KRISTINE L. ALAVE, BLANCHE RIVERA
Inquirer.net

HONG KONG—Now contrite, a Hong Kong writer who angered the Philippines with his article poking fun at the country, says he actually admires Philippine democracy and music and would like to someday visit the country he had derisively called a "nation of servants."

He says among the places he would like to visit is "Fort McKinley," a name that now seems to exist only in the dimming memories of old-timers, having been renamed Fort Bonifacio more than four decades ago.

Kit Tsao, who uses the name Chip Tsao in his *Politically Incorrect* column in *HK Magazine*, told the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* that he would like to be removed from the Philippine Bureau of Immigration's list of undesirable aliens barred from entering the country.

In Manila, Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan said he would personally give Tsao a tour of the Philippines if he visited the country, but Tsao must first issue a formal apology and request for a lifting of the ban.

"I have never been to the Philippines and it's a shame that I've never been to the place that [inspired] a long poem written by the founding father (Jose Rizal) in Spanish. I wish one day I will



CHEAP SHOT Hong Kong columnist Chip Tsao comes to the Philippine Consulate to say—believe it or not—he admires Philippine democracy and music and Jose Rizal and would so like to visit. Behind is Deputy Consul General Kira Danganan-Azucena.

Photo from Inquirer.net

be able to go there," Tsao said. Last April 1, Tsao went to the Philippine Consulate General in Hong Kong to face the Filipino community and offer his "deepest and most sincere apology."

Before that, Tsao had apologized several times on Hong Kong TV, radio and newspapers for his column.

"I chose to come here. I think it would be fairer for me to meet some of the union leaders and representatives of the community to clarify what has been happening in the past few days," Tsao said in an interview after addressing the Filipino group.

The 50-year-old Tsao bowed

after his talk.

Apology not accepted

But some Filipinos in his audience were unforgiving.

"You are a freaking racist," businessman Ricky Sadosa said. "Your apology to me is not accepted. I think you're lying."

Sadosa called Tsao a "nobody" in the Hong Kong media industry.

Tsao arrived at the consulate alone.

"I am very sorry and I apologize," Tsao told some 70 Filipino community leaders. "I wish to say that it was never my intention to humiliate, upset or insult the Filipino community in Hong Kong and the people of the Philippines."

Tsao reiterated that he was a political satirist and that he aimed his criticism at arrogant employers.

He said he had great admiration for the hardworking nature of Filipinos, for the democracy in the Philippines and the music by Filipino artists.

"The Philippines is a free democracy and a culture which I've admired for very long. I have a lot of admiration for the nation, and I think Hong Kong should learn from this more," he said.

Long time to heal

After the meeting, Tsao told the *Inquirer* that he would love to see the Philippines one day.

"The places I want to go to most is Fort McKinley, which I

have heard in literature books, to the cemetery of the deceased American soldiers and to the tomb [of Rizal]," he said.

"In the future, I'd be happy to promote the Filipino people and the Filipino community in Hong Kong," Tsao said.

Deputy Consul General Kira Danganan-Azucena told Tsao that she appreciated his coming over.

"It might take some time for us to heal from this experience but your coming here is an important first step toward that direction," Azucena said.

On the morning of April 1, Azucena was called to a meeting by Hong Kong Secretary for Security Ambrose Lee Siu-kwong to convey the Hong Kong government's message that it did not share Tsao's sentiments and that the article was indeed "insensitive."

Formalities needed

The Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila said the consulate and the community leaders officially accepted Tsao's apology and that they appealed to the Filipino community to not allow the incident to undermine the friendly relations between the community and Hong Kong society.

Libanan said in an interview that if Tsao asked for the lifting of the ban on him, the consul general in Hong Kong would assess his sincerity and "then I'll make

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Kiyoshi Kurosawa: A source of wisdom, guidance and inspiration

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We asked: there was a lot of horror in this film, of Takashi, a young guy going to war, of killing folks, of Kenji who can't play the piano, his passion, and the family breaking apart. Did you intend this to be a horror film? Kiyoshi responded that "it is a horrifying bit of reality, as film is meant to capture reality. Nothing is all happy and innocent. Without necessarily introducing the ghosts, the shift from fantasy to allegory, is the introduction of the burglar, to say something beyond. We wondered if the burglar was Kiyoshi's alter ego. He humbly shared that he had no clue of how the audience would react to the burglar.

He wanted to end the film with Debussy's *Clair de Lune*, a piano concerto, and he felt that a realistic development of the story would not be credible to the audience watching the film so he introduced this element, an abstract sense of hope, an insistent brand of optimism. To me, the music reaches the father's soul and the transformation in him was evident, a ray of hope in his eyes and a reaching out to his young son, Kenji, a reaching out to his wife, Megumi and the family is on its path to healing, after an economic devastation that breaks their spirits.

He left his prior imprint of horror genres as he admitted he needs new imagination and if it will come, he will do horror films again. We pursued another angle of how he finds creativity in his personal life and whether he has creative opportunities outside of his work environment of filmmaking. He apologized for leading a boring life and wonders what in the world would he do if he was not making films. He reads books, he watches films and again apologized those were not so cool answers. I got a sense that he wants his private life kept private.

I asked him if he had the prescient ability to be in synchrony with US Politics, whose national mantra and theme now is positive, an insistence on creating hope. He said he is not familiar with US politics or the details, but "it is safe to say, that the given political factors in Japan are heavily influenced by US politics, and what is happening in the United States is also connected to Japan and that small family's sense of hope in Japan is also connected to America."

I asked, if living a mundane life is akin to already being dead, or dying to one's own inner spirit. Was that what you were trying to communicate? "Not exactly, as you put it, as part of an ordinary, mundane life, there are modest pleasures. It is the absence of change, when one is stagnant, when one is lonely, when one is isolated, when one feels crushed by society and that develops into an emotional crisis. The world is a big place and it can't stay the same. There are small issues in daily life, and tracing them to their root, it is global, we are dealing with the same issues, in that sense, they are all surmountable!"

Prosya Abarquez-Delacruz, J.D. is a features writer for Asian Journal. She stumbled upon writing when she met NVM Gonzales, who introduced her to the beauty of live violin music from his friend, Nonoy Alsaybar. Since then, she strives to attend live musical events, particularly those created by her kababayan - musical artists!



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