



JAPANESE STUDIES IN THE PHILIPPINES

8TH JAPANESE RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT COMPETITION

日本



21 MARCH 2026 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM, PST (GMT +8)
SEMINAR ROOM, SECOND FLOOR, ASIAN CENTER,
UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES DILIMAN

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PROGRAM

9:00 Opening Ceremonies
Philippine and Japanese National Anthem
Welcome Remarks

Noel Christian A. Moratilla, Ph.D.

Dean and Professor, Asian Center, UP Diliman

Recap of the Previous JSRDC
Competition Mechanics
Introduction of the Judges

UNDERGRADUATE PRESENTATIONS

9:15 **The Japanese in the Local History of Abra, 1941-1945**
Mark Joseph B. Borja
University of the Philippines Baguio

9:30 **Memories of the Japanese Occupation:
The Bagobo-Klata-Japanese Relationship Before
and After the Second World War**
Merian Daphne M. Dapon
University of the Philippines Mindanao

9:45 **Nishida Kitaro's Dialectic of Self-Negation
and Hospitality in Tourism: A Comparative Analysis
of Japan and Siargao, Philippines**
Khent Bryll M. Jarales
Mindanao State University Iligan Institute of Technology

10:00 Open Forum

PROGRAM

10:15 Coffee Break

10:30 **Discipline and Freedom: Rethinking Japanese Moral Education in Philippine Pedagogy Reform**

Charles M. Perolino

Mindanao State University Iligan Institute of Technology

10:45 **Salvific Soft Power: Japanese Post-war Cultural Diplomacy in the Philippines from the Establishment of the Cool Japan Project until the Second Abe Administration**

Bianca Ysabelle P. Tagarda

University of Santo Tomas

11:00 Open Forum

11:15 Awarding of Certificates and Announcement of Winners

11:30 Lunch Break

GRADUATE PRESENTATIONS

12:30 **Social Creativity and Digital Representation: Exploring the Negotiation of Japanese Catholic/Christian Identity on YouTube**

Patricia Belle J. Adolfo

University of the Philippines Diliman

12:45 **Contested Frames: Japanese Wartime Newsreels and Indonesian Agency, 1942– 1945**

John Adrianfer Atienza

University of the Philippines Diliman

PROGRAM

- 1:00 **Kyōjo and Bayanihan in the News: An Ecolinguistic Exploration of Disaster Solidarity in Japan and the Philippines**
Vincent Jhun O. Dorias
Mindanao State University Iligan Institute of Technology
- 1:15 Open Forum
- 1:30 **Exploring 'Izumi no Yu' and the Commercialization of Japanese Bathing Culture and its Implications on Diamond Princess: An Autoethnographic Sketch**
Sheilla L. Pamittan
University of the Philippines Diliman
- 1:45 **Healing Across Borders: An Ethnographic Study of Transmission and Adaptation of Reiki in the Philippines**
Ma. Kamille M. Untalan
University of the Philippines Diliman
- 2:00 Open Forum
- 2:15 Coffee Break
- 2:30 Awarding of Certificates and Announcement of Winners
- 2:45 Closing Remarks
Dir. Ben Suzuki
Director, The Japan Foundation, Manila
- 3:00 End of Competition

Jocelyn O. Celero, Ph.D.
Karl Ian Cheng Chua, Ph.D.
Masters of Ceremonies

THE JUDGES



Ms. Hanna Miyashita is the Assistant Director at the Japan Foundation, Manila from November 2025, overseeing projects related to Japanese Studies and Global Partnerships in the Philippines. Prior to her current position, she has worked at the Arts and Culture Department, Planning Department, and Japanese Studies Department at the Japan Foundation, Tokyo headquarters.

Prof. Nappy L. Navarra finished his BA Political Science and B in Landscape Architecture from the University of the Philippines Diliman. He completed his Master in Tropical Landscape Architecture degree in the same institution. He proceeded to take his Doctor of Engineering, Major in Environmental Planning and Design from the University of Tokyo.



He currently serves as Professor in the College of Architecture, University of the Philippines–Diliman. Aside from handling teaching loads, he is the present Coordinator of the Integrated Graduate Program and the Coordinator of the Environmental Landscapes Studio Laboratory.

Aside from his practice in the academe, he is involved in design consultancy and projects in landscape planning and design that aim to create positive impact to the environment and to the community.



THE JUDGES



Dr. Patricia Ysabel E. Wong is an Assistant Professor at the Department of History of Ateneo de Manila University. Her areas of specialization are girlhood history and drag culture.

Mr. Eisuke Matsuda is an assistant director of Japan Foundation, Manila, a community organizer for queer immigrants, activist, and researcher. He holds an MA in sociology from the Graduate School of Social Sciences at Hitotsubashi University. He is the author of the book "Taiwan Homonationalism: 22 Personal Narratives on 'Proud' Same-sex Marriage and 'Good Queer'". Born in Hong Kong, he has lived in Taiwan, Japan, the United States, and the Philippines. Outside of work, he has been performing for children around the world for over a decade as a member of Theatre Banana.



THE JUDGES



Mr. Shigehiro Matsuda is the First Secretary of the Embassy of Japan in the Philippines and the Director of the Japan Information and Culture Center. His section in the Embassy is in charge of cultural exchange, people-to-people exchange including academic exchange, and also public relations/media relations.

Dr. Maria Thaemar Camañag Tana is an Associate Professor in the Japanese Studies Program at the Dr. Rosita G. Leong School of Social Sciences (RDGL-SOSS), Ateneo de Manila University. She previously held a Japan Foundation–Global Japan Studies (JF-GJS) fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, University of Tokyo. She earned her Ph.D. in Japanese Studies from the National University of Singapore and an M.A. in International Studies from De La Salle University. Her research focuses on Japan’s foreign policy and its evolving relations with East and Southeast Asia. Dr. Tana is also a non-resident fellow at the Stratbase Institute and a research fellow at the Asia Pacific Pathways to Progress Foundation, Inc. (APPF).



日本

THE FINALISTS



ABSTRACTS



UNDERGRADUATE CATEGORY



Mark Joseph "Jojomay" B. Borja graduated Cum Laude from the University of the Philippines Baguio in July 2025, earning their Bachelor of Arts in Social Science with a Major in History and Minor in Sociology. Their undergraduate thesis was awarded the Best Thesis in History Award by UP Baguio (2025), entitled *Tungo sa Pagdalumat ng mga Kaalamang Bayan sa Kasaysayang Bayan: Diam ng Itneg sa Abra, Bago Ika-19 Dantaon hanggang Dekada 1910*. They are currently in the 1st Year of pursuing their MA in History degree at UP Baguio. Their research interests span ethnohistory, Itneg/Tinguian, Indigenous history, nationalism, women and queer history, and sociology of gender.

THE JAPANESE IN THE LOCAL HISTORY OF ABRA, 1941–1945

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Local histories are usually reconstructed from accounts of foreigners; hence, it is crucial to write it utilizing local accounts, oral or written, in this paper, more on documented. In Philippine historiography, the Japanese period is one of the most written periods—the violence of the war, the guerilla movement, the Americans of Allied forces versus Japan of the Axis power in the Pacific. Abra is rarely an interest of a historian, with few having to write about its indigenous inhabitants, the Itneg or Tinguian like Raymundo Rovillos (2016; 2009; 2007; 2006). This paper is a discussion on the local history of Abra during the Japanese period. Establishing the vital role of Abra in the guerilla movement, and highlighting the experience from the Japanese. This paper brings together archival material, historical analysis, and local-centric research that highlight the Japanese presence and traces in the local history of Abra Province. Contextualizing Abra during the World War through archival sources dug online, and establishing the role of the indigenous people of Abra, the Itneg, during the war.

Keywords: Abra, local history, Japanese Occupation, guerilla war

UNDERGRADUATE CATEGORY



Merian Daphne M. Dapon is a graduate of the University of the Philippines Mindanao, where she earned her Bachelor of Science in Anthropology in 2025. Her undergraduate research, titled “Memories of the Japanese Occupation: The Bagobo-Klata–Japanese Relationship Before and After the Second World War,” examines the historical experiences and narratives of the Bagobo-Klata community in relation to Japanese presence in Mindanao. Through her work, she highlights Indigenous perspectives often overlooked in mainstream wartime histories. Her research interests focus on Philippines–Japan relations from the pre–World War II period to the present, with particular emphasis on memory, oral history, and the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples in Mindanao. She aims to contribute to a more inclusive and community-centered understanding of Philippine history.

MEMORIES OF THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION: THE BAGOBO-KLATA-JAPANESE RELATIONSHIP BEFORE AND AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

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This study examines the memories and narratives of Bagobo-Klata and Bagobo-Klata-Japanese families in Calinan, Davao City, focusing on their relationships with Japanese settlers before, during, and after the Second World War. Centered on the themes of land, labor, marriage, and violence, the research highlights how collective memory functions as both a historical source and a cultural practice through which Indigenous communities preserve identity, negotiate trauma, and assert historical agency amid colonial and postcolonial transformations.

Situating Japanese migration within the broader context of the Nanshin movement and Japan's imperial expansion, the study traces how Japanese settlers became embedded in Bagobo-Klata life through abaca plantations, wage labor, land rental, and intermarriage. Drawing on Maurice Halbwachs' theory of collective memory and Pierre Nora's concept of lieux de mémoire, the paper demonstrates how oral traditions, family narratives, and spatial attachments reconstruct Indigenous experiences often excluded from dominant national histories. These include gradual land dispossession, labor exploitation, cross-cultural marriages, wartime violence, and postwar silences surrounding Japanese ancestry.

Methodologically, the research employs ethnographic fieldwork, oral history interviews, and narrative and thematic analysis among Bagobo-Klata households, particularly those with Japanese lineage. Findings reveal that memories of the Japanese are complex and layered. Prewar recollections emphasize economic cooperation, kinship, and coexistence, while wartime memories foreground fear, displacement, killings, and sexual violence. In the postwar period, memories of Japanese ancestry shaped internal community relations, producing selective silence, stigma, and negotiated belonging.

Ultimately, the study argues that Bagobo-Klata narratives differ from mainstream accounts not because they deny colonial violence, but because their experiences were shaped by intimate, economic, and relational forms of colonial encounter. Memory emerges as a dynamic force that links past struggles to present-day assertions of Indigenous identity, land rights, and cultural resilience, offering an alternative historical perspective grounded in Indigenous lived experience.

Keywords: Bagobo-Klata, Klata-Japanese, descendants, Second World War, collective memory

UNDERGRADUATE CATEGORY



Khent Bryll Jarales is a graduating student of the Bachelor of Science in Philosophy, majoring in Applied Ethics, at Mindanao State University–Iligan Institute of Technology. In 2021, he represented the Philippines at the UL Conference on Racial Discrimination hosted by Tosei University in Asahikawa, Hokkaido, Japan, contributing to international dialogue on race and global justice. In 2024, he participated in the 7th Japanese Research and Development Competition, advancing to the finals in 2025 where he secured the fourth place with his paper *Jouge Kankei: Exploring the Role of Friendship in Japan*. Jarales is also a contributing author to *Trese as Philosophy* (2025), edited by Leander Marquez of the Pinoy Pop Culture as Philosophy Series. His work is titled: *The Races of Terra Mundo: Exploring Dehumanization in Interracial Relationships*. Furthermore, in February 2026, he presented his undergraduate thesis at the 16th Social Ethics Society Conference held at the Holy Cross of Davao College, further expanding his engagement in academic research and scholarly discourse.

NISHIDA KITARO'S DIALECTIC OF SELF-NEGATION AND HOSPITALITY IN TOURISM: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF JAPAN AND SIARGAO, PHILIPPINES

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This paper examines tourism spaces in Japan and the Philippines, with the aim to go beyond purely economic concerns, underscoring the tension between local residents and tourists. To understand these dynamics, I apply Kitaro Nishida's dialectic of self-negation, a philosophical idea that explains how selves and others shape one another through mutual self-negation, as a conceptual lens for interpreting local responses to disrespectful or disruptive tourist behavior and how locals navigate in tourism spaces. The study combines philosophical analysis with comparative methods: philosophical analysis clarifies the moral and relational structures underlying hospitality and exclusion, while comparative analysis reveals similarities and differences in how Japan and a Philippine case study, Siargao Island, experience and manage tourism-related change. Empirical materials include scholarly literature, news reports, social media posts, public interviews with local residents, and blogs that document widely discussed incidents and local reactions. I acknowledge limitations: the research relies on accessible online sources rather than direct field observation, and translations of Nishida's work shape the philosophical reading. Despite these constraints, the paper aims to contribute to tourism studies and Asian philosophy by showing how Nishida's framework deepens our understanding of both hosts and visitors in contemporary tourism spaces.

UNDERGRADUATE CATEGORY



Charles M. Perolino is a third-year BS Philosophy (Applied Ethics) student at Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology. His current research is titled "Discipline and Freedom: Rethinking Japanese Moral Education in Philippine Pedagogy Reform."

Beyond his academic work, he serves as a Feature Writer for *Silahis*, the official student publication of MSU-IIT. He is also the Vice Mayor of the Junior Philosopher's Guild under the Department of Philosophy and Humanities,

His academic interests include Critical Theory, Gender Studies, Contemporary Media, and Pedagogy. Through his studies, he engages philosophical inquiry with interdisciplinary perspectives, particularly in examining ethics within cultural and institutional contexts. He is committed to developing rigorous critical analysis and contributing to thoughtful discussions on education, society, and moral formation.

DISCIPLINE AND FREEDOM: RETHINKING JAPANESE MORAL EDUCATION IN PHILIPPINE PEDAGOGY

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The tendency to treat discipline and moral habituation as inherently restrictive has become common in Philippine education reform, where liberation is often associated with autonomy, critique, and resistance to authority. Within this framework, Japan's pedagogy of moral education, marked by discipline, social harmony, and collective responsibility is frequently viewed with skepticism. This paper examines how this perceived incompatibility between Philippine reform ideals and Japanese moral pedagogy is produced rather than assumed. It argues that the tension arises from a dominant understanding of freedom as oppositional which is shaped by Western-oriented pedagogical discourse. Drawing on the philosophy of Nishida Kitarō, particularly his ideas of relational agency and moral action, the study shows how structured moral practice can be understood not as regulation but as a form of ethical self-realization. By reframing the tension as a conceptual difference rather than an inherent conflict, this paper invites a more pluralistic understanding of liberation in education and highlights the relevance of Japanese philosophical thought in rethinking contemporary educational reform in the Philippines.

Keyword: Moral Education, Liberation, Nishida Kitarō, Relational Agency, Comparative Pedagogy

UNDERGRADUATE CATEGORY



Bianca Ysabelle P. Tagarda is currently a fourth-year Asian Studies major from the University of Santo Tomas. Her interests in the interdisciplinary field include Japanese studies, East Asian studies, and Asian culture. Grounded in cultural diplomacy and regional studies, her academic work explores the intersections of soft power, identity, and cross-cultural engagement in Asia.

She has also been actively involved in academic simulations such as the UST Model ASEAN Meeting and UST Model United Nations that cultivate dialogue on regional cooperation and multiculturalism. Her research reflects a commitment to examining contemporary Asian dynamics through both historical context and policy analysis. Through her scholarly pursuits, she aims to contribute to conversations on cultural exchange and regional integration, particularly within the broader East Asian sphere.

SALVIFIC SOFT POWER: JAPANESE POST-WAR CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN THE PHILIPPINES FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COOL JAPAN PROJECT UNTIL THE SECOND ABE ADMINISTRATION

Bianca Ysabelle P. Tagarda

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Japan's post-war transformation from a militarist empire to a global cultural power illustrates how nations reconstruct identity through non-coercive means. In the Philippines, this cultural resurgence became visible through the spread of Japanese popular media namely anime and manga, culminating in the state-led Cool Japan Project later on. Existing studies on Japanese cultural diplomacy emphasize economic branding and media exportation but seldom explore its postwar and reconciliatory dimension in Southeast Asia, particularly in the Philippines. This study addresses that gap by analyzing how the Cool Japan initiative functioned as a soft power instrument to rebuild its image and strengthen relations with the Philippines from the 1980s to the second administration of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Anchored in Joseph Nye's concept of soft power and Constructivism theory, this paper treats cultural diplomacy as a socially constructed process in which attraction reshapes collective memory, identity, and political meaning. Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative historical approach, drawing on archival materials and semi-structured individual online interviews with Generation Z students and Millennial faculty members actively involved in Japanese cultural communities and affiliated with the chosen universities in the Philippines. These perspectives allow for an analysis of both institutional intent and audience reception. Preliminary findings reveal a nuanced outcome wherein Japanese popular culture proved effective largely through media dissemination and government-supported cultural institutions that promoted creativity, modernity, and shared values. However, respondents also expressed lingering disillusionment toward Japan, specifically regarding unresolved wartime atrocities and perceived historical amnesia. Despite these tensions, Japanese cultural diplomacy significantly redefined Filipino perceptions of Japan from a former wartime aggressor to a creative, familiar, and largely trustworthy partner. This demonstrates how culture can operate as a form of salvific soft power, facilitating postwar reconciliation while advancing long-term regional diplomacy within the realm of international relations in contemporary Asia.

Keywords: Cool Japan, Soft Power, Cultural Diplomacy, Postwar Perceptions, Constructivism

GRADUATE CATEGORY



Ms. Patricia Belle J. Adolfo is a graduate student from the Asian Center, specializing in Northeast Asia (Japan). Her research presentation, entitled “Social Creativity and Digital Representation: Exploring the Negotiation of Japanese Catholic/Christian Identity on Selected YouTube Videos/Content” explores how Japanese Catholics/Christians use YouTube as their digital third space to navigate and express their religious identities. These sentiments were viewed either through another YouTuber’s video and/or by them personally uploading their own videos in their respective channels.

On top of her interest in studying religious minorities, Belle’s other scholarly pursuits revolve on the following topics: the effects of technology in international relations, governance and the economy, peace building, and conflict resolution.

Professionally, she currently works for an international organization that provides technical assistance and capacity-building programs which aims to contribute to the sustainable peace in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

SOCIAL CREATIVITY AND DIGITAL REPRESENTATION: EXPLORING THE NEGOTIATION OF JAPANESE CATHOLIC/ CHRISTIAN IDENTITY ON YOUTUBE

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Despite the persecution of Christian religious missionaries during the Shogunate era, the opportunistic “otherness” branding during the Meiji Japan, and the social alienation in contemporary society, approximately 1.5% of the Japanese population still chose to publicly identify themselves as part of this religion. A qualitative analysis of the themes and content of 15 YouTube videos from 10 independent YouTube content creators were analyzed using the reinforced analysis of van Bezouw et. al (2021) on Tajfel and Turner’s Social Identity Theory. The study emphasized religion as a social creativity, a strategy employed by minorities to express themselves and actualize their own identities.

Content analysis from these YouTube videos revealed that Catholic/Christians Japanese minorities negotiate their religious identities in three ways: as means to cope with social instability (Type 2); as means to promote social stability (Type 1); and as an avenue to question the existence of this social stability (Type 3). In these pockets of flexibility, these marginalized Japanese found community that provided opportunities for them to combat loneliness, depression, and loss of purpose in life. However, since constructing actual churches and community centers take time and invitations occur primarily through word-of-mouth, YouTube serves a crucial intermediary function. As the second most popular online platform in Japan, YouTube's significance lies in its dual effectiveness: making Japanese Christian experiences educationally visible to broader audiences while also providing limited community connection for isolated believers.

Social creativity, as the framework of the discussion, also mapped out, at least at a surface level, how the Japanese public perceive religious individuals and their country as a whole, how Japanese Catholics/Christian began their religious journey – from their exposure to the critical point of the lives that convinced them to convert; and how they hold on to their faith despite the secular challenges that test them every day.

Keywords: religio., minority studies, YouTube, digital representation, social creativity

GRADUATE CATEGORY



John Adrianfer Atienza is a Master of Arts in Philippine Studies student at the Asian Center, University of the Philippines Diliman. His research examines Philippine cinema as well as American and Japanese wartime newsreels related to the Philippines. His work has been published in peer-reviewed journals, including *Humanities Diliman: A Philippine Journal of Humanities* (2021, 2024) and *Pelikula: A Journal of Philippine Cinema and Moving Image* (2022, 2024). He has presented his research at conferences, workshops, and academic programs hosted by the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (2023); Universität Bonn (2024); the Philippine Historical Association (2020, 2021, 2025); the 12th KRITIKA LaSalle (2024); the Japan Foundation Summer Program (2025); and the Japanese Studies Association of Southeast Asia (2025).

CONTESTED FRAMES: JAPANESE WARTIME NEWSREELS AND INDONESIAN AGENCY, 1942–1945

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This study examines Japanese wartime newsreels as a contested filmic space between the Japanese and Indonesians during the Second World War. It first analyzes newsreels produced in and about Indonesia as part of Japan's visualization of wartime imperialism. Japanese imperialism in these newsreels is articulated through the cinematic projection of militarism and intra-Asian orientalist logic, which converge within the filmic space. By attending to the visual and thematic conventions of newsreels, the study demonstrates how Japanese wartime imperialism was constructed and mediated through newsreel imagery. Within these same filmic spaces, the study also identifies moments in which Indonesian nationalist agency is visualized. It argues that Japanese newsreels functioned as spaces through which anti-Japanese sentiments and nationalist ideas circulated. Privileging the unique capacities of moving images, the study moves beyond the thematic and propagandistic content of the newsreels. Through close analysis, it examines the filmic language operating within the newsreels, uncovering both Japanese imperialism and Indonesian agency. In doing so, it contributes to Japanese and Indonesian history by studying an overlooked historical material through the lens of film studies and history. The study addresses the following central research question: In what ways did wartime newsreels function as a contested visual space between the projection of Japanese imperialism and the articulation of Indonesian agency?

Keywords: Japanese wartime imperialism, Indonesian agency, wartime newsreels, Second World War, wartime cinema

GRADUATE CATEGORY



Vincent Jhun O. Dorias is a faculty member of the Language and Letters Department, College of Arts and Sciences, at Bukidnon State University, where he completed his Master's degree in English Language Teaching. He is currently in the dissertation writing stage of his PhD in English Language Studies at the Department of English, College of Arts and Social Sciences, Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology. His doctoral research, titled "Kyōjo and Bayanihan in the News: An Ecolinguistic Exploration of Disaster Solidarity in Japan and the Philippines," investigates how media discourses construct collective solidarity during disasters through an ecolinguistic framework. His research interests include ecolinguistics, ecocriticism, language and culture, peace linguistics, and discourse analysis.

KYŌJO AND BAYANIHAN IN THE NEWS: AN ECOLINGUISTIC EXPLORATION OF DISASTER SOLIDARITY IN JAPAN AND THE PHILIPPINES

Vincent Jhun O. Dorias
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Disasters in the Asia–Pacific region increasingly reveal that resilience depends not only on institutional preparedness but also on culturally embedded values that shape how communities interpret responsibility and collective action. In Japan and the Philippines, the concepts of *kyōjo* and *bayanihan* have long served as cultural anchors that inform how people make sense of disasters and mobilize support. Yet despite their prominence in disaster scholarship, limited attention has been given to how these values are discursively constructed in media narratives and how such constructions shape public understandings of solidarity. This study addresses this gap by examining the linguistic framings of *kyōjo* and *bayanihan* in domestic news reports covering earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons, and monsoon–induced flooding in Japan and the Philippines. Guided by Stibbe’s (2014; 2020) ecolinguistic discursive tools framework, the analysis focuses on framing, metaphor, evaluation, and identity to explore how media reproduce, negotiate, or challenge cultural expectations of collective solidarity. Findings reveal that Japanese media foreground *kyōjo* through narratives of orderly cooperation, institutional coordination, and communal restraint, while Philippine media emphasize *bayanihan* through depictions of grassroots mobilization, volunteerism, and adaptive improvisation. Despite these differences, both media systems frame solidarity as a relational process shaped by linguistic cues that guide how communities imagine and enact collective resilience. The study contributes to disaster communication research by offering a relational, culturally grounded account of how language sustains mutual assistance across contexts, and it provides practical insights for designing context–sensitive communication strategies that integrate local cultural values into disaster risk reduction efforts.

Keywords: *Kyōjo*, *Bayanihan*, Disaster Communication, Ecolinguistics, Collective Solidarity

GRADUATE CATEGORY



Sheilla Littaua Pamittan is a graduate student at the University of the Philippines Diliman, currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Asian Studies with a major in Northeast Asia—Japan. She also holds a Bachelor's degree in Linguistics major in Japanese from the same university. Her research, titled "Exploring 'Izumi no Yu' and the Commercialization of Japanese Bathing Culture and its Implications on Diamond Princess: An Autoethnographic Sketch," examines the commercialization and staging of Japanese bathing culture aboard a cruise ship through autoethnography. Her research interests include Japanese cultural studies, language studies, commodification, tourism and hospitality labor, intercultural communication, and transnational mobility, with a particular focus on Filipino migrants and maritime workers in Japanese and global contexts.

EXPLORING 'IZUMI NO YU' AND THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF JAPANESE BATHING CULTURE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON DIAMOND PRINCESS: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC SKETCH

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This study explores how Japanese bathing culture is recontextualized and commercialized aboard the Diamond Princess cruise ship, focusing on its spa, Izumi no Yu, the largest Japanese-style bath at sea. Through autoethnography, it analyzes the researcher's six-month experience as an onsen attendant, examining how tangible and intangible heritage elements are selectively reproduced to create a curated sense of "Japaneseness."

Guided by concepts such as cultural commercialization and authenticity, the study examines how cruise tourism transforms cultural traditions into structured hospitality experiences shaped by branding, pricing, and guest expectations. Findings reveal that Izumi no Yu serves as a staged cultural encounter, emphasizing authenticity visually while negotiating behavior. It uncovers tensions between participation and observation, comfort and vulnerability, as both Japanese and non-Japanese guests navigate communal nudity and etiquette. This research highlights how commercialization both democratizes access to cultural experiences and simplifies complex practices, resulting in a hybrid form of bathing culture that is tranquil yet corporately managed. Ultimately, it contributes to scholarship on tourism, cultural heritage, and labor, examining the negotiation of identity and tradition in transnational leisure spaces.

Keywords: cultural commodification, Japanese bathing culture, Nihonjinron, autoethnography, cruise ship tourism

*This paper utilized artificial intelligence-assisted tools, including Grammarly and Google Translate, to support

GRADUATE CATEGORY



Ma. Kamille M. Untalan is a Master's student in Asian Studies specializing in Northeast Asia (Japan) at the University of the Philippines Diliman. She is currently on her thesis track, working on "Healing Across Borders: An Ethnographic Study of the Transmission and Adaptation of Reiki in the Philippines." Her research interests include complementary healing modalities, women and gender, and transnational cultural exchange. She has written on women's increased labor participation and childcare dynamics in Japan, postcolonial feminism and theory-building in Asia, and co-authored "Perspectives of Filipino Consumers on the Authenticity of Japanese Food in Little Tokyo," presented at the 21st Young Scholars' Conference on Philippine Studies in Japan in June 2016.

HEALING ACROSS BORDERS: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE TRANSMISSION AND ADAPTATION OF REIKI IN THE PHILIPPINES

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This study explores the transmission and adaptation of Reiki in the Philippines through the lens of Harumi Befu's fourfold framework. Reiki, a Japanese healing modality originating in early 20th-century Japan, has evolved into a globally practiced healing modality. Using Befu's theoretical framework, this research analyzes Reiki practice in the Philippines through the four dimensions of Befu's framework: Human Dispersal, Organization Transplantation, Cultural Diffusion and Images of Japan. This study underscores how Befu's framework elucidates the complex interactions between global influences and local adaptations in the evolution of Reiki in order to offer a comprehensive understanding of its global trajectory and cultural transformation in the Philippine setting.

Keywords: Reiki, Japan, Transmigrators, Globalization,
Complementary Alternative Medicine

JAPAN FOUNDATION, MANILA

The Japan Foundation is the only institution dedicated to carrying out Japan's comprehensive international cultural exchange programs throughout the world. With the objective of cultivating friendship and ties between Japan and the world, through culture, language, and dialogue, the Japan Foundation creates global opportunities to foster friendship, trust and mutual understanding.

The Japan Foundation was established in October 1972 as a special legal entity supervised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In October 2003, it was reorganized as an independent administrative institution. As the 18th overseas office, the Japan Foundation, Manila (JFM), which was founded in 1996, is active in three areas: Arts and Cultural Exchange, Japanese–Language Education, and Japanese Studies and Intellectual Exchange.

The Japan Foundation has a global network consisting of its Tokyo headquarters, the Kyoto office, two Japanese–language institutes (the Japan Foundation Japanese–Language Institute, Urawa; and the Japan Foundation Japanese–Language Institute, Kansai) and 24 overseas offices in 23 countries, including two Asia Center liaison offices.

ASIAN CENTER

Who We Are:

The Asian Center is the University of the Philippines' only unit with a regional area of specialization and one of the colleges in the university's Diliman campus. Established in 1955 as the Institute of Asian Studies, the Asian Center offers graduate-level multidisciplinary academic programs on Asian Studies and Philippine Studies. Its mandate—the study of Asia—is underpinned by law, Republic Act 5334, which took effect in June 1968. The Asian Center is based at the GT-Toyota Asian Cultural Center. It is a member of the Consortium for Southeast Asian Studies in Asia, the Kyoto International Consortium for Asian Studies (KICAS), and Network of ASEAN-China Academic Institutes (NACAI).

Mission:

“To develop a closer and broader contact with our Asian neighbors in the field of learning and scholarship to attain knowledge of our national identity in relation to other Asian nations through profound studies on Asian cultures, histories, social forces, and aspirations,” Republic Act 5334.

Vision:

To serve as a research hub for Asian Studies and Philippine Studies in the Philippines and help create a society aware of and appreciative of its Asian and Filipino heritage in ways that promote Filipino identity and its relations with its Asian neighbors.

ASIAN STUDIES: JOURNAL OF CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ASIA

Call for Papers:

Asian Studies: Journal of Critical Perspectives on Asia is an open-access, peer-reviewed academic journal published since 1963 by the Asian Center, University of the Philippines Diliman. Promoting original and penetrating research, it offers novel and alternative interpretations of Asian experiences, helps deepen the understanding of the region, and enlivens debates on issues affecting Asian peoples and societies. One of the pioneering journals of its kind in Asia, Asian Studies offers a critical, multidisciplinary platform where scholars, practitioners, and activists can publish research that draws on the theories and perspectives from the social sciences, humanities, or cultural studies. Published twice a year, the journal welcomes:

- Commentaries and documents
- Reviews (films, books, novels, exhibits, plays, websites, etc.)
- Poetry and short fiction; and
- Travel narratives

View content and submission guidelines: www.asj.upd.edu.ph.
Submissions are welcome year-round.

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Project Proponents

Jocelyn O. Celero, Ph.D.

Matthew M. Santamaria, Doctor of Law

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