

# Newsletter No.1-16

Address: 3, Akti Miaouli Str., 185 31 Piraeus, Greece • Email: info@ombros-consulting.com  
Web: www.ombros-consulting.com • Tel:+30 210 4123341

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Subject: Understanding the Filipino seaman by Author Tomas D. Andres

**Title: His values, attitudes and behaviour**

Extending positive understanding towards people is a central part of the professional role of every Master and officer. Whether you are in charge of the engineering crew or of the deck crew, getting to know and understand the people you're dealing with is a necessity for success!

Masters and officers cannot operate in a vacuum. You have to know how to convince and inspire, cooperate and communicate with your people to be successful. Aboard a multinational crewed vessels ship you have to get people to trust and understand each other in spite of considerable barriers, erected by differences in language, values, ethics, attitudes, traditions, customs, and ways of thinking.

This article is a summary of concise study of Filipino values, etiquette, mores, customs and manners which show differences as well as similarities in behavioral expectations that arise when Masters and officers come to live and work with Filipinos.

This article has two intended uses.

It is a tool for intercultural relations training aboard ship that, hopefully, will provide a wealth of data for Masters and officers who wish to relate effectively with Filipinos.

It is hoped that this article will also be used informally by individuals going to work with Filipinos who will be unable to attend intercultural relations training.

Coming to terms with people of other cultures can be difficult.

Time-consuming, too, and very expensive if one fails to build up the necessary confidence.

Familiarize yourself thoroughly with Filipinos!

It's a wise investment that soon pays off.

**By Author Tomas D. Andres**

# ***Understanding the Filipino seaman: His Values, attitudes and behavior***

**TOMAS D. ANDRES**

THE AUTHOR



DR. TOMAS QUINTIN DONATO ANDRES is an intercultural consultant who conducts cross-cultural orientation on Philippine culture for expatriates of multinational and international organizations. Having worked as counselor and consultant in several prestigious institutions in Europe, United States, Asia and Philippines, he has advised and given cross-cultural education to thousands of seamen and migrant workers Filipinos, Americans, Indians, Spaniards, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Cubans, Japanese, Nigerians, Iranians, Nepalese, British, Danish, etc. - in their moments of culture shocks in foreign lands. Dr. Andres holds a doctorate degree in educational management from the Far Eastern University, a diplomate in labor and industrial management from the Labor Management College of New York in Buffalo, a master's degree in philosophy from the University of Santo Tomas, and five baccalaureate degrees in Education, Liberal Arts, Oriental Philosophies, Behavioral Sciences and Industrial Technology from India, Spain and Philippines. He is presently pioneering on a Philippine-based management and training system called MANAGEMENT BY FILIPINOALD.F.S and an internationally-based management and training system called MANAGEMENT BY HUMOR in his VALUES AND TECHNOLOGIES MANAGEMENT CENTRE of which he is president and general manager. He is a professor of the Ateneo de Manila University and is consultant to multinational as well as local companies and organizations.

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## **1 UNDERSTANDING THE CULTURE, PERSONALITY TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF FILIPINO SEAMEN**

The Philippines is composed of 7,107 islands with a total area of 300,000 square kilometers. The country is bounded on the west by the China Sea, on the east by the Pacific Ocean, and on the south by the Celebes Sea. It lies a little above the equator and is 960 kilometers off the southeast coast of the Asian mainland.

The Philippines has for its languages Filipino, English and Spanish; it has 87 different major dialects ranging from Tagalog, Sugbuanon, Hiligaynon, Samarnon, Bikol, Pampango, Ilocano, Maguindanao, Maranaw to Tausug. English is widely spoken; in fact, this country is the third largest English-speaking nation in the world. The Filipino seamen have a good grasp of the English language and high levels of secondary and tertiary education.

The biggest islands of the Philippines are Luzon, Mindanao, Mindoro, Samar, Panay, Cebu, Palawan, Leyte, Bohol and Masbate. Its largest cities are Manila, Quezon City, Davao and Cebu. A big number of Filipino seamen come from Luzon and Visayas.

Filipino seamen are a happy blend of several races, basically Malay with Chinese, Spanish, Indian and American admixtures. Their values and ways of life were shaped by several, sometimes conflicting cultures, and the resulting blend is what makes their own uniquely Filipino. In their veins run the rich Christian values of Europe, the pragmatic and democratic values of America, and the spiritual values of Asia.

To the predominantly Malay Filipino seaman, frankness is a breach of courtesy, righteousness and eccentricity. Thus, he says nothing negative of anything that he does not approve of. The best man for him is one who is "easy to get along with." He is trusting as a child, naturally tolerant, forbearing and kind but belligerent when provoked.

The predominantly Chinese Filipino seaman has the values of patience and perseverance, hardiness and foresight, frugality and thrift. The Chinese ideal of filial piety, the emphasis on man as a social being and "sageness within and Idngliness without" ideal have been carried over into Filipino seaman's life. Relations between parents and children and lateral relatives is a matter of ethics and honor. Getting along with one's fellowmen is a fundamental prerequisite to prosperity, happiness and human existence.

The predominantly Spanish Filipino seaman, is generous but arrogant. For him, the emphasis is on appearance, reputation, privilege and status. He observes the family rituals of Sunday worship and follows social standards.

The predominantly American Filipino seaman is trained to ask two questions: "Does it work" and "What has he done?" He possesses the modern mechanics and the techniques of Westernized democracy, the Protestant ethics of rationality, of questioning, of independent thinking, and of direct communication.

### ***Regional Difference among Filipinos***

There are 111 linguistic, cultural and racial groups in the Philippines. The major linguistic groups are the following: Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon, Bicol, Waray, Pampango, Pangasinan and Maranao.

The Filipino seaman is known to be a spendthrift if he comes from the Tagalog region, the Visayas or Pampanga, but an incorrigible tightwad if he comes from the Northern provinces. Filipino seamen from the sugar area in Visayas and Luzon are generally loose with their money, whereas the Ilocanos are generally industrious and thrifty with their hard earned money.

Ilocanos, Pangalatocs, Cagayanos, and Igorots, are God-fearing, hardworking, enduring, humble, self-disciplined, and frugal. They are serious in their jobs and are aware that it is the source of livelihood for them and their loved ones. Being frugal, they have few vices, if any. Their lives are kept simple and basic. As they

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accumulate honest-savings, they invest in something worthwhile such a house and lot, education, productive machines before spending for luxuries. Being God-fearing, they are humble, honest, loyal, and just. In their work, they can be relied upon. They put their best efforts and talents.

The Tagalogs and Pampangos are also God-fearing people, intelligent and well-informed, possessing the same virtues as the Ilocanos. They likewise have a high sense of honor but are at times tempted by material gains.

The Bicolanos and Visayans are likewise God-fearing, have a sense of clannish pride, adventurous, and very gregarious. They take a challenge, reasonable or otherwise.

The Moslems are brave warriors and are adventurous in a different way. They are proud of their Malay heritage and conscious of their noble blood. They believe and profess faith in the oneness of God or Allah and the Prophethood of Mohammed.

## ***Cultural Differences and Similarities***

A Master or officer in dealing with people of other cultures must know two important points regarding culture: first, it is important that he accepts that there are no intrinsically "right" or a "wrong" solutions, no objectively "better" or "worse" ways of meeting basic needs; secondly, every culture is and has always been ethnocentric, that is, it thinks its own solutions are superior and would be recognized as superior by any "right-thinking," intelligent, logical human being.

For the Westerner, for example, to eat with bare hands is "dirty"; for the Filipino, it is the usual thing to do.

The Filipino, compared with Westerners, prefers a "structured" way of life rather than one in which he can be assertive of his own individuality.

Filipinos compared with Westerners are more sensitive and easily humiliated. One must never ridicule a Filipino seaman. He considers with a great deal of resentment, a ridicule coming from a foreigner or stranger, though not so much from a fellow Filipino or townmate. He is sensitive to hard words and aggressive behavior. One must avoid showing signs of conflict when relating to a Filipino seaman. As much as possible never show a sour look, nor utter harsh words to him.

For the Filipino, smooth interpersonal relationship (SIR) is the rule for any/relationship. A smile, a friendly lift of the eyebrow, a pat on the back, a squeeze of the arm, a word of praise or a friendly concern can easily win the friendship of a Filipino.

The Filipino tends to be a poor loser. He is unable to take defeat gracefully. If he wins, he is exceedingly jubilant; if he loses, he is exceedingly bitter. In athletics, he is deeply sportsminded but tends to be unsportsmanlike. To him, to be defeated is to be humiliated. Thus, the Filipino, when he loses is apt to put up an excuse or alibi.

Westerners tend to regulate their contact with people of other culture by failing to observe the gap; the Filipino tends to regulate his contact with people of other cultures by a clear recognition that differences exist and a shallow and incurious notion of what these consist of. The Filipino limits his contact with people of other culture in their midst partly by shifting to the Tagalog dialect, and by a variety of other defensive measures whereby he tries, understandably, to evade the experience of difference.

A Filipino may interpret the frankness of the Westerner as rudeness, and in the way Westerners view the Filipino's reticence at saying a direct "No" as indecisiveness. To the Filipino, "I'll try" could either mean "No" or that he'll really try.

Westerners conceive of time in linear-spatial terms: the past, present and future. The Filipino has two concepts of time: first is the linear where time is a succession of moments with a fixed starting point and a fixed ending point; the second is the cyclical concept of time where time is a succession of moments without a fixed starting point nor a fixed ending point Thus the "manana habit." The Filipino considers time flexible

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and unlimited. What cannot be done today can always be accomplished tomorrow. Among friends, meetings are not held promptly.

## **2 THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION TO FILIPINOS**

Historically, the Filipinos have embraced two of the great religions of the world " Islam and Christianity. Islam was introduced during the 14th century, shortly after the expansion of Arab commercial ventures in Southeast Asia. Catholic Christianity was introduced as early as the 16th century with the coming of Ferdinand Magellan in 1521. However, it did not become firmly established until the 17th century when the Spaniards decided to make the Philippines one of their colonies. Catholic Christianity is the predominant religion.

Protestantism was introduced to the country in 1899 when the first Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries arrived with the American soldiers during the Spanish-American War. Following closely were the Baptists (1900), the Episcopalians, the Disciples of Christ, the Evangelical United Brethren (1901) and the Congregationists who came in 1902. Since then, many other Protestant denominations have come.

Locally, two Filipino independent churches were organized at the turn of the 20th century and are prominent today. These are the Aglipay (Philippine Independent Church) and the Iglesia Ni Cristo (Church of Christ) founded in 1902 and 1914, respectively.

A Filipino is very religious but at the same time very superstitious. Some superstitions and beliefs that can influence the behavior of the Filipino seaman are the following: 1) One must not organize teams of 3 or 13, otherwise one member will die. 2) If someone smells the odor of a candle when there is no candle burning, one of his relatives will die. 3) When a group of three have their picture taken, the one in the middle will die first. 4) If one meets a black cat while crossing the road, a misfortune will occur. 5) When a duck flies it is a sign of bad luck. 6) When a cat washes himself, a storm is coming. 7) Sweeping the floor at night one will lose all his wealth. 8) If one breaks a glass, a plate or a cup during a banquet, something bad will happen. 9) One will have bad luck if he breaks a mirror. 10) Whistling in the evening is bad. Common among Filipinos is the belief that sickness is the work of some evil spirits.

The Filipino world-view is personalistic and he explains the physical reality in a religious and metaphysical manner. He looks at the world and nature as controlled by other beings different from himself and governed by forces above him. His fatalism leads him to believe that one's life is shaped and directed by superior forces beyond control. He interprets success or failure, health or sickness, life or death, a good or bad harvest on the basis of the supernatural and trust and reliance on a divine providence. Thus Filipinos believe in lucky and unlucky dates and numbers.

The Filipino articulates the presence of God through symbols. He is fond of rituals and external manifestations of piety. Candles, incense, processions, statues, medals, ritual dancing, ritual devotion to the invisible dead, etc. are the more common visible articulations of the Filipino's contemplative sense of the invisible. This the Westerner and other people of other cultures may never understand but must respect.

Fiestas may be held any time of the year but the most celebrated are Christmas (December 25), New Year (January 1), the Feast of the Black Nazarene (January 9), Holy Week (March-April), Santacruzans (May), and All-Saints' Day (November 1). For the Filipino, the fiesta is the ultimate gesture of respect and esteem. He who does not celebrate it is taken to be rude, for the fiesta is a time for showing appreciation to the saints for favors received, for favors done. The fiesta is an occasion for a party. Officers may be invited to participate in the celebrations by way of being offered a drink and a little food. Have the drink and the food offered. It is in good taste to inquire as to the reasons for the celebration but it is not advisable to enter into a discussion as to the relevance of such celebrations in a modern world. What may seem out of date and superstitious to a Westerner may be very important and sacred to some Filipinos.

Religion plays an important role in the lives of Filipino seamen. Worship is essentially a communitarian affair and Filipinos go to church every Sunday and Holydays to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of

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the Mass. Freedom may be given to Filipino seamen to go to Mass or their churches whenever possible. Representatives of the crew ashore may be allowed to find a priest or a pastor to administer the Sacraments of the Word of God to Filipino seamen.

### **3      *DIETARY REQUIREMENTS***

The customary Filipino food consists mainly of rice (plenty of it) meat and/or fish, vegetables and desserts and/or fruits in season. The above specially holds true for lunches and dinners.

Lunches and dinners normally include at least two dish meals, with vegetables a preferred part of it

Breakfast may be in the form of bread (breakfast roll), cheese or butter, slices of ham/bacon and coffee/milk. Another variation could be fried rice and dried fish or preserved meat products (sausages, processed meat). As a general rule, Pilipinos take heavy breakfasts and in-between meals snacks.

They don't go for table wines but would prefer carbonated soft drinks or a bottle of cold beer.

Filipino seamen can be very sensitive regarding food being given to them. They can feel and intuit whether they are being cheated with regard to their food allowances or given what is due to them. Where a complaint is made regarding the victualling allowance or the quality of the food supplied, immediate attention should be given to such complaint and proper action should be taken.

### **4      *UNDERSTANDING THE FILIPINO MALE ENVIRONMENT, HIS ATTITUDES TO DRINK/DRUG USAGE AND SOCIAL HABITS***

In the Filipino value orientation, a man is brought up with the orientation of strength, boldness and aggression. He is allowed more freedom of action than a woman simply because of the usually ascribed adult traits distinctive of the male - responsibility, independence and conviction. Oftentimes, these traits are shown under the guise of masculinity - that is, in terms of muscles, sexual prowess, booze, cigarettes. The Filipino male is to drink, smoke and have as many women as their energy will allow them prior to and after marriage. A man who is promiscuous is considered simply as demonstrating his pagkalalake or manliness.

A value very common among Filipino males is machismo or the male's physical and mental superiority over the female. This machismo complex imposes on the Filipino male to engage in a sexual role which could only be verified by the peer group to which he belongs in terms of the number of affairs he maintains and children he sires either with his lawful wife or his mistresses. What divorce is to the Westerners, querida system is to a few Filipino males. This is a way of life wherein a married man maintains a mistress, sometimes to the extent of including a second home.

As a result of machismo, there exists a double standard of morality. A set of principles requires women to be faithful, modest and chaste while on the other hand, men are considered immuned from such principles and restrictions. Philandering by the Filipino male is not very much looked down upon in the Filipino culture. Because he is a man, he can be forgiven for taking too much sexual freedom. He just wants to prove his masculinity.

#### ***Social Habits***

The Filipino is generally friendly, hospitable and helpful He is a peace-loving and sociable fellow. He has a compromising character and is not inclined to confrontation.

Filipinos are fond of giving parties. Any event such as a promotion, a birthday, etc. can be an excuse for having a party, or giving a "blow-out"

As with any other culture, there are certain customs and traditions the Filipinos follow in hosting parties:

1. An invitation is intended to confer honor on the guest If the guest is a foreigner, it is a particular

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honor to be invited not only for the guest, but also for the host Filipinos will invite everyone casually so no one feels left out. The person receiving a casual invitation usually realizes this when the host does not insist on his coming.

2. Filipinos will be very persuasive about an invitation and if the guest must decline, it can be a delicate matter. In order to save the host any embarrassment, the guest should simply say he will let the host know an answer as soon as possible. Then, he should either compose a tactful note in response or ask a third party to act a go-between.

3. Gifts are usually presented at birthdays, baptisms, and anniversaries. They are almost never opened in front of the giver. Filipinos do not want to embarrass other guests. When a gift is given, it is usually handed over to the hostess with an apology: "Sorry, this is all I could afford." The recipient scolds the giver for taking the trouble to get a gift and sets it aside.

4. Filipinos do not usually send "Thank You" notes. Instead, the recipient waits to reciprocate.

5. It is not considered rude to be late. Filipino hostesses generally plan on an hour of socializing before serving the meal, allowing for latecomers. Though there appears to be no rule of thumb to gauge the proper arrival time, arriving at the exact time of the invitation will embarrass the hostess. It is better to be a little late " about 15 minutes or so.

6. The basic guideline of social behavior for Filipinos is the concept of *biya*, loss efface. Practically all of the guidelines below are designed to keep things on a smooth, even keel, without risking embarrassment to anyone. The host often apologizes for his house, because it is a status symbol. Do not admire an item in someone's home. The host may feel obligated to give the item to the admirer. It is considered polite to refuse food the first or second time it is offered. The invitation becomes more insistent by the third asking.

7. Quantity is the most important consideration in planning a menu. Not only will additional guests be arriving, but it is considered a sign of welcome to offer lots of food and drink

Rice is always served with a meal, usually in the place of bread. *Lechon*, a roasted whole pig, is customary for many occasions and ham is regarded as a festive main dish. Seafood is seldom the main course but is usually served as a first course or as an accompanying dish. Other pointers are:

A hostess in the Philippines is always prepared to feed more people than were originally invited. *Yoyos* children's nurses - and drivers often come with the family. Guests often bring family and friends to a gathering as well. *Yoyos* usually sit at the table to help the children. Drivers generally eat with the household staff.

The host and hostess generally do not sit with the other guests. After much coaxing, the guest of honor is seated at the head of the table and the host and hostess hover, insisting guests to have more of this dish or that dish;

Guests are expected to eat everything, preferably in large quantities. But a guest should leave something on his plate to show there was more than enough food.

A large spoon is often presented as part of the table setting instead of a knife. It is used for pushing the rice into the fork and for cutting food.

8. Filipinos often ask guests to entertain other guests, particularly with speeches or by singing songs. It is considered rude to refuse and hesitant foreigners should remember that few of the other guests will stop talking to listen anyway.

9. Guests always linger-after the meal. Otherwise it looks as if they only came to eat. When it is time to leave, they must tell the host and hostess. This is called "getting permission".

## ***Attitudes to Drink and Drug Usage***

Filipino males are fond of drinking especially on occasions of gatherings and celebrations. As early as in 1621, when Magellan and his men arrived in the Philippines, the feast set before then included earthen jugs filled with *tuba* ( a stinging and bitter-sweet hard drink made by extracting the sap of an unopened coconut bud.)

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Any inclination to alcohol or drug use is directly related to a high degree of peer pressure and openness to new experiences, tolerance of deviance and non-conformity, independence, low self-esteem, and depression. Cautious, dependent, conforming, socially inhibited, achievement oriented, and religious Filipino males are relatively unlikely to try drugs or alcohol. Situational influences may also influence any likelihood of a Filipino male turning to alcohol or drugs. A shipboard situation with few outlets for recreational activities or programs may result in bored seafarers looking towards less healthy outlets for their energies.

Filipinos appreciate the restraint of rules, particularly when they have helped formulate them. Develop guidelines for drinking and celebrations - include hours, places that are allowed for drinking, the kind of supervision needed, and conventions about the use of alcohol and prohibition of drugs.

Encourage the Filipino seamen to become involved in activities which allow them to have a good time such as chess, dama, contests, bible study, during their free time.

Establish responsible drinking pattern. Use alcohol responsibly and in moderation. It is important to emphasize that the limits of bottle of drinks per person or nationality may be different. Westerners may drink five bottles of beer and still be not drunk while for a Filipino one bottle of beer may be enough to make him drunk. Establish ground rules for using or not using alcohol. Emphasize acceptance of another's wish not to drink.

A Filipino may turn to alcohol for relief from problems-personal, family, work and others. This is his way of withdrawing temporarily from the realities of his problems. It is advisable to counsel Filipino seamen to approach their officers if they have any problem and be given proper counseling by them or any competent professional for that purpose. Encourage them to share their problems with their trusted fellow-seamen. Encourage them to write frequently as possible their loved ones and family.

Filipinos value very much their families's well-being and security. Ensure that the Filipino seamen's families are receiving regularly their hard-earned money. A letter to a seaman by his wife that she is not receiving money can lead to negative reaction toward his officers.

## **5 HOW TO MAKE THE FILIPINO TICK AND CLICK**

Some Filipino seamen have created an image of the Filipino as a quarrelsome breed who tends to gang up with others of his country to fight it out with any other ethnic group willing to take them on. In general, this is not so. The Filipinos are a peace-loving people. They can easily accept as friends and brothers nationals of other countries, both from the East and West.

The Filipino seaman is responsible, hardworking, industrious and dependable. However, his Masters, Chief Engineers and officers should treat him under their command with consideration and social justice and keep him happy and contented no matter what circumstances are. They should visit him in his quarter in a fatherly fashion once in a while to inquire after his well-being; they should be his advisers and confidant regarding personal problems and should be ready to lend a helping hand when needed. They should keep their cabins open any time to him when he has complaints. Treated in this way, he is bound to look up to his superiors with respect and give them their cooperation.

### ***Conduct and Discipline***

Stern discipline should only be imposed at the right time, and if possible, within the confines and privacy of a cabin. Calling crew's attention with harsh words where others can hear will only cause embarrassment and a feeling of resentment toward the superior. A ship is an isolated community, far from families and friends. Officers should, therefore, organize Filipino seamen, and activities on board in such a way that living conditions become more bearable in spite of the hard work. If an officer is held in esteem and loved by his Filipino subordinates, they will think twice before committing any infraction on the ship such as pilferages, quarrels, or acts of insubordination.

Personalism (person-to-person relationship) carries a premium in managing Filipino seamen. Authority may make the Filipino seaman work, but it won't make him work to his fullest capacity. A

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personalistic management style stimulates productivity, good conduct and discipline in Filipino seamen. He works and works hard for the officer whom he can consider not only his superior but also his friend. Thus, Filipino seamen are likely to be motivated more by gestures of personal concern and attention from their officers than by raising of voice or swearing.

Deep rooted values should be understood more clearly by Westerners who manage Filipino seamen. Work to most Filipino seamen is only a means to an end. Their ultimate achievement imagery is knowing that their respective families are enjoying some luxuries while they work on board and they look forward to a changed social status one day.

The social value of "utang na-loob" (loosely translated as "debts of gratitude") is very much in operation in the Filipino seamen. They work hard for an officer to whom they have "utang-na-loob" but they also expect him to continue feeding their feelings of self-worth. The officer's gestures of personal concern and attention will be more valued and repayed with productivity, and loyalty. Pats on their backs and one or two drinks are some ways of repaying the Filipino seamen after doing a good job.

Should the necessity arise for a Filipino seaman to be reprimanded, the officer should give him feedback about both his desirable and undesirable behaviors. The officer should do it in private, avoiding doing so in the presence of other people or else the Filipino will very likely feel that he has been publicly humiliated. An officer's hasty action, nasty remark, public reprimand, loss of temper, etc. will provoke the Pilipino to belligerence.

## ***Gambling***

Filipinos have a penchant for gambling even at a very early age. They have the tendency to play or gamble anytime and anywhere. Family celebrations and funeral wakes are never complete without mabjong or poker or bingo sessions. The rich and earning Filipinos have pusoy, pekwa, casinos, horse racing, etc. Elderly Filipinos have their sakia, jueteng, and sabong or cockfighting. This fondness for gambling is carried over to sea by Filipino seamen.

Gambling can have relaxational and recreational purposes for Filipinos, if properly regulated and managed. They should gamble only with their excess money; thus the bets should not be large. The officers should fix and delimit the site or area and time wherein mahjong and various card games may be played. Troubles arising through gambling must be prevented by the officers by their proper supervision of it.

## **6 COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY WITH FILIPINOS**

To communicate effectively with Filipinos one has to step back A and look at how they develop perception. Meanings are not in words but in people. The Westerner has to listen two or three times as hard to Filipinos in order to find out what they really mean. Filipinos prefer to use body language rather than words to express themselves. Westerners look for meaning and understanding in what is said; the Filipino in what is not said. The silences for Filipinos together with the pauses between silences are very meaningful. They do convey messages.

The Westerner should have in mind the indirectness of the Filipino is contrast to his directness. The Filipino is indirect because he wants to keep his interpersonal encounters pleasant and friendly, because that way the channels of communication will remain open. The Westerner puts a premium on honesty and frankness and feels that communication has to be direct to be effective. For the Filipino, directness and frankness is rude and brutal.

Among intimates the indirect way of communicating is in the form of teasing or biruan. A form of teasing is the Filipino's propensity to giving nicknames. To the Westerner, some nicknames may appear unkind, especially if they are directed at the persons most obvious physical trait.

In Filipino culture, curiosity about another individual's personal life precedes entry into any relationship with him. So an officer must not be annoyed if, in trying to be friendly, a Filipino seaman asks him questions that seem to invade his privacy, like "How much is your salary?"; "Why don't you have any children",

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or "Where did you come from?" These are simply a form of greeting and may not be seriously answered. A simple: "Oh, just around the corner." will do. Privacy is not given as much importance among Filipinos as among Westerners.

## ***Circumlocutions and Polite Indirections***

Filipinos are very fond of circumlocution and polite indirections when they are dealing with foreigners and people of higher strata. A form of circumlocution or at least of polite indirection manifested in their speech is the constant use of the progressive form. An example is "I am inviting you to a celebration next month," in which the invitation is expressed in a state of continuing progress for a long time rather than as an explicit quickly completed action.

The Filipino is euphemistic. He chooses to give opinions in as pleasant words as possible and avoid using harsh and insulting words. To say "stupid" or "crazy" to a Filipino who commits a mistake would cause immediate resentment. In order to preserve harmony and good feelings between the Westerner and the Filipino, it would be advisable for the former to tone down his voice in speaking to the latter. Among Westerners, negative remarks and anger can be expressed loudly and vociferously and usually no harm is done; often results are quick and forthcoming when one displays a show of righteous indignation. Among Filipinos, it is a different story. Speaking in a raised voice, shouting, swearing and showing violent displays of temper are considered inexcusable. The Filipino involved will suffer a loss of face (*mapapabiya*), and the Westerner who has shown anger will suffer a loss of respect that he may never regain.

Comments on a Filipino or his work should be given a round-about way. The Filipino feels that he and his work are one. Criticism of his-work becomes a criticism of himself as a person. Thus he reacts to criticisms emotionally unless they are couched in a language that is not hurtful, that considers his feelings.

## ***The Filipino "Yes"***

Westerners are oftentimes baffled by a Filipino's positive answer to an appointment or to instructions given only to discover later on that the same individual did exactly the opposite without cancelling the appoint' merit or asking questions regarding the clarity of the instructions. An average Pilipino will say "yes" when:

1. He does not know.
2. He wants to impress.
3. He is annoyed.
4. He wants to end the conversation.
5. He half-understands the instruction or what is being said.
6. He is not sure of himself.
7. He thinks he knows better than the one speaking to him. Usually the Filipino agrees weakly-instead

of giving a flat refusal of "No." *Siguro nga, Marahil, Pipilitin ko* ("Maybe," "Perhaps," or "I'll try") are his usual answers to questions to which a Westerner would really say "No. " This is because of the Filipino desire to please in spite of the negative response. To interpret the meaning of this "I'll try" or such similar vague answers, requires only a little persuasion to change the "I'll try" to a reluctant "yes" or an apologetic "no."

## ***Asking Questions or Not Asking Them at All***

There is a reluctance on the part of a Filipino to ask questions in situations where a Westerner ordinarily will. Officers who have managed Pilipino seamen often wonder why they usually get-a respectful silence when they expect hem to react to certain issues they bring up in meetings.

One possible explanation for this is the Filipino attitude towards his officers and superiors. Since they are considered the epitome of wisdom or more knowledgeable, it is unthinkable for most seamen to question them. Secondly, Filipinos refuse to ask questions because they feel it is "shameful," *nakakabiya*, to do so. There is a popular belief that only the stupid and the ignorant and the *provinciano* (meaning "from the back-

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woods") ask questions. A Filipino seaman would rather pretend to understand the instructions given him and risk making a mistake than ask questions.

A suggestion when giving orders to a Filipino is to ask him to repeat the order back to clarify that it has been understood. Be willing to repeat your instructions. Be patient. Always ask for questions but don't ask leading questions such as "Did you understand the instruction?" Ask the Filipino to summarize what he understood. Speak clearly, using simple language and specific and accurate terms.

To encourage the Filipino to ask questions especially if he has not understood the instruction is to make it easy for him to ask for a favor by asking him what he can do for him. And when he hesitates, he insists that he asks him the question with admonition not to be shy.

On the other hand, an officer asking a Filipino personal questions such as "How are your wife and children?" conveys a message of goodwill. This is considered by a Filipino as a sign of concern. It is all part of pakikisama or "getting along well."

When correcting a Filipino, don't go straight to the point. Talk about something pleasant first. In delivering your correction be as diplomatic as possible. Most Filipinos cannot take a direct, black and white declaration of his mistake. Do not use harsh tone of voice. Do not curse. Do not correct him in public. After a correction has been made, follow-up with an inquiry about some personal concern such as his family, his health, etc.

If an unpleasant encounter cannot be helped - say, if an officer has to call down a Filipino - one of the indications that an attempt is being made to lessen the hurt or minimize the unpleasantness is in this showing of concern for the Filipino's private life. Thus, after an officer has told his Filipino seaman to work harder because ship efficiency suffers because of him, he abruptly switches to an "And how are your wife and children?" routine. This relieves the Filipino seaman and makes him feel that he still belongs, that he is still accepted. Otherwise, he resents the criticism and does not accept it. The Filipino criticized concludes that the officer is unmindful of other people's feelings and is difficult to get along with.

## ***The Filipino Sociostat***

Sociostat is a popular conversational technique which regulates social behavior. One way it operates is to cut down to size any individual who publicly takes credit for an act or claims any kind of superiority over his in-group.

Westerners consider traits like assertiveness, pride, aggressiveness, frankness and familiarity as assets to a person. For Filipinos, however, virtues of politeness, humility, modesty and passiveness are more greatly admired in a person. One is expected to be modest in speech and not boastful. Officers must learn how to use the sociostat with Filipinos to maintain smooth interpersonal relationships. This is known as the levelling technique which runs: "If a Filipino exalts you, you should humble yourself; if he humbles himself, he expects you to exalt him."

## ***Filipino Humor***

Laughter spices the life of the Filipino. Without it, life for him becomes a mere routine and brings about sheer boredom. Laughter or giggling is commonly used to relieve tension in embarrassing or emotion-charge situations. Westerners find this mannerism disturbing. It seems inappropriate for a Filipino seaman to laughingly announce that he has an accident, yet it does happen. Such behavior does not mean that accident is being treated lightly, and in fact, it means quite the opposite. Laughing or giggling is acceptable behavior for a Filipino in tension-filled situations. Besides laughing when they are happy, Filipinos also laugh when they feel shy or are embarrassed.

Laughter, to the Filipino, can be kind of psychological therapy in time of difficulties, problems and untoward incidents. Filipinos are said to be one rare breed of people who can laugh even at themselves. Laughing at himself is one of the more important coping mechanisms of the Filipino. Sometimes playful, sometimes cynical, he manages to laugh even at times when the Westerner would consider laughter

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inappropriate.

## ***The Filipino English***

The average Filipino speaks English well, sometimes even sounding like an American. At times, however, Filipinos speak English with distinct regional accents - Tagalog, Ilocano, Pampango, Visayan " depending on what part of the country he comes from.

Within the English languages are numerous accents and there will be a certain amount of time require for familiarization of the way English is pronounced by Senior officers.

Don't be too particular about the pronounces "he" or "she" or diction in general. Some dialect's alphabet does not have an "F", and so Filipinos tend to pronounce it as "P". Filipino seamen sometimes misuse their she's and he's because in Filipirio language there is no such distinction in gender.

Filipino English is slightly different from American English or British English. It is based upon the American dialect, but with strong influences of the indigenous languages. Grammar and pronunciation are noticeably affected. Additionally, some words have restricted, specific meanings. Following are a few commonly-used words and their meanings:

"Blowout" - a treat or celebration

"Brownout - an electrical power failure

"Colgate" - toothpaste

"Comfort Room" - restroom

"Dear" - expensive ,

"Dirty Kitchen" - second kitchen, usually the maid's kitchen

"Frigidaire - refrigerator "Xerox" - copier machine, photocopying

"Kodak" - film

"Polaroid" - instant photography

"IBM" - computers

"San Miguel" - beer

"to pass" - to pick up, to stop for, to go by, to pass by

"to get down" - to get out "to go down" - to get off

"to sleep late" - to stay up late

"dressed for his funeral" - dressed to kill

"to have oiled his officer" - to have buttered his officer up.

"his watch is dead" - his watch has stopped

"open the light" - put on the light

"homely" - to be very much dedicated to one's family.

## ***Friendly Phrases***

Learning and using a few Filipino words while with Filipino seamen is a very powerful way of saying "I like you." Common greetings such as "Kumusta kayo?" (How are you?); "Magandang umaga" (Good morning); "Magandang gabi" (Good Evening); "Mabuhay" (long Live); etc. will help develop a very deep kind of rapport with them. The following are some friendly and survival phrases which is good for officers dealing with Filipinos to learn:

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FIUPINO	ENGUSH	PRONUNCIATION
Magandang umaga po	Good Morning	ma-gahn-DAHNG oo-MA-ga PO
magandang hapon po	Good afternoon	ma-gahn DAHNG-HA
magandang gabi po	Good evening	poan PO ma-gahn-AHNG
kamusta po kayo?	How are you?	ga-BEE PO ka-moo-sta PO ka-YO
ano po ang pangalan ninyo?	What is your name?	AH-NO PO AHNG pa-NGA-
PuedeBaPo fr\ DAIM\ O Paki)	Please	lahnNEEN-yo? Poo-weh-de BAH-po (or PAH-KEY)
salamat po Hindi ko po sinasadya	Thank you Excuse me	saLA-mahtpo Heen-De KO PO See-nah-sahd-ya
paalam	Goodby	pa-AH-lahm
opo, oho,oo	Yes	0-po
hindipo	No	heen-DEE po
Puede ba po kayong magsalita ngmaiahan	Please speak slowly	Poo-weh-de BAH-po KAH- yung maag-sah-tec-ta nahng ma-ra-han
na iintindihan ba poniyo?	Do you understand	na ee-een-teen-dee-HAN baNEEN-yo
hindi ko po na iintindihan	I do not understand	heen-DEE ko po na ee-een teen-dee HAHN
Paid guhit rao ako ng mapa	Please Draw me a map	PAH-KEY GOO-heetmo ah-KO nahng MA-pa
Ginoo	Sir/Mr	ggeen-o-0 (or Mister)
Ginang	Madam/Mrs.	GEEN-ahng (or Mrs)
binibini	Miss	bee-nee-BEE-nee (or Miss)
Kailan ngayon bukas	When Today Tomorrow	KA-M-LAN nga-YOAN BOO-kahss

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direcho	Straight ahead	dee-re<ho'
sakanan	to the right	sa-ka-NAHN
sakalnva	to the left	saka-lee-WA
nasaanang?	Where is?	na-sa-AHN
kasityas	a toilet	ah ng ka-SEEL-yahs
restaurant	a restaurant	ah ng rest-ow-RAHN
Doctor	the doctor	sadoak-TOR
pulis	the policeman	sapoo-lccss
sinehan	a dnema	SEE-nee-HUN
magkano po ang halaga	How much does it cost?	mahg-KAH-no PO ahng ha-lah-GA
ang mahal naman po gusto ko pong	it is to expensive I would like	ahng-MA-HAHL nah-mahn po GOO-stokoPONG
kmnain	eat	koo-MA-een
kwarto	room	KWART-o
angotel	hotel	ah ng o-TEL
magbayad	pay	mahg-BA-yahd
ako ay Amerikano/Ingles	I am an American/Englishman	ah-KO A-ee ah may-ree KA-no/Ing-les
Anong oras na ho?	What time is it?	ah-noang 0-ras nah-ho?
patawadpo	Foregiveme	PAH-TAH-wahd po
pakisuyo	Favor	pa-KEE-soo-yo

### **7 HOW TO MOTIVATE AND BRING OUT THE BEST IN THE FILIPINO**

The Filipino is unique. To motivate him one must understand his A hierarchy of needs which is not exactly in the same order nor fits perfectly the Western framework of hierarchy of needs.

In the Filipino hierarchy of needs, the first need is familism or the need to belong to a family or group. A Filipino normally sees himself first as member of the family and only secondly as member of the outside group whether it's an office or company. The Filipino could not be expected to put the welfare of his company over and above his family. To motivate and bring out the best in the Filipino, it may therefore be to the long-term favor of firms to implement measures that will satisfy their Filipino seamen's concern for their families. Furthermore, the Filipino seamen can be expected to maintain company loyalty so long as the company objectives do not conflict with the implicit objectives of the nuclear family.

The second need of the Filipino in the hierarchy is the need to be reciprocated. This is based on the utang-na-loob value, a behavior wherein every service received, favor, or treatment accomplished has something in return. The Filipino has a high sense of personal dignity. His dignity and honor are everything to him, so that the wounding of them, whether real or imagined, becomes a challenge to his manhood. He respects other people but they must also respect him. Many a conflict between a foreign superior and a Filipino seaman is founded on a disregard on the one hand, and a sacred regard on the other, of individual dignity. The foreigner is apt to underestimate the dignity of the Filipino. He idolizes, perhaps the individual dignity of his foreign superior but he demands the same treatment; if not, he loses his self-control because he feels that he has been wronged or insulted though the cause itself may be trivial or slight.

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According to the findings of Dr. Angelina Ramirez,<sup>1</sup> Filipinos find the following reasons of vital importance in work satisfaction:

- (1) He expects to be treated as an individual with dignity.
- (2) He wants to carry on an open communication and get feedback from those he works with.
- (3) In the context of performance appraisals, he wants to be rated high because the benefits of recognition and promotion go with it.
- (4) He wants to be given credit for any participation which results to the productivity of the organization.
- (5) He works best with co-workers who are socially supportive.
- (6) He wants to be involved in challenging tasks which provide calculated risks but he is resistant to change when new behavior is required from him which he is not ready for.

The third need in the Filipino hierarchy of needs is social acceptance, that is to be taken by his fellows for what he is or what they believe him to be, and be treated in accordance with his status. The Filipino needs to be socially accepted by the people who can help him in time of need. He must develop and cultivate their goodwill so as to get along with them for they are psychological investment for future economic, religious, social, and political gains. Thus, acceptance of a fictive relationship is enjoyed and appreciated. By fictive relationship, we mean that relationships which is neither legal nor by blood. However, though fictitious it may be, it is definitely real in Filipino culture. When a Filipino calls his superior "kuya" (elder brother) or "tatay" (father), although he is not really related to him, he is developing a fictive relationship which may make him feel he is one of the members of the officer's family.

Sometimes, a foreigner may be invited to be a sponsor for a wedding or baptism by a Filipino. Since there are several sponsors, the Filipino may be asking the foreigner because of the special prestige a foreigner brings, a manifestation of the need for social acceptance. For Filipinos such request is not only a religious act but a social one; it is therefore believed that to deny such request would be a very rude act. If the foreigner chooses to participate as a sponsor, the Filipino considers this as a great honor.

The fourth need in the Filipino hierarchy is the social mobility need. Most Filipinos want to make more money to climb the social ladder. If they are given help to achieve this goal, they will do so. Because of this need, evaluation by an authority or superior would be welcomed but not by subordinates or peers. The Filipino sees his mobility as guaranteed if it were determined by his superior.

The fifth need in the Filipino hierarchy is pagkabayani ("being a hero"). This is the highest of the need levels. Here enters the values of "honor," "dignity," and "pride." Here enters the value of hiya which in Pilipino in the broadest sense best defined as "self-esteem." This is one of the most important concepts in the social psychology of the Filipino because in it are found almost all of the aspects of the Filipino value and motivation.

## **8 HOW TO NEGOTIATE AND HANDLE CONFLICTS WITH FILIPINOS**

The Filipino is generally friendly, peace-loving and sociable fellow. He has a compromising character and is not inclined to confrontation.

When a Westerner's personal rights are trampled upon, his first reaction is ordinarily to complain and fight back. The Filipino is surprised to see Westerners quarrel over disagreements on personal rights and afterwards become friends as if nothing happened at all. This is because the Filipino has been culturally brought up to value harmony. If a Filipino's rights are trampled upon, he first uses the friendly way. He often makes his feelings known through the indirect or roundabout approach. Porhim to directly confront someone will have lasting wounds which no among of

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<sup>1</sup> From a speech delivered by Dr. Angelina Ramirez

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friendly reconciliation! can heal. Only after the friendly means (pakikisama) are exhausted does he resort to violence (pakikibaka).

The Filipino desire for harmony does not mean the absence of actual conflict Truly enough, for him violence or a direct confrontation is not the first step. However, if put to shame, the Filipino can turn violent. Any attempt at casting doubt upon or questioning a Filipino's action, integrity and honor even if it is true can elicit vindictive reaction from him. One who publicly denounces a Filipino may only get worse results because he did not follow the cultural norm of first airing grievances privately and politely.

The average Westerner conducts his personal life and his maintenance of law and order on principles of right or wrong; the average Filipino, on sanctions of shame, dishonor, ridicule, or impropriety. The average Westerner is forced to categorize his conduct in universal impersonal terms. The "law is the law" and "right is right," regardless of other considerations. The average Filipino takes the law from the concrete and personal angle. He has a shame culture and this factor greatly affects his behavior. A Filipino feels that saving his honor is more important than the truth. The Westerner's passion for the truth no matter who is hurt is illustrated in exposing the misdeeds of the departed. But this is not the case for the Filipino. Any superior or official's misdeeds are buried with him; his memory is honored for he has gone.

Take the case of the concept of justice. Justice for the Filipino is not something abstract. Being just is something concrete, visible; someone from whom you can elicit sympathy or pity. Justice is the judge, the officer, the superior. The ethics of justice for the Filipino is based on the value of harmony. Justice for Filipinos is not individualistic but communitarian. The Filipino's concept of justice is "inner self-worth," not necessarily equality to all.

Negotiating with Filipinos requires a deep sense of respect for elders and for authority. It should be done with care and diplomacy in order not to hurt the "inner self-worth" of the Filipinos. The relationship of the negotiators should be a human relationship and possibly in a family atmosphere. Both negotiators should work together for the good of one another without any selfish motive of trying to outdo one another.

## ***Steps in Filipino Negotiation***

Intensive preparation for negotiation is essential since this is viewed as following an orderly logical psychological process.

Step One: "Magtapatan ng Loob" or be sure to prepare truthful facts. Both negotiating parties should tell truthfully what they think and feel.

Step Two: "Magkagaangan ng loob" or develop a trusting relationship and atmosphere. Filipinos are persons who go along with persuasion. For example just by setting the negotiation on his or your birthday can be a propitious occasion for negotiation with a Filipino. A birthday is a venerable occasion in the Philippines. A Filipino is supposed to greet even his enemy on his birthday.

Step Three: "Makuha ang loob ng bawa't isa" or harmonize your objectives and intentions with his objectives and intentions. Negotiating with Filipinos must be a win-win situation; an attempt to grant the greatest satisfaction to both parties within their established value range. It assumes an established range of values that are alternatives to both parties.

Fourth Stage: "Magkapanatagan ng loob" or setting the terms of agreement and concentrating on what they are supposed to do. The essence of a good negotiation is making the best possible deal for both negotiating parties without creating long-running problems or injury to both of them. The negotiation must aim for a mutually beneficial deal. Each negotiating party must put himself in the other person's shoes. The emphasis must be on the fact that both parties involved are satisfied.

It is in the atmosphere of peace of mind that both parties can analyze issues and established common terms. The emotional climate must be conciliatory, emphatic and directed toward problem-solving. The attitudes and behavior

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of the negotiators must be trusting, supportive, relaxed, helpful, reasonable and creative. It is in this kind of atmosphere that a Filipino becomes reasonable, condescending and noble.

Fifth Stage: "Puspusang loob na tinutupad ang pinag-usapan" or both parties wholeheartedly fulfill their obligations and live up to the duties and responsibilities of their agreement.

Negotiated accords allow the negotiating parties to be both stable in their own areas and flexible in details.

Negotiating with Filipinos demand a holistic approach. One should be logical and sensitive to emotions at the same time.

## **9 DO'S AND DON'TS WITH FILIPINOS**

Here are some general statements intended to help Masters and officers sailing with Filipino seamen:

1. Do understand the Filipino's body language:

*The Filipino frequently nods in the middle of a conversation, which simply means, "I understand what you are saying," but it does not mean "yes."*

*The eyebrows are raised in recognition, and to answer "yes."*

*Establishing eye contact is a recognition signal. A smile to go with it becomes a friendly "hello" without words.*

*The lips are used to point*

*"Sst-Sst" is used to get attention.*

*Clucking (like giggling) is used to show sympathy.*

*The common signal for OK where the thumb and index finger form a circle means for Filipinos money. The new sign for OK is the thumb-up sign.*

*Using one's forefinger or index finger upward to call a Filipino is considered degrading and only used for animals.*

*A downward gesture of the hand should be used without making the arch too wide since this will appear too dominating.*

*Staring is rude and aggressive. The better part of valor when confronted by a glaring tough looking character is to look briefly and then cast one's gaze away.*

*Arms akimbo is considered arrogant, challenging, angry. It is not a posture that will win and influence Filipinos, unless you are a policeman about to issue a traffic ticket.*

*It is insulting to beckon someone by crooking your finger. Filipinos will point out a direction by shifting their eyes towards the direction indicated.*

*A light touch on the elbow is permissible when calling someone's attention.*

*Two males holding hands or with arms over each other's shoulders are the accepted norm, free of any overtones of homosexuality.*

*Physical contact with opposite sex in public is not on. Ladies greet each other with a kiss on the cheek, but male and female keep respectfully apart. Some women may shake hands with a man, but they have to initiate such gesture.*

*A limp handshake is socially acceptable.*

*A woman and a man will refrain from being demonstrative in public.*

*The average Filipino requires less privacy than the average Westerner. He tends to require less personal space as well. Filipinos stand close to one another when walking and talking, - and do not find body contact in crowds offensive.*

*Filipinos usually don't queue or line up.*

2. Do understand the Filipino's physical and verbal mannerisms:

*Officers, elders and superiors are addressed by "sir" or "ma'am", or by their title or profession.*

*When asking a question, an apology is offered first (I'm sorry to bother you, but...)*

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*When inviting a Filipino, do invite him at least three times. Filipinos are taught that it is proper to refuse the first time or two. To them, insistence is a clear sign that the offer or invitation is a sincere one.*

*Flowers are associated with death. Give food to a sick Filipino, but not flowers.*

*"Pasalubong" is a gift given as a souvenir after a trip. A superior bringing "pasalubong" when returning from a trip shows to his people that he thought of them during his absence.*

*Consistency is a prime requisite for a smooth relationship for Filipinos.*

*The use of a third party or intermediary is a very acceptable norm for asking and for telling. This helps avoid a direct confrontation situation, which may lead to embarrassment.*

3. Do understand what annoy Filipinos:

*Someone who strongly disagrees with his opinion in a discussion. You can disagree with him but not strongly.*

*A person who looks down on him.*

*Ignorance that foreigners show about his native land.*

*Minute attention to small details.*

*A person who treats him like a servant.*

*Criticism from someone who is not his superior.*

*Someone with less experience telling him how to do his job.*

*Inconsideration for his feelings.*

*Race prejudice.*

*Body odor.*

*A foreigner who says "that is the way we do it back home."*

*Being told to hurry up.*

*An air of superiority in a person.*

*A blunt and overly frank person.*

*Rich people who refuse to talk to people of lower social status.*

*Foreigners who write about his native land without knowing too much about it.*

*People who preach democracy but do not practice it.*

*People who demand a yes or no answer.*

*People who take credit for what is accomplished in joint efforts.*

4. Do understand the Filipino concept of property.

*The Filipino concept of property is threefold:*

1) *What is mine is mine. The Filipinos have inherited from the Western world the concept of private ownership such as having land titles and documents for things they own.*

2) *What is yours is mine. The kapitbahay or neighborliness value requires a Filipino to share some of his properties with his neighbor; vice-versa, this value gives him right to some properties of his neighbors. In the name of neighborliness, a neighbor can borrow another's car or go and watch TV in another's house.*

3) *What is public property is mine. The Filipino value of sakop makes public and private properties assume a communal dimension. In the Philippines public property belongs to no one. Rather the user of public property appears to regard it as his own personal property.*

*The Filipino uses public space while driving as he would while walking - taking on rights to it as he moves. He considers that particular spot on which he stands or which he moves, his personal property and, therefore, utilizes it as long as necessary in any way he wants.*

*The Filipino when elected or appointed to office, tend to use his office, vehicle, telephone, for his private and personal use.*

*The sharing of goods in the sakop dimension might actually be "borrowing." The Filipinos, for example, who have a strong sense of sakop property, consider things "borrowed" what Westerners consider "stealing."*

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5. Do call a Filipino by his name. A Filipino subordinate called by his officer by his name feels very elated because he is proud to know that his superior knows him personally.

6. Always offer a Filipino coffee, tea or something when he visits you. This is a sign that he is welcome to your office.

7. It would always be proper to say "Quiet please" or "kindly tone down" rather than saying "Shut up."

8 Do give a Filipino a way out of a situation so he can save his face and not get embarrassed. Such embarrassment causes "hiya" which is painful for a Filipino to accept.

9 Don't lend money except in very exceptional cases. Repayment may be a problem. To avoid misunderstanding as to whether it is really borrowing or not, make a clear distinction between the three concepts of property of the Filipino. In some cases borrowing money may just be a symbolic way of asking for money.

10 Don't expect punctuality or promptness in terms of time if you have not clarified whether it is linear or cyclical time that applies to the situation.