

# MIGRANT HERITAGE CHRONICLE

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## Immigrants call for 'One America'

By Marivir R. Montebon



SONGSPELL from Davan Alibonog captivates the 2008 Fiesta Asia audience in the U.S. capital

The many faces of Asia. Dressed in colorful costumes, Filipino children, Vietnamese ladies, Kazakhstan gentlemen, and a Korean lad joining the Thrilling during Fiesta Asia. (photos by Elizabeth R. Sablera)

CELEBRATING Fiesta Asia, one of Washington DC's largest multi-cultural events, did not just mean enjoyment and having a great time basking in the sun at the onset of spring.

For this year's celebration, more and more immigrants attended the day-long festivity to join the call for a "one America". For leaders and prime movers of the event, it was definitely an expression of the need to unite all races in the US, being widely recognized as a country of migrants.

Bannered the theme "Savor the flavors of Asia," some 21 countries joined the street fair that showcased a vast array of Asian cuisine, arts and crafts, as well as songs and dances last May 17 on the vast grounds of Pennsylvania Avenue NW between 3rd and 6th Streets.

According to Ms. Grace Valera-Jaramillo, MHC executive director, the organizers of the event not only intend to show the richness of Asian cultures to the public every year but also to contribute to the building of "One America" where the racial and cultural identities of migrants are understood and respected.

"After all, we contribute economically and culturally in building this great nation of America," she said.

MHC is one of the organizers of the annual event led by the Asia Heritage Foundation, an Asian cultural, non-profit group initiated by Sutera Malaysia's Wuiping Yap and co-founded it with then Philippine Embassy's Cultural Officer & Attache' Grace Valera-Jaramillo in early 2006.

Continued on page 62 . . .

## Recruit Scam of Teachers Hits US

By Bobby Tuazon

THE battle of Filipino teachers against what U.S. and Philippine news accounts call an illegal recruitment agency is gaining ground after the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) certified that the agency is not licensed to recruit workers in the Philippines.

The recruitment agency, Greenlife Care International, LLC is represented by Isidro L. Rodriguez and his sister Pura Socorro Rodriguez. The Rodriguezes have been recruiting Filipino teachers for employment in U.S. public schools under the name of Greenlife's partner in the Philippines, Worldgoal Corporation. The POEA, through its director for licensing and regulation Melchor B. Dizon, issued the certification in connection with charges of illegal recruitment and estafa filed against Isidro and Socorro Rodriguez.

Sometime in 2007, complainant Nannette M. Mendoza of Sta. Cruz, Zambales filed with the POEA the case against the Rodriguezes. POEA Chief of the Prosecution Division, Anti-Illegal

Recruitment Branch, Atty. Rosemarie Gondranios-Duquez, recommended criminal prosecution against the respondents for violation of Republic Act No. 8042. The case was referred to the Office of the City Prosecutor of Makati for criminal investigation.

The Philippine case describes the same technique used allegedly to victimize at least eight other Filipino teachers in Virginia and North Carolina. In their affidavits, the teachers said that Isidro Rodriguez promised each of them teaching positions in the U.S. and collected various fees from them, totaling about \$10,000 to \$15,000 per person. Documents presented by the teachers show Isidro's signature in the receipts. But no jobs awaited the teachers upon their arrival in the U.S. Each of them had to find ways to seek employment from other schools and process new immigration papers with the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Continued on page 61. . .

### INSIDE

#### MHC's 3rd People's Ball

Commemorating 102 years of Filipino Migration **Page 12**

#### Happy and Healthy at 102

Find out how a 102-year-old Fil-Am lives that blessed long life **Page 14**

#### Women Interrupted!

A historical account of how Filipino women's development were interrupted by cultural influences **Page 52**