

# MESSAGE

On behalf of the School of Social Sciences of the Ateneo de Manila University, warmest congratulations to the Chinese Studies Program (CSP) on its 25th anniversary! The CSP celebrated this significant milestone in Academic Year 2012–2013 by organizing twenty-five lectures by a diverse set of speakers on a wide range of topics. Until then the School of Social Sciences had not seen this kind of celebration on the Loyola Heights campus. It was an intense year of seeking to gain a deeper and better understanding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), of promoting Philippines–China relations, and of appreciating the Chinese heritage of Philippine society.

In a paper published in volume 60, issue number 1, of *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints*, Professor Bao Maohong of Peking University discussed the studies of Philippine history in the PRC. He identified three waves, the point being that the changes in historiography could be attributed to China's internal dynamics and the evolving relationship between China and the Philippines and also between China and the overseas Chinese.

We find an analogous, although not exact, mirror of this observation if we analyze the study of China in the Philippines. After the Second World War, interest in China was crystallized in the 1960s and 1970s as Filipino leftist intellectuals sought inspiration in Mao's Communist Revolution in 1949. When Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in 1972, a number of Filipinos sought refuge in the mainland.

Interest in China and Chinese Studies in the Philippines acquired a new and wider impetus when the PRC began to undertake economic reforms, eventually emerging as an economic power in the 1980s. China's rise spearheaded the overall emergence of East Asia and it heralded the so-called Asian Century. This development caused a massive interest in studying

China and learning Mandarin. In the context of the late 1980s we can appreciate the founding of the Chinese Studies Program here at the Ateneo de Manila University.

For the past twenty-five years the CSP has sought to educate our students and our faculty about China, an important state with which the Philippines cannot but relate, and the indissoluble historical ties that bind the two societies together as personified by Filipinos of Chinese descent. Indeed throughout history, regardless of the regnant political systems, the relations between the peoples of the mainland and the peoples of the archipelago have been an important aspect of the transborder histories of these two societies. Of late, however, the study of China in the Philippines has been driven largely by the maritime and territorial conflicts in the massive body of water that separates the Chinese mainland from the Philippines and other parts of Southeast Asia.

Thus the last twenty-five years of the CSP's existence have seen dramatic changes in the broader context in which the study of China in the Philippines has been pursued. All the more, the lectures collected in the current publication are vital in illuminating the diverse perspectives on this subject. These papers prompt us to ponder: What motivates our studies of China in the Philippines? What interests do we promote when we pursue these studies?

Congratulations and many thanks to the Chinese Studies Program not only for holding the lecture series during its anniversary year but also for preserving those lectures through this publication, which can reach a far wider audience than those that attended the actual lectures.

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*Dean, School of Social Sciences*