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## Books, books, books everywhere!

BY TERESITA TANHUECO-TUMAPON ON MAY 25, 2018

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TERESITA TANHUECO-TUMAPON

### Part 3 – More on cultural institutes

WITH the mounting desire for quality assurance worldwide, universities would ensure that their libraries maintain up to date hard and digital copies of books and journals. Connections would remain to be a vital feature, maximizing what OPAC could source for readers—scholars and non-scholars—the latter patronizing libraries for enjoyment and not necessarily for studies/research. From basic education to postgraduate levels, books are valuable learning resources. The complaint on lack of reading material in all levels of the educational system have

been the subject of media. There are, however, concrete and widespread efforts to fill this need. In this three-part series on Books, we share information on how, to a good extent, reading needs may be satisfied by donor foundations, cultural institutes, foreign and local agencies and other organizations for international aid. Scholarships may include book awards to grantees/their institutions—to deepen and sustain the interest of the grantee/institution in the study area covered by the scholarship. My summer session in Tokyo for a scholarship in Japanese literature in English and classical theater had such awards, which served as initial holdings for a sustained collection of Japanese literature and classical theater in English. To date, this collection has expanded to other forms of Japanese cultural arts: the tea ceremony, ikebana (flower arrangement), bonsai (dwarf trees/garden) and other Japanese soft and hard technology.

More on cultural institutes. Earlier, we introduced cultural institutes as usual means of cultural diplomacy of countries with embassies in our country. These are a type of “public diplomacy and soft power that include the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding.” “. . . develop an understanding of the nation’s ideals and

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institutions in an effort to build broad support for economic and political goals.” In essence “cultural diplomacy reveals the soul of a nation,” which in turn creates influence. Cultural institutes train teachers, students and other interested persons in studying/teaching the language of their respective homelands.

Instituto Cervantes of the Spanish government. The Instituto Cervantes maintains a library collection and holds cultural programs aimed to give its readers a better understanding of the socio-political and economic landscape of modern day Spain. The center is “for those individuals or schools interested in learning/teaching Spanish as part of their academic program”— to “promote the teaching, study and use of Spanish as a second language, and to contribute to the advancement of Spanish and Latin-American cultures throughout the world.” Its library in Manila offers “an extensive collection of documents, literature and audio-visual, focusing on the language and culture of Spain and Spanish-speaking countries.” Its more than 20, 000 documents as part of “its collections and services, provide the Filipino student/researcher/citizen with documents/information/data pertaining to the Hispanic world.” This collection includes “Spanish and Latin American literature, a large number of films and references on the most important works of Spain,” and “music. . .” <[http://manila.cervantes.es/enlibraryspanish/library\\_spanish.htm](http://manila.cervantes.es/enlibraryspanish/library_spanish.htm)>. Spanish was the first foreign language to be taught under the DepEd’s Special Foreign Language Program (SFLP) and counts as having the most enrollees of DepEd’s pilot schools. The Instituto trains teachers in Spanish and how to teach it in said pilot schools and links with universities in Spain for teacher-training.

Confucius Institute of the Chinese government. China has four Confucius Institutes housed in different Philippine universities— Ateneo de Manila University, Bulacan State University, Angeles University and the latest, at the University of the Philippines, Diliman. The latter two were upon the initiative of the director of these Philippines-based institutes, Dr. Lourdes M. Tanhueco-Nepomuceno, of the University of the Philippines, Diliman, who is on her second term as current president of the University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific. The Institutes offer scholarships, conduct language training for teachers of Mandarin locally as well as sending them to China for intensive training, maintains collections of cultural hard and soft resources (books, journals, tapes, films, etc.) about the homeland. Activities include DepEd’s SFLP—teaching Mandarin in pilot public schools. Various cultural exchange and blending activities to advance understanding through exposure to Mandarin and Chinese culture are widespread. They also maintain libraries rich in cultural materials. Visit <[confucius.auf.edu.ph/](http://confucius.auf.edu.ph/)> <[ateneoconfucius.squarespace.com/](http://ateneoconfucius.squarespace.com/)>, <<https://www.bulsu.edu.ph/confucius/home.html>> and <[ci.upd.edu.ph/about-us](http://ci.upd.edu.ph/about-us)>.

Alliance Française de Manille of the French government. The Alliance Francaise de Manille (also one in Cebu) works closely with the French embassy in Manila to promote the French language and culture. “AFM encourages friendly relations between Filipinos and the French through intercultural dialogue, hosting artists and intellectuals (particularly of French and Filipino nationality), as well as educational programs.” “With French language classes, translations, a library resource center, a French restaurant, an art gallery, weekly film screenings and cultural events, AFM offers a taste of France, Europe and the Francophonie right in the heart of Manila.” AFM “participates with the DepEd’s SFLP; trains teachers to teach the French language and links with French universities for cultural exposure and intensive training of Filipino teachers of French.” <<https://ph.ambafrance.org/Alliance-Francaise-de-Manille-1940>>.

The Goethe Institut of the German government. The Goethe Institut Philippinen, like most cultural institutes, offers the teaching of German and examinations for the various levels of German Language Proficiency. It helps promote Germany’s cultural diplomacy. Its library offers a variety of hard and digital copies on various topics of German life and culture, organizes cultural and scientific exhibits, invites artists in the performing and visual arts, trains teachers to teach German, administers awards

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for intensive training here and in Germany, certifies proficiency levels, distributes cultural materials—books, journals, magazines, poster and, oversees the School: Partner for the Future project (Schulen der Zukunft/PASCH) which constitute a worldwide network of 1,700 schools. Visit the web for other cultural institutes.

The British Council of the United Kingdom. The UK's international organization for cultural relations and educational opportunities is The British Council. Besides maintaining resource materials in hard and digital forms of British life and culture, it “offers the International English Language Testing System (IELTS)—the world’s most popular English language proficiency test for higher education and global migration; administers the IELTS tests up to four times a month in the Philippines.” While the Chevening scholarships are applied for at the British Embassy, study visits and cultural material could be available in the British Council. <<https://www.britishcouncil.org/>>



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