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The Juan D. Nepomuceno Center
HOLY ANGEL UNIVERSITY

for Kapampangan Studies
ANGELES CITY, PHILIPPINES

**SPECIAL
DOUBLE ISSUE**

KAPAMPANGAN FOLK THE POWER AND THE GLORY



RIVERS THE LOST HIGHWAYS OF PAMPANGA



folk wisdom

AN EXAMPLE OF EARLY KAPAMPANGAN PROVERB:

*Panayan mu karing anak mu
ing depatan mu kang tata mu.*

(Expect your children to treat you
the way you treated your father.)

COVER: "GOD THE FATHER" CHURCH CEILING PAINTING
SAN LUIS, PAMPANGA
(*Photograph by Prof. Regalado Trota Jose*)



river culture

THE FISHERFOLK OF SOUTHERN PAMPANGA HAVE AN ANCIENT WISDOM AND INDIGENOUS WORDS FOR WINDS, AS WELL AS FOR DIRECTIONS: AMIANAN (NORTH), ABAGATAN (SOUTH), ASLAGAN (EAST) AND ALBUGAN (WEST). IN NORTHERN PAMPANGA, MOUNT ARAYAT IS THE POINT OF REFERENCE: PARALAYA (TOWARDS ARAYAT), PAROBA (AWAY FROM ARAYAT).

(Illustration by Joel P. Mallari)

RECENT VISITORS

JUNE



Gen. Aglipay

Bebet G. Gozun, DENR Secretary; Gen. Edgardo B Aglipay, Chief, PNP; Francesco Cardinal Marchisano, Vatican City; Dr. Ma. Cristina Carlo Stella, Vatican City; Fr. Isidro Abaño, Secretary-General, UST; Joseph McCallus, Columbus State Univ.

JULY-AUGUST



Cardinal Marchisano

Rep. Anna York Bondoc, Fourth District; Board Member Nestor Tolentino; Board Member Aurelio Gonzales; Board Member Johnny Quiambao; Elwood Perez, film director; Amacia Espanta, School of the Infant Jesus; Judge Irin Zenaida S. Buan, RTCC Br. 2

CENTER JOINS VARIOUS NCCA COMMITTEES



Clockwise, from top left: Cruz, Dizon, Prima, Castro

tee on Language and Translation, while Cultural Activities Coordinator, Erlinda Cruz, recently elected chair of the *Kapatagan* (Lowland Cultural Communities) Subcommittee (Zambales, Tarlac, Pampanga Cluster), has joined the NCCA's National Committee for Kapatagan and elected assistant secretary.

Ms. Cruz earlier won in the cluster election participated in by representatives from various cultural and academic institutions like the Minalin Museum, Batiauan

A NUMBER of staffers and consultants of the Center for Kapampangan Studies have been invited to join the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA).

Center Consultant Prof. Lino Dizon was recently elected to the executive council of the NCCA's National Committee on Historical Research, while the Center's Museum Curator, Alex Castro, sits as a member.

Resident translator Anton Prima represents the Center Director in the National Commit-

tee on Language and Translation, while Cultural Activities Coordinator, Erlinda Cruz, recently elected chair of the *Kapatagan* (Lowland Cultural Communities) Subcommittee (Zambales, Tarlac, Pampanga Cluster), has joined the NCCA's National Committee for Kapatagan and elected assistant secretary.

Ms. Cruz earlier won in the cluster election participated in by representatives from various cultural and academic institutions like the Minalin Museum, Batiauan Foundation, Bamban Historical Society, Capas Tourism Office, Ramon Magsaysay Technical University, Tarlac State University and the Arts and Culture Councils of San Fernando and Mabalacat. The other cluster officers are Nancy Tremblay, Vice Head; Roland Quiambao and Michael Pangilinan, Pampanga Coordinators; Bayani Chavez and Dr. Cecile Santiago, Zambales Coordinators; Rhonie de la Cruz and Lino Dizon, Tarlac Coordinators.

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER



Dom Martin Gomez, OSB



Ma. Isabel Ongpin

Jose "Ping" de Jesus, President, Manila North Tollways Corp.(MNTC); Dom Martin Gomez, OSB, Monastery of the Transfiguration; Maria Isabel Ongpin, Museum Foundation of the Philippines; Sr. Nicole Dabalus, SPC, St. Paul University, Tuguegarao; Giovanna Fontanilla, UST; Jaime de los Santos, UST; Nina Cabral, UST; Joyce Arriola, UST; Evangeline Escobar, St. Mary's University, Bayombong; Jocelyn Ong, University of San Agustin, Iloilo; Alvin Sanchez, University of Regina Carmeli; Arch. Clarisse Avendaño, UST Museum; Sandy Chua, UST; Fr. Ramonclaro Mendez, Angelicum Univ.; Jun Romeo Galang, UP Diliman; Antonio A.S. Valdes, Phil. Carouche Society; Jesus Ma. Vitug, LTO Region III; Fr. Lucio Gutierrez, OP, Fr. Angel Aparicio, OP, Fr. Fidel Villaroel, OP, Maria Eloisa de Castro, Divina David Tulio, PNP Regional Director Quirino dela Torre

RADIO STATIONS, MALLS TOLD TO PLAY K MUSIC

THE Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Pampanga recently passed two resolutions intended to further boost the cultural renaissance currently sweeping the Kapampangan Region.

Resolution No. 138 "requests all AM and FM radio stations in the Province of Pampanga to play at least one Original Kapampangan Music (OKM) in the morning, afternoon and evening everyday as a way not only of popularizing these songs but also of creating a sense of cultural awareness and pride among Kapampangans."

The resolution was proposed by the Center for Kapampangan Studies and sponsored by Board Member Nestor Tolentino.

The Sanggunian went one step farther by passing Resolution No. 147 that requests all municipal mayors and San Fernando City Mayor (Angeles is a chartered city), cinema/theatre operators/owners, schools, malls in the Province of Pampanga to do the same. Board Member Tolentino also sponsored the resolution.

The second resolution suggests "reasonable" time and frequency of airing Kapampangan music, as follows: cinemas/theatres, every after showing of the film; schools, before the flag ceremony and included in music lessons; malls, included in the centralized sound system; municipalities, before and after flag ceremony.

The two resolutions were signed by Vice Governor Joseller Guiao and approved by Governor Mark Lapid.



Congratulations for a job well done in preserving and disseminating the rich literary tradition of the Kapampangans. My grandfather and father-- indeed my whole family-- are proud of, and happy with, your effort.



MANUEL V. PANGILINAN
Chairman, PLDT





VATICAN VICAR GENERAL OPENS ARCHAEOLOGY EXHIBIT AT CENTER

THE highest-ranking Church official to ever set foot on Pampanga soil came to the Center for Kapampangan Studies to open an exhibit featuring wood and stone artifacts from different parish churches in the province.

His Eminence, Francesco Cardinal Marchisano, DD, Vicar-General of the Vatican City-State, President of the Fabric of St. Peter and President of the Pontifical Commission on Sacred Archaeology, recently visited the Archdiocese of San Fernando to fulfill a promise he had made when he failed to attend the Third Biennial National Convention of Church Cultural Heritage Workers held last year at Holy Angel University. His elevation to the College of Cardinals had coincided with the convention.

Cardinal Marchisano was accompanied by Dr. Cristina Carlo Stella, secretary of the Pontifical Commission on the Cultural Heritage of the Church, of which the Cardinal is the former president.

The exhibit is the result of the six-month special course on Pampanga church history facilitated by Prof. Regalado Trota Jose at the Holy Angel University, in cooperation with the HAU ABSTRAK Art Group and HAU-KAMARU, a student archaeological organization. HAU President Bernadette Nepomuceno led hundreds of faculty, administrators and students in welcoming the Cardinal. The University choir, brass band, *rondalla*, dance the-



Top, the HAU community comes out in full force to give Cardinal Marchisano a rousing welcome. Above, part of the exhibit on Pampanga church archaeology at the Center.

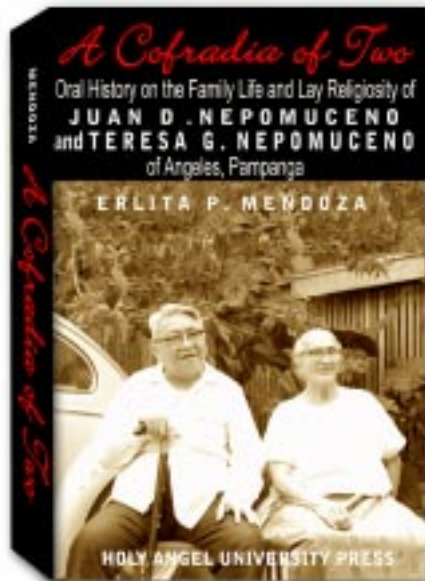
atre group and traditional Kapampangan *polosador* all performed during the arrival ceremonies.

Archbishop Paciano Aniceto earlier accompanied Cardinal Marchisano in a tour of the Archdiocesan Museum, the half-buried San Guillermo Church of Bacolor and the Santiago de Galicia Church of Betis, where the visitors were greeted by townspeople dancing the *kuraldal* in the street.

Dr. Carlo-Stella said the Pampanga welcome was "the best welcome the Cardinal has received anywhere in the world."



Author Erlita Mendoza (left) and Bernadette Nepomuceno, President of Holy Angel University, at the book launching.



THE Center recently launched its latest book, *A Cofradia of Two: Oral History on the Family Life and Lay Religiosity of Juan D. Nepomuceno and Teresa G. Nepomuceno of Angeles, Pampanga*, written by Erlita P. Mendoza with Foreword by Ambeth R. Ocampo, Chairman of the National Historical Institute.

Historian Dr. Luciano P.R. Santiago was the guest reviewer during

the launching ceremonies. Bernadette M. Nepomuceno, President of Holy Angel University, which published the book; Center Director Robby Tantingco; Cynthia Rivera, Director of the UST Center for Intercultural Studies, all gave speeches.

Mendoza, a researcher and faculty member of the University

of Santo Tomas, and Teresita N. Wilkerson, one of the surviving children of the book's subjects, also spoke during the program.

The book cites Juan and Teresa Nepomuceno as "a remarkable couple whose unlikely partnership helped build the first city of the Kapampangan Region." Their story is told verbatim in individual interviews with their eight surviving children, namely, Javier Jesus (Jave), Aureo Jose (Fr. Rely, SJ), Carmelo Patricio (Miling), Teresita Marcela (Teresing), Aurora Hilda (Auring), Flora Gracia (Lula), Josefina Marcela (S. Pining, OSB) and Pedro Pablo (Peter), and by their in-laws, Cristina, widow of Geromin Pedro (Min), and Yolanda, widow of Juan Mamerto (Tok).

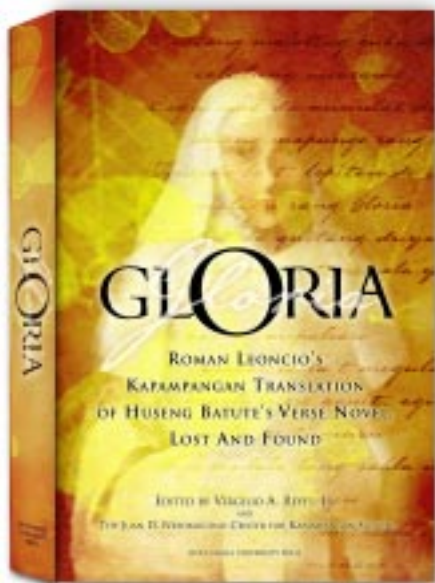
Except for a few who are abroad, the interviewees and their respective families attended the book launching. Other guests included Archbishop Paciano Aniceto, DD, Bro. Andrew Gonzales, FSC, Dr. Albina Peczon Fernandez, Palanca Hall of Famer Ben Medina, Councilor Vicky Vega Cabigting, Dr. Evangelina Lacson, Prof. Regalado Trota Jose, Dr. Juliet Mallari, Abong Tayag, and UST administration officials and faculty members.



Your magazine will go down in Philippine history as an excellent publication.

DR. LUCIANO P.R. SANTIAGO
Author, *The Hidden Light*

CITY COUNCIL CONGRATULATES CENTER FOR **NATIONAL BOOK AWARD**

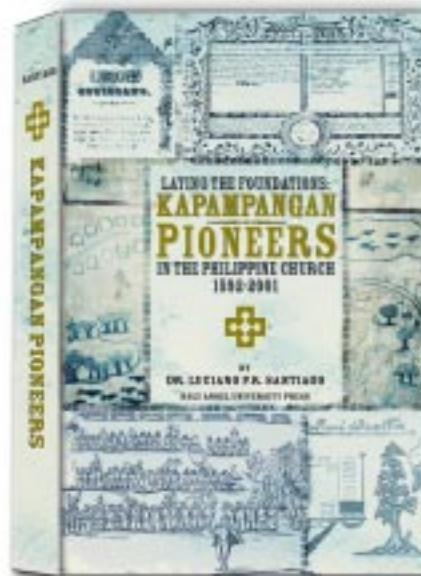


After only two years of publishing books, the Center for Kapampangan Studies has won the country's highest book award given by the Manila Critics Circle.

Gloria: Roman Leoncio's Kapampangan Translation of Huseng Batute's Verse Novel, Lost and Found, co-edited by the Center and Ambassador Virgil Reyes, Jr. and published by the Holy Angel

University Press, won this year's National Book Award (Translation Category).

The book presents and analyzes the translation of a work of a major Tagalog writer, Jose Corazon de Jesus, a.k.a. Huseng Batute, done by an obscure Kapampangan writer, Roman Leoncio, in the late 1920s. Apparently, the translation had been lost until Ambassador Reyes stumbled upon the manuscripts 70 years later under the most serendipitous circumstances.



National Artist Nick Joaquin hailed the book as a significant collaboration between Kapampangans and Tagalogs, whose paths have alternately crossed, merged and even collided in the course of the nation's history.

The book was the Center's third; the second publication, *Kapampangan Pioneers in the Philippine Church*, was also a finalist in the 2003 National Book Awards (History Category).

Meanwhile, the Angeles City Sangguniang Panlungsod unanimously approved Resolution No. 4261, S-2004 congratulating the Center for Kapampangan Studies "for winning the country's most prestigious award for publications." The resolution was sponsored by Councilors Vega-Cabigting, Aguas, Sangil, Rivera, Lacson and De La Cruz and seconded by Councilors Maniago, Ganson, Yabut, del Rosario and Mallari; it was signed by City Vice Mayor Dr. Ricardo Zalamea.

RESEARCH JOURNAL NO. 2 OUT



The Center has announced the release of the second issue of *Alaya: Kapampangan Research Journal*, with the theme *Filipinos and Kapampangans During Nascent Colonial Contacts and Evangelization (1571-1715)*.

Edited by Prof. Lino L. Dizon, the issue is refereed by an international panel composed of John Larkin (State University of New York at Buffalo), Buichiro Watanabe (Nihon University at Mishima), Joseph P.

McCallus (Columbus State University), Emmanuel F. Calairo (De La Salle University at Dasmariñas), Lydia Yu Jose (Ateneo de Manila University) and Eusebio Dizon (UP Diliman).

Articles include: *Pampanga, 1571, Compared with Sumatra and Java, 1511* by Edilberto V. Santos; *Doubting a Hero's Name* by Jose Victor Z. Torres; *Metallurgy in Early Kapampangan Society* by

Joel P. Mallari; *Philippine Religious Missions to Japan and Philippine-Japan Relations in the 17th Century (1582-1715)* by Lino Dizon; *Felipe Sonson: 17th Century Filipino Jesuit Missionary to Marianas* by Fr. John N. Schumacher, SJ;

The Philippine Revolution in Pampanga: A Letter of Rufino Santos, OSA (1899) by Fr. Policarpo Hernandez, OSA; *Balagtas Property Site, San Jose, Guagua, Pampanga: Preliminary Archaeological Report* by Lee Anthony M. Neri.

The issue also contains reviews and commentaries, e.g., *A Thomasite in Pampanga: The Experience of Will M. Carruth* by John Larkin; *Ghosts of the Past: A Review of Lino L. Dizon's Mr. White: A Thomasite History of Tarlac Province, 1901-1913* by Jose Victor Z. Torres; *By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them: A Review of Erlita Mendoza's A Cofradia of Two* by Luciano Santiago.



I cannot congratulate you enough for this historic issue. The previous issues were very good, but this one is world class.



JAVIER J. NEPOMUCENO
Former VP & Comptroller
Ayala Corporation

ON-GOING CENTER PROJECTS



ANTHOLOGY OF FOLK SONGS

Kapampangans who think *Atin Ku Pung Singsing* is the only Kapampangan folk song are in for a surprise when they see the musical anthology that the Center is putting together. Staffers have been combing the villages in the Pampanga countryside to discover, record and annotate little-known folk songs like *arana* (serenades), *kantang ukbu* (Huk protest songs), *tumaila* (lullabies), *pantatanam* (planting songs), *gosu*, *basultu*, *polosa* and others. "One 80-year-old farmer in Porac sang for us 50 songs in one drinking session," Center Director Robby Tantingco said. "He could remember every word even if the last time he sang them was 20 years ago. The bad news is, he wasn't able to pass them on to his children and grandchildren. So when he dies, the songs die with him." The Center is also preparing with Arti Sta. Rita a province-wide MTV competition featuring Kapampangan songs.



ORAL HISTORIES

Oral witnessing sessions continue with Angeles town historian Daniel Dizon reliving World War II as it happened in his community. The Center is also lining up interviews with Kapampangans who have stories to tell about their experiences with Mount Pinatubo's eruption last June 15, 1991 and the subsequent lahar flows in their respective towns. "The Jews who survived the Holocaust have their testimonies on tape," Tantingco said. "Kapampangans experienced a similar life-altering event and their stories should never be forgotten."



TRANSLATIONS

Resident translator Anton Prima has finished translating into English the town histories contained in the *Luther Parker Collections on Pampanga*. These texts contain little-known information on local history which is in Spanish and mostly handwritten. Meanwhile, Fr. Edilberto Santos, a Kapampangan historian, is also translating for the Center some of the earliest grammar books written by the Augustinian friars, namely, *Arte y Reglas de la Lengua Pampanga* (1621) by Fray Francisco

Coronel; *Arte y Diccionario Pampango* (1700) by Fray Alvaro de Benavente; and *Arte de la Lengua Pampanga* (1729) by Fray Diego Bergaño.

ZARZUELA REVIVAL

The Center is in pre-production stage of the Kapampangan zarzuela *Ing Managpe* by Mariano Preceso Pabalan Byron of Bacolor, the first zarzuela in any Philippine language. Musician Stan Palma, the play's musical director, has reconstructed the original melodies contained in the zarzuela's libretto. Meanwhile, the Center is again co-producing Arti Sta. Rita's second CD of Kapampangan songs. The Center was the co-producer of two previous CDs, *Kapampangan Ku* (Arti Sta. Rita) and *Abe Mu Ku* (Mon David).

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

In an effort to popularize Kapampangan language and lit-

// Congratulations for continuing to be the most active and productive regional cultural center in the country.



FR. JOHN SCHUMACHER, S.J.
Church Historian
Ateneo de Manila University



erature among children, the Center did its own version of Jose Rizal's illustrated fable of the monkey and the tortoise, entitled *I Paû ampo i Matsin*. Resident archaeologist/artist Joel Mallari did the watercolor enhancement of the sketches, while Ana Marie Vergara did the layout. Consultant Lino Dizon translated the original English text into Kapampangan; Erlinda Cruz edited it. Storytelling sessions using PowerPoint presentation of this fable are part of museum tours at the Center, especially for schoolchildren. The Center is also publishing illustrated comics on the life of "the warrior from Macabebe" (a.k.a. Tarik Soliman) and of Phelipe Sonsong, a Macabebe soldier who became a missionary and a probable candidate for beatification.

ASSISTANCE TO TOWNS

The Center provides miscellaneous forms of assistance to towns in Pampanga, such as certifying documents in the boundary row between Minalin and a neighboring town, testifying on the controversy of the "missing" church bells of Magalang, helping put up the parish museum of Sto. Tomas, providing a name for the new festival in Angeles City, the Sadsaran Festival, and, with the NCCA, conducting training for the new members of the San Fernando arts and culture council and the Pampanga provincial arts and culture council.



John Villacorta

DONATION PROGRAM

The family of Angeles poet Jose F. Sanchez has donated a boxful of Sanchez' pre-war manuscripts, including unpublished works such as theatre plays, screenplays, poems, short stories and letters. The family of Guagua's Pedro Danganan, a.k.a. Apung Iru, the celebrated Kapampangan faith healer in the 1920s, also donated an actual Apung Iru costume, a black shirt and a pair of black trousers, which he had used in healing and photo sessions (for *estampitas*). Fray Francis Musni of the Convento de San Agustin likewise donated an extant copy of *Ing Emangabiran*, dated November 20, 1915, which is one of the earliest Kapampangan-language newspapers.



DICTIONARY PROJECT

Fr. Venancio Samson has finished translating the first half of *Vocabulario en la Lengua Pampanga en Romance* (1732) by Fray Diego Bergaño and is expected to wrap up his work by New Year's Day. The translation of what is regarded as the earliest Kapampangan dictionary is a collaboration between the Center for Kapampangan Studies and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA). It is the first phase of a larger project to compile a comprehensive *Kapampangan-English Dictionary*. "The benefits of making the Bergaño dictionary accessible to Kapampangan researchers and students are immense," Tangingco said. "It is a treasure trove of original

// I think about the Center a lot and I enjoy your newsletter. //

JOHN LARKIN
Author, *The Pampangans*



Kapampangan words no longer in existence today; it provides clues on the culture and lifestyle of Kapampangans as the Spaniards found them in their pre-colonial state." Another book in development is Lillian Borromeo's authentic Kapampangan recipes.



INDUNG K ON CABLE TV

The Center and Infomax, the region's top cable TV network, have started co-producing a weekly 12-minute cultural documentary show entitled *Indung K*, hosted by Kaye Mayrina Lingad, PRO of the Center. The first episode aired recently featured Kapampangan *joie de vivre* as seen in their folk festivals. Infomax Manager Maureen Aquino revealed that the episodes will be shown on the syndicated Living Asia series. The Center is also co-producing with KAISA-KA a documentary on the Malaya Lolos as well as videoke and MTV materials featuring Kapampangan songs.



HARVESTING SONGS. Over pancit and bottles of brandy, researchers of the Center interview Florentino David and other old farmers in Jalung, Porac and record vanishing Kapampangan folk songs as part of its program to document, annotate and popularize again little-known Kapampangan songs. The Center also interviewed Diosdado Pascual and Mercy Cruz, basulto singers from Sta. Rita.

NCCA, CENTER HOLD MUSEOLOGY WORKSHOP FOR CULTURAL COUNCILS

A day-long workshop on setting up and managing town museums was held at HAU last October 28 for various municipal arts and culture council officers from Pampanga and Tarlac. It was initiated by the JDN Center for Kapampangan Studies in partnership with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA).

Enrico Manlapaz from the NCCA's Speakers and Resource Persons Bureau facilitated the workshop. The Center's resident archaeologist Joel Mallari served as re-

source person.

Among the towns that sent representatives to the workshop were: Guagua, Floridablanca, Bamban, Candaba, Capas, Angeles City, Mabalacat, City of San Fernando, Sto. Tomas, Masantol, Mexico, Tarlac City, Lubao, Macabebe, Minalin.

The Pampanga provincial capitol and Camp Olivas also sent delegates.

The activity is part of the Center's objective to help towns and parishes set up their local museums and libraries.



AWARD FROM PAMPANGA PRESS CLUB

The Pampanga Press Club recently named Center Director Robby Tantingco as Outstanding Kapampangan (Culture and the Arts Category) "for his outstanding accomplishments towards preserving and promoting Kapampangan cultural heritage."

The 54-year-old press club, said to be older than the Philippine Press Club, handed the awards during its anniversary

celebration.

Other awardees were: Rep. Ana York Bondoc (Medicine), Sen. Francis Pangilinan (Government Service- National), Mayor Buddy Dungca (Government Service-Local), Gov. Mark Lapid (Youth), Tess Laus (Business), Bishop Florentino Lavarias (Religion), Maureen Aquino (Mass Media), Supt. Nicanor Tanga (Law).

It's brilliant! The hard work of research and writing that you put into it, and the love and devotion to our culture and history, are evident and admirable. I am touched and impressed that our kabalens' spunk and nobility of vision, talents, courage and self-sacrifice have contributed immeasurably to our nation's progress and well-being.

MARIEL N. FRANCISCO
Book Author and Founder, Center for Health & Creative Arts

RECLAIMING THE KAPAMPANGAN REGIONAL IDENTITY

Region III should be reconfigured to create a separate Kapampangan Region

By Edwin N. Camaya

WHEN Pampanga was established as a province in 1571 (the first in the entire country), it was about ten times its present size, and according to the 1903 Census of the Philippine Islands, "embraced all the central plain north from Bulacan to the missions of Cagayan and its mountains." Over the years, the Spaniards carved out other provinces from it, in a process usually accompanied by the retreat of the Kapampangan language before an expanding Tagalog. Whereas there is evidence that most of Bulacan and Nueva Ecija, Eastern Bataan and Tondo were Kapampangan at the beginning of the Spanish conquest, the Kapampangan area is now confined to Pampanga, Southern Tarlac and rapidly retreating remnants in Bataan and Nueva Ecija, with the language shift going on at an even faster rate. Today, Kapampangans form a minority in Tagalog-dominated "Gitnang Luzon," and unless something is done, will be reduced to insignificance or disappear as a distinct people in a few decades.

It has not always been so. Kapampangans have often been described as "clannish," a negative term used in Manila to describe those who do not conform to the language, cul-

The Kapampangan-speaking region, extending beyond Pampanga Province to include lower Tarlac and upper Bataan. The green-shaded areas are solid Kapampangan speakers; the peripheral areas have scattered Kapampangan speakers, remnants of what used to be a larger Pampanga Province during colonial times. Map shows the main ethno-linguistic groups in central Luzon today. (Courtesy of Dr. Jean-Christophe Gaillard).

ture and identity of the capital. Their reputation in the metropolis as being *mayabang* included pride in their native culture and language, which they spoke with each other on every occasion, even outside their home region. This stubborn sense of identity and consciousness of their heritage allowed them to survive as a distinct people even as they were surrounded by their large, rapidly expanding neighbors, the Tagalogs and the Ilocanos.



This continued into the beginning of the 20th century. Portraying Kapampangans at the height of American colonial rule in his *The Pampangans*, John Larkin notes that they spoke their own language, possessed a thriving regional literature and a distinctive cuisine, and had distinguishing characteristics such as differences in attire (he mentions, for instance, that the traditional farmer's headgear is different in shape and material from those of neighboring peoples in Central Luzon). In addition, the book *Philippine Ancestral Houses* by Fernando Zialcita and Martin Tinio, Jr. observes that the Kapampangan version of what is known in Tagalog as the *bahay na bato* was different in style and layout from its counterparts in other regions of the Philippines. Indeed, Larkin notes that large-scale interaction with non-Kapampangans did not take place outside of the elite until the agrarian unrest of the 1920s and 30s, when the foundations of what would later become the Hukbalahap were formed. Not surprisingly, as late as 1960, it was noted in the census that a majority of the people in four Pampanga towns could still not speak Tagalog; in addition, there were only five municipalities where the proportion of those who could speak Tagalog was over 60%.

Nevertheless, their nearness to Manila, relative to other major Philippine groups, has meant that Kapampangans were drawn into the politics of the central government earlier and more intimately than the others. Despite sporadic revolts, they were enlisted into the Spanish colonial army and helped maintain order throughout the archipelago during most of the colonial era. In the late 19th century, amidst increasing discontent, Kapampangans were among the first members of the Katipunan, and were the only non-Tagalogs of the first eight provinces declared in a state of revolt in 1896. Despite their relatively small number, they have been represented in practically every cabinet since the time of Aguinaldo, headed all three branches of the Philippine government, executive, legislative, and judicial, and are well represented in most fields of endeavor.

This success comes at a very steep price. Kapampangans have paid for it by a steady erosion of their sense of identity. Once proud of their distinct culture, many Kapampangans today are ashamed of or even deny their Kapampangan-ness. A Filipinas Foundation survey published in 1975 underlines the extremely poor Kapampangan self-image. Alone among nine groups surveyed (the others being the Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Ilonggo, Bicolano, Waray/Samar-Leyte, Pangasinense and Muslim), the Kapampangans rejected their own group, considering the Tagalogs the most likeable. In addition, some of the Kapampangans (2%) considered their group the least likeable. The percentage of the others was either zero or less than that of the Kapampangans. In a ranking of the major ethnic groups, Tagalogs had a higher average ranking (1.8) than Kapampangans (2.7) in a survey conducted among Kapampangans. Needless to say, the rest of the groups ranked their own far ahead of the others.

Kapampangan literature, which, during the 1930s was described as the most extensive in proportion to population by the Encyclopedia of the Philippines, is today variously described as moribund or dying. As early as 1981, Edna Zapanta Manlapaz, author of *Kapampangan Literature*, expressed the fear that the older generation of poets may not be replaced. The Kapampangan language itself is by many accounts in danger of extinction: the late Renato "Katoks" Tayag predicted in 1985 that with the steady decline of the language, the Kapampangans would disappear as a separate people within a century. This may be a generous estimate. As increasing numbers of Kapampangan parents no longer bring up their children to speak the language, Kapampangan could reach a crisis point much earlier.

This has taken place despite two developments in the recent past which brought Pampanga to the limelight. The first, a cultural revival sponsored by the provincial government in the early 1980s, was cut short by a change of administration before it could show results, and in any case did not extend to the mass media and the educational system. The second, rapid economic development during the late 1980s (at one point, Pampanga became the leading province in economic growth) was, unfortunately, not accompanied by serious moves to encourage the local language and culture. In any case, this was slowed down by several nationwide developments, and finally ended by the Pinatubo catastrophe in 1991.

Ironically, it was the Pinatubo tragedy, perhaps the worst disaster Kapampangans have gone through in recorded history (that is, the past few hundred years), which destroyed so much of the world they knew, also brought a sort of rebirth. Faced with the prospect of annihilation as a people, our kabalens gathered what remained, and reaffirmed a culture that had been neglected for so long. While some of this was under the auspices of the government or established institutions like the Church, it also involved private groups or individuals. From the popularity of Kapampangan-language handmade greeting cards among the youth to the rise of updated, Kapampangan-themed festivals (such as the Tigtigan Terakan King Dalan and Fiestang Kuliati in Angeles and the Sinukuan Festival in San Fernando) and the adoption of business names in the regional tongue ("*Bingut*," "*Mekeni*," "*Miyabe*," "*Pialungan*," etc.), the message was that the native culture was once again "in."

One of the results of the Kapampangan revival was an increasing acceptance of the concept of the Kapampangan Region. Formerly, people referred only to Pampanga, despite the fact that there are also large numbers of Kapampangans in nearby provinces like Tarlac (where they comprise nearly half of the population), Bataan and Nueva Ecija (in his article "*Salute to the Simple Life*" in the 1960s, the late Nick Joaquin noted that "much of the province is now outside its borders"). The fact that most Kapampangan areas, and not just Pampanga, were affected by the ravages of Pinatubo, intensified this sense of solidarity, which was nourished by the cultural revival going on, and given impetus by the location of the Clark Special Economic Zone astride the Pampanga-Tarlac border. Today, the term is gain-

IRONICALLY, IT WAS PINATUBO THAT BROUGHT A REBIRTH; FACED WITH THE PROSPECT OF ANNIHILATION AS A PEOPLE, WE REAFFIRMED A CULTURE LONG NEGLECTED.

ONE OFFSHOOT OF THIS REVIVAL IS AN INCREASING ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF A KAPAMPANGAN REGION BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF THE PROVINCE.

THE TIME IS RIPE TO PUSH FOR A SEPARATE POLITICAL UNIT TO REFLECT THE SEPARATE LINGUISTIC, CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL COMMUNITY OF KAPAMPANGANS, TO REPLACE THE PRESENT INACCURATE GROUPING OF PROVINCES KNOWN AS REGION III.

ing general currency, being used explicitly by institutions and groups ranging from the Center for Kapampangan Studies at Holy Angel University to the regional glossy K Magazine, as well as various Kapampangan-medium Internet sites ("Aptas"). Still, this growing consciousness of a Kapampangan region has so far not translated into a move for a separate political unit. Until now, that is, for the results of the recent elections have proven conclusively that the Kapampangan region is a political reality, the way it is a geographical, historical and cultural one.



In the 1700s, the territory of Pampanga extended all the way to Nueva Vizcaya in the north and Baler in the east, covering all of Tarlac and Nueva Ecija and portions of Bulacan and Bataan

Many metropolitan commentators have commented (unfavorably) on how the President lost in her "own region," Central Luzon, with the implication that it does not reflect well on her. This ignores the fact that Region III, as presently constituted, is an artificial region that does not have a common denominator, whether cultural, geographic or historical. While the "region" is more than half Tagalog, three of the seven provinces have non-Tagalog majorities (Pampanga, Tarlac and Zambales), while a fourth, Aurora, is divided between Tagalog and Ilocano (not to mention the fact that the regional center is San Fernando, a Kapampangan city). Two others, Bataan and Nueva Ecija, are mostly Tagalog, but have large numbers of Kapampangans in the case of the first and Ilocanos and Kapampangans in the case of the second (the towns of Northern Nueva Ecija are mainly Ilocano, while Cabiao has a large Kapampangan minority). This leaves Bulacan as the only "pure Tagalog" province. This is not exactly true: there are reports that a few border villages of San Miguel remain Kapampangan to this day. In fact, the evidence indicates that most of Bulacan was Kapampangan when the Spaniards arrived, with the Tagalog-speaking area limited to the Meycauayan River Valley. Kapampangan-language place names are evident in many towns. For instance, *Mayumo* in San Miguel de Mayumo comes from the Kapampangan word for "sweet." On the other hand, one of the oldest villages in San Ildefonso is Pinaod, from the Kapampangan word for *nipa* thatch, *pinaud* (the Tagalog equivalent is *pawid*). Likewise, the old name of Plaridel is Quingua, from the Kapampangan *qñg uaua* ("at the mouth of the river"). The name of Bulacan itself is supposed to have come from *burac*, supposedly a description of its fertile soil.

Region III does not even correspond to the Central Plain: three provinces, Zambales and Bataan in the west and Aurora in the east, are narrow coastal areas dominated by mountain ranges, and do not belong geographically to the Central Plain of Luzon. On the other hand, Pangasinan, which is part of the Central Plain, is grouped along with Region I, the Ilocos Region.

The implication is that the President *does* have a regional political bailiwick, although this does not correspond to Central Luzon, but rather to the Kapampangan-speaking area, the area referred to as the Kapampangan Region. In Pampanga, she swept her opponents with 90% of the vote, her 642,712 burying Fernando Poe Jr.'s 84,720. Proof that this is not just a provincial Pampanga vote but a regional, pan-Kapampangan one is the fact that the landslide extended to the Kapampangan-majority areas of neighboring Tarlac:

Bamban, Capas, Concepcion and Tarlac City. So strong was her showing there that she was able to carry the entire province, 210,171 against 166,249, despite the fact that she lost in all 14 non-Kapampangan towns. That in itself is proof of the existence of a Kapampangan vote and a Kapampangan region, for the pro-GMA vote followed not the political boundary of Pampanga, but the linguistic boundary of Kapampangan.

This is not the first time Kapampangans have voted as one. The Kapampangan Region voted for Macapagal in 1965, Osmeña in 1969, Aquino in 1986, Ramos in 1992 and De Venecia in 1998. This was in defiance of the national (and Central Luzon) landslide for Marcos in 1965 and 1969, and for Estrada in 1998. As if to drive home the point of a common Kapampangan vote, Southern Tarlac has voted almost invariably like Pampanga, and unlike Northern Tarlac, in practically every election, including the just-concluded one.

The inescapable conclusion is that the Kapampangan Region is a legitimate region linguistically, culturally, and historically, and now politically as well. The last factor should finally convince Kapampangans, as well as the authorities, to promptly work to constitute the Kapampangan-speaking areas into a separate political region, in preparation for a shift to the federal system, in which they should have a federal state of their own. Aside from the above factors, it certainly has the economic clout to stand on its own. Of the eight major language groups, only Kapampangans and Pangasinenses do not have regions of their own, something that is long overdue for both. The Kapampangan Region is larger in area and population than at least 21 independent countries, including Barbados, Grenada, Liechtenstein, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius and Seychelles, and in population than at least 24 including Brunei, Cyprus, Estonia, Fiji, Gabon, Guyana and Swaziland. This may be the last chance to save the Kapampangan language and identity.

For the President, it will be an opportunity to leave a legacy, the survival of Kapampangan and other regional languages. It will be a most appropriate legacy by a leader with a command of so many tongues, and one for which future generations will be eternally grateful.

8 UNIQUE KAPAMPANAN



RIGHTFUL PLACE. Aguman Sanduk participants in the shadow of the centuries-old Minalin Church (All color photos by Robby Tantingco)

GAN FOLK FESTIVALS

The malling of Pampanga and the SMization of its folk festivals —i.e., financing traditions on the condition of holding them in shopping centers —is it boom or bane to local culture?

By Robby Tangingco

Kapampangans are still debating whether malls are good or bad for the local economy. The debate may as well apply to what they do to local culture. The Giant Lantern Festival of the City of San Fernando, the *lubenas* of Angeles City, the Malaya Lolas' book launch, the Pampanga Arts Guild exhibits—these are just some of the cultural events that may not have happened at all had SM, Robinson's and Nepo Malls not sponsored them. By picking the tab, the malls saved these traditions from extinction and ensured that Kapampangans will continue seeing them for years to come.

However, there's just this little thing that the malls are asking in return: can these sponsored events please be held in the mall grounds? These modern-day parks ensure a big audience and take care of collateral worries like marketing and technical production.

Problem is, the people who go to malls go there to shop, not to watch a cultural show. Thus, they merely stop and stare at a *basulto* singing contest in one of the mall's halls, for example, and then leave. The heavy traffic of shoppers gives organizers the illusion of patronage.

Secondly, a folk tradition that is uprooted from its natural habitat and staged in an artificial environment may not be a good thing. *Bandurias* and acoustic guitars are electronically enhanced or they'd be drowned out by disco music blasting from the centralized speaker system and by the din of the noisy crowd reverberating across the cavernous mall. Because shoppers have not been as psychologically preconditioned for a cultural show as ticketed patrons are, folk festivals held in malls leave no lasting impression on their viewers, and therefore fail in their objective to create cultural awareness. They may continue surviving for many years but that's all they will do, survive. Failing to take root, they will eventually wither and die.

Malls should push their good intentions one step farther by dropping the condition in the contract and by agreeing to sponsor the festival right in the community where it originated. The community, for its part, should ask only for partial, not total, sponsorship from big business and rely on its own resources. One good example is Sapangbato's *sabat santacruzán* that the Center for Kapampangan Studies asked Nepo Mall to co-sponsor last May. This unique version of the May festival, featuring costumed performers reciting Kapampangan verses in the street as they interrupt the *santacruzán*, had been sustained by the David Family every year until they could no longer do so starting five years ago. The Center, furthermore, will assist the organizers in converting the tradition into a community



project in which other Sapangbato families and successful residents donate money, time and resources to revive it and stage it not in the city proper or in the mall but in the streets of Sapangbato where it began God knows how many decades, even centuries, ago.

The Kapampangan Region—Pampanga, Southern Tarlac and a few towns in Nueva Ecija, Bulacan and Bataan—is on the threshold of becoming a part of the expanding orbit of the Tagalog Metro-Manila. Its unique traditions, from the *limbun* of the northern towns to the *libad* of the southern towns, are in real danger of being forgotten by a population that has allowed its tastes, lifestyles and priorities to be defined by the giant malls.

Last year, when Robinson's built the world's largest lantern in response to SM's Giant Lantern Festival, Kapampangans finally realized that malls support culture only to the extent that culture supports the malls, i.e., far

from being altruistic, malls are in reality after benefits such as the fiesta-like atmosphere that cultural activities create, and the good image they help the malls to project. Cultural workers and artists may be lured to take advantage of the availability of funds but with the Robinson lantern standing forlornly in the middle of the empty parking lot like a homecoming queen that missed her own parade, they are beginning to wonder if accepting the malls' offer is worth commercializing, adulterating or uprooting culture.

Malls can only provide the life-support that will prolong the slow death of local culture; they can never restore it back to health.

Here's a catalogue of those charming, peculiar but vanishing folk festivals:

STARRY NIGHT. Procession of lanterns in Mabalacat



1. LUBENAS

It's another folk tradition forced to turn to commerce and tourism after being disowned by a religion that has outgrown its usefulness

WHERE IT STILL SURVIVES: Mabalacat, Magalang, Angeles, San Fernando, Mexico, Concepcion, Capas

WHEN IT OCCURS: Nine evenings before Christmas (December 16-24), the same period for *simbang bengi* (dawn Masses); *lubenas* is the corruption of *novena*, meaning "nine"

WHAT IT IS: It is a procession on land (*limbun*, to differentiate it from *libad* which is a procession on water) where two rows of lanterns mounted on bamboo poles accompany the *andas* (shoulder-borne carriage) or *carroza* (wheeled carriage) bearing the patron saint's image. The lanterns, five to seven of them on each row, are carried by boys or men, sometimes women; except in Mexico where only one row of lanterns precede the *santo*. (The number of lanterns depends on what the barangay can afford.)

At the head of the procession is a lantern in the shape of a cross, and behind it is another lantern in the shape of a fish, with movable fins, mouth and tail. Right behind the *santo* is a solitary lantern that is larger than the rest.

All the lanterns in a *lubenas* are made of paper and bamboo frames and are illuminated from within, either by candlelight or electric light. (Today, it is only Brgys. Cutcut and San Jose in Angeles City that still include the fish lantern; only one man, 70-year-old Eulogio Catahan or Apung Eloy of Cutcut still makes fish lanterns, and only one household, in Brgy. San Nicolas, still makes the peculiar white lanterns of Angeles, quite different from the multi-colored lanterns of San Fernando.)

Angeles lanterns have tails while Mabalacat lanterns generally are tailless.



The peculiar fish lantern and white lanterns of Angeles.



1933 painting of lubenas by Vicente Alvarez Dizon

Marching behind the carroza is the local choir singing “*Dios te Salve*,” usually accompanied by a brass band or a lone guitarist. According to historian Mariano Henson, the two most popular versions of “*Dios te Salve*” were arranged by Prof. Higinio Herrera and Prof. Antonio G. Dizon.

In Mexico town, the singers pause at intervals to pray the rosary. This practice is probably a vestige from the Spanish times when Kapampangans had a peculiar way of doing a procession: they stopped at certain points to watch the reenactment of the life of whoever saint was being honored in the procession.

From December 16 to December 24, the town’s barangays hold simultaneous lantern processions in their respective areas; on Christmas Eve, right before the Midnight Mass, lantern processions from these barangays converge in the church patio, creating a wonderland of hundreds of lanterns of various shapes and colors. This event is called *maitinis* (probably from the word *matins*).

HOW IT BEGAN: Henson said the tradition started (or was already existing) when the town of Angeles first celebrated the *La Naval* fiesta in October, 1830. But the practice of lighting paper lanterns for religious festivals, which is common among Far East countries, probably originated in Bacolor, site of the first *La Naval* celebrations (held in November) in Pampanga. Because of the proximity of the *La Naval* to Christmas, the same lanterns used to line the *dalan paglimbunan* (designated proces-

sion route, usually the main streets surrounding the church) were most likely retained for the Christmas season.

WHAT IT MEANS: The lubenas shows the Kapampangan tendency to do everything in excess: one suffering of having to wake up in the wee hours to attend the nine consecutive *simbang bengi* (dawn Masses) is obviously still not enough penitence for Kapampangans to prepare their souls for Christmas, they also must add another suffering, i.e., staying up late the night before to attend a procession that requires them to walk great distances. But Kapampangans camouflage their suffering beautifully with yet another manifestation of excess: instead of just using candles to light their procession, they have to hoist multi-colored lanterns which are illuminated from within.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS:

In general, fewer people join processions because the Church since Vatican II has underemphasized the importance of such para-liturgical practices, and also because heavy traffic has made processions inconvenient and even risky. In Angeles, only about five barangays still hold the lubenas; in Mabalacat, only 14 out of 27 barangays; the same number do it in Mexico. In Angeles, the *maitinis* has been transferred from the church patio to the Museo ning Angeles grounds and starting last year to the parking lot of Nepo Mall. Organizers have transformed the tradition into an inter-barangay competition, with cash prizes to boot, as an incentive to revive interest in it. This is another example of a folk tradition that has served the Church so long and so well during its struggling years, but now that it’s become anachronistic, is gradually being eased out and therefore is left with no choice but to turn to that other great structure in the community, the Mall. Parish pastoral councils should reclaim this gem of a tradition and use it for the reason it was originally intended: to bring people back to church like moths being lured to the light. Holding it in secular settings diffuses its religious significance, and artificially propping it up by turning it into a contest cheapens its spirit. (R. Tantingco)

HAIL MARY IN SPANISH. One of seven versions of *Dios Te Salve* composed by Kapampangans for the lubenas. (Annotation by Edwin Lumanog).

2. LIGLIGAN PARUL

Clash of the titans: lanterns as big as houses
flash their amazing technicolor lights like giant electronic peacocks—
but these behemoths are an endangered species

WHERE IT STILL SURVIVES: San Fernando

WHEN IT OCCURS: Saturday night before Christmas Eve

WHAT IT IS: It is a competition of giant lanterns, measuring two- to three-stories high, trucked in from the competing barangays of San Fernando. During the performance, the lanterns take turns in impressing spectators with a display of dancing lights made possible through *rotors* placed behind the lantern—large steel barrels rotated by a driver to synchronize with the music. Each rotor contains a map made of thousands of hairpins (yes, *aspile*), each hairpin corresponding to a light bulb in the lantern to which it is connected by an electric wire. Strips of masking tape cover portions of the rotor so that when the rotor is rotated, the flow of electricity to the lantern is cut or released according to this map, thus producing the illusion of dancing lights.

This rotor technology is both primitive and ingenuous. The beauty and elegance of a giant lantern hide the complex network that powers it: 4,000 light bulbs individually holed up in a vast mesh of wires, cardboard and foil, covered with layers upon layers of multicolored paper and plastic, and connected to the rotors by hundreds of yards of electric wire tangled like spaghetti at the back of the lantern.

During the competition, the lanterns “dance” to cheesy music like soundtracks from *Voltes V* and *Hawaii Five-O* or irreverent pop tunes like *Ocho-Ocho*, *Spaghetting Pababa* and *Ang Bangu-bango ng Bulaklak*, and judges grade the lanterns based on synchronicity and audience impact, rarely on the lantern’s design since many of them are done by the same makers and therefore the differences in design are not that radical. When the giant lantern festival was still held in the patio of the San Fernando Cathedral, the lanterns danced to a live brass band playing traditional Kapampangan songs like *Atin Cu Pung Singsing* and *O Caca, O Caca*.

HOW IT BEGAN: As mentioned earlier, the tradition of

illuminated lanterns in Pampanga most likely began in Bacolor as part of the La Naval festivities. Residents used paper lanterns to protect candle flames from wind and rain during the La Naval months of October and November. When the capital was transferred to San Fernando in 1904, the tradition of illuminated paper lanterns followed as well, although the competition itself may have begun only in 1908, in the new capital. The shift to electricity-powered lanterns occurred in 1931; with the problem of lighting thus solved, the lantern makers focused on expanding the size and enhancing the design and technology of the lanterns, including the innovative rotor system which replaced the manual switching system.

WHAT IT MEANS: The *ligligan parul* of San Fernando is a showcase of Kapampangan vision, ingenuity and craftsmanship, and of the Kapampangans’ willingness to overspend just to produce a thing of beauty. Residents of the city may have become jaded to the giant lanterns but tourists are always dumbfounded by their magnificence and native technology. They look like spaceships with blinking rainbow lights descending upon the crowd, but more than being visual wonders, the San Fernando lanterns are genuine community heirlooms, giant heirlooms like the pyramids of Egypt which contain an ancient technology passed down from the ancestors. Part of the charm is their fleeting nature: you know that they are put together only in December and after that they are disassembled again. Their heft and size make them unstoreable even in warehouses. You often see cannibalized giant lanterns lying in backyards during the rainy season, like skeletons long decomposed but awaiting their next reincarnation. It’s both sad and hopeful.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS: Years ago, the *ligligan parul* was held in the cathedral grounds in downtown San Fernando; later it was transferred to the Paskuhan Village parking lot and recently to the SM parking lot. The commercialization was inevi-







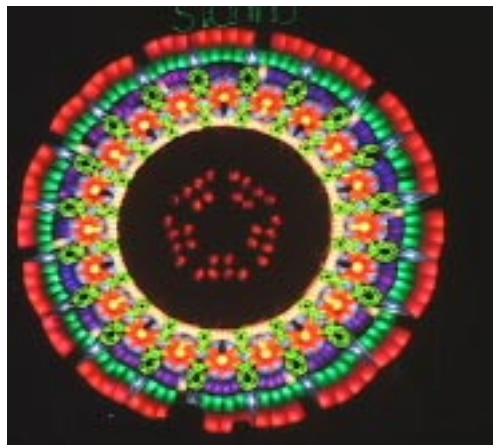
Behind each giant lantern is the rotor system mounted on a truck.

table to keep the amount of prizes commensurate to the rising cost of building a giant lantern, which can cost up to P300,000.00. Only a few barangays can afford to join the competition; in fact, the makers of giant lanterns are concentrated in only three barangays, namely, Del Pilar, Sta. Lucia and San Jose. The best known lantern maker today is Roland Quiambao; he is often commissioned to make the lanterns of several barangays; thus, he is the one competing with himself. The lanterns should express the character of the barangay that owns it and should be a product of the residents' creativity, instead of just their ability to pay. There should be an effort to reintroduce traditional elements and return to the original intents of the festival; for example, organizers argue that old Kapampangan tunes are not fast enough and therefore not challenging enough for the dancing capacities of the lanterns. But this is because the festival has degenerated into a contest of the lanterns' technological prowess, instead of their aesthetics; after all, it is a giant lantern festival, not a dancing lantern festival. Also, these magnificent monuments of light and color do not deserve to be unveiled in the parking lot of a shopping center; they have to be returned to the parish church which inspired their creation in the first place; if the patio cannot accommodate the number of viewers, maybe a series of shows can be done, not only in the cathedral grounds but also in the barangays which they represent, and not only during Christmas but long after it, if only to make the costly lanterns worth all the money the barangays have raised to make them. In recent years, the city government has made an effort to use the lanterns as vehicles of local tourism by exhibiting them in distant places like Rizal Park, Intramuros, and even Taiwan. (R. Tantingco, with additional notes by Ivan Anthony Henares).



Ivan Henares

DWARFED. Roland Quiambao dresses up one of his giant lanterns. Below, the real wonder of the giant lanterns is the illusion of dancing lights and kaleidoscopic colors during performance.





DANCING QUEENS. Women and children of Minalin watch their menfolk do the unthinkable: dress up as girls in the middle of the street and in broad daylight. Below, that's a man in a dress wearing a paper crown spiked with tuyo.

3. AGUMAN SANDUK

Hundreds of farmers and fishermen put on their wives' lipstick and wear their daughters' mini-skirts, every year since 1931, all in the spirit of fun and in defiance of long-cherished Kapampangan values

WHERE IT STILL SURVIVES: Minalin; a smaller version called *Aguman Sensi* used to be held in San Antonio, Bacolor until lahar forced the evacuation of the entire village

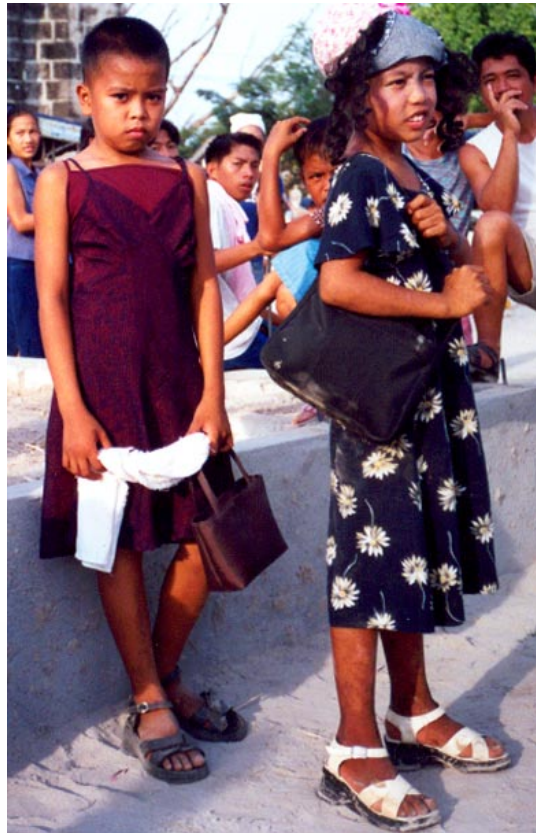
WHEN IT OCCURS: In the afternoon of New Year's Day, when most people, including tourists and media men, catch up on lost sleep from the previous night's revelry—which is why *Aguman Sanduk* is Pampanga's best-kept secret

WHAT IT IS: *Aguman Sanduk*, literally "fellowship of the ladle" (*Aguman Sensi*, on the other hand, means "fellowship of the spatula") is an annual event held only in Minalin town, where hundreds of boys and men from various barangays pour into the street wearing wigs, make-up and women's clothes. It is Pampanga's own Gay Pride Parade, except that no gays are allowed. It is the menfolk of Minalin—sunburned farmers and fishermen, local doctors and engineers, school boys and neighborhood thugs—who unabashedly parade in the streets around the parish church in full transvestite glory. These days, the celebration has been enhanced by the inclusion of floats representing the barangays of the town; each float features the "ladies" and a number of cos-



tuned performers, satirizing conventional women's roles like giving birth, preparing dinner, etc. The float is preceded and followed by more "ladies" doing choreographed dances. After the parade, a short program is held in the church patio to determine the year's Aguman Sanduk Queen, who is the ugliest of the cross-dressers. Thus, the "muse" of each competing barangay not only dresses up as a woman but has to look like an ugly woman, which is why Aguman Sanduk is both a celebration of womanhood and a parody of it.

HOW IT BEGAN: It all started in 1931 when a group of Minalin men, drinking beer and eating *lelut manuk* in front of the old municipal hall (now museum), brainstormed on how to end the long Christmas season with a bang. They dared each other to do the ultimate no-no among



Kapampangan men: make fun of their manliness by wearing a dress in public. And do it smack on New Year's Day, in defiance of the superstition that whatever you do on the first day of the year, you'd be condemned to do it the rest of the year.

In the early years, Aguman Sanduk participants did not merely walk in the street but role-played women, the most popular of which was a pregnant wife being attended to by a midwife and a worried husband, atop a *gareta* (carabao-driven cart) which paraded around the poblacion. In the evening, the men performed *crissotan* (verbal jousts in which poets composed witty verses on the spot). The first Aguman Sanduk Queen was Hilarion Serrano. According to old folks, prominent men participated in the Aguman Sanduk through the years: retired Sandiganbayan Justice Roberto Lagman, ConCon delegate Ricardo Sagmit, Jr., provincial board member Antonio Mercado, and a long line of mayors and parish priests.

In the 1950s the menfolk of San Antonio, a barrio in Bacolor, launched their own version of the Aguman Sanduk, calling it Aguman Sensi. It proved

as enduring as the original, until lahar from Mount Pinatubo erased the village from the map in 1995 and forced the residents to resettle in Bulaon, San Fernando. So far, no one is talking about reviving the tradition.

WHAT IT MEANS: Aguman Sanduk is a weird festival not only because of the freakish makeover of the participants, but also because it parodies Kapampangan machismo and Kapampangan pulchritude—two biases firmly enshrined on the altar of Kapampangan socio-cultural values. Sociologists may also see it as an expression of Kapampangan *joie de vivre*, their carefree spirit that drives them to recklessly plunge into anything that will put them in trouble later on. Sociologists may also see this quaint festival as a protest against—and liberation from—a whole catalogue of political incorrectness, e.g., gender discrimination, fear of homosexuality, etc.

Aguman Sanduk likewise calls attention to



QUEER AS FOLK. Even the neighborhood thugs are ready for their close-ups; Aguman Sanduk is only for heterosexual men, and gays can have their separate beauty pageants on another day. Far left, it is every child psychologist's nightmare to see boys and adolescent men dress up as women, but in Minalin no one seems to care.

the little-known fact that it is the Kapampangan man, not woman, who is the better cook. Most likely, Augustinian friars taught their houseboys and sacristans the art of culinary fusion, blending indigenous and Spanish elements to produce dishes that were acceptable to both the friar and his native house companions; thus, benefiting from this unique arrangement and also from the availability of all necessary condiments in the rich priest's kitchen, Kapampangan cuisine has achieved universal respectability and has created the archetypal Kapampangan male cook brandishing a *sanduk*.

Aguman Sanduk is also noteworthy on two aspects: one is its endurance, and the other is its purity of intent. The fact that the residents of this small village have been doing it for more than 70 years, despite the war, the eruption, the economic depression, and the fact that they have done it not for religion, and certainly not for media attention or for tourism (because it's held in the afternoon of New Year's Day when tourists and TV crews are asleep, the only spectators they have are their own wives and children)—these prove that Aguman Sanduk, despite its relatively recent and shallow beginnings, has earned the right of being considered a

genuine Kapampangan folk festival.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS: Today, Aguman Sanduk remains little known outside the town itself. Since it is a unique Kapampangan tradition, it should be promoted by holding it throughout the province as part of town fiestas and company parties. Prominent citizens, like the governor, town mayors, priests and business and civic leaders should participate and show that they do not take their manliness and handsome faces too seriously. Local organizers should not allow it to degenerate into a gay beauty contest; they also should revive cultural elements like the *crissotan* and should not inject adulterations like inviting Manila celebrities who will only hog the limelight away from the cross-dressers. A couple of years ago, they invited the Sex Bomb dancers who stole the show from the "ladies," nearly caused the stage to collapse and erased the whole point of Aguman Sanduk. The people of Minalin should be smart enough to recognize, respect and preserve the cultural treasure that their forebears have passed down to them, and to pass it on to the next generations in its pristine form. (R. Tantingco)



4. KURALDAL

Pilgrimage to a small fishing village brings hope to childless couples, who must dance this wild dance all night long on the feast of St. Lucy

WHERE IT STILL SURVIVES: Sasmuan, Lubao, Macabebe, Betis

WHEN IT OCCURS: While Sasmuan marks its town fiesta on the feast of its patron saint, St. Lucy, on December 13, *kuraldal* is held with great fervor in the week starting January 6, which used to be the feast of the Three Kings (recently stricken out from the reformed Church calendar). The only plausible explanation for the date is the connection between light, which is the meaning of the saint's name, and the Star of Bethlehem which guided the Three Kings. In Sta. Cruz, Lubao, the residents dance the *kuraldal* on the barrio's fiesta on May 3, towards the end of the procession in front of the chapel along the Olongapo-Gapan Road. In Macabebe, barrios and sitios celebrating their respective fiestas in May perform their small-scale *kuraldal*. In Betis, a group of 24 dancers and 2 instructors, all residents of Sta. Ursula, dance their own version of *kuraldal* with swordfights on July 25 (feast of St. James) and for 9 consecutive days before the feast day, when devotees fetch the saint's image from the *hermana's* residence.

WHAT IT IS: *Kuraldal* is a dance in honor of St. Lucy (although in other places, Kapampangans do the *kuraldal* in honor of their respective saints). It is performed by devotees who make a pilgrimage to Sasmuan during the town's fiesta (December 13) and with increasing intensity all the way to *kuraldal* season in January. Dancers cry "*Viva Santa Lucia! Puera sakit!*" ("Away with ail-

ments!"); petitions range from pregnancy to winning the lotto to passing the board exams.

The mother of all *kuraldal*, the Sasmuan *kuraldal*, starts in the morning of January 6, after the 8 AM Mass. A short-distance procession of the image of St. Lucy, between the parish church and the Sta. Lucia barangay chapel, along the narrow portion of the *dalan paglimbunan* (procession route), is marked by street dancing. The next day, January 7, a group of women devotees, wearing buri hats and dresses with pink-and-white floral designs, dance door-to-door for donations. The climax is on the evening of January 10, when the Archbishop of San Fernando, the Sasmuan parish priest and several other priests concelebrate Mass on a makeshift stage in a square behind the Sta. Lucia barangay chapel. After the Mass, two brass bands, one in front of the makeshift stage and the other in front of the chapel, signal the start of the *kuraldal*. The crowd is sometimes so thick that devotees only manage to sway or jump instead of dance. The dancing lasts until after midnight.

Meanwhile, devotees clamber up the makeshift stage to pick up flowers and leaves from the bouquets and rub their handkerchiefs on the image of St. Lucy. This wooden image is a smaller version of the January 6 image, but probably much older and definitely not made in Spain, judging from the elongated earlobes similar to Buddha statues, according to church heritage expert Prof. Regalado Trota Jose.



DANCING FOR MONEY. Costumed dancers perform door to door for donations



MIRACULOUS. Left, image of St. Lucy is the object of veneration. Above, the basic kuraldal tune (annotated by Edwin Lumanog).

with faces white as sheet and eyes rolling up as if in a trance.

In Betis, the 24 dancers are expected to pass on the duty of performing the kuraldal to their children, in the same way that they inherited it from their respective fathers.

HOW IT BEGAN: Spanish chronicler Gaspar de San Agustin wrote in 1698 that an image of St. Lucy had been venerated in Sasmuan "since long ago." More research is needed to determine if kuraldal may have originated in the tribal dances of pre-Hispanic Kapampangans and if the Spanish friars who could not stop the practice may have merely replaced an unknown pagan idol with the image of the Catholic saint. Or, kuraldal may have been a para-liturgical ritual begun by the Augustinians or the secular priests, which, over the years, was moved out from inside the church to the church patio and later, farther into the streets of the community. The timing of kuraldal coincides with the end of the *duman* season in nearby Sta. Rita town, which raises the possibility that it may have been part of the natives' harvest rituals in pre-Hispanic times.

WHAT IT MEANS: More research should also be made on why only the communities along riverbanks practice kuraldal. Kapampangans, as their name suggests, are river people; the Kapampangan civilization began on the riverbanks and merely radiated towards the interior of Luzon island. Thus the river towns

in the south are older than the towns in the northern uplands; many traditions found in southern towns are unheard of in the northern towns; in fact, going from southern towns to northern towns in Pampanga is like moving from a cultural feast to a cultural famine; Kapampangans seem to lose their cultural foothold the farther they wander away from their birthplace, the Pampanga River. Kapampangans in Apalit, Masantol, Macabebe, Sasmuan and Lubao dance at the drop of a hat, even in the middle of the street and in broad daylight; their cosmopolitan counterparts in Angeles, Magalang, Mabalacat and San Fernando have to dress up first and create artificial inducements like *tigtigan terakan king dalan* (street disco) to bring themselves to dance in public.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS: Unless organizers impose a liquor ban, devotees will one day stop coming to Sasmuan for the annual kuraldal, which is gradually being taken over by inebriated teenagers who are clueless about the cultural and religious significance of the event. Local juveniles probably mistake kuraldal for a rave party so they convert the chapel into a disco, dancing wildly and irreverently on pews and on the altar table itself. Kuraldal is unique to Pampanga; it is probably a hint to how musical, how carefree, and how hedonistic our Kapampangan ancestors were; kuraldal should therefore be promoted and positioned as *the* Kapampangan festival, with the kuraldal dance steps adopted as the basic dance steps in other Kapampangan festivals, e.g. the Sinukuan Festival in the City of San Fernando and the Baguis Festival in Angeles City, two well-funded cultural inventions in search of a theme and a rhythm that resonates with the Kapampangan spirit. (R. Tangingco with additional notes by Arwin Paul Lingat)



5. BATALLA

Everything rocks and rolls in this irreverent procession, but this obscure village holds the clue to the power of folk and to the ultimate destiny of the Church in the Third World

WHERE IT STILL SURVIVES: Most barangays in Macabebe but particularly Brgy. Dalayap, which is one of those villages in the Pampanga River Delta that can now be reached only by boat after farmlands were converted into fishponds in the 1970s; also Brgy. Sapang Kuayan in Masantol and Brgy. Sto. Niño in San Simon town

WHEN IT OCCURS: May 22, which is the barrio fiesta of Dalayap (feast of St. Rita), although it is a moveable feast depending on how soon the annual floods come; last Sunday of April in barrio Sta. Maria, Macabebe; in Sapang Kuayan, it is held on the last Saturday of February; in Sto. Niño, on January 25

WHAT IT IS: *Batalla* may just be a variation of *kuraldal*, since both involve dancing and use the same music, but *batalla* seems to be a reenactment rather than devotional. After the 4 p.m. Mass officiated by a visiting Catholic priest in the predominantly Methodist village of Dalayap, the procession begins at the chapel and heads for a footbridge to the east. Then it makes a U-turn just





before reaching the bridge, and that's the signal for the start of batalla: the brass band starts playing the familiar kuraldal tune, and devotees begin to dance the batalla, which is different from the steps of kuraldal. Batalla is mostly hopping, which intensifies as the band plays faster, with intervals of swaying when the music slows down. All participants, from *ciriales*-bearing acolytes to barefoot children and old wives and fishermen, jump and dance as they negotiate their way through narrow streets and around fishponds and riverbanks, until after sunset. Those who carry the *andas*, bearing the tiny image of their patron saint, rock it from side to side, at times really violently, as they chant "Oy! Oy! Oy! Oy! Oy!" Devotees form two lines behind the *andas* by holding the shoulders of the person in front of them: adults right behind the saint, where the dancing is most violent, teenagers in the middle, and small children, some barely above the ground, at the tail-end.

When the procession finally returns to the chapel, the participants, including the *andas* bearers, start running around and shouting like banshees, similar to what the Chinese do in their dragon dance. Afterwards, they position the image in front of the church door and then perform a ritualized tug-o-war; the intensity and

the violence of the dancing and shouting indicate that the batalla has reached its climax. It then resolves itself with the saint being allowed inside the chapel. The band plays a few more tunes before the crowd's excitement subsides.

HOW IT BEGAN: The oldest villagers in Dalayap say batalla was already practiced by their parents and grandparents. Batalla, which means "battle," is quite obviously a ritual based on *moro-moro*, popular during the colonial days, depicting the battle between the Crusaders and the heathens, or perhaps between the Christian conquistadores and the Muslims who were the inhabitants of Pampanga at the time of the Spanish Conquest in 1571. Like *kuraldal*, batalla may have been a pre-Hispanic tribal dance that was merely Christianized when the missionaries came. There are no references to this unique Kapampangan ritual in extant Spanish documents.

WHAT IT MEANS: The folks who practice batalla probably do not realize that they are reliving the struggle between the Muslim Kapampangans and the Christian Spaniards. The eventual entry of the saint's image through the chapel's door and the subsiding of emotions immediately thereafter may be seen to symbolize the





successful Christianization of Kapampangans and the pacification of their land. But one small point should not be missed: the saint succeeds in entering the door only because the people have allowed it, and not as a result of a defeat in battle. In history, outside of Tarik Soliman's defeat in battle which occurred in Manila and not on Kapampangan soil, there is no known resistance put up by Kapampangans when the Spaniards penetrated the land for the first time by way of the river. In the metaphor of the batalla, the saint's entry may be interpreted as Kapampangans having lost the battle but won the war, i.e., while Christianity transformed them, they also transformed Christianity through the folksification of religion. Common folk create their own rituals like makeshift ladders so they can reach an unreachable God; priests who decide these folk rituals have outlived their usefulness sometimes cruelly terminate them and replace them with alien ways of worship, leaving the people to wander about listlessly. This obscure festival called batalla in this obscure fishing village in Masantol probably holds the clue to the ultimate destiny of the Church in this part of the world: the revelers, towards the end of batalla, boisterously seizing the chapel with no priest in sight recalls the image of a revolution and hints at the uncontrollable, untamable

power of folk and its eventual victory.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS: Tourists, media people and researchers have largely ignored batalla owing to the distance and scarcity of the places where it occurs. In the case of Dalayap, the obstacles include the frequent ebb and flow of the river which floods the village around the time of its fiesta, and the brownouts (electricity is out longer than it's on). The batalla there ends early in the evening because the entire place is thrown in total darkness.

Although the residents have mostly converted to Methodist and other Protestant denominations, many of them continue to join the batalla; fiesta visitors from other barrios also swell the number of revelers. Still, the tiny community can hardly afford the requisite brass band, much less a generator to light up the batalla venue. The practice is also threatened by intoxicated participants who become violent and vulgar when the image of St. Rita enters the chapel and the band starts playing popular ditties. Concerned parish pastoral councils, instead of barangay officials, should take charge of the event to preserve its religious content and prevent it from deteriorating into a mere tourist attraction or worse, a political vehicle. (R. Tangingco)





6. LIBAD

Pampanga's own fluvial procession has swimmers manually pulling the *pagoda* across the river and devotees being rewarded with a spectacular shower of food from the riverbanks, like manna from heaven

WHERE IT IS STILL PRACTICED: Apalit, Sasmuan, Minalin, Macabebe

WHEN IT OCCURS: In Apalit, where the biggest and most elaborate celebration occurs on the *Rio Grande* (Pampanga River), the first *libad* begins on June 28 and the last one occurs on June 30. In Sasmuan, small *libad* are held by the barangays and sitios located along the whole stretch of the river *Dalan Bapor* (Guagua-Pasac River) during their respective fiesta; in Minalin, the *libad* is held during the town's fiesta on the second Sunday of May, along the San Francisco River; and in Macabebe, specifically on the river island of Pulu, a *libad* around the two-kilometer island is held on the feast of Nuestra Señora de Candelaria.

WHAT IT IS: *Libad* is the generic term that refers to a fluvial procession held in honor of a patron saint; in Apalit, it is in honor of St. Peter, whom locals intimately refer to as *Apung Iru*. Two big *libad* are held to accompany the passage of the venerated image of Apung Iru, which is an Arnedo family heirloom but which is lent to the parish church on the feast of St. Peter on June 29. The first *libad* is held the day before, when the image "travels" to the Apalit church; the second, more boisterous, *libad* occurs the day after the fiesta, when the image "returns home."

On June 28, after the 9 AM Mass,, the ivory-faced image of



Ivan Henares

FIRST POPE. Life-size ivory image of St. Peter a.k.a. Apung Iru the Fisherman

Apung Iru leaves its chapel in Brgy. Capalangan, and is borne in procession by the Knights of St. Peter, who wear bright orange shirts. After the procession on land, the image is brought to the banks of a tributary leading to the Pampanga River in Brgy. Sulipan and put on a *pituya* (two or three small boats tied together), which takes it to the *pagoda* (barge decorated and made to look like a multi-tiered house). The Pampanga River Control System (PRCS) and later, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) regularly lent the barges on which the *pagoda* is mounted to prevent a repeat of the tragedy in a similar festival in Bocaue, Bulacan. Meanwhile, hundreds of boats, many of which are festooned with images associated with St. Peter (cock, fish, etc.) and bearing brass bands and wildly cheering revelers, accompany the barge as it negotiates a seven-kilometer stretch of the Pampanga River. Organizers have instituted an inter-barangay competition of boat decorations to liven up the celebration. The barge lands in Brgy. San Juan, in a port under the North Expressway bridge, from where Apung Iru is led in procession again towards the Apalit parish church, where it stays during

the town fiesta.

On June 30, the image of Apung Iru is taken from the church after a Mass at 8 AM, to the same port in San Juan where another Mass is held; then, another *libad* commences as the saint is returned to Capalangan. It is in this last *libad* where thousands of devotees on both sides of the Pampanga River keep pace with the



progress of the pagoda; there are groups who wave leaves and flowers as they dance to the strains of *kuraldal* from another brass band on land. There are also those who climb up the roof of their houses so they can throw apples, canned goods, boiled eggs, etc. on the people on the pagoda or on the boats accompanying the pagoda, presumably to ease the hunger pangs of devotees who have skipped lunch to follow the image, or, as a local superstition goes, to feed St. Peter who comes disguised as a hungry old fisherman during his feast day. The shower of food is both breathtaking and environmentally unsound, because the stuff that doesn't land on the boats stays on the water for days. The Knights of St. Peter, swimming in the river's murky water, pull the barge with a thick abaca rope to make sure it doesn't tilt and also to guide it towards the river banks where clusters of devotees wave and splash in the water. Somewhere in Brgy. Tabuyoc, where the pagoda has been assembled earlier, two sets of Knights perform a push-and-pull ritual with the pagoda, so that the image stays longer in the vicinity. In Brgy. Sulipan, the image is taken from the barge and borne on the shoulders of another set of the Knights of St. Peter, for a procession to bring it back to its chapel in Capalangan where it will stay until the next fiesta. Thousands of devotees, many of them dancing the *kuraldal*, follow Apung Iru in this last leg of the procession, many of them shouting "*Viva Apung Iru!*"

Jojo Valencia

Fray Francis Musni



FROM WAY BACK. *Libad* in 1929; below, *libad* in 1950.





Devotees throw foodstuff in plastic bags at the Knights of St. Peter.



The Rio Grande is filled with hundreds of boats; below, revelers on the riverbanks greet the passing pagoda.



HOW IT BEGAN: Kapampangans in southern towns like Apalit used to celebrate *bayung danum* (new water), the early floods of the season, which may have been the pre-Hispanic equivalent of new year. The Spanish friars probably Christianized this pagan practice by introducing saints like St. Peter and St. John the Baptist, whose feast days in June coincide with the ancient holidays.

The ivory image of Apung Iru, said to be 300 years old, is a family heirloom of Macario Arnedo, governor of Pampanga in 1904-1912. Don Pedro Armayan (or Umayan) is credited to have brought the image from Spain in 1844. In 2002, the family's mansion in Capalangan mysteriously burned down, which necessitated the transfer of the image to the barangay chapel.

According to old folks, the early years of the libad saw only a few boats, none of which was motorized, accompanying the image on its trip to and from the Apalit church. One of the local legends is that fish leaped out of the water in the duration of the libad. Another is that one reveler drowned every year as a sacrifice to the river.

WHAT IT MEANS: Fluvial processions are common in regions that are awashed with river networks, but the libad of Pampanga is unique because of the intense devotion, the elaborate celebrations, and the mystical connection between the people and the river. The Apalit libad, according to former UNESCO Commissioner Prof. Felipe de Leon, Jr., is a combination of Naga's Peñafrancia fluvial procession and Tayabas' *hagisan* during which devotees throw foodstuff from their houses in the wake of the San Isidro procession on the street. It is also a hodge-podge of Christian and pagan elements so fused over decades of repeated occurrence that it is impossible to tell one from the other. Is the throwing of food meant for the Knights of St. Peter or for the river itself? Are the devotees thanking the saint or the river whose cyclic floods replenish their farmlands and lead fish to their very doorstep?

Kapampangans seem to nurture their spirit by returning regularly to the cradle of their civilization—the river after which their land was named—in the same manner that the Hindus, for example, make regular pilgrimages to the Ganges and bathe in its banks at least once a year for spiritual renewal.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS: Locals believe each libad always claims one fatality; while this may only be a superstition, cases of drowning have indeed occurred during the frenzy of the river celebrations—although nothing in the same magnitude as the tragedy in Bocaue, Bulacan. Local organizers should increase the number of patrols and lifeguards during the libad and if it can be helped, ban politicians from using the participating boats as vehicles for their campaign streamers. The festival can also be a launch pad for the proposed river cruises of the Department of Tourism. (R. Tantingco with additional notes by Tonette Orejas)



7. SABAT SANTACRUZAN

The charming original form of the vastly popular but shamelessly commercialized santacruzán lives on in a small village at the foothills of Mount Pinatubo

*Swordfights and torchlights
in Sapangbato*

WHERE IT STILL SURVIVES: Sapangbato (Angeles), whose patron saint is the Santa Cruz (Holy Cross), San Fernando and some villages in Concepcion (Tarlac)

WHEN IT OCCURS: Towards the end of May

WHAT IT IS: Also known as *Goydo-goydo* (after Goy do Borgonia, successor of Constantine), *sabat* is a version of the *santacruzán* in which costumed performers interrupt the procession to challenge the *sagalas* and their *consortes* to a duel, either through verbal joust or in a swordfight. It is a reenactment of the ambushes that infidels (Moros) launched on the Crusaders as they returned to Europe after finding the Holy Cross. The *santacruzán* itself, before it degenerated into a pageant of beauty queens and starlets, used to be a novena procession commemorating the finding (not the search, because Reyna Elena is already holding it!) of the Cross by Empress Helena and her son, Emperor Constantine, in Jerusalem. The basic storyline of the Sapangbato version, which is handwritten on a thick book that resembles a *pasyun*, begins with Reyna Elena embarking on a search for the Cross and ordering Goy do Borgonia, next in line to her son Emperador Constantino, to repel an attack led by Moro queen Florifis, sister of Prinsipe Arabiano and Prinsipe Turquiano. Goy do Borgonia, however, falls in love with Florifis and is unable to carry out Reyna Elena's order, thus prompting the queen to turn to Emperador Carlo Magno of the Franciang Corte for help. Carlo Magno sends eight of his 12 brave princes (*Doce Pares*), namely,

Prinsipe Roldan (the captain), Oliveros, Reynaldos, Conderlos, Goyperos, Montesino, Galalon and Ricarte. The Crusade encounters many battles en route to joining Reyna Elena's party; in one battle, Roldan slays Moro prince Clynos and wears his cape. Meanwhile, Reyna Elena and party finally discover the Cross relics on Monte Lebanon (Mount Lebanon), and start their victorious journey back to Europe, singing *Viva Victoria!* They encounter Roldan who is still on his way to the Holy Land and whom they do not recognize because of his borrowed Moro cape and also because they think he's been dead. Reyna Elena asks each of Roldan's princes who also do not recognize him—except Olivares, who confirms Roldan's identity. The problem thus settled, the procession resumes until they are ambushed by Prinsipe Arabiano. Goy do Borgonia captures the Arab prince but just then Moro queen Florifis comes to rescue Prinsipe Arabiano, her brother. Being in love with Florifis, Goy do Borgonio requests permission from Reyna Elena to free Prinsipe Arabiano. Afterwards it is Florifis' other brother, Prinsipe Turquiano, who attacks the procession and is about to succeed in stealing the Cross when Reyna Elena makes an impassioned speech about the meaning of the relics to Christendom. Moved, Prinsipe Turquiano and the Moros are converted.

HOW IT BEGAN: Santacruzán originated in Europe, was exported to Mexico, and then passed on to the Philippines in the earliest days of colonization. Fr. Francisco Coronel, OSA translated in 1689 a papal bull on the practice, *Ing Bulla quing Sancta*

TRADITIONAL CHARACTERS IN A SANTACRUZAN

Being a folk ritual conceived by common people who may only have heard (instead of read) about the stories, the santacruzan anachronistically mixes up Biblical, literary and historical personages such as:

Methuselah (or Matusalem), a bearded old man on a *gareta*, toasting grains of sand on a hot pan to remind us about mortality;

Reina Banderada in a long red gown carrying a yellow triangular flag, representing the advent of Christianity;

Aeta aborigines, the heathens before the Spaniards came;

Reina Mora, the Moro queen, representing the Moslem religion which antedated the Christian faith in the Philippines;

Reina Fe (carrying a cross), representing the virtue of Faith;

Reina Esperanza (carrying an anchor), the virtue of Hope;

Reina Caridad (carrying a red heart), the virtue of Charity;

Reina Abogada, wearing a black graduation toga and carries a large book, the defender of the poor and the oppressed;

Reina Sentenciada, her hands bound by a rope and flanked by two Roman soldiers, the symbol of people unjustly convicted;

Reina Justicia, carrying a weighing scale and a sword;

Reina Judith, Judith of Pethulia who saved her city from the Assyrians after she beheaded the cruel Holofernes; she carries the head of the beheaded man on one hand and a sword on the other;

Reina Sheba, who visited the famed King Solomon and was overwhelmed by his wisdom, power and riches; she carries a jewelry box;

Reina Esther, who spared her countrymen from death and destruction through timely intervention with King Xerxes; she carries a scepter;

Samaritana, the woman whom Christ spoke to at the well; she carries a jug on her shoulder;

Veronica, the woman who wiped the face of Jesus; she holds a piece of cloth imprinted with the three faces of Jesus;

the Tres Marias: *Mary of Magdala* (she carries a bottle of perfume), *Mary, Mother of Christ* (she carries a handkerchief), and *Mary, mother of James* (she carries a bottle of oil);

A-V-E—M-A-R-I-A, eight (8) girls wearing long white dresses and angel wings, holding their respective letters;

Divina Pastora, Divine Shepherdess, holding a staff;

Reina de las Estrellas, Queen of Stars, holding a wand with a star;

Rosa Mystica, holding a bouquet of roses;

Reina Paz, Queen of Peace, holding the symbol of peace;

Reina de las Propetas, Queen of the Prophets, holding an hourglass;

Reina del Cielo, Queen of Heaven, holding a flower and accompanied by two angels;

Reina de las Virgines, Queen of Virgins, holding a rosary, also flanked by two angels;

Reina de las Flores, Queen of Flowers, holding a bouquet of assorted flowers;

Reina Elena, Queen Helena, the legendary finder of the True Cross, represented by the small cross she carries, escorted by her son, the Constantino, both canopied by the procession's largest *arco*. (For the santacruzan to be more exciting, the identity of the chosen Reina Elena is kept a secret until the day of the procession.)

And then comes the *carroza* bearing the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary and in other cases, with the *pintacasi* (patron saint) of the town/barrio, followed by a *musicus* (brass band) playing *Dios te salve*.

cruzada pepanabanga ming Sto.Padre ing laguiona Inocencio decimo. The original santacruzan was like a *moro moro* staged a la street theatre (*estrada*); it lasted many hours as the procession made numerous stopovers to give way to the poetic jousts. Thus it is the *satat*, and not the sagalas-studded santacruzan, that more accurately resembles the santacruzans of yesteryears.

The month of May, coinciding with the start of the all-important rainy season, was probably the most festival-laden season for the pre-Hispanic Kapampangans. We have no idea what these pagan festivals looked like, and how much have been retained or reflected in today's festivals. The Spanish friars either banned them, or replaced the *anitos* with saints, or coincided calendared feast days with folk festivals, which is probably why certain fiestas are played up in Pampanga around this time of year (Sta. Cruz on May 3, Sta. Monica on May 4, San Miguel Arcangel on May 8, San Isidro Labrador, patron of farmers, on May 15; Sta. Rita on May 22; San Juan Bautista on June 24, and San Pedro or Apung Iru on June 29). *Flores de mayo*, the practice of offering flowers to the Blessed Mother, is said to have begun in 1854 after the Pope proclaimed the dogma of *La Purisima* (Immaculate Conception) and local folks started a separate festival specifically for the Blessed Mother who many thought had been overshadowed by Helena in the santacruzan. (*Flores de mayo* is integrated in some santacruzans, with the inclusion in the procession of a *carroza* bearing the image of the Blessed Mother.)

WHAT IT MEANS:

Kapampangans have three great festival seasons, namely, Christmas, Holy Week and May, and of all the celebrations occurring in May, the most spectacular in terms of costumes and community participation, is the *satat* santacruzan. The romantic elements in the story, e.g., the love affair between Roldan and Florifis and the reconciliation between Christians and Muslims, which repudiates the notion of Christians subjugating Muslims and implies the equality and ultimate union of all religions, resonate among Kapampangans who in 1571 gave up Islam to embrace Christianity.

WHAT THE FUTURE

HOLDS: In Sapangbato, the David Family, who keeps the original *goydo-goydo* text as a family heirloom and whose members comprise the informal drama company that performs it, has ceased producing it since five years ago due to lack of funding from spon-



sors and support from the community. The last performance was held outside Sapangbato upon the request of the sponsor, and unless sabat is staged in its traditional locale, its natural habitat as it were, and unless the Sapangbato community itself rescues it through organized effort, this extraordinary folk festival, which has a potential for becoming not only a tourist attraction but also a catalyst for barangay unity, will just be another lost and forgotten folk festival of Pampanga. This year the Center for Kapampangan Studies, in cooperation with the Nepo Mall, sponsored the revival of the sabat santacruzian but insisted on it being held in Sapangbato, not in the city proper. Judging from the reaction of the villagers, there is hope that they will organize themselves to support their homegrown tradition and sustain its survival for years to come. The Center, for its part, will provide technical assistance by sponsoring seminars on community organizing, drama and speech workshops for performers in the sabat; by tapping successful Sapangbato residents for sponsorship; and by linking it up with the city tourism office to promote it as a seasonal tourist destination.
(R. Tangingco with additional notes by Edgar John Ocampo).



MOUNTAIN MAIDENS. Below, makeshift canopy sheltering the Reina Elena is the centerpiece of a folksy santacruzian in Sapangbato, Angeles City; above, 1860 sketch of a local santacruzian (La Ilustracion Filipina).



8. MAL Á ALDO

The holiest days of the year are celebrated in the unholy manner: men mutilating their bodies instead of going to confession, and women on microphones chanting and wailing all night instead of going to Mass



MELODRAMATIC. Hooded men show their children how to ask forgiveness of sins. These boys will most likely do the same thing when they grow up.

Holy Week in the Kapampangan Region is like no other: the pageantry and charming traditions of the Catholic Church collide with the violent rituals of the common folk. While the rest of the country quiets down in prayer and reflection, the entire province explodes with fiesta-like activities that rival and defy the subdued official ceremonies inside the churches. *Mal a Aldo* literally means "Important (or Holy) Days." The seven-day spread is prefaced with the *Biyernis Dolores*, the Friday *before* Holy Week when

Kapampangans celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, thus setting the tone for the next few days. In Sto. Tomas, the image of the *Mater Dolorosa* is fetched from the *hermana's* residence by a group of *stabats*, or girls singing the *Stabat Mater*, and is brought to the church for the Mass. The *hermana* throws a party for all—quite strange considering the Church's rule on fasting for all Lenten Fridays, but then it may be considered as the local *Mardi Gras*, or the feast before the fasting. Some highlights of the week in the



CONTRAST. While their husbands defy Church ban on flagellation, pious womenfolk of Minalin toe the line and lead procession of Mater Dolorosa (circa 1920s) J. Dado

kubul (shrines or altars) have been set up as stopovers for the priest who slowly makes his way while blessing the palaspas. Each *kubul*, sponsored by a family, has its own costumed angels singing one version of the *Osana* (there are seven versions). Upon reaching the church, the priest knocks on the closed door three times; when the door is opened, everybody enters and the Mass begins.

MONDAY By this time, *puni* or makeshift chapels have mushroomed at every road turn throughout the region. Financed by barangay funds and contributions from the neighborhood, the *puni* can be as simple as a small altar table with a roof of banana leaves and walls of coconut leaves and bamboo sticks, and as elaborate as a real *kapilya* with a painting at the altar depicting a suffering Christ. Inside the *puni*, a group of singers chant the *pasyun*, which is the common folks' version of the Bible. Visitors are served coffee, juice or ice cream. In Macabebe and Masantol, *puni* are usually small but the organizers serve lavish food and invite different chanters every night (the biggest feast is, ironically, on Good Friday). Lining the road in front of the *puni* are food stalls, set up for the week to take advantage of the influx of visitors and kibitzers. The atmosphere is fiesta-like. In the parish church itself, the mood is somber as members of various parish organizations cheerlessly prepare the liturgy for the week, dress up the *carrozas* and decorate the *monumento*, which is what they call the temporary altar to house the Blessed Sacrament on Maundy Thursday.

TUESDAY Flagellants have also started to emerge from fields and orchards after donning the traditional attire consisting of a cloth mask crowned with vines and a single rope tied around the arms and legs. By the time

Kapampangan Region in chronological order:

PALM SUNDAY Blessing of the *palaspas* (palm leaves) in all churches in Pampanga and Tarlac occurs in the morning Masses, with some parishes garnishing their rituals with nuances like having the priest ride a donkey and conducting the blessing outside the church to simulate Christ's entry into Jerusalem. *Palaspas* come in many creative forms, the most amusing of which have dangling grasshoppers and birds woven from the palm leaf. In Sasmanan, *palaspas*-waving residents line the street between the church and the nearest *visita* (chapel), where seven

TYPES OF FLAGELLANTS, THEN AND NOW



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MAMALASPAS bleeds his back using the traditional gadget *panabad* and later by repeatedly beating his back with bamboo sticks (*burilyus*).



MAMUSAN KRUS carries a cross made of hard wood, sometimes bamboo and, in some cases, banana trunk.



MAGSALIBATBAT rubs skin against the dirt road and crawls for several kilometers

they hit the street, their bare backs have already been wounded with a *panabad*, which is the traditional gadget for bleeding flagellants (the Kapampangan term for flagellant is *magdarámè* or *magparáya*, "one who bleeds himself," although other terms are used to specify the kind of penitence employed, e.g., *mamalaspas* (one who uses bamboo sticks to bleed his back), *magsalibatbat* (one who throws himself to the ground), and *mamusan krus* (one who carries a cross). Reasons for flagellation range from asking pardon for sins, to asking favors, to thanksgiving. Flagellants end their penitence in the puni, where they lay face down as their assistants whip them with banana stalks while they pray. Flagellants arrive in the puni singly, in pairs or in groups; their arrival is always accompanied by a crowd. Meanwhile, in the big mansions of the *poblacion*, rich families now based in Manila start arriving and preparing their heirloom *santo* for the Wednesday *prusisyun*,

which is the excuse for their annual reunions.

WEDNESDAY Parishes hold a long procession featuring *carrozas* of the Blessed Mother and the Apostles, but costumed according to their traditional iconography (to differentiate this procession from another one on Good Friday, when all the saints wear black). In most towns of Pampanga (except Mabalacat, Magalang and Mexico; in the case of Angeles and Floridablanca, the Wednesday procession has been merged with the Good Friday procession) the *carrozas* are tableaux, i.e., entire Biblical scenes with multiple *santos*, instead of solitary saints (e.g., Last Supper, Entry to Jerusalem, Agony in the Garden, The Arrest, Scourging at the Pillar, Crowning with Thorns). The tableaux *santos* actually move, thanks to a mechanism operated by boys hidden under the *carroza*. The most spectacular of these tableaux is the *Tercera Caida* (Third Fall) in pre-lahar Bacolor: a

carroza with the image of a cross-bearing Christ flanked by a *Hudyo* (literally Jew, but depicted as Roman soldier, reflecting the outdated Catholic bias against the Jews) in the act of whipping Him and another playing a drum, met up in front of the public market with another *carroza* from the opposite direction, which bore the image of St. Veronica. Surrounded by people from the merged processions, the two *carrozas* were joined to allow Veronica to glide forward and reach out to wipe the face of the fallen Christ; when she returned to her *carroza* she spread her hands again to reveal the miracle of Christ's face being imprinted on the cloth. It was great entertainment which, sadly, had been discontinued after lahar buried the town in 1995. By the way, Kapampangans traditionally hold their processions at 8 P.M. to give themselves time to go home after the Mass and eat dinner. Many parishes today start the procession immediately after the late after-

PASYUN SERENATA. In Sta. Rita town, two sets of pasyun chanters and their respective brass bands try to outperform each other by alternately singing the entire pasyun to the tune of zarzuela and opera pieces, with only the traffic and promenaders around to witness the grand performance.



noon Mass, probably for fear that people would no longer return after dinner.

In Magalang and Arayat, some flagellants carry crosses made from huge banana trunks. In Brgy. San Basilio in Sta. Rita, local folks hold a quaint version of the pasyun, called *pasyun serenata*, in which two sets of chanters mounted on

elevated platforms (like balconies where ladies are serenaded from below) alternately sing the pasyun to the tune of classical opera pieces, each group of chanters accompanied by its own brass band situated beneath the singers. The whole performance lasts all night, and is repeated nightly throughout the Holy Week. The bands are allowed to play their best pieces during intervals between pasyun texts, but there is only a small crowd to appreciate them. The bands are also placed precariously close to the road, where noisy tricycles and over-speeding jeepneys and trucks interfere with the otherwise magnificent show.

MAUNDY THURSDAY Years ago, the Archdiocese banned puni activities after Wednesday; for a while, there was compliance, but in recent years this order has been largely ignored. And so while the faithful flock to the church for the Maundy Thursday rituals like Washing of the Disciples' Feet and the exposition of the Blessed Sacra-



AGNUS DEI. In Mabalacat, they venerate a cake shaped like the Lamb of God.

ment in the *monumento*, another sector of the community continues its own reading of the salvation story and performs its own rites of atonement, in complete defiance of the Church. When darkness falls, thousands of perfumed Catholics cause massive traffic jams as they hop from church to church for the traditional *Visita Iglesia*; meanwhile, the unwashed hoi polloi mill about on the dusty road in front of the puni waiting for the next flagellants to arrive. In Mabalacat, the afternoon Mass is preceded by a small ritual called *Agnus*

Alex Castro



Crucifixion in Pampanga circa early 1900s; below, costumed Tres Marias in San Pedro Cutud en route to hill of crucifixion







CHURCH TRADITION VERSUS FOLK TRADITION. During Holy Week, the pomp and pageantry of official church rituals collide with the raw violence of folk practices. In Sasmuan, however, flagellants have been allowed to trail the Good Friday procession, showing that the two can coexist. Opposite page, bottom, the town's *Sto. Entierro* is said to be one of the most exquisite *carrozas* in the country, a genuine community heirloom.

Dei, in which the costumed Twelve Apostles and members of various parish organizations fetch an image of the Lamb of God, which is actually a cake stuffed with cooked meat, to be offered during the Mass and eaten afterwards.

GOOD FRIDAY Today is the day when thousands of Kapampangan men (and some women) perform their individual and group rituals of blood-letting and self-immolation all across Pampanga and Tarlac. In Bamban, penitents in uniform Nazarene costumes and customized crosses converge at the grotto at sunrise and proceed by batches to Mabalacat, where they all converge at the church patio, creating a scene straight out of a Cecil B. de Mille epic. In Sta. Maria, Macabebe, even doctors and professionals bend down to have their bare backs wounded by a local *manabad* before they flagellate themselves in the streets. In Magalang and Arayat, penitents crawl like worms on the dirt road, rubbing and bruising their skin and covering their bodies with dust. As noon approaches, various groups reenact the Passion of Christ in street performances: in Pampang, Angeles City, thugs and market stevedores portray Roman soldiers mounted on horses; in Madapdap Resettlement, Mabalacat and in Batasan, Candaba (now administratively part of Bulacan Province), men pursue and beat up a cross-bearer with such ferocity and realism to qualify it for reality TV's *Extreme Challenge*—both road shows end in an actual crucifixion. But all roads lead to San Pedro Cutud and Sta. Lucia, both in San Fernando, where a number of men and women have themselves nailed to the cross for the benefit of thousands of foreign and domestic tourists who

brave the heat and the kilometric walk to the local calvary. As the orgy of pain and violence subsides in the late afternoon, thousands of Kapampangans converge in church patios for the long Good Friday procession; in Bacolor, San Fernando, Sto. Tomas, Mabalacat, Sta. Rita and Guagua, the image of the grieving Blessed Mother is followed by a choir singing *Stabat Mater* accompanied by violins; as the procession passes the Rodriguez Mansion along Consunji Street in San Fernando, members of the family throw petals from the balcony. But the highlight of the Good Friday procession is the hearse bearing the *Apung Mamacalulu*, also known as *Sto. Entierro* ("The Interred Christ"). By this time, flagellants have gone home to soothe their aching backs, except in Sasmuan, where the Good Friday procession is tail-ended by another grim procession of penitents who carry crosses as big as electric posts—the only place in Pampanga where orthodox rituals mix with folk practices.

BLACK SATURDAY Many parishes hold the Easter Mass at 10 PM so that they can coincide the *salubung* with the stroke of midnight. *Salubung* is the reenactment of the joyful meeting between the Blessed Mother and the Risen Christ; two processions with their respective *carrozas* start from opposite sides and meet in front of the church where a girl dressed up as an angel is lowered from a scaffolding to lift the black veil off the face of the *Mater Dolorosa*. In San Matias, a barangay of Sto. Tomas, scions of prominent families defy the Easter vigil and do the *rigodon de honor* in the Sabado de Gloria Ball, because the town fiesta always falls on Easter Sunday (when St. Thomas saw the Risen



*GLORY IN THE FLOWER. The small town of Sto. Tomas comes alive with truly quaint folk traditions on Easter Sunday: *pusu-pusuan* (top) at break of dawn; *sagalas* (left) after the Easter Mass (a rite of passage for all maidens of the town); and the *pakbung hudas* (bottom) shortly before noon, where they explode the effigy of Judas.*

Christ) and tradition dictates a *rigodon de honor* must be held on the eve of a town fiesta.

EASTER SUNDAY The most elaborate *salubung* are held in front of the churches of Sto. Tomas and Minalin. Shortly before the break of dawn, the brass band plays and an all-girls' choir sing *Alleluia* as the two *santos* are positioned face to face. The angel does not immediately appear; instead, she is hidden inside a *pusu-pusu* (heart-shaped giant banana flower) which opens in five stages, one layer of petals at a time. Each opening is accompanied by the band playing and choir singing, which prolongs the whole ceremony. After the *salubung* (also called *pusu-pusuan* in these parts), the people go inside the church for the Easter Mass. In Sto. Tomas, another quaint tradition follows after the Mass: a group of well dressed girls and their escorts dance and sing and throw petals on the path of the carroza bearing the statue of the Risen Christ, accompanied by a violin. This ritual is called *sagalas*. Afterwards (8 AM in Minalin and 12 PM in Sto. Tomas), a crowd gathers in the church patio for the *pakbung hudas*, in which an effigy of Judas Iscariot, who had betrayed Jesus, is exploded with firecrackers planted inside its body. The crowd cheers lustily and the last ritual of the Kapampangan Lenten Season ends.

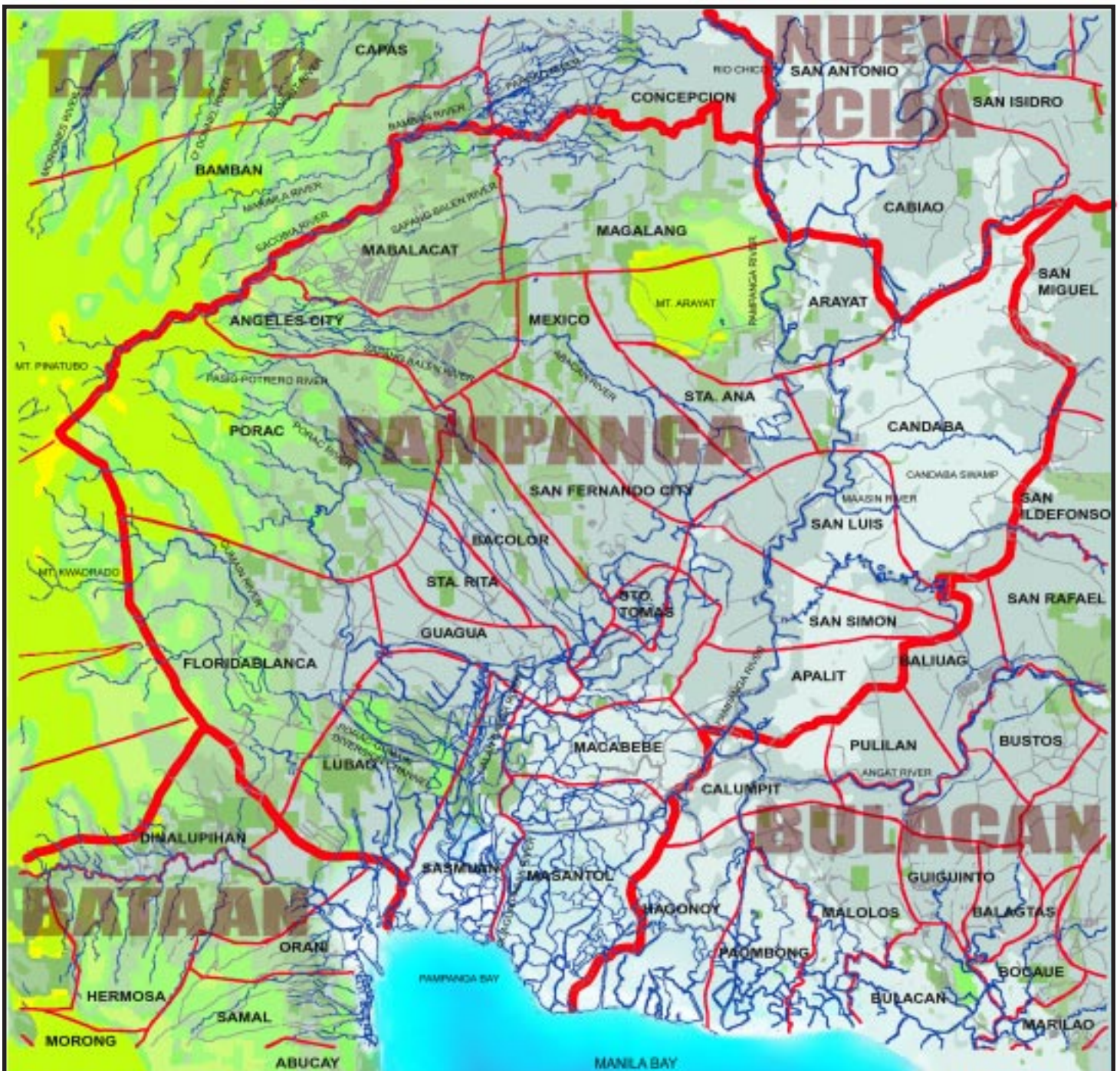
(R. Tangingco with additional notes by Arwin Paul Lingat)



PART TWO

SPECIAL FEATURE ON RIVERS THE LOST HIGHWAYS OF PAMPANGA

RIVERS AS HIGHWAYS. Long before the Westerners came and introduced the concept of road, our ancestors used the vast network of rivers, streams and canals to go around. Unfortunately, due to siltation and other natural and manmade interventions, this network has all but disappeared. (Map by Joel P. Mallari)





Alex Castro

BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA

Sinukuan versus Namalyari, siltation versus subsidence—trapped in a mythical and geological battleground, Kapampangans must find their destiny and redemption in their rivers

By Robby Tantingco

A MILLION years ago, when the earth's sea level was much higher, the area that would later be called Pampanga lay under water, between two islands that would eventually become the Zambales mountain range and the Sierra Madre.

As the sea receded, the land emerged, still swampy compared to the rest of Luzon, but the eruptions of Pinatubo and Arayat, simultaneous or alternating, dumped sand and stone all over, like the two warring deities that the earliest inhabitants would later imagine in mythology.

The lahar phenomenon we see today is only one of the cycles of siltation and subsidence that have occurred throughout the ages. The volcanoes reclaimed land from the sea, but the siltation weighed down the reclaimed area back into the sea. Today, following the 1991 eruption of Pinatubo, which released tons of new soil that elevated many towns, the scientists are again warning us that our province is slowly sinking. The geological history of Pampanga is a never-ending battle between the land and the sea. Once upon a time, the sea extended all the way to Bacolor. Then lahar from

Pinatubo pushed the seashore to Masantol. Now subsidence is threatening to make the sea return to Bacolor! Even the town's original name, Bakulud, which means elevated, gives us a hint of the cyclical push-and-pull of geological forces in Pampanga: when our ancestors named the town, lahar had just elevated it; by the time Pinatubo erupted in 1991, the town was no longer elevated, which made it the catch basin of the modern-day lahar. Today, after that episode, the town is once again *makabakulud*, standing on elevated ground.

When our ancestors came and settled around the Pampanga River, did they realize they were putting up their houses in a battleground? Did they have an actual experience, or at least a memory, of a pre-historic eruption of Pinatubo? Did they know that God created a thousand rivers to run through Pampanga precisely to provide channels for the volcano's vomit to flow to the sea? Was this why they had so much respect for their rivers—not only because they got their daily sustenance from them, but more importantly, because the rivers assured the perpetuation of their race by creating a balance in nature, between a hemorrhaging volcano and the galloping sea?

Today, we have recklessly altered this order by choking our rivers with houses, dikes, farmlands and fishponds. Our forefathers had built their churches and houses facing the river; we did the reverse: our houses have their backs turned and the river has become a mere receptacle of our wastes. Our forefathers had no roads, only rivers; no cars or horses, only boats. It was only the

Westerners who introduced the concept of road, reoriented our town layout away from the river, and slowed down travel. Today we boast we can reach Manila in an hour-and-a-half using the North Luzon Expressway; actually, our forefathers reached Manila in 30 minutes via Pampanga River.

Our rivers have saved the day for us many times in history.

Tarik Soliman and his 40 caracoas sailed from Macabebe to their martyrdom in Bankusay through a river. Kapampangans in Candaba, Guagua, Bacolor, Apalit and even Porac traded venison, indigo and metal wares with the Chinese and the Japanese, as well as with each other, through an intricate network of rivers and canals that connect to Manila Bay. According to geologists, shallow rivers like the Abacan of Angeles, the Pasig Potrero of Bacolor and the Gumain of Lubao used to be deep and

navigable enough for traders and warriors. And it was the Rio Grande that gave conquistadores, rebels and revolutionaries access to the heartland of Luzon, and which served as escape route for the tragic Macabebe Soldiers who were abandoned by the same Spaniards they had defended in the last dying hours of colonial rule.

To really understand the role of rivers in the history and destiny of their race, Kapampangans need only to check the map to see that their province looks like a human heart enveloped by a web of arteries, veins and capillaries, which are actually the thousand rivers, streams and canals that radiate from the mountains and empty into the bay.

THE REASON PAMPANGA HAS A THOUSAND RIVERS IS PRECISELY SO THAT LAHAR CAN FLOW SAFELY TO THE SEA

GEOLOGICAL CYCLE. Ancient Kapampangans called the town Bakulud because prehistoric lahar had elevated it. When the Spaniards came, in 1571, another eruption had just elevated the surrounding towns. Thus, in the next eruption, in 1991, lahar flowed into the now low-lying Bacolor, elevating it once again.

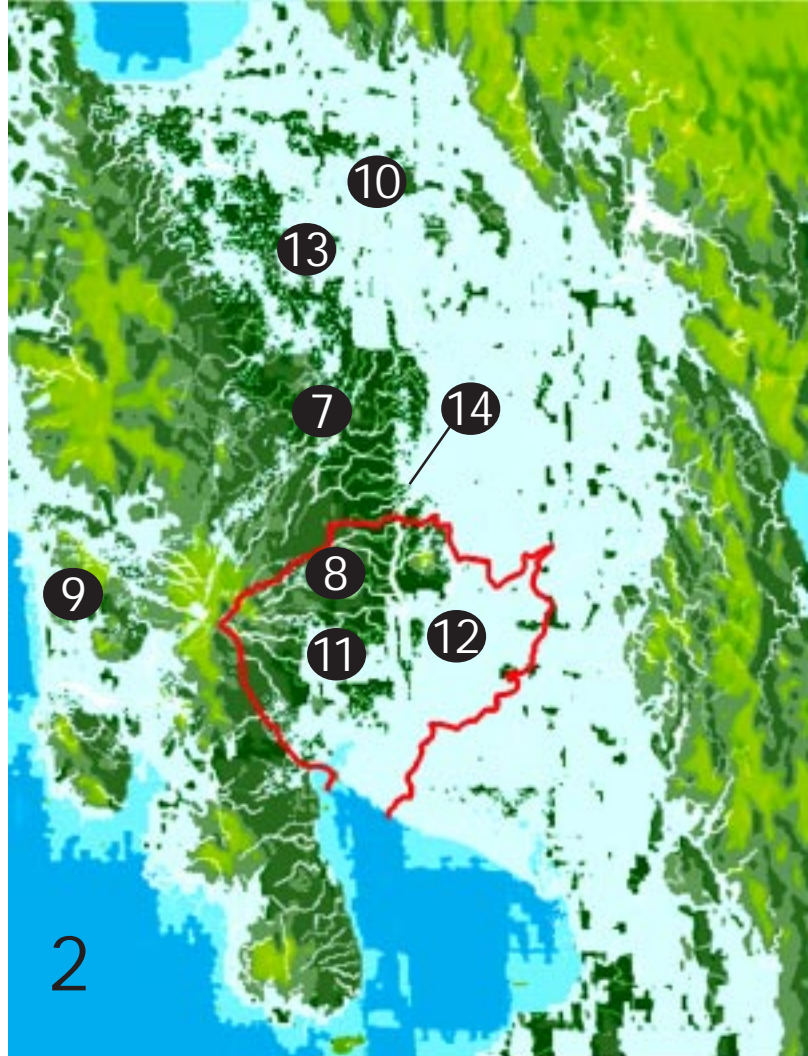
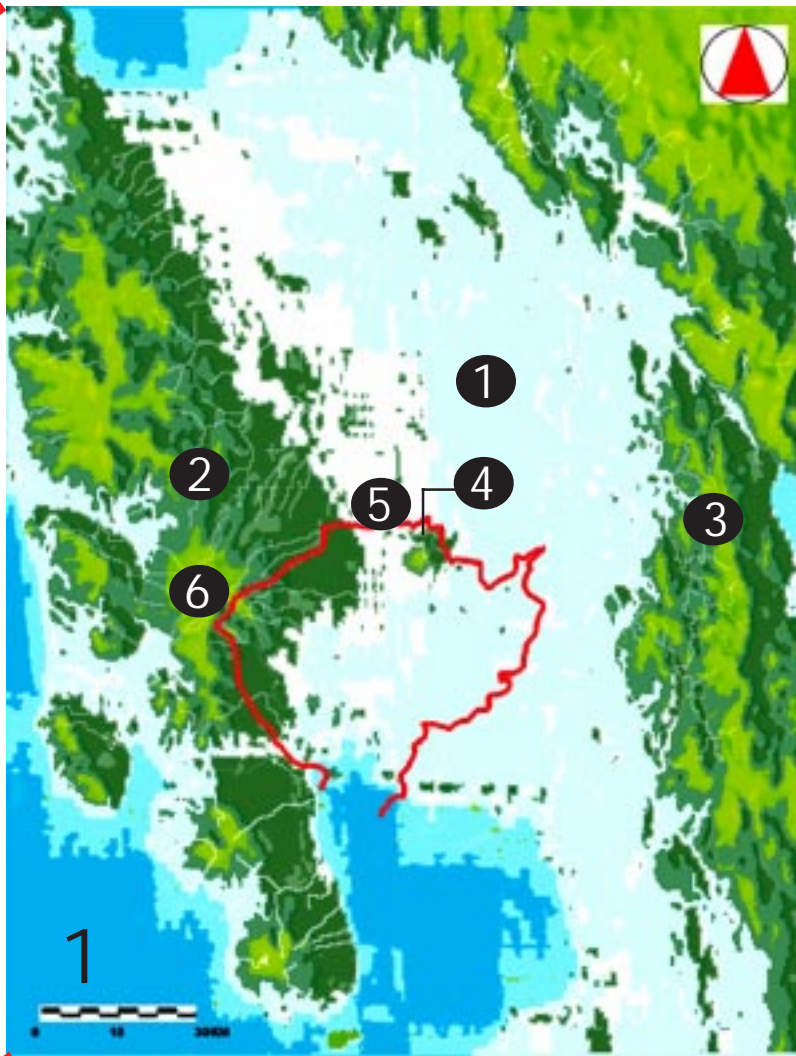


HOW THE VOLCANO RECLAIMED PAMPANGA FROM THE SEA

The province, as well as Luzon's central plain, was under the sea until Pinatubo's prehistoric eruptions dumped lahar all over the place

By Robby Tantingco and Joel Pabustan Mallari
Maps/Illustrations by Joel Pabustan Mallari





1

This series of computer-aided maps reconstructs a probable sequence of geological events that shows Mount Pinatubo's role in the formation of the land mass that Spaniards, only a few thousand years later, would name Pampanga (in red lines).

(1) Much of central Luzon is under water, forming a shallow strait between two elongated islands that will later turn out to be the Zambales Mountain Range (2) and the Sierra Madre (3). In the middle is a volcanic island that is Mount Arayat (4), already dormant at this point, the last eruption having occurred half a million years ago. To its left are a string of islets (5) that are actually the tips of what will be known today as outcroppings and foothills in Mabalacat (the so-called Doña Africa Hill is one of them) and Bamban. Mount Pinatubo (6) has a much larger crater formed by previous eruptions more massive than the 1991 eruption, resulting in early alluvial fanning towards the east that is the future Porac, making the town the first among Pampanga towns to emerge from the sea. A team of archaeologists, geologists and geographers from UP and the National Museum is presently analyzing data to determine more accurately the dates of Pinatubo's prehistoric eruptions.

2

Subsequent Pinatubo eruptions (*Inararo Eruptive Period 35,000 years ago, followed by Sacobia Eruptive Period 17,000 years ago; Pasbul Eruptive Period 9,000 years ago; Crow Valley Eruptive Period 6,000-5,000 years ago; and Maraot Eruptive Period 3,900- 2,300 years ago*) further spread volcanic debris and lahar towards Tarlac (7) and Angeles and Mabalacat (8) on the eastern side, and Zambales (9) on the western side. Global sea level is, coincidentally, also receding, exposing other parts of Luzon like the elevated sections of Pangasinan, Nueva Vizcaya and Nueva Ecija (10). The earliest settlers (there is still debate whether they were the

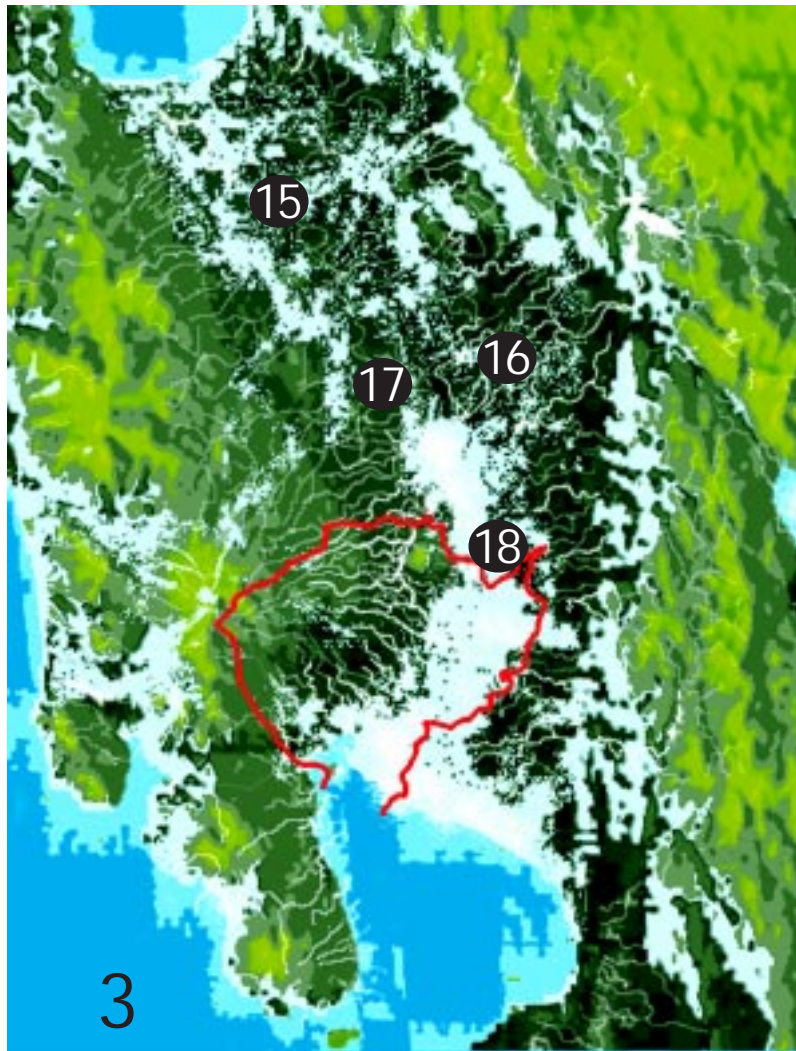
seafaring Austronesians or the aborigines who crossed land bridges on foot) arrive in the coastal areas, which are actually the slopes of the Zambales mountains. Chinese traders also probably reach the area. One likely settlement is Porac, where archaeological excavations will yield artifacts from as early as A.D. 900. Another probable settlement site is the island of Mount Arayat, the most conspicuous landmark in the region. The boatmakers to whom the Candaba Adze is credited probably settled on the shoreline around Mount Arayat.

The seawater in the strait recedes so much that most of central Luzon turns into a vast marshland or swampland. More eruptions of Mount Pinatubo continue to silt the volcano's surroundings, reclaiming more areas that will later become towns, like Bacolor

(11), which the first pre-Hispanic settlers will later call "*makabakulud*," i.e., elevated. The deeper portions of the strait remain underwater, the future Candaba Swamp (12) and Lake Canarem (13) in Tarlac. A sliver of seawater northwest of Mount

Early cartographers mistakenly recorded lakes in central Luzon which were actually only swamps, such as, Magabol Swamp, Lake Canarem and Candaba Swamp.





Arayat (14), site of the future Magalang town, is probably the original route of the prehistoric Pampanga River. Meanwhile, the first settlers may have been buried or driven away by continuing eruptions of Mount Pinatubo; however, other waves of migration persist.

3 As the sea level continues to drop and Mount Pinatubo continues to hemorrhage, the strait practically dries up and the central plain of Luzon is exposed for the first time. Pangasinan (15), Nueva Ecija (16) and the rest of Tarlac (17) emerge, although still swampy and therefore uninhabitable. The area east of Mount Arayat remains underwater (18); this will be the future route of Pampanga River. In the Candaba Swamp area, scattered habitation sites appear on emerging islands and islets, which explains the ancient tradeware and local pottery sherds found in the vicinity. The last big eruptions of Mount Pinatubo (*Buag Eruptive Period, 500 years ago*) occur only less than 100 years before the coming of the Spaniards in Pampanga in 1571, burying settlements in Porac and in San Marcelino, Zambales once again, and elevating the areas around Bacolor, making Bacolor lower than its surroundings, contrary to its name (from *makabakulud*, elevated).

4 This is the landscape that the Spanish conquistadores came upon in 1571. Although the eruptions of Mount Pinatubo have ceased completely, the lahar deposits on the slopes and upstream continue to slide down. The environment having relatively stabilized, more settlers arrive, as well as traders from neighboring Asian countries like China, Japan and Indonesia, lured by the looming Mount Arayat, the fertile volcanic soil and the network of rivers that encourage mobility and inland exploration. The early Spanish arrivals find thriving

communities in Betis, Macabebe, Lubao, Bacolor, Candaba, Apalit and other areas in Pampanga, but these are more like independent states and islands surrounded by palisades and other kinds of fortifications, which give the conquistadores the impression of disunity. Porac is settled by various separate tribes, and several decades after the Spanish conquest, is abandoned again, leaving behind cemeteries and houses that will be excavated in the 20th century. Meanwhile, the plain's depressed areas, the last sections to become dry, become the Pampanga River Basin (19).





5



6

5

In the last 400 years, the residual lahar from the last prehistoric eruption of Mount Pinatubo has continued to alter the landscape of the region. For instance, lahar has covered the original route of Pampanga River west of Mount Arayat and pushed the river farther east, at the opposite side of the mountain. Thus, Pampanga River today skirts around Mount Arayat, flows in a zigzag fashion on the plain (20) until it finds the depressed Candaba Swamp (21) before proceeding aimlessly across more flatland, finally spreads out dendritically towards the sea (22). In the meantime, silt from the slopes of Mount Pinatubo extends the southern coastline of the province, creating an area later known as Masantol (23). Elsewhere in the province, sand and silt gradually fill the intricate web of rivers and tributaries, causing floods. The situation is further aggravated by the phenomenon of subsidence, the sinking of vast areas of land due to the weight of siltation, rapid decrease of underground water due to unregulated use of artesian wells, inability of soil to absorb surface water due to urbanization, etc.

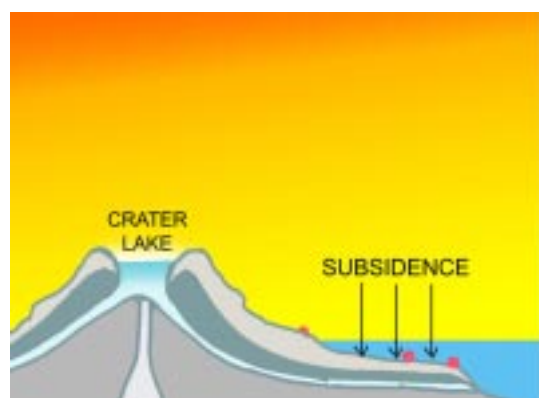
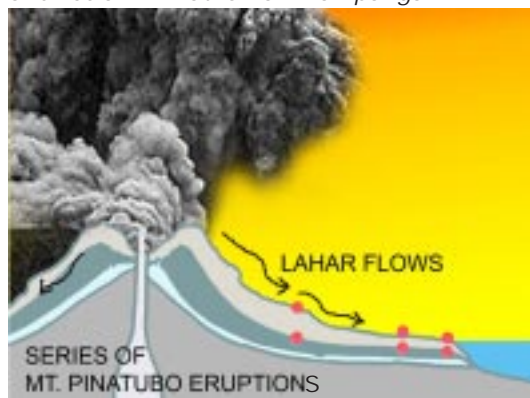
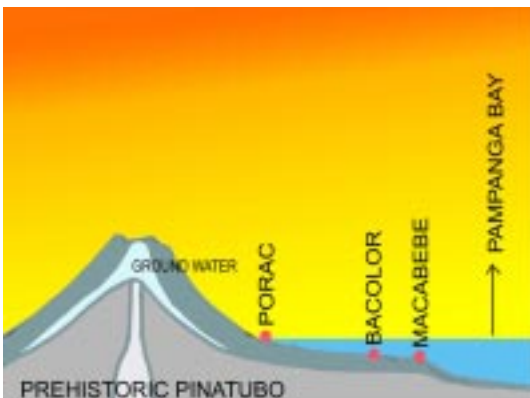
6

In 1991, Mount Pinatubo again vomitted massive pyroclastic ejecta, choking once more the river channels. In Tarlac, lahar is being channeled towards the sea via the Moriones River (24), O'Donnell River (25), and Sacobia-Bamban-Parua River (26), all of which eventually merge with the Rio Chico which in turn merges with the Rio Grande (Pampanga River). In Pampanga, the lahar deposits on the slopes of Mount Pinatubo empty into the following rivers: Abacan River (27), Pasig-Potrero River (28), and Porac-Gumain River (29), all of which merge with the Guagua-Pasak River (which could be the former route of the prehistoric Pampanga River before lahar pushed it behind Mount Arayat). Buried under several meters of volcanic debris, the town of Bacolor is once again *makabakulud*, elevated, while the surrounding towns languish in prolonged flooding. The modern-day eruption may have benefited the province with a fresh supply of soil material, but the added weight, according to scientists, has in fact hastened the effects of subsidence. Thus, Pampanga is sinking back into the sea...again.

PAST. Before prehistoric eruption; coastline extends to Porac

PRESENT. Pinatubo eruptions dump silt and reclaim what is now Pampanga

FUTURE. Subsidence weighs down & causes land to fall back into the sea



SUBSIDENCE PHENOMENON ...AND HOW THE SEA WILL RECLAIM PAMPANGA

Pampanga (Manila, too) is sinking,
and Pinatubo is both the culprit
and the solution



ASIDE from the large amount of rainfall (El Niño), the silted river channels and the rising sea level, there is another reason for the unusually severe flooding in Pampanga in recent times. It's called subsidence. It's a geological phenomenon where an entire regional surface subsides as a result of normal, natural compaction, accelerated compaction, and tectonic movement.

In the case of Pampanga and the areas around Manila Bay, including Manila and Bulacan, the cause of subsidence is accelerated compaction of land, i.e., the porous layer (where you find water, sand and gravel) tightens underground, causing the layers on top to settle down. This is caused by two things. First, people pump up water faster than it can be replaced; in southern Pampanga, almost every house has a water pump (most likely donated by a politician during the campaign). This is where scientists have measured subsidence to be at its worst.

The second cause of accelerated compaction is the lahar that the last eruption of Pinatubo has dumped on the province, which weighs the delta down. As it is, the delta is a soft, sandy area created by the ancient eruption's silt and by the rivers' sand; when you dump tons of fresh lahar on top of it, it slowly sinks.

Dr. Fernando Siringan of the UP National Institute for Geological Sciences (NIGS) cites indicators of subsidence in Pampanga: flood levels are higher; floods recede more slowly; nipa palms and other plants and animals that thrive in brackish water slowly advance upstream; farmlands are invaded by salt-water and become unproductive; water pump poles jut out of the ground.

Government efforts to solve subsidence, such as dike construction and dredging are a waste of resources because subsidence can never be solved. In fact, these efforts only aggravate the problem. For example, dikes upset the floodplain dynamics by preventing the natural buildup of silt on riverbanks during floods, which will eventually elevate the surrounding areas. Dredging, on the other hand, deepens riverbeds to a point where the sea level becomes higher than the river itself, causing a reversal of water flow.

What people can do is minimize the effects of subsidence, like reforestation (which will delay erosion and siltation); dismantling illegal fishponds (which will quicken the exit of river to the sea); regulation of drilling pumps and wells by installing control valves and proper spacing of sites; erection of a water reservoir, so that people don't have to pump water every day, every hour (some pumps are even free-flowing).

These are just measures to minimize the effects of subsidence; it can never be stopped. Pampanga will eventually sink back into the Manila Bay, the coastline will progressively advance inland, all the way to Bacolor and even San Fernando. The only thing that will reclaim the land from the sea is another eruption of Mount Pinatubo, larger than the 1991 eruption, which will dump sand on the province like it did many centuries ago, restarting the whole cycle of siltation and subsidence once again.



Kragi Garcia

Above, 1832 map of Pampanga showing the intricate web of river channels in Pampanga

LIFEBLOOD

On the map, rivers, streams and canals look like arteries, veins and capillaries weaving around a province that's shaped like the human heart

By Kragi B. Garcia

*Gilid mu ilug, sapa king libutad mamagus;
Ngeni bina na kang minalis;
Kabibi ampon asan, atin pa kayang mengatagan?*
From *Lawiwi ning Makabebe*

AS BLOOD runs through our arteries and veins, rivers—being the vital milieu of Kapampangan lives, history, art and culture—run all throughout the region. *Dungan, sanglad, labas, batang, libad, bagse, katig*: these are but a few of very common words recited like mantras by riverfolks in the so-called *mawli* or Southern Pampanga. Sad to say, these words and whatever they represent are becoming extinct at an alarming rate. But then, who really cares?

Comfort is king and modernization is god! Tricycles and pedicabs (or three-wheelers) have replaced their precursors, the *kareta* and *kalesa* (and *karitela*) and have become, aside from jeepneys and cars, omnipresent whether in urban or rural areas. That's notwithstanding pollution, traffic jams and overcrowding. Instead of being the nostrum, modernization has become the poi-

son which brings about not only environmental but cultural chaos as well. Nowadays, very few barangays or towns recognize the importance of the *ilug* and *sapa*. Where before, houses and even churches faced the river, they're now built as though they snob it. Glorious *paro*, *biray* and even the common *bangka* are now in moribund state, if not already dead.

But if one were to converse with one's *makatwa*, one may find his nostalgic longing for the days gone by. Those were the days when everything in everyone's life revolved around the *ilug*. Transport and commerce were done via the rivers; in the pre-Spanish period, even battles transpired therein or in their outskirts. From the very spectacular fluvial parades or *libad* to the very humdrum ceremonies like *kasalan* or even *binyagan*, the rivers were the usual venue. Thus, each *makatwa* has a story or two to relate about them; from folklores to tales about birth or death, romance or enmity and mythological vis-à-vis historical events, from the droll to the sacrosanct.



RIVERS AND GEOGRAPHY. Imagine a human heart and what do you see? It's a muscle full of veins and arteries. Take a close look at an old Kapampangan map and see the similarities. Pampanga is surrounded by rivers and crisscrossed by brooks, streams and canals emptying into the bay.

Barangays or areas within a town are usually named after rivers or brooks found there, like Sapang Batungdalig (birthplace of Aring Tarik Bangku Suliman, the village whose residents made the mistake of discarding unusually large rocks and human bones during a dredging in connection with the Pampanga delta project), Sapang Maka, Sapa Libutad, Sapang Balen, Sapang Maragul, Sapang Maimpis, Sapang Batu, Sapang Pari (said to be the gravesite of decapitated priests), etc. which appropriately describe their location. Otherwise, they're called *pulu* (which does not necessarily mean island but merely village). In the same manner, settlements were named descriptively like Pulung Matalaib, Pulung Dyablu, Pulung Maungut, etc. Other variations similarly refer to rivers or events or things pertinent to them. Examples: *kadwang tete*, *tete matsing*, *kabambangan*, *bambang*, *bitas*, *bebe*, *alawli*, etc. *Dike* (pronounced phonetically) refers to the Arnedo Dike, which almost all *tubung-mawli* know as the 48.2-kilometer dike, constructed during the incumbency of Governor Macario Arnedo from 1904 to 1912. It was meant to protect 14 towns from recurrent floods whose currents, some *makatwa* say, are capable of splitting a *bangka* in two. As a side story, the construction of this dike rekindled the enmity between Kapampangans and Tagalogs. Provoked by their grandstanding politicians, Tagalogs in Bulacan, which is on the other side of the dike, protested by saying that since the water comes from the Pampanga River, the flood should stay in P a m p a n g a .

Kapampangans, on the other hand, argued that Tagalogs are free to fish in the Pampanga River and therefore should take their share of the river's ebb and flow. The debate ended only after they realized that the dike was intended to guide the floodwaters directly to the sea and therefore served the inter-



WATERWORLD. Kapampangans live in houses on stilts in the riverbanks in Masantol.

HISTORY'S FIRST MEGA-DIKE



THE Arnedo Dike was built during the administration of Pampanga Governor Macario Arnedo (1904-1912) when the country was under the American Occupation. The 48.2-kilometer dike runs from Baño in Arayat to Gatbuca in Calumpit; it was intended to prevent the Pampanga River from overtopping its banks during floods. In 1938, a 2.5-kilometer canal was dug up starting in Sulipan, Apalit downstream to further minimize flooding. Today, Kapampangans hardly notice the Arnedo Dike because residents have built entire neighborhoods on top of it.

ests of the people on both sides. Recently, Tagalogs protested again the Pampanga delta project, but that's another story.

RIVERS AND LIVELIHOOD People's livelihood is also influenced, even dictated, by rivers in the locale, e.g., farmers and fishermen from *dayatan* (farmlands) and *ligawan* (fishing villages), vinegar and tuba brewers (*magaslam*) from nipa palm (*sasa*) villages, and even *pinaud* peddlers, and in tandem with them, makers of *salakab*, *swiki*, *bukatut*, *kimput*, *alawas*, *dala*, *kitig*, *baklad*, and other fishing implements. *Anlwaging kwayan* at *pinaud*, obviously, are from nipa-producing barangays. Aside from *kubu*, they build *sawali* (or *dalig bulu*), or *sala-sala* (or *dalig kwayan*). On the side, these *anlwagi* (carpenters) usually also make giant kites (*burarul* or *guryun*), *sanduk*, *tambayuk* and even *parul*.

Inter-town trading, barely existing today, used to be a quite lucrative *baliwas* or *pamanangu* (business) for fishing entrepreneurs via cross-town waterways in Guagua, Sasmwan (Sasmuan), Apalit, Masantul, Minalin, Makabebe and even the Tagalog towns of Orani, Hermosa, Aguni (as residents of Masantul and Makabebe pronounce Hagonoy), Navotas, etc. They sold their daily catch of *apap*, *bangus*, *ema*, *alimasag*, *kabibi*, *paro*, *ulang*,

and also *manuk*, *bibi*, *itik*, *galas*, *pabu*, *dumara*, *pugu* and *wis*, as well as their eggs, either fresh or *buru*, at the *pantalan* or *dungan* or made transactions at the *bagsakan* or, to use a term acquired from the colonizers, *consignacion*. In Makabebe, there's a place they call *palengking luma* which used to be bustling with produce from various towns until the early 1960s. This *palengking luma*, or what's left of it, faces what is now an inconspicuous, almost dried-up *sapang libutad*, formerly the route plied by merchants on *bangka* or *bagse*, long before the advent of *pugpug* and motorized boats. Today, the only active *dungan* are those at Kadwang Tete and Saplad David in Makabebe, Pantalan Arabya in Masantul, and maybe those at Dawe, Saplad and Manyango in Minalin.

KAPAMPANGAN BOAT-MAKING. Watercrafts used to be a big industry in the coastal villages. Kapampangans were experts in making boats of various shapes and sizes and for various purposes. The *lanang* (molave tree, after which a village in



Kragi Garcia

WOMB TO TOMB. The river is setting for all rites of passage of Kapampangans.

TAGA-ILOGS AND KAPAMPANGANS

THE CULTURAL affinity of the two Malayan tribes was fostered as well as limited by the Big River. Both owe their name to the fact that they settled along rivers. Like the *taga-ilog* (people of the river), *ding capampangan* (people of the banks) built their homes beside rivers. Their towns and villages were named after trees, plants and bodies of water—Apalit (forest tree), Masantol, Sapa (the old kingdom in Sta. Ana, Manila, meaning “brook”) and of course, Maynila itself, where the *nila*, or indigo plant, abounded.

From the prow of Martin de Goiti’s flagship as it approached the delta on the edge of the Bay, all the land in sight belonged to only two tribes—Pampangos and Tagalogs. Goiti was not unacquainted with these peoples. Earlier, while exploring the Pansipit River, he had met Tagalogs—and perhaps some Pampangos, too.

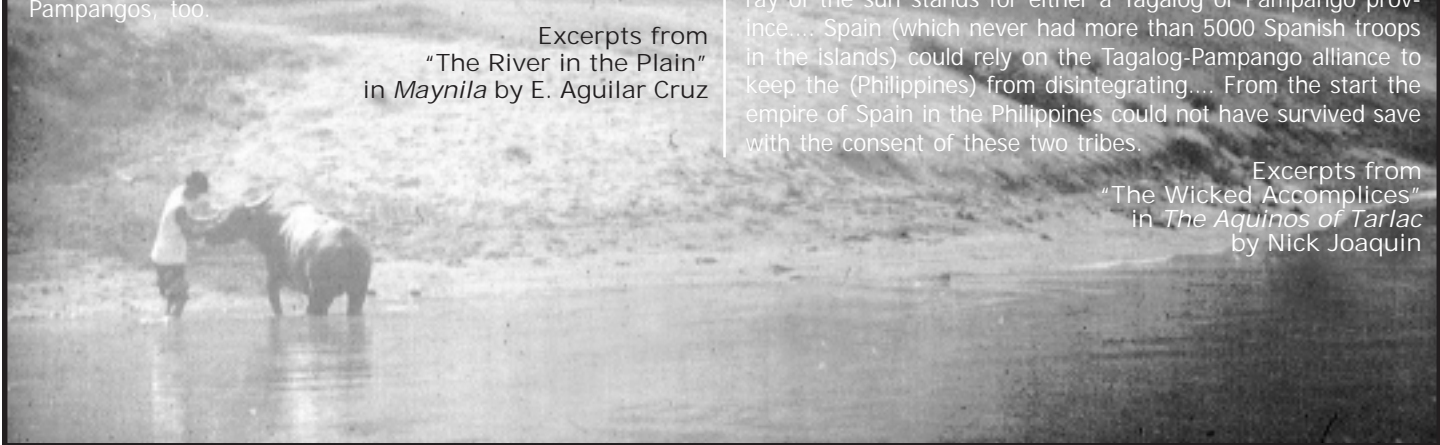
Excerpts from
“The River in the Plain”
in *Maynila* by E. Aguilar Cruz

THE IDEA OF national unity was to begin as this unity of the Tagalog and Pampango country... a counter capital to Manila always had to be within the Tagalog-Pampango terrain—like Arayat, as proposed by Governor-General Basco; or Bacolor, to which Anda removed the government during the British Occupation; or Kawit, Malolos, San Isidro and Tarlac, the successive capitals of the Aguinaldo government. But when the Spaniards, after the fall of Manila in 1898, transferred the government to Iloilo... it automatically meant the end of Spanish rule.... When the symbol of Victorian progress, the railroad, was brought to the Philippines, the first line was, of course, laid along, and further bound together, the Tagalog-Pampango country, connecting it with the outposts in the north....

The role of this region can be read in our flag, where each ray of the sun stands for either a Tagalog or Pampango province.... Spain (which never had more than 5000 Spanish troops in the islands) could rely on the Tagalog-Pampango alliance to keep the (Philippines) from disintegrating.... From the start the empire of Spain in the Philippines could not have survived save with the consent of these two tribes.

Excerpts from
“The Wicked Accomplishes”
in *The Aquinos of Tarlac*
by Nick Joaquin

Kragi Garcia



Candaba had been named) was the primary material for boat-making. For the *katig* (outriggers), they used *impun kwayan* (bamboo) for its buoyancy. For the *layag* (sails), cloth or plaited strips of plants were mounted on bamboo masts with swivels for easy maneuvering. *Bagse* (oars) came in many forms.

The watercrafts built by Kapampangans included: the *karako* (caracoa), the ancient warship which carried the infantry battalion and the artillery; the *biray* or *virey*, the warship commandeered by the *laksamana* (conspicuously named after the character of King Rama’s admiral brother in *Ramayana*), or admiral who was none other than the *lakan*

or *rajah*; the *paró* or *parao*, a multi-purpose boat for transporting large cargos and passengers (owning a *parao* was considered a status symbol, not unlike owning a *carroza* today for religious processions); the *vinta*, mostly for open-sea travels, but hardly used in Pampanga where gale-force winds are rare; and lastly, *bangka* or *baloto*, which has survived to this day, although equipped now with a motor (replacing the oars and rowers but not the *takad*, which is still used upon reaching the *dungan* or port).

Kapampangan boats have a peculiar diamond-shaped *sumanga* (prow) which differentiates them from boats in other regions.

In the latter days Kapampangans ventured into making *kasku*, and were recruited in building galleons by the Spanish *polo* administrators.

PHENOMENON OF SUBSIDENCE. A recent study made by the group of Dr. Fernando Siringan of the National Institute of Geological Sciences (NIGS) regarding the rate of sinking of coastal towns in Pampanga, Bataan

and Bulacan reveals that subsidence has been happening at an alarming rate of 30 millimeters per year. Many factors are said to contribute to subsidence: sea level rise due to global warming, tectonic movements, volcanic activities, the accumulation of sediments in the Pampanga delta which straddles the three abovementioned provinces, and the heavy extraction of water (through water pumps), which compacts the layers of sand and soil beneath us.

RIVERS AND POLITICAL (UNDER) CURRENTS. The extinction of rivers and their tributaries is both a natural and man-made phenomenon. In a Los Angeles speech in 1983, shortly before he died, Ninoy Aquino asked, “What if a person punched you and knocked you down, then offers his hand to help you stand up, are you obliged to thank him?” Most of the *plasdán* or fishponds that have mushroomed around the Pampanga River delta are owned by politicians; whether acquired illegally or not is another issue. Remember the blastings made by then-Governor and now Senator Lito Lapid? Too bad a legislator-friend of then President Ramos was sideswiped by the explosion, and so there went the blastings! These shrewd owners make the people believe they truly care by distributing relief goods (donated by equally



Floodwater in Minalin stays for months



THE VANISHING TRADITION OF BOATMAKING

BOATS started instinctively as part of the human development and adaptation to riverside and coastal environment. Around 3500 BCE, the Egyptians developed carpentry skills for building plank watercraft and perhaps used these for a sickle-shaped boat; meanwhile, in China, ducks probably gave the Chinese the idea making ships as evidenced by the recovery of a 5th-century BCE lacquered vessel in the shape of a mandarin duck. Traditional Southeast Asian ships were capable of sailing across the Indian Ocean to Madagascar Island, and across the Pacific Ocean to as far as Easter Island.

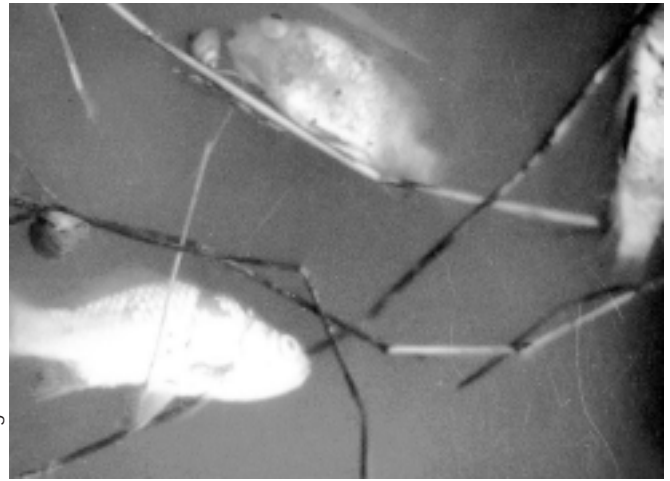
The boats recovered in Butuan, Agusan del Norte were round-bottomed, sail-propelled, rudder-steered and carbon-dated to be from AD 320, which predated European boat construction. In the Kapampangan Region, canoe-shaped boats called *baluto* (var. *baroto*) and *balbaloto* were made by carving out the inner portions of logs using types of *daras* (adze, the oldest specimen of which, the Candaba Adze, is about 5000 years old) and later, *gobia*, *lukub*, *pait* and *balibol*. Only a few boatmakers in Abucay, Bataan (and a handful in Sasmuan and Candaba) still employ this Neolithic technique of boatmaking. Before, most river communities in Pampanga, including Betis, Guagua, Lubao, Apalit and Macabebe had thriving boatmaking industries. The main reasons for their disappearance are the scarcity of skilled boatmakers and the depletion of forests. (Joel P. Mallari)

pretending-to-care civic groups) during floods. They also distribute banlik with trucks marked "For official use only" (that is, for dredging only), but in reality, they use these trucks for digging their new fishponds. They also use their pork barrel fund to construct causeways and "band-aid" roads, which don't last a year, and that's where the rub is—an instant alibi to use their pork barrel fund in a vicious cycle of *patapal-tapal* and the opportunity to pay political debts. Projects like these are usually given their finishing touches to coincide with election season. And these politicians have the gall to demand gratitude from their supposed beneficiaries who are actually the poor victims of their two-faced swindle! As the rivers dry up, *'nu ku po, lakwas lang mikwalta reng makwalta, deng pakakalulu lakwas no mang mekalulu!*

RIVERS AND ENVIRONMENTAL WHIRLPOOLS. It's amazing how local

someplace else?

In addition to what's been said earlier, the extinction of rivers worsens ecological problems. Travelers have replaced boats with the ubiquitous jeepneys and tricycles, whose emissions have poisoned the once-*babaung-duman* Kapampangan environs. Though not as noticeable as before, the repulsive fermentation plant in Sulipan, Apalit continues to oppress the residents in the vicinity. No one has made a follow-up to see if the alcohol plant has indeed stopped dumping toxic wastes into the Rio Grande. Dead fish continue to be seen floating. The *talangka*, which could be enticed with *darak* and scooped up with a *tabu* right in front of one's house during a flood, have all but disappeared. That's not to mention *kabibi*, *parus-parus*, *ulang*, *damuku*, *lyalu*, *likauk*, *bya*, *dulung*, *komun*, *tagokgok*, *balanak*, *tampal bangka*, *alugasin*, *palus*, *kanduli* and the fish of the elite, *apap*. Even the *kobing-kobing* have not been spared.



Kragi Garcia

FISH KILL. Pollution is causing an ecological disaster in the rivers of Pampanga.

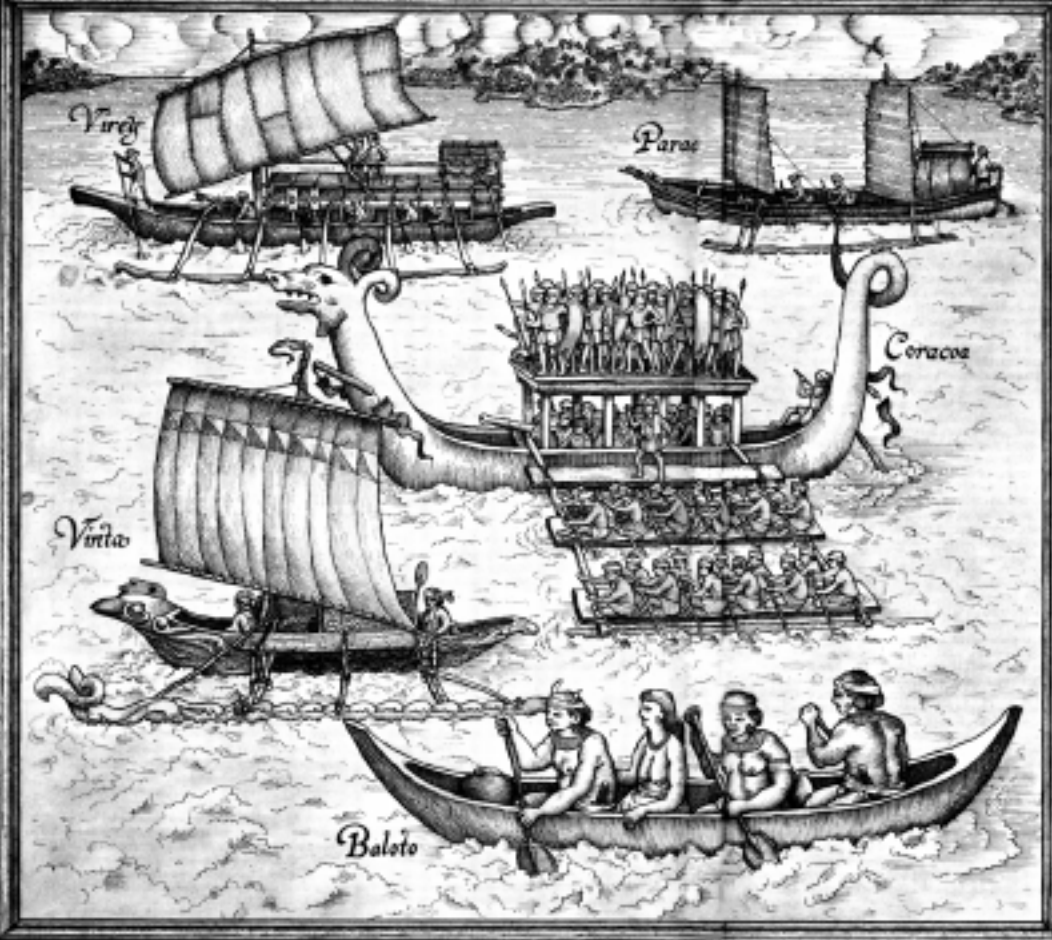
administrators allow, or even they themselves do, squatting on the banks of *sapa* and *ilug*, systematically inching their way and encroaching upon these public domains. *Ila-ila namu reng makinabang at paparusan da la reng malukang keraklan*. And why should they give a damn to the populace when they have their mansions built

Though the *dapu* has long disappeared, one wonders what ecological imbalance and other environmental repercussions its disappearance has caused.

Aside from fish kill, the *pinak* vegetation has been endangered, too, not because of pollution but because of our irresponsible kabalens' wanton exploitation. *Bakawan*, *palapat*, *turumpalat*, *kansasaga*, *kulumanas*, *pandakaki* and the very rare *dalwari* have become extremely difficult to find, indeed.

RIVERS AND CULTURAL RIPPLES. Kapampangans are a festive lot. And since their lives are inseparable from rivers, revelry and celebration are often held near or in the rivers or at least tied up to them. The *libad* or fluvial parades in honor of the town or barangay patron or *patulunan* take place in the rivers. Aside from the popular Apung Iru of Apalit, the Nuestra Señora de Candelaria in Pulu is noteworthy because its libad literally circles Brgy. Pulu which is a river island with a length of only two kilometers. Sasmwan town and a barangay in Masantul have the same patroness, Sta. Lucia, whom residents honor with *kuraldal*. On the feast of St. John the Baptist (San Juan Bautista), river communities explode with a frenzy of splashing and bathing. Locals call it *sangwanan*; bands of revelers armed with buckets of water roam the streets on the lookout for unsuspecting victims, stopping at nothing, even chasing passenger jeepneys or waiting in ambush atop trees. In Masantul and Makabebe, rivers are lined with revelers on both sides throwing plastic bags of murky water at each other like two armies exchanging fire; woe to the boat that gets caught in the crossfire! *Nung e ka bisang mabasa*, the dictum goes, *e ka makipaglibad!*

Kapampangan folklore, mythology and even history are checkered with references to rivers. In Apalit, Apung Iru, patron saint of fishermen, allegedly appears disguised as



The Hondas and Toyotas of our ancestors: viray, parao, caracoa, vinta and baloto



RIVER FESTIVALS. Kapampangans believe that if it rains on the feast of St. Peter in Apalit (above) on June 28-30, it will also rain on the feast of St. Nicholas in Macabebe (below) on September 8-10. St. Nicholas, fondly called Apung Kulas, is Macabebe's version of Apalit's Apung Iru.



an old fisherman begging for food. This happens during the *libad* of June 30 after being displeased with the celebration held during the previous *libad* of June 28. It is also to be expected that one reveler drowns during the *libad* as a human sacrifice to appease Apung Iru or the river deity.

Residents of Makabebe, whose patron saint is St. Nicholas, observe with keen interest how the weather turns out during the fiesta of Apalit; their belief is that if it rains

on the feast of Apung Iru on June 28-30, it will also rain on the feast of Apung Kulas on September 8-10!

There's an old river tale about Apung Kulas: One day, an unbaptized *isik* (Chinese merchant) was rowing his *bangka* during stormy weather. While negotiating the river, he encountered a large, starving *dapu* downstream. He panicked, but just then remembered he had *tinape nang Apung Kulas* stashed in his pocket, given to him earlier by a friar. He threw the biscuit at the crocodile, shouting, "Sanikulasi, sanikulasi, magi ka sa'ng batu balani!" The *dapu* instantly turned into stone and the *isik* was saved. From the river he ran back to the friar and asked to be baptized.

During World War II, according to Huk veteran Eugenio Santos a.k.a. Kumander Kislap of Makabebe, Huk soldiers evaded the Japanese by optimizing their familiarity with the river systems. They launched ambushes from hidden *sapa*

and used canals as their escape routes. He said they even used *tangke kapaya* (papaya stalks) when snorkeling under water, or hid among the *tukal* (water lilies).

Pampanga River is also gravesite for some people, casualties of suicide and homicide; "salvaging" incidents are as frequent as drowning accidents. Bloating bodies of victims of summary execution are seen floating down the *wawa* or mouth of the river, often mistaken for animal carcasses.

RIVER OF TEARS? The term "dried-up rivers" is an oxymoron. Tears, not even a river of them, will never be able to reverse what centuries of warped disregard and shameless exploitation of our rivers have done. One historian once said that our forefathers used hundreds of carabaos in pulling tons of timber and logs from forests to shipyards. Excuse me, but such hypothesis defies logic. Rivers were still everywhere during that time and it was the more convenient alternative to float logs on rivers and canals, from the *ilang* (forest) to the *kabalenan* (town), using skilled Kapampangan boatmen as guides. Rivers need not be worshipped the same way the Ganga or Yamuna are worshipped in India. What we simply have to do is save what's been left of them and give the next generations of Kapampangans the simple but precious gift of being able to behold them still and, hopefully, the bonus of being able to navigate them even once more, just like we used to do.

DEADLY DELTA FISHPONDS

Politicians continue to ignore a major ecological disaster

THE WANTON conversion of ancestral farmlands and swamplands in the Pampanga River delta (Masantol, Macabebe, Lubao, Sasmuan, Minalin) into lucrative fishponds (milkfish, shrimps and tilapia are certainly more profitable than nipa) starting in the 1970s has led to an ecological disaster whose effects are known only to the victims.

The mangroves were the first casualty. These trees once blanketed hectares upon hectares of coastal land, providing sanctuary to native and migratory birds and rare species of marine animals and plants; they also prevented soil from washing into the sea, and preventing saline water from creeping into farmlands and waterbeds.

Today, there is only a thin patch of mangrove trees at the point where Pampanga River empties into the bay. Kapampangans should visit it to marvel at its exquisite beauty and weep that it's all that's left. Farmers in many barangays in Masantol and Macabebe also shake their heads over farmlands that have been laid to waste because the soil has been



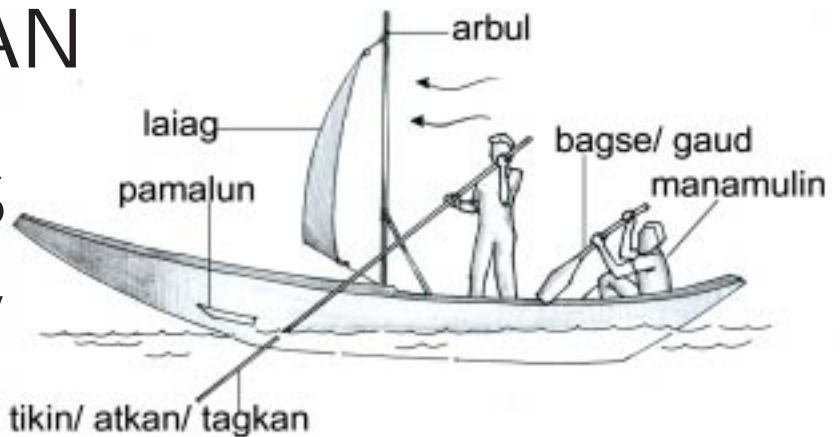
poisoned by invading saltwater.

Villagers living on riverbanks also are perplexed by the phenomenon of the disappearing freshwater fish like *gurami*, *lualu*, *karpa*, *itu*, *tagokgok* and even *talangka*. They say these have been replaced by *bangus*, *paro* and *ema*—not bad except that these are found not in the free waters of the river but in the fenced fishponds; the villagers just have to content themselves with a few that escape into the river.

KAPAMPANGAN BOATS AND BOATMAKERS

Today's fishermen have lost all memory of their ancestors' native wisdom

By Joel P. Mallari

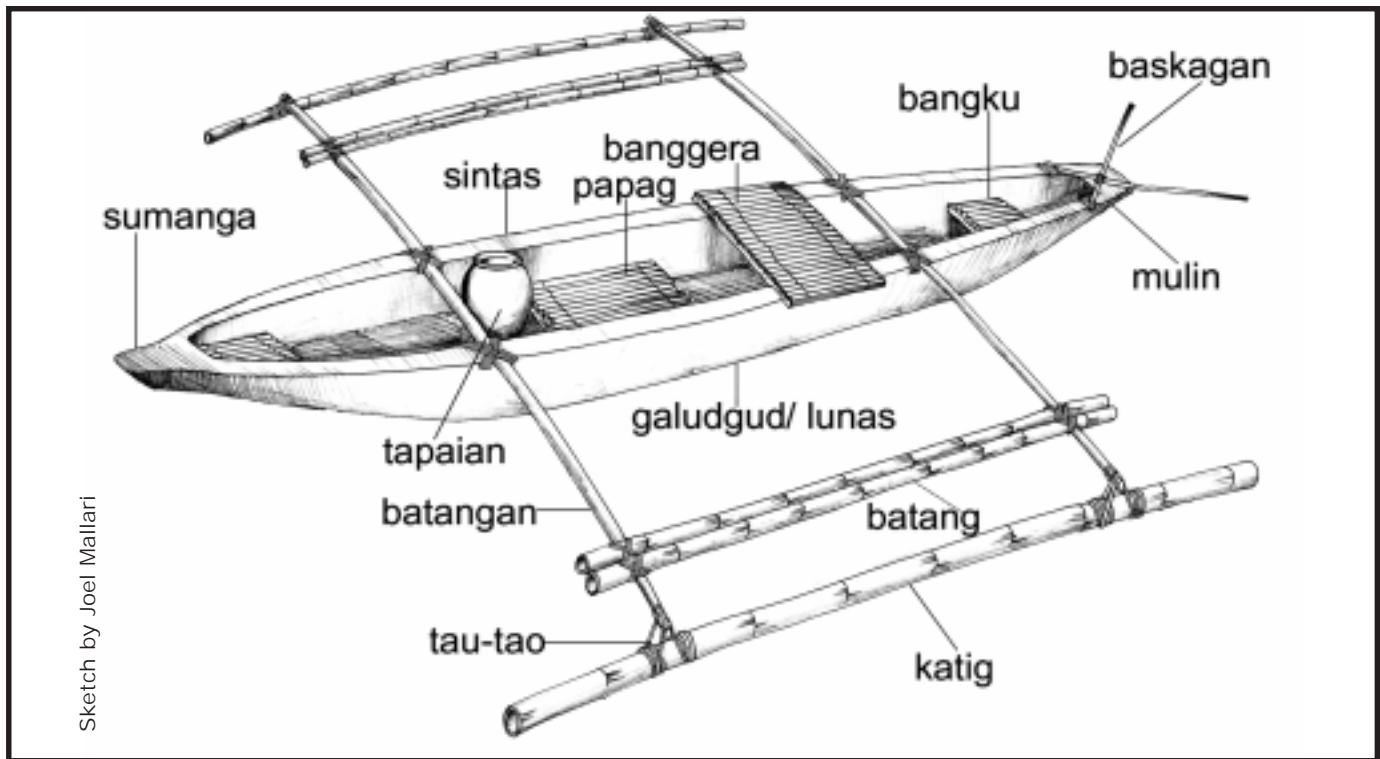


JACKS OF ALL TRADES. Boatmakers (*bangkero*) are navigators, carpenters, fishermen, foresters, woodcarvers all rolled into one. As navigators, they are supposed to be skilled in the art and science of flotation, in the supervision and balancing of *katig* and *batangan* (outrigger parts), in determining the boat's preparedness for trip and the measurements of the *bangku*, *papag*, *banggera*, etc. as well as the direction of the *sumanga* and *mulin* (front and rear of the boat) and how much combined weight of passengers and catch of fish the

boat could take..

As foresters, they must know which hardwoods to use and what age: *bulaon* (or *molave*, *Vitex parviflora* Juss.), *dau* (*Dracontomelon dao* Bico.), *balacat* (*Ziziphus talanai* Bico.), etc. which will be chosen depending on whether the boat will sail in saltwater or freshwater, in river or in open sea. In addition, they should know what time of year is the best time for boat production. For instance, Candaba boatmakers recommend production from February to July.

TYPES OF BOATS. The usual boats are the small ones like *dunai*, which use *bage* (paddle) and *sipid*, valued for its speed. During colonial times, the *casco*, often mistaken for a Chinese ship, was used for transporting cargo. It used *laiag* (square sails). Sometime in the late 13th Century, perhaps as a result of Kublai Khan's thousand-ship raid on Java in AD 1293, Southeast Asian shipbuilders adopted the Chinese feature of transverse bulkheads similar to the local *casco*s often seen in the Pampanga River. The other types of boats seen by the early



Sketch by Joel Mallari

Spaniards were *biray* and *parau*. *Biray* was a small boat with flat bottom, equipped with an *ugit* or *timon* (rudder) and propelled by rowers using *gaud* or *bagse* (paddles) facing coxswain at stern. *Parau* was a large passenger and cargo sailboat common not only Kapampangans but also among Bisayans, Ilocanos, Tagalogs, etc. The Spanish galleons and Chinese junks, despite their sizes, did not astound the locals anymore since it was they who had built them through the policy of forced labor. In the 1800s, the steamships came to be known as *bapor* and *barku* among the locals. They became a common site in Guagua and Macabebe, which prompted locals to rename a local river as Dalan Bapor.

The natives' boats were smaller than the Spanish warships and galleons but it's like comparing a *sibad-dagat* (Pacific tern) and a *manok* (chicken): what the small lacked in size and heft they compensated with speed and maneuverability. These qualities made the natives' vessels suited for sailing along coastlines dotted with coves, islets and shoals; they could easily dock in numerous *bantilan* (wooden ports) in the riverbanks. Some of these boats had *arbul* (mast) where the *laliag* (sail) was lowered; otherwise it was used for drying the *lambat* or *kulumbu* (fishing net made of abaca fiber).

FISHING NETS. The *lambat* is made from woven abaca that is soaked and boiled with bark of *nigi* (*Camptosremon philippinense* [Vid.] Becc. Bombacaceae, common in Pampanga) or *dampol* (*Afzelia rhom* [Blco.] Merr. Fabaceae) to make it durable and color it red, in a process called *dampulan*. The

intricacy of the woven *lambat* is tested when even the tiny *kobing-kobing* (3-inch long needle-like fish) can be caught in its web.

The *lambat* is attached to the *baskagan*, a bamboo pole at the *sangkal* or boat's rear. There are two types of fishing net: *galadgad*, which is used for daytime fishing (when the boat is moving), and *dalungkit*, for nighttime (as well as daytime) fishing (when the boat is generally stationary).

BOAT FIXTURES. Every *bangka* should have a *papag* (bed made of bamboo slats), for sleeping and resting during the long



hours out at sea or river; *banggera* (smaller version of *papag*, used as table); *pamaté alun* (also called *pamalún* and *pamalbal alun*), wing-like extensions located at the boat's front and back, used for breaking the waves, balancing the boat and increasing velocity. For rivers and shallow portions of the sea, a boatman uses a *tagkan* (also called *tikin* and *atkan*), a long slender pole from a *bikal* tree (*Schizostachyum diffusum* [Bico.] Merr. Poaceae) to move and maneuver the boat as it approaches the shore.

BOAT FEATURES. Some boat features are peculiar to the fishing villages or regions they are used. The *galudgud* or *lunas* (boat's bottom) can be flat, semi-flat or cur-

vilinear. *Mulin* (rear) and *sumanga* (front) are sometimes flat or chipped (such as those found in Pampanga) or pointed (or *kinabite*, i.e., found in Cavite), or even carved with designs similar to those found in the wood trusses (rafters) of the Sta. Monica Church in Minalin.

The boat's rim is known as *sintas*; sometimes an additional *tabla* is added to increase height of the *baul* (boat's body). The *katig* (pair of bamboo poles on both sides of the boat) is used for steadying the boat; *batang* are the pair of poles that fasten the *katig* to the boat. Boats found in the Guagua-Pasak River and other tranquil rivers in Pampanga have only a single *katig* on one side of the boat. Some *katig* are tied to the bating with ropes called *tau-tau* to make the *katig* flexible.

MODERN BOATS. As late as 1980s, Sta. Ursula in Betis still produces the old fashioned

bangka. Today, boats in Pampanga are mostly made in Abucay, Bataan. Most are made of galvanized metal sheets, fiber glass, welding rods, palettes of putty, etc. Heavy machine equipment and electric power tools have replaced the old *daras*, *palatio*, *palakul*, *lagari*, *gunting*, *sinsil*, *dakam*, *katam*, *pait*, *arindela*, *sultador*, *lukob*, *pait* and other traditional tools. The young generation of boatmen have also lost all memory of the fisherman's wisdom of their forefathers, like being able to tell by the direction of the wind or the position of the moon and the stars if it's a good time to fish. It is yet another glorious Kapampangan heritage that is about to completely vanish.

LUGAL GABUN AS
LUGAL ILUG

KAPAMPANGANS were no doubt one of the early boat people of the Philippines. The kind of ancient boats they used, the precise period in pre-history and the particular areas they used the boats, can partly be traced to vernacular glossaries. Udiong, Bataan (now Orion) borrowed its name from *udiong*, which means either a big boat or a boat's tip or extremity. *Balbalutu* and *Balutu* are names of barangays in Victoria and Concepcion town, respectively, both in Tarlac Province; *balbalutu* refers to a canoe-type boat while *balutu* is a similar boat (var. *baroto*, small sailboat). Telabangka ("like a boat") is a village in Baman between the Sacobia-Baman-Parua River and Abacan River, and also in Arayat; on the other hand, Arbol ("boat mast") is a barangay (complete name: San Juan de Arbol) in Lubao.

Parua (or Paruao) River derived its name from either *palual*, downstream direction of the river, or *parau* (var. *parao*, *paraw*, *prau*, *praus*, *prahus*, etc.), large cargo/passenger sailboat.

Going back to *balutu*, this small sailboat is carved out from huge logs; the process of carving is called *mangobia*, i.e., *dukot* (carving) using *gobia* (rounded chisel), and other tools such as *lukub* (centering chisel), *pait* (chisel), *palakul* (ax), *balibul* (auger bit) and *daras* (adze, which is the oldest known boat-making tool). Pandaras River in the City of San Fernando and sitio Duquit in Dau, Mabalacat, can be traced to these boat-making terms.

Some of the toponyms pertain to topographical and hydrological terms like *uaua* (Guagua), river's mouth, or the point where the river meets the sea; *macabebe* means coastal or riverbank; *lubao* came from *baba* (n), floating, or *lebajo* (n), depressed area between two elevated areas, in contrast to *bakulud*, which means plateau or to some extent island. Two of the many rivers of Porac

BALUTU NATION TRACING THE EARLY KAPAMPANGAN BOAT PEOPLE

Collective memory of our watery past surfacing in unexpected places like *Tabun*, *Mancatian* and *Bana*, and in unlikely words such as *laut*, *luslus*, *muli* and *dulung*

By Joel Pabustan Mallari



Map of wind directions according to Kapampangan fisherfolk

are called Pasig-Potrero and Mancatian, which mean, respectively, "field near the riverbanks" and a conjugation of the verb ebb (*kati*), or low tide.

In Apalit, barangay Tabuyuk possibly came from the word *buiuk*, a cove or the point at which an inlet is deepest inland, or headwater which can be relative to a next barrio named Malauli which is a conjugation of downstream. Tabun, which literally means a dam, is a common placename in Pampanga, notably in Mabalacat, Angeles and Candaba, and even in Pulilan, Bulacan and in Nueva Ecija.

The *caracoa* or *korakoa* (*cora-cora* in Indonesia) is probably the ancient name of the *vinta*, the larger version of the *baranggay*. Old sketches show the *caracoa* resembling a large *bangka* with a carved beast's head as its bow and a carved curled tail as its stern, with the boat's hull representing the elongated torso of the beast. It has two sets of outriggers carrying more rowers, which increases the boat's speed. It has platforms capable of carrying a hundred or so fighting men aside from the rowers. The Kapampangan warriors from Macabebe who sailed their way to the fateful battle of Bangkusay in 1571 most likely rode in such *caracoas*.

The beast depicted in the *caracoa* resembles the *barag*, the monitor lizard hunted by Kapampangans even to this day for its meat. Diego Bergaño's 18th-century Kapampangan dictionary lists another name for *barag*, *baniás*, which may be the origin of the name of a village, Malabaniás, located along the Abacan River in Angeles (the prefix *mala* means "having the appearance of").

Another interesting point worth pursuing is Bergaño's inclusion of the word *barag-gay*

as another spelling for *baranggay*, which raises the possibility that the ancient boat derived its name from *barag*, whose image adorned the bow and stern of what Butuanons called *balanghai* and what Henry C. Scott described as capable of carrying 30 to 90 passengers on long seafaring trips.

MA(H)ANGIN, THE MANY WIND PATTERNS

Ancient river cruising and seafaring depended on the boat people's navigation skills, which included their indigenous knowledge about wind type and pattern. For example, Kapampangans

recognize the wind blowing from the south as *abagat* (var. *abagatan* or *timug*) in other places), which coincides with high tides. The north wind is *amian* (evident during the month of January), or *balas* in other places (northeast wind is *sabalas*); to fishermen out fishing farther down south on Manila Bay, *amianan* or *amianin* is the northerly wind coming from the Pinatubo area. *Amiang ibat-aldau* is the easterly wind; the west wind is *banaklaut*, while the southwest wind is *salatan*. Kapampangans also have a term for soft breeze, *palé-palé* (evident on the wavy rice fields), and for a gust of wind, *bulos*. *Banas, alasuas, alisuas* and *alinsangan* all mean sultry and humid climate.

ILUG, LABUG, LULBUG...: HYDROLOGICAL ACTIVITY AND RELATED DESCRIPTION

Because of their proximity to the rivers and the sea, and their frequent brush with floods, Kapampangans have become acutely aware of every nuance of water activity and have, as a result, a developed vocabulary for water and its properties. *Kāti, kakati, mankatian, kinati, makati* are forms of the Kapampangan word for low tide or ebb. J.V. Panganiban defines *makati* as a large area of land left bare by the ebb of the sea. *Albug, limbug, lulbug, kalbug* refer to flood. *Dagul, albug, matas* all mean high tide. *Alun, darabulbul, bulubuk, balusbus* mean wave, sound of flowing water, sound of bubbling water, and sound of falling water, respectively.

Susun is the Kapampangan word for small wave, *buiun* is big wave and *buiun-buiun* is a series of big waves. *Padpad* means "carried or pushed by the wave," which is different from *gáto*, which means "float on water."

Waterfall is *puntu* or *baldug* in Kapampangan, while flow or current of water is *agus*, the root word for *agusan* ("where the water flows") and *daragus/dadagus* ("flowing"). *Matabang/Tabang/Tinabang* means freshwater, which is different from *matabsing, maniaman, malansa* and other words to describe how water tastes. *Dayat* means irrigated farmlands (which look like a freshwater lake) while *dayat-malat/dayat-masin* means the sea.

The clarity of water is described either as *malabno, malino* or *malabug*, its density as *malanyo* or *maraiuput/madaiuput*. Lastly, a body of water that's full of vegetation is described as *magumi*.

The river delta is known as *pasig* or *pampang*, while the lowest part, the basin, is called *kotelado*. *Tabun* is dam, *tabun-malati* is a dam-like system for irrigation. *Bambang, paranum, paligi* are all types of irrigation channels; *batas* is the shortened route of irrigation.

Batung-sapa is river stone, *batung mabie* is finely grained stone, *batung mete* and *buga* both refer to frothy pumice stone (the latter also a verb for "spew" if stressed in the first syllable, and "throw" if stressed in the second syllable—clearly, either way, a reference

to its volcanic origin).

KATAGALUGAN REGION: TOPOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

Kapampangans call rivers their *ilug* or *sapa*, and springs their *batis* or *ulu*. *Banlik* is the fine sand found in slow-moving rivers and creeks. A pool of stationary water is *alugan*, which is related to the word *alog* found in old Ilocano and Tagalog dictionaries.

Alugan may refer to the marshy areas of Lubao, Sasmuan, Macabebe, Masantol, Hagonoy and Tondo. These communities surrounding the Manila Bay were probably the Lusung (Luzon) referred to by Gaspar de San Agustin. Thus, the term *Tagalog* might refer not only to the Tagalog ethno-linguistic group but to Kapampangans and all people living in the vicinity of an *alog* or *alugin*, or the rim of the Manila Bay. Tagalog does not refer to people of the *ilog*, or they should have been called Tagelog or Tagilog, as Siuala ding Meangubie theorizes, but rather to the people of the *alog*.

THE PALAEO-ENVIRONMENT OF RIVERS

Ancient Pampanga was dominated by crisscrossing navigable rivers (as evidenced by geological data and early maps) that gradually disappeared over centuries due to flooding, siltation and prehistoric lahar. This slowed down and eventually stopped Manila Bay navigators from proceeding inland. In recent years, this situation was further aggravated by settlement of people, reclamation of land, illegal and irresponsible dumping of domestic refuse and industrial wastes and of course, the 1991 eruption of Mount Pinatubo. Kapampangans are familiar with these phenomena as seen in words such as *bana* (marsh), *pinak* (swamp), *burak* (mire), *labuad* (deep mud), *tarlak/tarilak* (quicksand) and *kabanlikan* or *laiak* (deposit of fine sand caused by ebbing water).

PAULI NA KU, E NA KA LALAUT: EARLY TERMS FOR DIRECTIONS

Ancient oral mapping of places required great skills of referencing and establishing of markers. Rivers were an excellent example of spatial contours that served as markers. *Mauli, malauli, alauli* refer to downstream, e.g., when a Kapampangan said "*Pauli na ku*" he meant he was taking boat and going downstream. The opposite is *pangulu*, upstream (thus, *babopangulu*, a common placename, means headwater, or source of water that becomes the river). *Laut* is the sea, as in *E na ka lalaut* ("Don't go out to sea," although today it means far and applies to land as well). *Luslus* means the boat is bound for south, in the direction of Manila Bay; today it applies to distant travel on land ("*Luslus ku Menila bukas*"). *Dulong* also used to mean go down, usually to the riverbank where merchants sold their wares; today it means go to the market, regardless of its location or elevation.

Ing lupang Kapampangan manimu ia keng danum a kakaul keya...



BARAGGAY in the ancient dictionary is another spelling for baranggay. Did our ancestors name the boat after the lizard?



SUSUN-SUSUN means ripples or small waves, buyun means big wave



DAYAT is irrigated ricefields (dayat malat is sea); pulu means village, which looks like an island in the middle of the dayat

ÍPAN ALTÍ NEOLITHIC BEGINNINGS

Candaba already had boatmakers at the time the Pyramids of Egypt were being constructed, or 3000 years before Christ was born

By Joel Pabustan Mallari

ONE of the celebrated archaeological artifacts in the Philippines is a stone adze (locally known as *daras*), listed by the National Museum as having been unearthed in Candaba although some sources claim it came from Tarlac (the provenance papers may have been part of the documents destroyed or looted in World War II, so we will never know for sure). Today it is widely known as the Candaba Adze. It is estimated to be 5000 years old, which makes it as old as the Pyramids of Egypt. Kapampangans consider the Candaba Adze as their Holy Grail because it points to a Kapampangan civilization, or at least a Kapampangan boat-building industry, long before the Christian colonizers came, in fact 3000 years before Jesus Christ was born.

The adze, which early Kapampangans called *ipan alti* (lightning tooth), was made from basalt with a length of 36.4 cm, width of 9.8 cm and thickness of 4.53 cm. H. Otley Beyer presented this stone to the National Museum during his active involvement

in the 1930s. The recovery of this artifact is a crucial factor in establishing a chronology of prehistoric events which could possibly include the early seamanship around the Manila Bay area.

The early people in the region had learned that a tool with a definite shape and clean edges was far more effective than a flaked stone. They had learned that if they attached it to a pole they could lift it over their shoulder and bring it down with greater momentum of force, exactly the same principle in using a *sarulgamat* (hoe), *palakul* and *palatio* (axes), *piku* (pick mattock) and *masu* (hammer).

The Candaba Adze also provides clues on the early peopling of the region. Relative to this was the indication of the Neolithic Period of *balen* (nation) based on material type and morphology. Consequently this could be the earliest evidence of prehistoric civilization in the region that gives a clue on the settling phase of the people and the beginning of maritime trade (and possible movement) via the Pampanga River located on the western section of the Candaba Swamp. Daras are the pointer of wet rice cultivation which begins from forest clear-

ings that give way to the erection of houses for the rice cultivators and other domesticated crops towards the establishment of a *balen*. This stone tool was obviously designed to cut down trees and carve boats to be used for the exploration of other *pulu* (settlements or islands) beyond the seas. The size of this particular adze indicates it was used for larger boats; in fact it is probably the largest artifact of its kind found in the entire rim of the Austronesian (ancient sea-faring people) Asia-Pacific Region.

Related to the Candaba daras is the archaeological site in Arubo, Nueva Ecija where unearthed flaked stones point to Palaeolithic Age, and the recovered stone implements in Hacienda Dolores, Porac, which include *asung-asungan* (mortar and pestle), *taisan* (grinding pad for metal blades like *palang*), and *ipan alti* (adzes), with associated dates ranging from 12th to 15th Centuries.

As an aside, in Jalung, Porac, old farmers collect *ipan alti* (sometimes called *ipan duldul*, thunder tooth), which they believe have been cut by lightning and thunder (which brings curse and energy) to fell large *dutung* (trees).

Important discoveries on the Neolithic-Period socio-economic development of the settlements around Pampanga River might have been difficult to achieve without the Kapampangan *mandarás* (old boatmakers).

EARLY CIVILIZATION. The Candaba Adze (above, left) is proof that the land that would be known later as Pampanga already had settlers who used the stone implement to make boats (below) for seafaring and trading activities. An exact replica of the Candaba Adze is on permanent exhibit in the museum of the Center for Kapampangan Studies.



Filipino Heritage



Filipino Heritage

BALAGTAS PROPERTY SITE A GLIMPSE INTO GUAGUA'S ANCIENT MARITIME TRADE

New archaeological research in Guagua may rewrite Kapampangan history

By Joel Pabustan Mallari

GUAGUA's old name was Uaua, meaning the mouth of a river. This definition implies the role of this town as an ancient entrepot of transportation that carried not only local and trade goods but also the different cultures brought about by these interactions.

Recently, a team of archaeologists from the Archaeological Studies Program of the University of the Philippines and active volunteers from the Holy Angel University Archaeological Society performed a brief systematic exploration last February 6-8 at Brgy. San Jose in Guagua. Hundreds of artifacts were recovered; some of the initial finds already indicated cultural interactions between the early Kapampangans and their neighbors. This new archaeological site has been named the Balagtas Property Site after the owners, Balagtas-Capuno family. The site has an accession code of III-2004-G issued by the National Museum.

The site yielded significant artifacts among which were (a) a Chinese coin, and (b) a blue glass bead. The coin belongs to the Ch'ing Dynasty (1644-1911 AD) during the reign of Emperor Shih Tsung with reign title Yung-cheng (Yongzheng), who reigned briefly in 1723-1735 AD. This artifact was minted from the Manchu Yon (Yunan mint) written in the Manchu Yon script, found on the reverse side of the coin which no longer appear in the Chinese script. Related to this account was that during the late 1500s the Manchu Yons began to conquer the Ming Dynasty. They established the Manchu Dynasty in 1559 but controlled only a small part of China as rebels fighting the Ming. During this period, foreign demand for Chinese goods grew, causing huge amounts of silver to flow into China from the Americas via the Philippine archipelago and Japan. Coincidentally, this artifact seems to indicate that the early Guagua settlers not only traded goods during the Ming Dynasty but also continued trading with the Ch'ing Dynasty. Thus, Guagua was more than an ordinary entrepot of goods.

The second artifact, blue glass bead, found in a deeper excavation, is obviously older than the coin in terms of cultural period. Chinese documents written for sailors instructing them what to trade local products for, mention different kinds of beads. The lead-heavy beads found throughout Southeast Asia (and Eastern Africa) match the time and distribution of Chinese trade. These multi-wound beads (especially the blue ones) are now identified as Chinese. Another report says that when the Spanish set up the Galleon trade (1565-1815 AD) linking Manila to Spain via Mexico, other markets for Chinese beads opened. Padre beads identified as blue glass beads, copper ruby beads, multi-wound beads and other Chinese types are known in the Americas archaeologically or ethnographically. Trade beads that reached Mexico during the Spanish Period came principally from China through the Galleon trade. Indeed, the "Padre beads" of the American Southwest were



Chinese coins (top) with characters indicating year and place they were minted; blue glass beads (below) similar to the ones above, were found in Guagua recently by the HAU Archaeological Society.

one of them.

A different source may also possibly be seen from this blue artifact. Austronesian speakers from Borneo had settled in southern Vietnam in 500 BC – 100 AD. The pottery styles and jar burials of the Sa Hyunh culture show continuing ties with Borneo and the Philippines. These jar burials contain blue and red glass beads, attesting to the importance of trade to these regions. Thus, these practices with the direct association and/or presence of these beads especially the blue glass beads illustrate continuing links between southern Vietnam and Southeast Asian islands. Noted archaeologist Wilhelm Solheim further states, "I hypothesize that the Sa-Hyunh Kalanay and Lapita pottery traditions had a common origin somewhere in the Palawan-Sarawak-Sulu Sea-Salawesi area and that it was at this point in time and space that a second a main stage in the spread of the Austronesian languages began."

Historically, the role of active trade relations of the different entrepots found alongside the mouth of Manila Bay where the harbor of Guagua used to be strategically located in the northern part contributed much to the generated colonial income derived mainly from the galleons sailing from Acapulco. These galleons brought shipments of silver bullion and minted coins that were exchanged for return cargoes of Chinese goods, mainly silk textiles, as there was no direct trade with Spain.

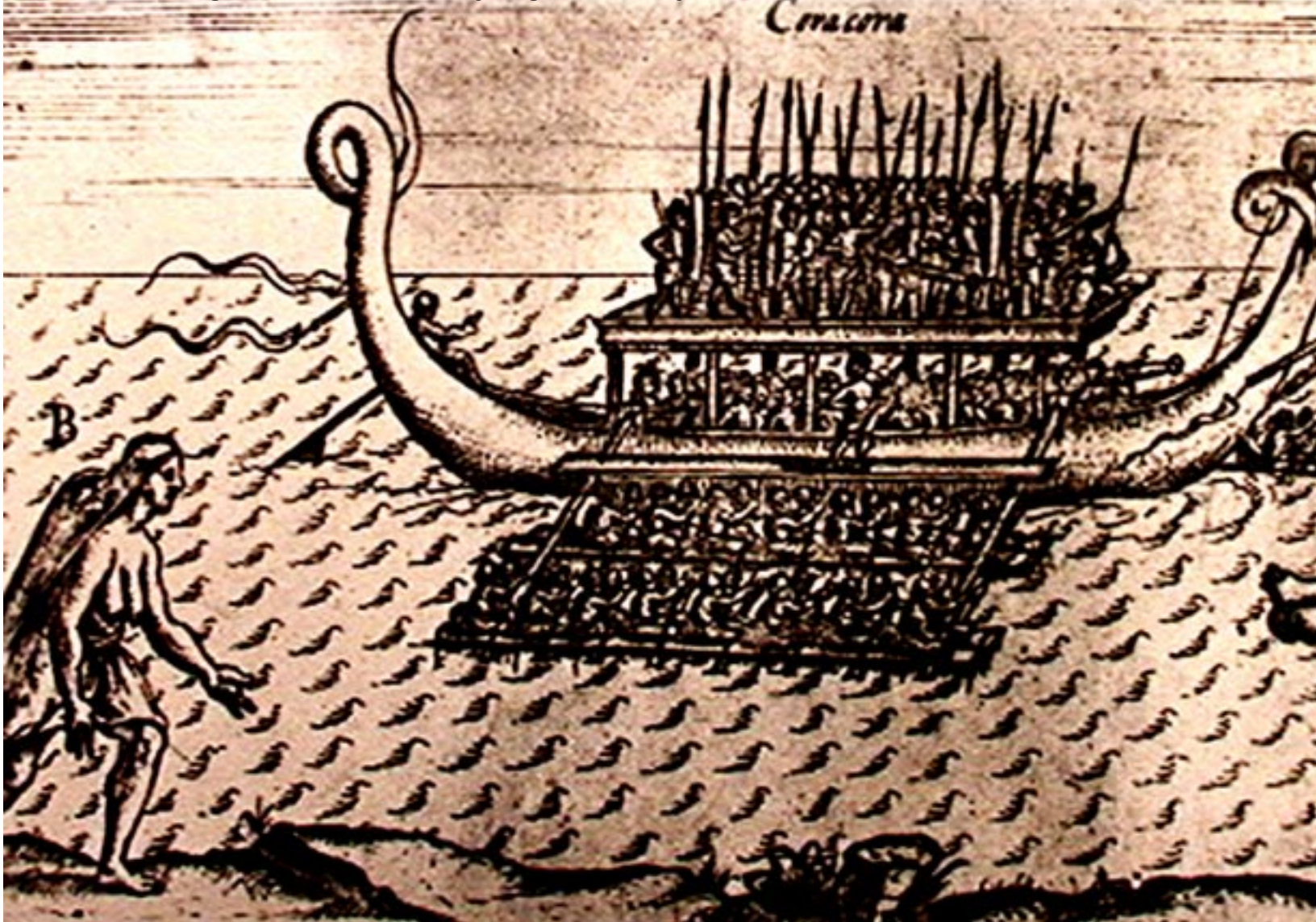
The trading relationship of the Kapampangans to local and overseas commerce has already been proven to be wide and progressive during those periods. Accounts have it that Kapampangans continued their trade with Batavia, until the Galleon trade gave the Spaniards full control over all commerce in the colony. Indeed, at one point Filipinos were not even allowed to leave their village to trade, thus, active freeports like Guagua may well have served as viable entrepot of trade and commerce.

Only two of the hundreds of artifacts unearthed in Guagua have been examined, and partially at that. Yet this preliminary archaeological analysis already offers a vivid glimpse into what could have been the glory days of ancient Guagua and the early Kapampangans.



RIVER MYTHS AND MYSTERIES

Strange burial boats in Lubao, sunken ships in Nueva Ecija, and the Russian prince who came to dine, wine and hunt in Apalit
By Joel Pabustan Mallari, Charlene Manese and the Research Team of the Kapampangan Archaeological Volunteers of Holy Angel University (KAMARU-HAU)



PRE-HISPANIC WARSHIP. Kapampangans as well as other ancient Filipinos used caracoas capable of carrying as many as 200 warriors. The first Filipino to die fighting for his country, "a young warrior from Macabebe," used such boats in the Battle of Bangkusay in 1571.

1. THE ONCE-MIGHTY PORAC RIVER

Ancient Porac was in the vicinity of a seashore

THREE PREHISTORIC settlements in Porac, one unearthed by anthropologist H. Otley Beyer's team in 1939 (Hacienda Ramona site), another by archaeologist Robert Fox in 1959 (Balukbuk site), and the third by the National Museum in 1999 (Bábo Balukbuk or Upper Balukbuk site) which was explored further by the UP Archaeological Studies Program in 2002, raise the question of why the settlers built relatively large communities high up on the foothills of the Zambales Mountain Range. Their location seemed not consistent with the usual pattern of

thriving communities along major rivers and seashores.

One theory is that centuries ago, the coastline of Pampanga was not in Masantol where it is now, but in Bacolor or, at most, San Fernando, which means that Porac was just in the vicinity.

Another theory says that the ancient Porac River, which today is nothing but a shallow brook, was navigable enough for large water vessels from Manila Bay, and that the subsequent eruptions of Mount Pinatubo, years (not centuries) before the Spaniards arrived in 1571, silted the river and either destroyed the communities or forced the inhabitants to abandon them. Old folks in Lubao town, located downstream where Porac River joins Gumain River to become the Porac-Gumain River, claim that in the 1960s, they saw what looked like large wooden boards floating in the river. The boards, between 12 and 16 feet long, were roughly cut



Maymaná Cocodrilo de que fhan ilenas las rias de ellas Zelas. 2. Sawa Culebra muy grande. 3. En distoñta Jaque arando con un Carabao, ó B. falo. 4. Luzes, en que se pila el arroz, y d donde se llama Luzes y la Oñala.

Kasaysayan

BAPU DAPU. Crocodiles once infested the entire stretch of the Pampanga River, resulting in the presence of the reptile in Kapampangan mythology, art and architecture, and in toponyms such as Sapang Dapu, Babang Dapu, etc.

(possibly by axe) and had holes in them, which made the folks speculate that they must have been parts of a large ancient boat washed down from upstream Porac River, which they believe to be navigable in the distant past.

Were the settlers Kapampangans? Or were they the dreaded Zambal headhunters who periodically went down from the mountainsides and raided towns in Pampanga? Tradeware ceramics as well as iron-tipped weapons and tools had been dug up by the archaeologists in Porac. What did the settlers barter with the traders? Lino Dizon theorizes that since deer thrived on the slopes of the Zambales Mountain Range (J. Mallat wrote that in 1819, more than 7000 stags were killed in a single Tarlac

pueblo), the settlers in the upland communities in Porac may have produced deer products like venison (prized meat then) and deer hide (used as samurai armor vest). (J. Mallari)

2. WERE BETIS AND LUBAO AS BIG AS CEBU?

The conquistadores found thriving Muslim communities here

THE EARLIEST Spanish chronicles show that the first settlements in Pampanga were situated along the major waterways. Miguel Loarca listed these ancient settlements with their corresponding population figures, thus revealing a comparison between Pampanga settlements and those in other parts of the archipelago:

Vitis (Betis)	3,500
Lubao	3,500
Cebu	3,500
Calonpiti (Calumpit)	3,000

Macabebe	2,600
Candaya (Candaba)	2,000
Vigan	1,600
Malolos	800
Negros	700
Mindodo (Mindoro)	500
Ylocos (Ilocos)	500
Guiguinto	400
Tondo	350
Vohol (Bohol)	200
Pandacan	150

Most if not all of these communities thrived along or close to riverbanks and coastal areas for two basic reasons: abundant resources and accessibility of transportation. This is true for all the great cities and civilizations of the world.

Sea-faring vessels penetrated island interiors through navigable rivers. One example of this is the Pampanga River. The early Spaniards called it the Rio Grande de la Pampanga (Great River of Pampanga) owing to its width and depth and length. The river originates from tributaries in Mount Lagsig and Mount Mingolit in the southern Caraballo Mountain Range, opposite Magat River. That area used to be part of Pampanga when the province extended all the way to Balete Pass in the north and Orion, Bataan in the south, or 125 km wide and 175 km long, in the 1700s. (J. Mallari)

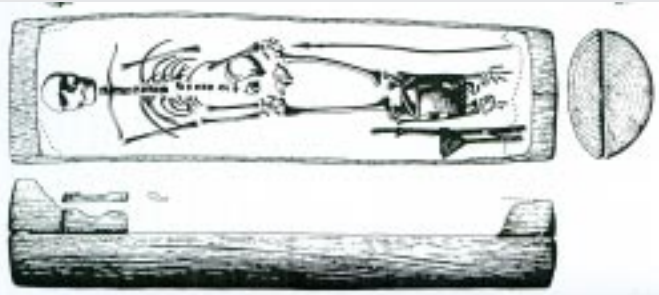
3. LUBAO'S ANCIENT BURIAL BOATS

Skeletons turn up during a flood

OLD civilizations all over the world observed a variety of elaborate burial rituals, one of which involved boats. The Vikings, for example, interred their dead in boats or ships, as in Oseberg, or in graves on land with stone markings in the form of a ship, as in Lindholm Høje. Around 3000 BCE the practice of burying actual boats along with the dead evolved in Egypt.

BOAT COFFINS

ALFREDO Evangelista of the National Museum says that archaeological evidence and early ethnographic accounts by Spanish chroniclers indicate that the disposal of the dead in hollowed-out wood has a long tradition in the Philippines. It evolved along with other forms of burial, like inhumation by wrapping the corpses in mats, or with tree bark, and interment of corpses or skeletal remains in jar containers inside caves, under the ground or in open air (e.g., cliffs, trees). Evangelista even goes as far as saying that burial by boat coffin is as old as burial in a jar, as recent archaeological activities in Palawan's Tabon Cave proved. If the Lubao boat coffins are authenticated (granting they are still retrievable), they may date back to between 710-890 BC (same as Nakavajayan) and AD 960-1279 (Sung Dynasty) and AD 1279-1368 (Ming Dynasty).



LITERALLY. In San Vicente, Sto. Tomas, the casket capital of the Philippines, a coffin doubles as a boat.

Austronesians such as the many ethno-linguistic lowlanders living in pre-colonial Philippines had this reflected culture. Archaeological excavations in Nakavajayan, Batanes, for instance, have produced what seem to be boat-shaped stone markers, as well as burial jars, dating back to 1595 A.D. In Palawan, Chamber A of the Manunggul Cave turned up a burial jar (710-890 B.C.) with anthropomorphic figures on top of the cover, representing souls paddling from a boat on their way to the afterlife. The *sumanga* (stern) of this miniature *práð* (boat) had been carved in the form of a human face with eyes, nose and mouth. This motif is still found in conventional sea vessels of Sulu, Borneo and Malaysia.

Researchers of the Center for Kapampangan Studies, together with Dr. Rordrigo Sicat, author of *The Kapampangans*, recently interviewed old folks in Dr. Sicat's hometown, Lubao, living near the now-heavily silted Gumain River. According to them, during the great flood of 1972, an eroded section of the protective dike near the property of a Pablo de la Peña in Brgy. Gumi turned up several boat-shaped coffins. They described the finds as canoe-shaped *kabaung*, inside of which were the skeletal remains of what appeared to be at least six-footers. Beside the skeletons, the interviewees claimed, were indigenous and tradeware ceramics: blue-and-whites with floral patterns they recognized as *losa*, brown stoneware dragon jar ("*balangang atin ubingang makabatibat na kule malanging dutung*"), and local earthen pots

like *kuran* and *banga*. Each coffin measured between 12 and 18 feet long, carved out of the trunk of a *bulaon* tree (*Vitex parviflora* Juss.). Not quite knowing what to do with their morbid discovery, the people of Lubao broke up the coffins and made them into handles of hammers, axes and bolos, as well as farming implements. The bones, meanwhile, were collected and put in a sack, brought to the church for the priest's blessing, and then buried in the town's cemetery. (J. Mallari)

4. FACTORIA AND THE SHIP THAT SANK IN NUEVA ECIJA Did Spanish galleons sail as far as the headwaters of the Pampanga River?



Pedro Arcilla wrote that as recently as the early 1900s, large boats could still navigate the Pampanga River from Manila Bay all the way to Cabanatuan City and other Nueva Ecija towns. In fact, a parish document in a Nueva Ecija town mentions a *casco* (old folks there say it was a Chinese junk, others say it was a Spanish galleon) that sank during a storm in the early 1800s in that upstream section of the Pampanga River that flowed through the town of Factoria. An old resident of San Isidro town (present name of Factoria) allegedly recovered a part of this sunken ship's rudder which is now displayed in his private museum, awaiting scientific verification.

In 1925, the old church of San Isidro fell into the Pampanga River during the height of a typhoon—proof of how destructive the currents of that upstream segment of the Rio Grande could be. Moreover, the toponym of Factoria implies three possibilities: first, as factory of bricks (the *ladrillos*, *tejas*, *tenejas* and *baldosas* of colonial churches were made of baked red clay abundant in the peripheries of the river); second, as foundry of bells (the churches of Factoria, Cabanatuan, Gapan, Cabiao, Arayat, Candaba, Sta. Ana, Apalit, Calumpit, Hagonoy and Macabebe, all lining the Rio Grande, are all facing the river and have similar bell designs); and third, as shipyard supplying all kinds of water vessels throughout the region.

Lino Dizon adds that the old town of Factoria controlled the tobacco industry in the North and was the capital of Nueva Ecija at the time. Indeed, this once-thriving town, formerly within the boundaries of the Kapampangan Region, owed all of this to its proximity to the Pampanga River. (J. Mallari)

5. THE SASMUAN-CABIAO CONNECTION

This upstream town served as haven to Kapampangan refugees

IN THE *Sasmuan Papers* of the Luther Parker Collections (c.1900), there is a claim that Factoria became the capital of



HIDING PLACE. Whenever times got rough, residents of Sasmuan evacuated to Cabiao, Nueva Ecija (then part of Pampanga) through the Dalan Bapor, San Fernando River and Pampanga River. Next to Cabiao, the Nueva Ecija town of Factoria (now San Isidro) became capital of Pampanga in 1762-65 when Bacolor was the interim capital of the Philippines, or so documents say.



The once-prosperous town of Mexico started declining after an 1883 quake destroyed the church and most of the community.

Pampanga in 1762, when the British invaded Manila and the country's capital was moved to Bacolor. The territory of Pampanga extended all the way to Nueva Vizcaya and the province of Nueva Ecija was not yet existing. The provincial *alcalde mayor* (Governor) of Pampanga, a Señor Biron, was residing in Factoria, when British soldiers invaded Sasmuan through the town's Manglares River. (A barrio in Sasmuan is called Estaca, from the Spanish word *estacadas* or stakes put up in the river to prevent entry of invaders.) Señor Biron ordered all the residents in the eastern section of Sasmuan (then still named Sexmoan) to evacuate to Cabiao (then still part of Pampanga). However, a group of women headed by Doña Magdalena Pineda presented a written protest against the order to evacuate citing the inconvenience of moving

to Cabiao. After the British left the country in 1765, the Philippine capital was returned to Manila and apparently, Pampanga's capital was returned to Bacolor and thus ended Factoria's brief shining moment in history.

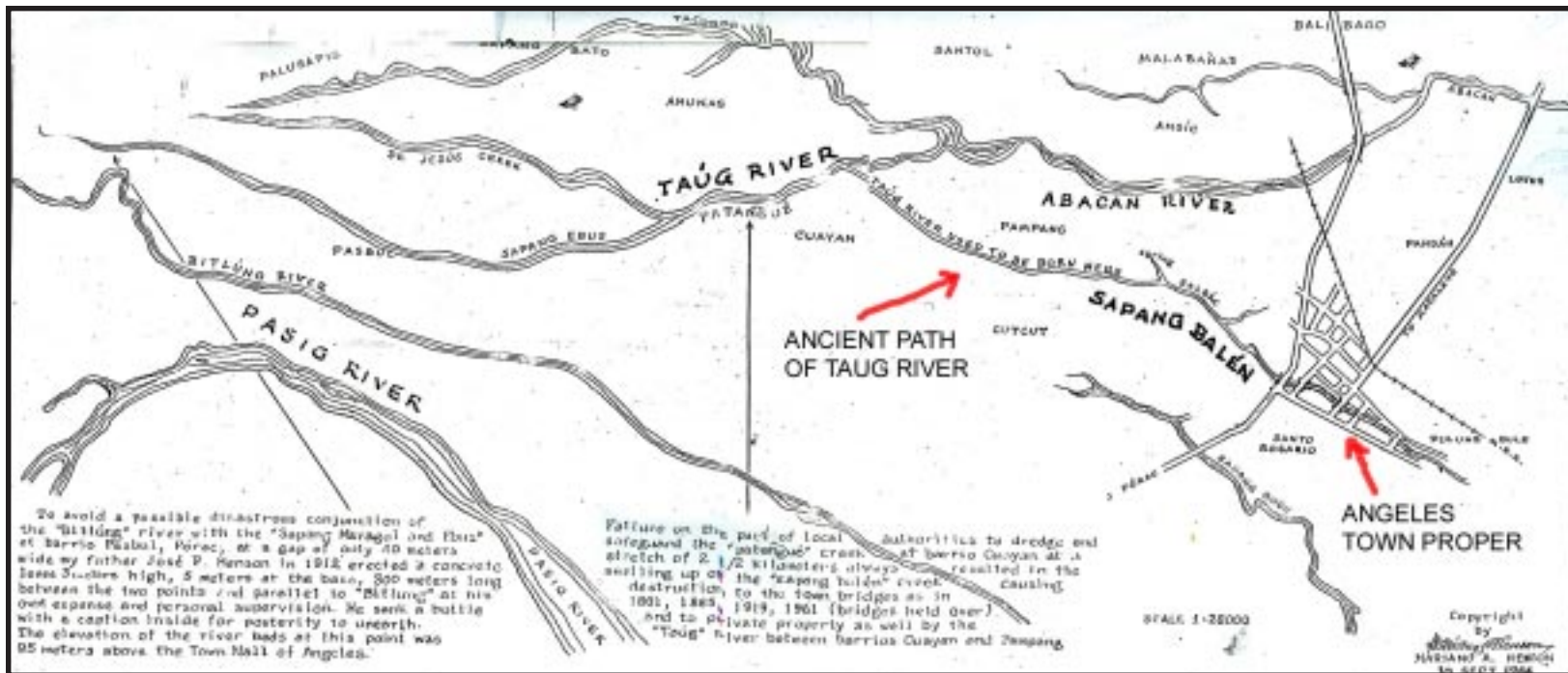
But Sasmuan's connection with Cabiao did not end there. In 1808, after Sasmuan's church burned down, there was a disagreement among townspeople where the new church and convent should be built. Those living in the northern part of the town wanted it built in the middle of the town, while those in the southern part preferred its present location (beside the river). As a result of the disagreement, many residents moved out to Cabiao and others to barrio Tapulac in Orani, Bataan. The convent was built on the riverbanks on the right side of the present church, but was soon destroyed by erosion as a result of constant swelling and battering of waves and water surges caused by steam boats and other water vessels frequenting the river (connected to the Dalan Bapor River of Guagua). A new smaller convent was built on the left side of the belfry in 1856.

6. MEXICO: PAMPANGA'S CAPITAL BEFORE BACOLOR? Bacolor was the provincial capital only from 1755 to 1903

BACOLOR started functioning as capital of Pampanga in 1746 and officially became capital only in 1755, or 184 years after the Spaniards created the province and seven (7) years before it became the interim capital of the Philippines. The town served as the provincial seat of government until 1903, when the capital was moved to San Fernando. In *Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas*, Gaspar de San Agustin, OSA wrote that the provincial capital prior to Bacolor was Mexico town, which is not surprising because Mexico was one of the oldest and most prosperous communities in Pampanga. The province's oldest surviving church structure is found in San Jose Matulid; the town has a barangay named Parian which indicates the presence of a thriving community of Chinese merchants before; and a tributary to the Pampanga River links Mexico directly to Manila Bay passing through the important towns of San Fernando, Bacolor, Guagua, Sasmuan and Macabebe.

7. SAPANG BALEN AND ITS VIOLENT PAST Angeles City lies in the path of an old, forgotten river

When the city's founder Don Angel Pantaleon de Miranda and wife Doña Rosalia de Jesus, came to Kuliat, the northernmost barrio of San Fernando, to establish a new town, they chose the area around the Sapang Balen creek which at that time was surrounded by lush vegetation. Thus, the two oldest streets, Sto. Rosario and Miranda, run parallel to the creek on both sides;



1964 sketch by historian Mariano Henson showing the river systems affecting Angeles City: the Taug River which originally flowed into Angeles City now turns to join Abacan River; the Sapang Balen (below, left) now occupies Taug River's former path. During the lahar flows in the 1990s, Pasig Potrero River (lower left) almost overflowed upstream to join Taug River, which could have buried Angeles City instead of Bacolor.



the oldest mansions are found along these two streets, as well as the church, the old municipal hall (now museum), old *camalig*, etc. The important barrios of Kuliát (now Angeles) are in fact located around the Sapang Balen: Pampang, Sto. Domingo, Cutcut, San Nicolas, San Jose, Sta. Trinidad, Sto. Rosario and Pulung Bulu. .

The creek may seem harmless but its present tranquility belies a violent past. Mariano Henson's *A Brief History of the Town of Angeles* notes that on July 20, 1881, "A typhoon and a heavy downpour of rain caused the treacherous Taug salient, which used to originate at the southwesternmost tip of barrio Pampang, to swell up to a murky, clayey tone into the Sapang Balen Creek, causing the destruction of the three bridges of 1850 and carrying away three houses from barrio San Jose. It is said that before 1796 the Taug sometimes went a few hundred yards behind the present church during protracted heavy rainfall."

A similar devastation occurred in 1972 when Sapang Balen washed away dozens of houses in San Jose, and again when Mount Pinatubo erupted on June 15, 1991, when the creek overflowed into downtown Angeles.

Sapang Balen is actually the ancient path of Taug River; at some point in the distant past, Taug turned and elbowed to-



Early 1800s map showing the Parua (Bamban) River but not the more major Tacobia River which is supposed to flow from the west towards Mabalacal and elbows to merge with the Parua River.

wards Abacan River, leaving behind a dried-up riverbed on which Brgy. Cuayan, Carmenville Subdivision and the city proper eventually stood. Today, somewhere near the subdivision, a spring appears and flows into what is now known as Sapang Balen, but there is always the danger that Taug will become so flooded that it will overflow the dike, reclaim its ancient route, reconnect with Sapang Balen and head straight towards the city proper. During the height of the lahar threat in 1992-1994, this doomsday scenario almost happened when lahar from the mighty Pasig-Potrero River, which turned out to be only a few meters away at some point upstream, nearly spilled over into Taug River. Had that happened, the lahar that eventually buried Bacolor would have buried Angeles City instead. (C. Manese)

8. THE MYSTERY OF THE SACOBIA RIVER

The mighty river probably did not exist before the 1850s

SACOBIA River, which became a byword during the lahar season in the 1990s, is one of four major rivers emanating from the eastern slope of Mount Pinatubo itself (the others being Abacan, Pasig Potrero and Porac-Gumain). Strangely, however, Sacobia River does not appear in maps made during the entire colonial period until mid-1800s. Cartographers could not have missed such a major river, considering that even creeks in the vicinity of the Sacobia River are depicted.

Is it possible that Sacobia River did not exist before mid-1800s?

There is a theory that it may have been formed, probably due to a lake breakout on the slopes of Mount Pinatubo, in the 1850s. Sometime in 1856, the town of San Bartolome in southern Tarlac was completely swamped with floodwaters from Parua, the river's old name. Parua may have been the downstream name of Bamban River (*Sapang Mabanglu*). 1856 may have been the year Sacobia River was formed; it elbowed away from Mabalacat (in a spot called *Maskup* in sitio *Bana*) to merge with the Bamban River before proceeding to Concepcion and draining into Rio Chico.

Another puzzle is the name "Sacobia." Nobody knows what it means or to whom it refers. It is not a Kapampangan term and there was no Spaniard or Filipino who went by that name. The fact that residents in the area have no indigenous name for it raises the possibility of its recency.

9. RUSSIA'S GRAND DUKE CAME BY BOAT

The world's rich and famous traveled all the way to Apalit



Alexis Alexandrovich, Grand Duke of Russia

DURING colonial times, elegant mansions of rich Kapampangan families lined the Rio Grande, the most famous of which was that of Don Joaquin Arnedo Cruz and Doña Maria Sioco Arnedo, in Sulipan, Apalit. "(Their) combined fortunes...created a lifestyle of leisure and luxury unmatched elsewhere in the archipelago," writes Gene Gonzales in his book *Cocina Sulipeña*. The couple frequently threw lavish parties for their guests who came from Manila via the bay and

Pampanga River (the Arnedos had a small pier) and stayed at least two nights and three days. They were pampered with the best of

Kapampangan hospitality: multi-course dinners accompanied by orchestra music, Spanish cuisine and its local adaptations, wines from Spain and France, canopied beds, Sulipan-monogrammed French porcelain washbasins and urinal pots, hotel-like room service, etc. Among the guests were Governors-General, Archbishops, Jose Rizal, Gen. Arthur McArthur, Gen. William Howard Taft, and Prince Norodom I of Cambodia, who had an alliance with the French, who in turn had an alliance with the Spaniards, who were assisted by Kapampangan soldiers in the Cochin-China War of 1868. The Prince reportedly fell in love with a local maiden, Pepita Roxas of the next town Calumpit, Bulacan. But the best-cherished visit to Sulipan was that of Alexis Alexandrovich, Grand Duke of Russia and son of the Czar himself. While in Pampanga, the Russian Duke hunted birds in the surrounding marshes, and boar and deer in the mountains. In gratitude, he gifted his gracious hosts with a whole set of monogrammed porcelain dinner set.



Guagua Church circa 1900

10. THE LOST CANNERY OF GUAGUA

Why a small tributary in an interior town is called *Dalan Bapor*

It's amazing how something so big could be erased without a trace so quickly. The town of Guagua has always been a commercial hub, even as early as pre-Hispanic times when it was a thriving community of Moros who traded with Chinese merchants. The Pasak-Guagua River which connected with the Rio Grande served as the highway of cargo ships doing business in the town; a tributary to this river is what used to be known as Dalan Bapor (literally, ship's way), which today is just a shallow canal after the eruption silted it. But at least until World War II, it was the scene of intense economic activity because it led to a cannery located in what is now a subdivision beside the Guagua National College

Fray Francis Musni

BOAT FARE TO GUAGUA FROM MANILA

Excerpt from the 1887 Guia Oficial:

VAPORES PARA LA PAMPANGA

Salida de Manila, los Domingos, Martes y Jueves, a las 7 y media de la mañana, con escala en Balanga a las 10.

Salida de Guagua para Manila, los Lunes, Miercoles y Viernes.

Pasaje de cámara, a Guagua	\$2.50
Id, de cubierta, Id	.50
Id, de cámara a Balanga	2.50
Id, de cubierta, Id	.25

in Brgy. Sta. Filomena. Old folks living in the area recall that the cannery occupied the entire land area of the subdivision; that "huge ships" transported tons of canned goods like sardines and even Kapampangan specialties like *tabang talangka* and *burung asan*; that it offered retail canning services for affluent families who wanted to send canned products abroad; that it was bombed by Japanese planes in World War II; and that it finally closed in the 1960s following a series of labor disputes.

Some remember the name of the plant as *Luzon Stevedoring*, but that may just be the recent name. They say that the plant did undergo changes, maybe in management or even ownership and kind of business. After the war, steamships became scarce and instead, barges with loads of *abonu* (fertilizer), *pulut* (honey or beeswax), mining products ("huge blocks of dark stone") and *mayumu* (sugar). Some recall the plant was purchased by PASUDECO which converted it into a warehouse.

There remains an island in the middle of Dalan Bapor, across where the cannery once stood, which is called Duck Island because well, the old folks have conflicting explanations: American pilots described it as duck-shaped; the islanders raised ducks and geese; and it is a corruption of "dock," because it is where the cargo ships docked when loading and unloading.

The rivers gradually lost their usefulness as transportation routes because of siltation and also because roads were improved and the Manila-Dagupan Railroad, which crosses San Fernando, opened. (J. Mallari)

11. THE GREAT FLOOD OF 1972

Pampanga's worst calamity before Pinatubo



Kasaysayan

NEXT to the eruption of Pinatubo, the worst calamity to ever hit the Kapampangan Region in recent memory was the flood of 1972, when the entire Central Plain of Luzon was submerged under water. Heavy monsoon rains lasting 40 days nonstop had been triggered by four tropical cyclones that made a direct hit in the area during that year's rainy season: *Asiang*, *Konsing*, *Toyang* and *Undang*.

The flood, which claimed 298 lives, was worst in the Central Plain because this area is the natural catch basin of two major waterways, the Pampanga River and the Agno River; moreover, the presence of the Candaba Swamp (*pinac*), *alugin* (waterlogged) areas and *baná* (marshes), as well as the phenomenon of subsidence, further makes the area susceptible to flooding.

Morphologically, the 1972 flood resulted in the sedimentation of the western side of the Central Plain, where erosion from the Zambales Mountain Range has geologically formed alluvial fans on the plain's western side, which continuously choke river sys-



Ninfa A. S. Springer

melon fields. (C. Manese)

tems and silt large areas of *dayat* (rice fields); local farmers even have a term for fields affected by sedimentation: *mibanlikan*. In San Fernando, for example, large areas of farmlands near Lapat experienced sedimentation of up to one meter high.

As an immediate result of sedimentation in the so-called Rice Bowl of the Philippines, the next harvests in Central Luzon were jeopardized. Kapampangans, however, took advantage of the sandy soil and converted rice farms into sugarcane and water-

THE PSYCHIC'S PREDICTION: "MANILA BAY WILL CONNECT TO LINGAYEN GULF"

SUPERSTITIOUS Kapampangans attributed the 1972 flood to the theft of the image of Sto. Niño in Tondo, Manila which happened shortly before the start of the monsoon rains. Others recalled the prediction of American psychic Jeanne Dixon, who had reportedly seen a vision of Luzon Island going completely under water that it was possible to travel by boat inland from Manila Bay to Lingayen Gulf. In fact, this was exactly what the astronauts saw from their spacecraft orbiting the earth at the time of the flood: floodwaters blanketing the island from Bulacan and Pampanga to Tarlac, Nueva Ecija and Pangasinan (in short, the entire Central Luzon region); the Agno River and the Pampanga River had disappeared and from the sky it was easy to imagine that Manila Bay had indeed connected with Lingayen Gulf and that it was completely possible to travel by boat from end to end!



Jeanne Dixon

In colonial times, natives and probably even Spaniards and Chinese merchants traveled between Pangasinan and Pampanga using the Rio Grande (Big River) de Pampanga which was still connected with the Rio Chico (Little River) de Pampanga; there is, however, a gap between Rio Chico and the Agno River, but in old maps a lake (Canarem, probably a swamp like the Candaba Swamp, also sometimes depicted as a lake in old maps) once existed in the vicinity of the gap which makes it entirely possible, especially during the rainy season, to make the connecting boat ride between the Rio Chico and Agno River. Moreover, there may also have been streams in this gap which connected the two rivers; the Chinese pirate Limahong could have easily made this his escape route from Salcedo's forces in Pangasinan.

Today, fallen trees and mud have rendered the Rio Chico un-navigable.

WATER has always been the lifeblood of ancient communities. Early settlers set up homes near rivers, brooks, lakes and streams for reasons of convenience. Water gave life, served as means of travel, nourished plants and spawned abundant marine produce that fed people, gave livelihood and caused whole towns to grow and flourish. Kapampangans, like the Tagalogs, thus settled by the banks of a great river, too, and the riverine settlements that grew along its *pampang* and its tributaries would define the Pampanga region and its people.

Alex Castro

Rio Grande de la Pampanga, as one of the longest rivers in the Philippines, lies in the middle of a giant depression called the Pampanga River Basin, which has a total area of 9,520 sq. km. encompassing

Pampanga, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija and portions of Zambales, Rizal, Quezon, Tarlac and Nueva Vizcaya, The Rio Grande originates from several rivers in the southern slopes of the Southern Caraballo range, in mountains Lagsing and Mingolit opposite to the Magat River of Cagayan. It flows in a southerly direction to its mouth in Manila Bay, joining its major tributaries, Rio Chico in Talavera near Mt. Arayat and the Angat River at Sulipan.

On this fabled river sailed the Malayan pioneers from the Malay Peninsula and Singarak Lake in West Sumatra, discovering dwellers along its banks. Henceforth, the inhabitants of the riverside communities were known as "*taga-pangpang*," giving Pampanga its name. As a rich source of livelihood and as means of commercial transport, the great Pampanga River has become inextricably linked with the province's economic, political and social history through centuries. It was no wonder then that our forebears considered the river as sacred, its ebbs and flows dictating the course of life along the banks and the towns beyond.

Rio Grande and Rio Chico (or "Chiquito") provided wide access from south

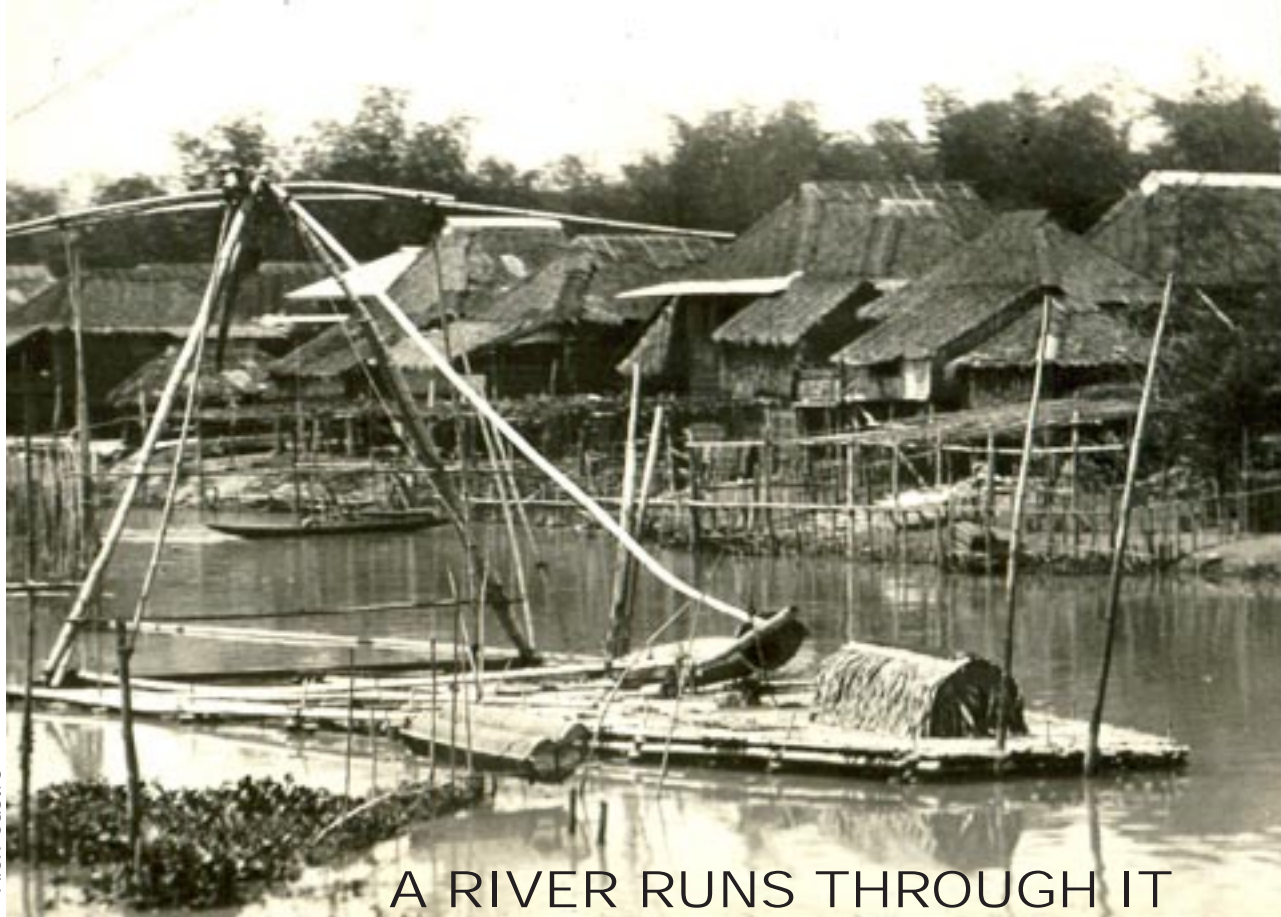
to north of Pampanga until the 18th century. Back then, travelers would find sailing the waters of the river very smooth, notwithstanding the rainy season. One could actually go upstream in a small boat from Manila Bay to Lingayen Gulf without seeing the sea! The course started northward via Pampanga River, to the Chico River, then rounded off the east of Arayat and along the Tarlac-Nueva Ecija boundary, up to Canarem Lake, then northwest along Tablang, Quiniblatan and Mangabol Rivers, proceeding to Tarlac River which empties downstream to Bayambang River and into Agno River which is the main tributary of Lingayen Gulf.

At the start of the Spanish colonial period, all major settled areas of the province were mainly situated in the south near the great river and along its tributaries further north. Apalit, Arayat, Bacolor, Betis, Candaba, Guagua, Lubao, Macabebe, Mexico, Porac and Sexmoan were the towns of principal importance at this time, due to their proximity to the river. Merchants from these towns would sail south in *bancas* and *cascos* towards the *esteros* of Quiapo, Tondo and Binondo where they would unload *zacate*, sugar and other

local produce. Mexico town's role as a major commercial center would soon diminish when the tributary, on which the town was located, was silted up; commercial traffic moved elsewhere.

Through the years, the Pampanga River has been dammed, silted up and polluted by man. And as everyone knows, the Pinatubo eruption of 1991 caused untold havoc to its tributaries. The disastrous repercussions are most felt during the rainy season, when water from the oversilted river channels and estuaries, which has risen higher than the land around it, floods whole towns and plains, a yearly encroachment that seems unstoppable.

Yet, remarkably, Rio Grande has shown an amazing ability to heal and renew itself. Today, the mother of all rivers flows smoothly still and it often comes as a surprise to the occasional water traveler that the rippling waters have remained pristine in some areas and the scenics similarly well preserved: from the lush mangroves jutting from the river's navel, the flock of migrant birds that have come to commune with nature to the magnificent townscapes visible from afar. What other magical sights could our forebears have seen from this river?



A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT

THE RIO GRANDE

Of the thousand rivers, rivulets, estuaries, streams, brooks and canals running through the Kapampangan Region, the grandest of them all is the Pampanga River

By Alex R. Castro



KABAKAUAN. Part of the research team that cruised down Pampanga River took an exploratory boatride into the mangrove forest (kabakauan) at the point where the river empties into the sea near the Masantol-Macabebe area.

A CRUISE DOWN PAMPANGA RIVER

A team of researchers tracing the route of ancient mariners discovers the river's capacity to renew and heal itself

PAMPANGA River is alive and well, still clean and healthy and suitable for trade, transportation and tourism. This was the discovery of a research team that recently went on a boat ride from the headwaters of the river in Arayat all the way to where it meets the sea in Manila Bay.

Organized by the Center for Kapampangan Studies, the team's mission was to trace ancient trade routes and to survey the river's potential for tourism activities.

The team rode on a double-deck houseboat lent by Engr. Robert Canlas through the auspices of then Masantol Vice-Mayor Bajun Lacap. The ride began in Candaba, going upstream until the boat hit shallow water in Candating, Arayat, then turning around and going downstream, past Candaba, San Luis, San Simon, Apalit, Calumpit, Macabebe and Masantol, where the team found a patch of mangroves—only a handful left but still unbelievably beautiful.

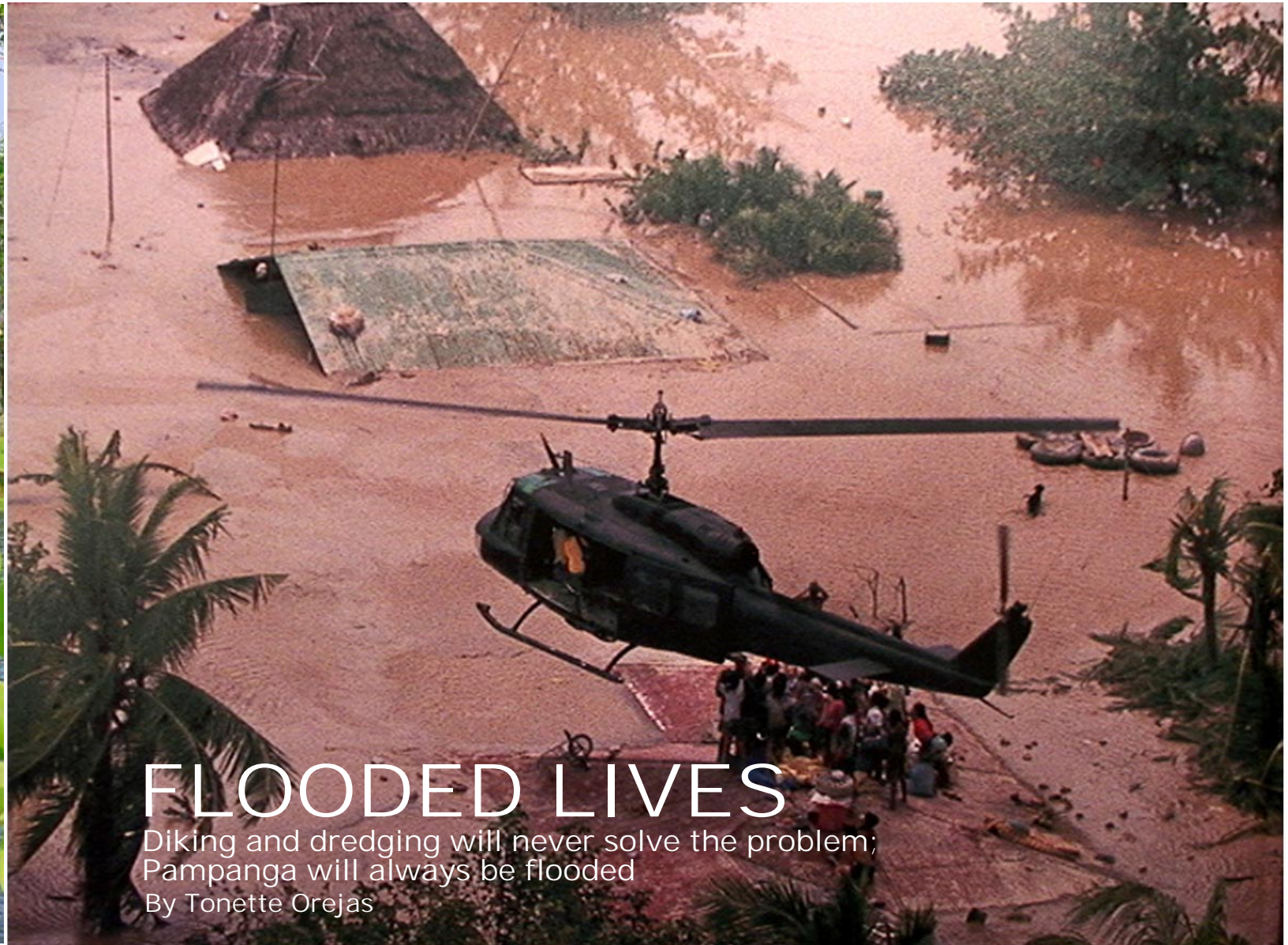
The team also found colonial churches and chapels on the banks, facing the river, their entrances barely several feet from the water—indicating that parishioners used to go to church by boat from their houses (before the Spaniards reorganized pueblos around the church, communities were linear, with houses lining the whole

extent of the river). That these structures have remained intact proves that the river hardly changed after several centuries.

Except for pockets of garbage dumps, and the fermentation factory in Apalit, the whole stretch of the Pampanga River was surprisingly clean. The siltation and the heavy pollution people were complaining about were in the tangled network of canals and tributaries, but Pampanga River itself has retained its pristine depth and width and beauty and strength.

The Center has proposed to the Department of Tourism river cruises using Engr. Canlas' fleet of yachts, kayaks and speedboats now docked in Sulipan, Apalit. The Center is also proposing a round-table conference among mayors of towns where the river passes to discuss clean-up, riverside eateries and docking/refueling stations, and cultural tours. Old churches can be the designated stopovers, where tourists can buy the town's products and have a taste of local delicacies. The boat ride itself will be rest and recreation, with performers on board singing traditional songs and annotating on history, culture and ecology.

The river cruises may also be timed to coincide with river festivals like *libad*, *kuraldal* and *batalla*.



FLOODED LIVES

Diking and dredging will never solve the problem;
Pampanga will always be flooded

By Tonette Orejas

LIKE planting cycles, floods (*albug* in Kapampangan) are regular seasons in the calendar of the hardy Kapampangans. Accustomed to the winds and waters of the Rio Grande, Kapampangans have come to regard the river as a means of transport and their source of fish and water for their crops.

Their ancestors built their houses on stilts to let wind and water pass through the *sulip*, as they called the high space between the ground and the floors of their houses. Dwelling on the banks, they lived in houses that faced the river. They refused to compromise this closeness to the river, forcing the Augustinian clergy to build along the banks the first churches in the province in the 16th century. Floods dictated where the churches would stand, as in the case of Minalin.

Floods came with regularity but with less disastrous impact, as the late historian Mariano Henson documented. Then, floodwaters took only a few hours to drain out, much unlike recent flooding when water would take days or weeks to recede.

Old folks reckon that floods never re-

ally disrupted lives. It was during the American colonial period that dikes sprouted all over the province. Official records show that the flood control works in the Pampanga River Basin—the drainer of 30 river systems in Central Luzon—began in 1939. By the end of 1990, there were 44 earth dikes spanning 381 kilometers. At least 86 percent of these dikes were within Pampanga and other provinces falling within the so-called Kapampangan Region: Tarlac, Nueva Ecija, Bataan and Bulacan. Drainage facilities like cut-off channels, waterways, floodgates and canals spanned 371 km.

Old earth dikes along the Pasig Potrero and Porac-Gumain rivers were part of early flood control measures.

The devastating 1972 floods worsened the situation, and as a result, easing future flooding became the priority of the government. In 1975, the government asked the United Nations Development Programme to undertake a comprehensive study of the Pampanga River and the Candaba Swamp, a natural water catchment spanning 33,000 hectares.

The result of the study was the Pampanga Delta Development Project, which had two components—irrigation and the widening and dredging of the mouth of the river that heads out to Manila Bay.

Both components have been accomplished. The P3.1-billion dam, named after the late President Diosdado Macapagal, rose in Arayat and diverted the water from the Rio Chico and the Rio Grande to some 8,000 farmlands in Pampanga. Other projects followed, including the widening and dredging of a 22.7-km span of the delta. These were done using loans obtained from Japan and carried out after the 1991 Mt. Pinatubo eruption.

Yet the flooding that these projects sought to ease became even more severe, not to mention the 10,000 families along the delta who sacrificed their lands to save the province. The Department of Public Works and Highways justified more spending by saying the effects of lahar had limited the drainage capacity of the rivers. The agency, reports show, spent P3.3 billion to put up and strengthen the basically weak FVR Megadike. The DPWH spent

another P119 million for dredging the Pasac delta area and Bataan in year 2000. The now-defunct Mount Pinatubo Commission channeled P567.08 million for desilting works.

With all these funds being funneled to flood control works, why do Pampanga and the rest of Central Luzon still experience serious floods?

Desilting seems to be the one and urgent solution that the DPWH and local officials see. But Ruth Pambid of the Central Luzon Center for Emergency Aid and Rehabilitation (CONCERN) said short-term measures, like desilting, are a waste of public funds. Rains, she said, only wash back the sediments dumped on the banks. Even President Macapagal Arroyo, in a visit to Mexico, Pampanga last year, noted the futility of desilting and castigated DPWH officials.

Two scientists, Dr. Fernando Siringan and Dr. Kelvin Rodolfo, have offered several alternative solutions. These are outlined in their ongoing study, *"Net Sea Level Changes in the Pampanga Delta: Causes and*

Consequences."

Pampanga, Bulacan and Metro-Manila are geographically prone to flooding because they are low-lying areas, they slope towards the sea, they are in a coastal environment and they take in rainwater from very large watersheds (Sierra Madre in the east and Zambales Mountain Range in the west). The seawater that the southwest monsoon winds push towards the shore also blocks the discharge of floods. Lastly, the aquaculture industry has also thrived along the delta, choking the river's mouth with fishponds.

Mount Pinatubo's debris that now silt the channels are only part of the problem, experts say. "It is true that flooding in coastal Pampanga worsened between the 1980s and 1990s, but it (had) also worsened in the decades before the eruption," Siringan and Rodolfo said in their study.

"Channel capacities have been decreased by encroaching fishponds and houses, by inappropriate garbage disposal and siltation largely due to deforestation and the conse-

quent erosion of upland slopes," they said.

Flooding, they added, was also worsened by the loss of the floodplain due to urban development and due even to dikes that ironically had been built to solve the problem.

The rapid rise in sea level, the result of global warming (expansion of water when heated, and melting of glaciers), is compounding the sinking of the delta plains. For Siringan and Rodolfo, the more viable solutions go beyond dikes and dredging.

Forest covers delay the rainwater that drains out to the flatlands. "If reforestation is to be effective, it cannot be done on a town-by-town, or even province-by-province basis, because parts of the watershed that drain into the delta plain also lie in adjacent provinces. Thus, a serious reforestation endeavor must be done on a national basis," they said.

The present forest cover of Central Luzon, at 334,193 hectares, is tiny compared to the region's total land area of 2.147 million hectares.

PREDICTING FLOODS, AVERTING DISASTERS

The whole stretch of the Pampanga River is now being monitored by government scientists

By Hilton Hernando, PRFFWC, FFB, PAGASA

SOMEWHERE within the sprawling structure of the Operations Building of the Weather & Flood Forecasting Center compound in Diliman, Quezon City, is a room where daily monitoring of hydrological parameters and forecasting of an impending flood in one of the major river basins in the Philippines, some 60 km north of the compound, is being made. There's nothing remarkable about that room until you consider that that's where the flood bulletins and warnings for any flooding within the Pampanga River Basin would be coming from. That room, they call The Pampanga River Basin Flood Forecasting & Warning Center (PRFFWC).

The Pampanga River is one of the 2 major river systems draining the Central Luzon plain, which is oftentimes referred to as the "rice granary of the Philippines". The area, unfortunately, suffers considerable flood damage almost every year.

The floods of August 1960, July 1962, and May 1966 are some of the destructive floods that affected the Pampanga River Basin. However, the flood that occurred in July 1972 was considered as one of the most disastrous. It inflicted a total damage of about \$300 million in Central Luzon area particularly in the Pampanga River Basin. It was in the light of these sad experiences that the government authorities saw the need for a non-structural measure of mitigating flood loss and damages – a flood forecasting and warning in the major river basins in the country.

In 1973, a pilot flood forecasting and warning system (FFWS) for the Pampanga River Basin was established through technical cooperation between the Philippines and Japan Governments, taking into account the action program decided by the ECAFE/WMO Typhoon committee. The effectiveness of the system subsequently led to the establishment of similar systems covering

the Agno, Bicol and Cagayan River Basins in 1982.

The FFWS in the Pampanga River Basin envisages forecasting the flood level at vulnerable places in the lower reaches of the river one day, or if possible two days, in advance. Forecasts of river stages will be prepared with reference to forecast points.

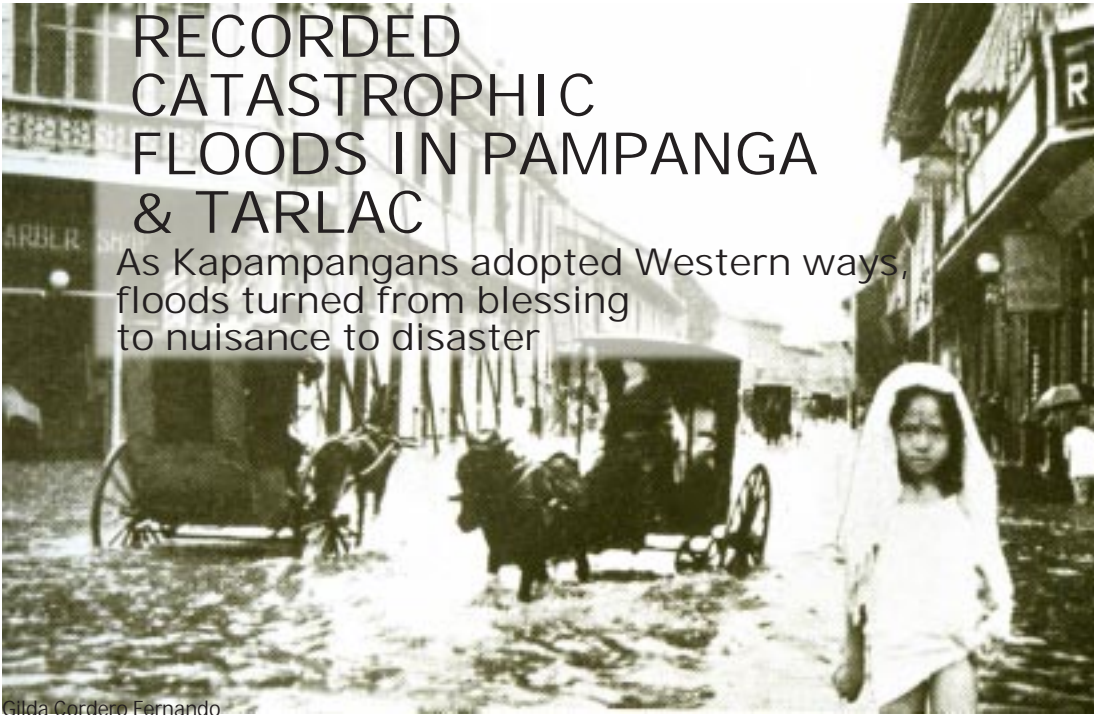
The procedure for flood forecasting involves estimation of the basin rainfall in advance, runoff computation, and estimation of flood wave propagation by means of flood routing and other techniques. The application of empirical correlation and computation of various parameters with the help of computers form a major part of the operational procedure. In line with common practices of flood forecasting, the results obtained from the operation of the system will be kept under continued review so that from the experience gained, improvements can be carried out whenever appropriate, both in the network of reporting stations as well as in the technical procedure.

The present flood forecasting system for the Pampanga River basin is composed of a telemetering network of rainfall and water level gauging stations. The network consists of 8 rainfall and water level gauging stations, 5 rainfall stations, a repeater station and 1 combined repeater and rainfall station all strategically located within the Pampanga River basin and the sub-basin of Guagua River. The terminal telemetry station serving as the nerve center of data collection is located in the Operations Center in the WFFC compound. Just recently, an on-line database system was installed in the Center for the continuous input of data from the telemetry network to the Center's computer.

The rainfall and water level gauging equipment in the station network are fully automatic. Depths of rainfall and water level of rivers at the stations are transmitted by the telemetering system

RECORDED CATASTROPHIC FLOODS IN PAMPANGA & TARLAC

As Kapampangans adopted Western ways, floods turned from blessing to nuisance to disaster



Gilda Cordero Fernando

ABACAN River in Angeles City used to be a navigable river, a route for traders and merchants from Mexico town downstream; it was probably named Abacan because when traders reached Angeles it was usually time for brunch (which ancient Kapampangans called *ábakan* because they only had two meals a day, brunch and dinner).

Abacan River wreaked havoc on Angeles town several times in history, probably because the new settlers did not realize they were building their town on top of an ancient riverbed. According to historian Mariano Henson, the town proper was flooded due to water overflowing the banks of Abacan on August 4 and September 3, 1929; July 1-5, 1930; August 12-14, 1931; July 29-30, 1932; and 1935, 1936 and 1937.

In 1846, the flood in Apalit town crept up to the church's main altar.

Calamitous floods have caused the relocation of many towns in Pampanga and Tarlac. Mexico town proper used to be in Brgy. San Jose Matulid, where the town's first church (the oldest in the province) still stands fronting the Sapang Matulid. Capas also moved due to flooding, and so did Minalin (formerly located in Sta. Maria, Macabebe), Lubao (formerly in Brgy. Sta. Cruz) and of course, Concepcion and Magalang, which used to be one

town (Macapsa) until floodwaters from Cuayan and Maisac Rivers forced residents to transfer to San Bartolome; floods from the Parua River forced another mass evacuation: one group of evacuees moved north to Sto. Niño which eventually became Concepcion, another group remained for a while in San Bartolome until yet another flood, in 1856 (the town "looked like a large lake"), necessitated an evacuation southward to San Pedro Talimundoc, which remained the present Magalang (the town's complete name is San Pedro de Magalang although its titular patron saint is San Bartolome). The old site of San Bartolome, meanwhile, was known as *Balen*

Melacuan ("Abandoned Town") and is now a mere barrio of Concepcion.

Other recorded floods:

1683	Macabebe	1871	Candaba
1769	Minalin	1872	San Luis
1815	Candaba	1881	Floridablanca,
1831	Bacolor,		Bacolor
	Guagua	1884-85	San Luis
1832	Candaba	1886	San Luis
1833	Minalin	1887	Minalin, Sto. Tomas,
1839	Candaba		Macabebe, Apalit,
1846	Apalit		San Simon, San Luis,
1856	Concepcion,		Candaba, Bacolor
	Magalang	1890	Bacolor
1869	Minalin	1899	Tarlac

In Angeles, historian Mariano Henson has a detailed record of the floods occurring in the town, mostly due to typhoons and protracted rains causing the Taug River to overflow, the most significant of which are: July 20, 1881, September 1885, July 20, 1911, August 20-27, 1919, July 17-25, 1920, June 26-27, 1961, July 21, 1962.

at a specified time interval; say one hour, via a repeater station at Cabanatuan and San Rafael to the terminal telemetry station at the Operations center.

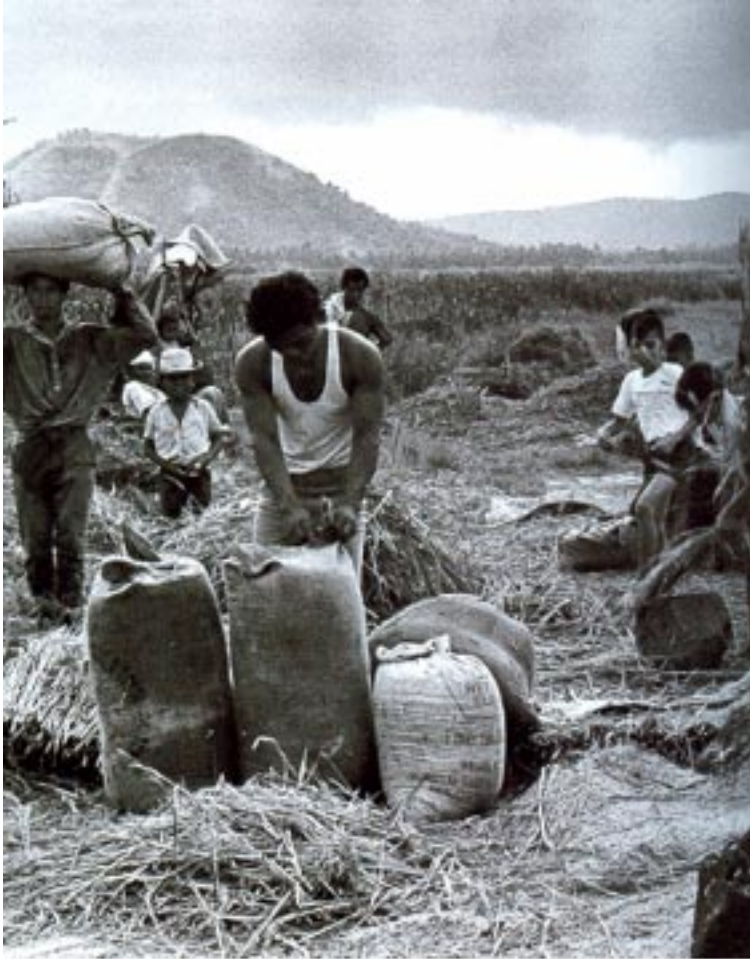
A year-round operation of the system is maintained in as much as data collected from the network of observation will be useful not only for flood forecasting but also for research, engineering and agricultural purposes in the area.

Similar to the FFWS in the 4 major river basins in Luzon, the Flood Forecasting and Warning System for Dam Operations (FFWSDO) in 3 of these basins (Pampanga, Agno & Cagayan) was conceived and finally started in 1983. This was in the light of the unprecedented flooding brought about by the release of impounded water by Angat Dam in Bulacan in 1978, which caused destruction and death downstream of the dam.

The FFWSDO is aimed at the telemeterized FFWS that will provide the necessary information for the safe and cost-effective operation of the Pantabangan and Angat dams for the Pampanga River basin, ultimately to forewarn the people in the

flood plains downstream of these dam sites of the impending release of impounded water through spillways during floods. The system is operated under an inter-agency cooperation between PAGASA, as the lead agency, and the dam operating agencies, namely the National Power Corporation (NPC) and the National Irrigation Administration (NIA).

The PRFFWC has been in existence for over 30 years now; however, its operations and its purpose are not yet fully heard of at the basin where it provides flood bulletins and warnings. Owing to its level of service competency and concern of the welfare of the basin's populace, the center hopes to promote its responsibilities through public information drives and close coordination with the local disaster coordinating councils of the basin. For now, whether the center is known or not, the business of service goes on and will continue for as long as there's always a threat of flood in the Pampanga River Basin area. After all, public service is never meant to be advertised but rather to be felt.



Farmers during the dry months



... become fishermen when the floods come.

Kasaysayan

THE AMAZING FARMER-FISHERMEN OF CANDABA

They ride the cycle of seasons and go with life's ebbs and flows
By Robby Tantingco

THE CANDABA Swamp, locally known as *Pinac*, is a vast expanse of farmlands during summer and a lake of floodwater during the rainy season, which led many Spaniards in colonial times to misrepresent it as a lake on the map. The people of Candaba are so used to the annual flood they would be upset if no flood came within the year.

Thus, their rice fields alternate as fishponds and farmers replace their plow and harrow with fishing implements. Their versatility reflects the land's ability to regenerate and flow with nature's cyclical rhythms: flood replenishes the soil, its ebb coincides with the arrival of migratory birds which feast on the exposed bed of snails and jumping small fishes. The people of Candaba who get the best of both seasons are therefore assured of a year-long livelihood and supply of food.

There's a lesson to be learned here for the rest of the Kapampangans who know the flood will surely come but they still weep when it does, because they never learn how to embrace it as part of life. Our ancestors lived in houses on stilts, so water never entered their rooms; we, on the other hand, build palaces on the ground and then put up a fortress of sandbags around it when the flood comes. Our ancestors had a ready boat under their house; we spend all our savings on a luxury car which is trapped useless

in the garage when the streets are flooded. Our ancestors let the river flow where it must; if it changes direction then they lift their lightweight houses and set it up elsewhere. We build subdivisions on the path of the river and then when we get flooded, it's the river that we force to relocate; we keep spending billions dredging the river and walling it up with concrete dikes which keep collapsing and leading to tragic loss of life.

Our ancestors were never harassed by the constant floods in Pampanga because they had also learned to build their communities around floodplains instead of on top of them. They let these natural catch basins to do their part as nature had intended them. The Candaba Swamp is a good example: in summer it functions as farmlands, on rainy days as fishponds. Our ancestors recognized it and respected it. Modern Kapampangans, on the other hand, suffer all the inconveniences and tragic consequences of the annual floods because they have built their communities right on top of floodplains. It won't be surprising if 20, 30 years from now, developers who have absolutely no memory of the Candaba Swamp will build a subdivision right in the middle of it..

We are, first and foremost, river people. Our province is called Pampanga and we are called Kapampangan. About time we live up to our name.

RIVERBANK Kapampangans have common patterns of culture. These include their values, preferences, mores, pigment, customs and traditions, and their strong sense of identity. They are found in the south and southwestern areas of the province, including Lubao, Guagua, Sasmuan, Macabebe, Masantol and portions of Minalin, Apalit and Bacolor, precisely or proximately along the mouth of the Pampanga River and around the Manila Bay. Examples of these cultural patterns:

MUSICAL SPEECH, GRAPHIC LANGUAGE. Usually, Kapampangans in these areas speak in a sing-song (*gegége*). Inflection and intonation are higher than normal. The gaiety of the speaker's tongue is tireless, energetic and sometimes even theatrical. Even in casual conversation, speakers are pleasantly noisy (*maingé*). As the language is naturally and instinc-

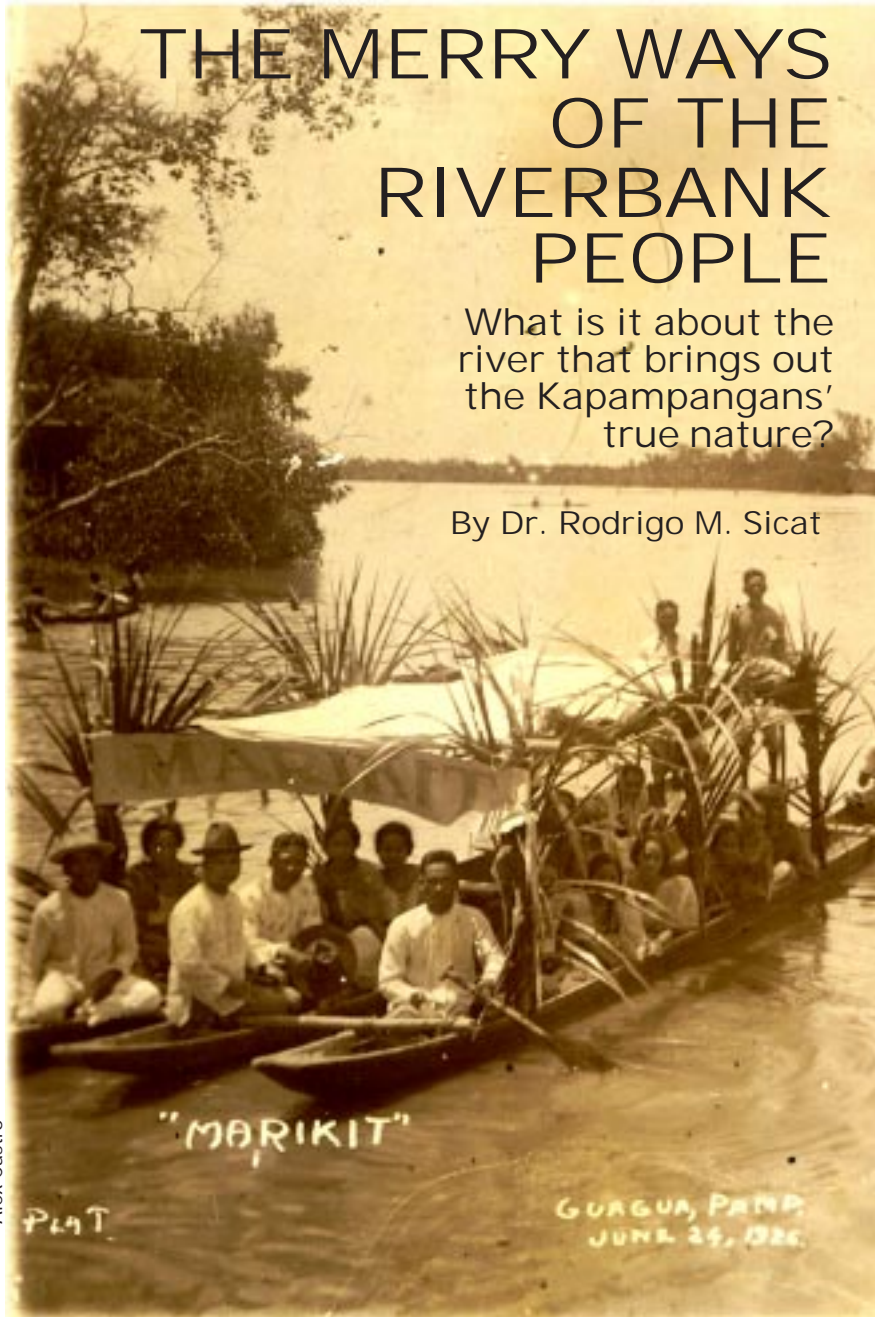
tively spoken, words come like rapid-fire sounds and rhythms, often high-pitched (*matarling*), at times even agitated, which is misconstrued as quarrelsome which of course it is not. The language is decorated with figurative and flowery expressions, bordering on the bawdy: *buguk* (lit. rotten), *murit* (idiot), *'nai da na* (short for *puta ya i inda na*, son of a bitch), *sosoning* (moron) and the like are used in casual conversation, rather carelessly. To non-Kapampangans, they sound rude; to Kapampangans, especially in the river towns, they are quite harmless.

FIESTA DANCING Regardless of religion, Kapampangans in coastal villages and river communities in the south fill their homes with food during fiesta and open their doors to friends and strangers alike. The highlight of

THE MERRY WAYS OF THE RIVERBANK PEOPLE

What is it about the river that brings out the Kapampangans' true nature?

By Dr. Rodrigo M. Sicat



any fiesta is the *curaldal*, which is a Catholic tradition similar to the thanksgiving dance rituals of the Kapampangan Aetas performed during harvest season. This beautiful tradition is participated in all members of the community as a gesture of gratitude to their patron saint. The term means "endless body movement." For example, when one moves his entire body pointlessly, we say to him, "*Tuknang na kang luluyon, balamu cucuraldal ka.*" The word is akin to *daraldalan* (to disturb) and *dadaran* (to remove or thresh), common among farmers in the area. Both words involve intense body movement in a merry environment, particularly the movement of arms and feet which is fundamental to a dance ritual.

The word *daldal* is a fishing term used when the waters are disturbed (*me daladal*).

In virgin swamps and ponds, fishermen's footprints scattered all over the mud floor are evidence of disturbance. In fishing parlance, a watery area that has not been disturbed (*e medaldal*) means good harvest, because the water has not been desecrated yet. Undisturbed water yields great crops. When harvests are copious, fish catchers and gatherers march and feast in the river, marsh, swamp, pond and tributary in great joy. When fish baskets (*buslu*) and bancas are brimming with catch, the village people rejoice in thanksgiving.

Most riverbank communities of Pampanga have been pious and passionate practitioners of the *curaldal* since time immemorial. As devotees of Sta. Lucia (St. Lucy, patroness of light) in Sasmuan town celebrate the saint's feast day on January 10, the devotees of Apu Sto. Cristo observe their fiesta every May 3 in Sta. Cruz, Lubao, the celebrations highlighted with a *curaldal*. The miraculous black wooden cross of Sta. Cruz is believed to be the Spaniards' gift to the natives when they arrived in this village in 1572. Similarly, the island villages of Lubao perform the *libad* fluvial procession, which culmi-

nates in a *curaldal* also. This charming tradition is spectacularly celebrated in Apalit during the Apung Iru feast day.

THE MERRY FISH PORTS. Fishports (*dungan*, or sometimes *sadsaran*) are a lovely sight. Bancas and boats in all shapes and sizes are parked along the shore (*paroba*) which is usually near the marketplace. Motorboats have painted women's names on them, usually the boat owners' beloved. Unpainted bancas, on the other hand, indicate antiquity but they remain the most popular vehicles in these parts. Here, in these ports, merchants and buyers (*manial*) interact with the usual tricks of the trade like *sitsitan* (whispered negotiation over price), *pakyawan* (wholesale), or *tundukan* (retail). Fish and mollusks are often sold in *banyeras* (fish basins). All in

all, a noisy, smelly, intense activity.

THE VILLAGE PEOPLE'S TAN. Dwellers along the shoreline and riverbanks are darker than their upland counterparts. The tan is of course attributed to the saline and alkaline breeze from Manila Bay and the Pampanga River. Kapampangans wear their tan like a badge of honor testifying to their hard work and paying tribute to their maritime ancestors.

FISHING TOOLS. Kapampangans in fishing villages tenaciously use the following indigenous tools: *pasabal*, *balkad*, *bumbun*, *baslig*, *dalungkit*, *sakag*, *patinga*, *biakus*, *saklit*, *palapad*, *bukatut*, *pukut*, *gayad*, *panti*, etc.

PLEASURES OF SACCHARINES. To fishermen, sweetened delicatessens serve as

substitutes for meats and vegetables especially during the long rainy season. As one riverbank saying goes, *Malumud ku man at mate, ing kanakung pakabug e ke ipaglibe*. Some of these native sweets are: *inuyat* (thick red-brown syrup extracted from *mascovado* or brown sugar, contained in tin cans or bamboo poles), *tinuklab* (or *pakabug*, hardened sugar block shaped like two-sided mounds), *pinotsa* (sugar block which is a coarser version of tinuklab, plain round in shape), *patku* (grated coconut meat cooked in brown sugar), *bagkat* (fried peanut cake baked in brown sugar) and *tirati* (long, hard stick coated with white sugar).

FLOOD-WISE. Southern towns are prone to year-round flooding, whether rain or shine. Tidal floods (brought about by high tides from Manila Bay) raise the level of river water by one-half to one meter high. Hence, coping

with flood has become a part of day-to-day life for coastal Kapampangans. During low tide, receding river water exposes fish and snails to the delight of fishermen. High tides that last for a week or so soak hamlets and villages (*makasangkayo*), which means no income for villagers within the duration of the tide. This predicament is the most painful helplessness of riverbank life.

This condition is aggravated beyond imagination when rainy season comes. Zero income and poor support from local authorities make life in the riverbanks unbearable. Hence, the inexpensive saccharine (*pagmayumu*) is the best substitute viand among the people during these pathetic circumstances. Flood covers mangroves, fish ports and fishponds. The duration of this type of flood is dictated by the monsoons. As floods subside, life in the coastal villages begins anew.

TREES AND PLANTS FOUND ALONG THE PAMPANGA RIVER

Flora de Filipinas



SASA (*Nipa fruticans* Wurm. [Blco.])



PANDAN LALAKI (*Pandanus gracilis* [Blco.])



KALUMPANG (*Sterculia foetida* Linn. [Blco.])



BOTON (*Barringtonia speciosa* Linn. [Blco.])



DAPDAP (*Erythrina carnea* [Blco.])



PUTAT (*Barringtonia racemosa* DC. [Blco.])

TUGAK , BARAG AND DAPU: FELLOW RIVER DWELLERS

These reptiles and amphibians have co-existed with Kapampangans as friend or foe or food

By Joel Pabustan Mallari

Amphibians make up one of the six classes of backboned animals generally classified between classes of fishes and reptiles. Frogs and toads are the most important to the Kapampangan chef, since a lot of these species are edible. *Tugak* generally refers to frogs such as *tugak pepekat* (*Rana erythraea*) and *tugak kakanan* or *tugak tutu* (*Rana cancrivora* and *Rana limnocharis*). These seem to be limited to open cultivated areas, such as *kadayatan* (ricefields), *plasan* (fishponds), rivers and streams. *Karag* technically refers to varieties of toads which are stout and have warty skin; examples are the *baner* (*Bufo marinus*, widely distributed in the Philippines and introduced to the islands during the American Period) and *karag gubat* (*Bufo biporcatus philippinicus*) which old folks claim is also edible and delicious especially its muscled leg parts.

Meanwhile, reptiles are more numerous and more diversified than amphibians. The living species of reptiles include the orders of turtles (*pau*, *pauikan*); tuataras; lizards and snakes; and crocodiles and alligators (like *dapo*). Examples of snakes are the *ubingan tudtud* (*Typhlops braminus*), *kamuhalu/kamamalu* (King cobra, *Ophiophagus hannah*) etc. while lizards include *barag* (monitor lizard, *Varanus salvator*), *baniyas* (water lizard, *Hydrosaurus pustulosus*), *tarebalak* (common scincoid lizard), *tuko* and *galakgak* (chameleons) and the smaller ones such as the varieties of *lupisak* (gecko species) seen on barks of trees and on house walls and ceilings. Among the lizards mentioned, *barag* is the most in demand to Kapampangan chefs. It



Jonathan Best



Angel Alcalá & Walter Brown

EDIBLE. Above, frog species that become betute on the Kapampangan menu; left, *barag* also ends up on the table.

is considered as a prized catch to an average *mangasu* (hunter), since this lizard is very fast and adaptable on land, in water and on trees. It has well developed limbs for running whether the terrain is swampy or marshy. *Barag* can still be found nesting along the riverbanks close to Mt. Arayat and swampy areas of Candaba and San Luis. It is considered an endangered specie. Its eggs are highly prized for their rarity and nutritive value.

As for crocodiles, old fishermen in Sasmuan recall that crocodile-hunting was

once so prevalent in their villages that at one time the then young General Emilio Aguinaldo, together with his friends, was able to capture a big crocodile in the river—so big that when they transported it to Batangas it created large waves. In Candaba, there is an old wives' tale about a crocodile terrorizing people in the marketplace during a flood, many years ago. In Apalit, long before the Apu Iru fluvial celebration, revelers in the river fed the crocodiles that were said to infest the waters.

ARU! KAMARU!

Only Kapampangans have a word for the mole cricket

By Emar Canilao Chua and Joel Pabustan Mallari

Kamaru (mole crickets) have robust front legs highly modified for digging. They tunnel rapidly just below the soil surface and make trails of pushed-up soil similar to that of a mole, only much smaller. Mole crickets can run very rapidly when on the soil surface. They are attracted to lights and are occasionally pests of vegetables.

Mole cricket is known as *kamaru* in the Kapampangan vernacular. It is best repre-

sented by the specie *Orthoptera: Gryllotalpa orientalis* Burmeister. This insect has so far no other indigenous name among the rest of the ethnolinguistic groups of the Philippines. It is dark brown and about 30 to 35 mm long. Generally, crickets are known for their chirping noises.

In flooded rice fields and freshly eroded riverbanks, mole crickets are usually seen swimming in the water. Early Kapampangans

sought for these insects during the rainy months of May till August along riverbanks and walls of irrigation channels. They are also found in permanent burrows or foraging-galleries in levees or field borders. The entrances to burrows in the soil are marked by heaps of soil. The nymphs feed on roots and damage the crops in patches.

The mole cricket tunnels into the soil using its enlarged forelegs. It feeds on seeds and resulting in loss of plant stand or poor crop stands. Kapampangans utilize their abundance by including them in their regular menu as *arobung malangi* or *sinangle kamaru*.

ELECCION DING ASAN FISH IN THE LIFE OF THE KAPAMPANGAN



An old nonsensical song about an imaginary election among river fishes surprisingly provides a glimpse into folk lifestyles, beliefs and attitudes
By Lino L. Dizon

*Misan cayaldauan
Ilug cacung delaquitan
Adungdungan co ring asan
Mipagvotu lang capitan*

*Ing votu rang picayari
Teniente ya ing balulungi
Presidenti ya ing bundaqui
Uling maragul yang dili.*

*Cocinero ya ing itu
Uling mingatba ya tibu;
Sundalus no man ding tuyu
Balang tindajan atilu pu.*

*Governador ya ing bangus
Uling dactal ya ganadus;
cuñeras no man ding paro
Uling macapal lang tutu.*

*Infiernus ya ing calang
Ligaya ya itang curan,
Uling carin la bucal-bucal
Deta pung icua cung asan.*

[From Alejandro Perez' Pampango Folklore (1968). Text reverted to early Kapampangan orthography for purposes of analysis.]

"One day/ as I crossed the river/ I saw fishes/ electing their head [mayor or capitan municipal].

The results were: /the balulungi was the lieutenant,/ the bundaqui the president/ Because it was the largest of them all.

The itu was the cook/ for its sharp whiskers on both sides/the tuyu were the foot-soldiers since they were available in every store.

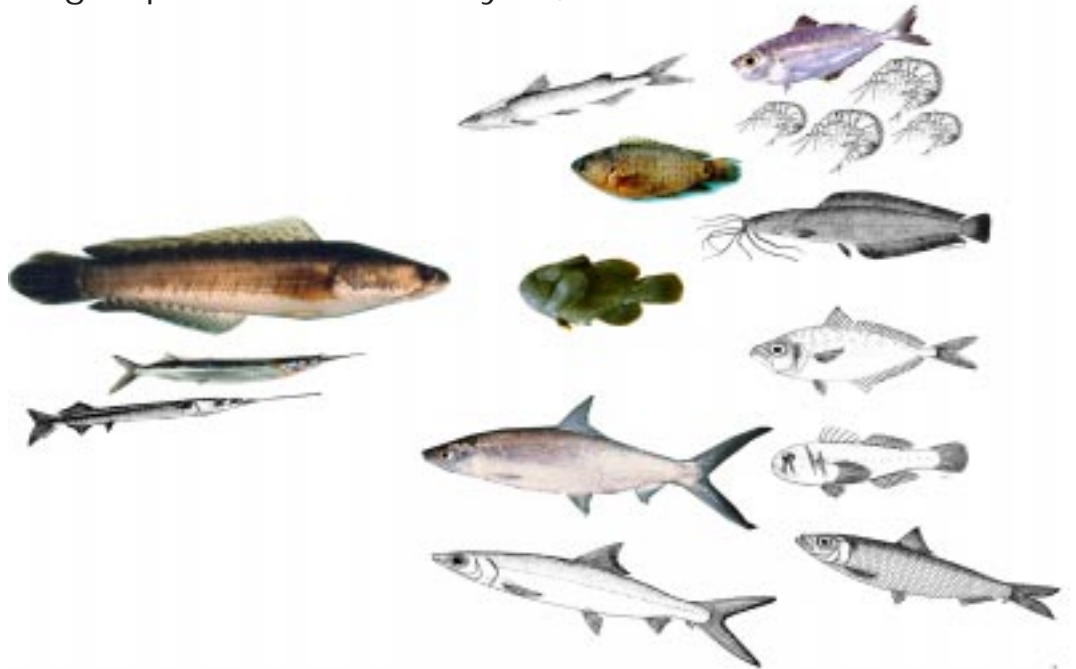
The milkfish was the governor/ because it had many followers:/ the shrimps were the deputies/ since they were abundant.

The stove was hell,/ the cooking pot was heaven/ since that was where they were a-boiling,/ the fishes that I had caught."

[Though Perez has his own translation, which is used as reference in this article, the above translation is this writer's.]

This is a *basulto* [Kapampangan nonsensical folksong] about a gathering of fishes in an electoral process. Contributed by a certain Magdalena Dayrit of San Fernando, Pampanga which Dr. Alejandro Perez included in his graduate thesis and later published in 1968, the song must have been quite popular during its time because of the many versions that it spawned, one of which surfaced in Concepcion, Tarlac two decades later. The title *Misan Cayaldauan* (One Day) is the song's first line and not necessarily its theme.

Like most nonsensical rhymes, *Misan Cayaldauan* has an un-



derlying meaning; it is actually a commentary on Kapampangan riverine society and lifestyle. Intended to be accompanied by a guitar, its lyrics describe and ridicule the process of electing a *capitan* (head) of a *pueblo*. The song was most likely composed during the last decade of the Spanish period, when elections, in spite of the reforms of the Maura Law in 1893 (including changing the term *gobernadorcillo* to *capitan municipal*), were monopolized by the *principales*, or the elite. This *basulto's* anonymous composer was probably a *manasan* (fisherman), who was quite familiar with the ways of fish and of the politicians in his community; the folk song could have been his way of making his views about the political system at the time heard.

Probably composed and sung while he was fishing with a *paduas* (fishing rod) or the more elaborate rattan *salacab* or fish-trap, the folksong reflects a Kapampangan's penchant for fish. For 'the people thriving on the banks,' the river, including its fish, is life. Writing about him and other Filipino *indios* in 1842, Monsieur Jean Mallat briefed the reading world on this essentiality: "Fish abounds in the sea, the lakes and the rivers to such a point that the native has to fish for only a few instant to provide him food for the day, and it often happens that all the father of the family has to do is to get into the river which flows below his little *bahay* or house, to obtain a provision sufficient for the food of the whole family."

For the Kapampangan, *asan* (fish) is synonymous with *ulam* (viand, anything that goes with rice, his staple food). Thus, when he asks, "*Nanu ing asan?*" (literally, "What is the fish?"), it is not incorrect to answer, "*Fritung babi* or *manuc*" ("Fried pork chops or fried chicken"). Fray Diego Bergaño himself noted *asan's* lin-

guistic interchangeability in the 1700s: *Masan cang bubulbulan* ("Eat rice with a viand that had to be dressed [chicken or bird]").

DING ASAN QUING TABANG : A PLANTILLA OF FRESHWATER FISHES

The *basulto* is a laundry list of freshwater fish (*asan tabang*) that thrived in the river before its water became polluted and before *tilapia*, *gourami* and Bangkok *itu* (catfish) invaded it from the adjoining *plasad* (vast fishponds that evolved from mere *baclad*).

The *teniente* or lieutenant (field inspector/ chief of police) is the *balulungi*. Perez described it as "a small fish resembling a sword-fish;" the term, which is absent in Bergaño's dictionary and other Kapampangan sources, could have been coined by combining *balungus* (mouth/beak) with *tungi* (sharp stick). According to Gene Gonzales, these fish were considered "plebeian fare because of their reputation as surface skimmers that feed on floating waste."

A freshwater variety, the *balulungi* could be the *rcynchorhampus georgii*, Valenciennes, 1847, the "long-billed half-beak," known as *baritos*, *buging* and *bugiw* in other major Philippine languages. Dr. W.C.T. Herre was to write during the early American period (1923): "In nearly every little stream can be found curious little fishes with elongated beaks, which on examination are seen to have but the lower half extended while the upper beak seems to have been cut off. These halfbeaks, near relatives of the flying fishes, spend their whole lives in fresh water."

Belonging to the order of *Beleniformes* (needle fishes), the *balulungi* with its long, threatening beak and its constant patrolling of the waters, qualified for the coveted position of inspector and police chief (*teniente-mayor*) in the song's make-believe election.

The *tuyo*, a popular fare on the Filipino dining table, expectedly figures in the song. But for a fish that's so indispensable in one's diet, ironically there was a time when nothing was more degrading than to be caught having *tuyo* as *asan* or *ulam*. This unfortunately low status of the *tuyo*, the song goes, is due to its cheap price and availability in every store; thus it is compared to *sundalos* or *cudrilleros*, foot-soldiers; a variant of the song calls the *tuyo* *secretas* (pupils), for rhyming purposes as well as to underscore once again its bottom rank. Even now, one can still hear from a Kapampangan that he has only a *sundalo* to go with his rice. J. Mallat was so right when he said in 1842 that a certain fish was despised by Europeans in the Philippines not because it was not good but because it was common.

Another misfortune for the *tuyo* is its name, which is often confused with the very process of drying and salting that gave it its name (also *daing* [*pescado seco*, Bergaño]). It should have been called *sardin*, in conformity to the name of its species; e.g. *sardinella gibbosa* (Bleeker, 1849), the Goldstripe sardinella. Sharing this predicament is a cousin, the *tinapa*, or smoked fish—a noun that's really a verb, as in *tinapang tamban* and *tinapang galunggung*.

In earlier times, the *tuyo-tinapa* duo were generic in children's rhymes. A popular G.I. whistling drill, *Let's Go...* was reworded by playful Kapampangans as:

Tuyu, tinapa, balasenas liga.

(Dried fish, smoked fish, boiled eggplant).

This can be taken either as poking fun or as a

tribute to the poor Kapampangan's dining table, where the abovementioned trio are the most common fare, along with *aslam sasa* or nipa vinegar, and *baguc* (*salmuera*, Bergaño), or shrimp paste. And who could forget these irreverent ditties:

*Lucsu ca, Tuyu/ Babaing malagu,
Nung acung mamiru/ Milaco ca baru.*
(Jump, *tuyo*, Beautiful Lady,
If I play a trick on you, you'd be undressed)

*Lucsu ca, Tinapa/ Babaing mataba,
Nung acung manuma/ Milaco ca baba.*
(Jump, *tinapa*, Fat Lady,
If I kiss you, you will lose your chin)

Of all the fish in the Kapampangan riverscape, nothing compares to the milkfish or *bangus* (*Chanos chanus*, Forsskål) in its dignified, almost regal, bearing (no wonder it is the national fish). It is thus compared in the *basulto* as the *Governador* (provincial governor) and in the song's variant as the *abugadu* (lawyer) which, again, in this case is more for rhyme than for aptness. Could it be a racial slur, since *alcaldes* (as governors were formerly called) were then exclusively full-blooded Spaniards, and even *mestizong bangus* (half-breeds) did not endeavor to become? What also qualified the *bangus* as governor was the fact that it is almost always surrounded by *ganados*, which Perez translated symbolically as "many young ones," referring to countless fingerlings that constantly follow the milkfish—not unlike the usual retinue of ubiquitous bootlickers, opportunists, and blind followers—literally and appropriately, *ganados* means domesticated animals or livestock.

In the same league with the *ganados* are the shrimps, the *paro* (*parao*, Sp. *camarones*, Bergaño). The *basulto* assigns them the position of *cuñeras*, which Perez translated as "rowers," probably from *cuña*, or cradle. Can there be more efficient rowers than the *paro* who will never go against the flow? Shrimps are caught by the thousands with an ordinary fishnet (*dala*, *sacag*, *bating*, etc. Sp. *red*, Bergaño), and it is their fate to become *baguc* or, as Mallat observed, "the natives leave them in piles with the sole aim of making them rot so that they may be sold as fertilizer for the betel plantations, to which they give much pungency and aroma." Actually, in political parlance, *cuñeras* refers to the official's assistants or deputies who crowd government offices, a phenomenon still observable in present times.

And there is the *ito* (native catfish), or the Tagalog *hito* (*clarias batrachus*, Günther 1864), notable for its pair of sharp whiskers or barbels. The *basulto* compares it to a *cocinero* or a cook. For sometime, as alleged by Herre in the 1920s, it was the "commonest of the freshwater fishes," a distinction that is no longer true since its more adaptable, meatier but less delectable kin, the Bangkok *ito*, now dominates the market.

CODA

The variant *basulto* also adds some more fishes in its repertoire, including the



biang pucpuc, the *licauc*, the *sapsap* and the *canduli*:

Fiscal ne man ing biang pucpuc

Consejal ya ing licauc ...

Camineru ya ing sapsap, Uling malutu ya balat ...

Magmasid ya ing canduli ...

(The stunted *bia* is the *fiscal*/the *licauc* is the councilor/The *sapsap* is a street-cleaner/ Since it is red-skinned/ the *canduli* is the overseer.)

The first two are similar to the *paro*, tiny and sold by the bulk, and thus assigned as *fiscales* and *consejales* (fiscals and councilors). Herre observed that "in most streams, too, there are gobies (*bia*) that do not go down to the sea...and can be dismissed from consideration as having little bearing upon a study of the geologic history of the Philippines and the land connections of the various islands."

Bia, with their numerous kinds (e.g., the *bunug*, the *padas*, and the *gapis*), are also caught by the thousands and are cooked by the handful with a mixture of starch and then fried, like *beruyang okoy*. The same goes with the *licauc*, which others call *ayungin* (silver perch); it is a small *bangus*-like fish that teems in ponds after flood or rain, preferred for their petite roes (*puga*). Actually, in Bergaño, it is properly termed as *lucauc*, or *pececillos*, *como martinicos*; a small fish, like the mythical, legendary *duende*. It is probably the *bia* and *licauc*'s untraceable and unexplainable origins, or so the common folk thought, that endowed them their supernal stance.

Another *pececito* or small fish cited by Bergaño in the 1700s was the *alubebay*, now pronounced as *alubebe*. This species has suffered the same fate of the *tuyo*; its name has been downgraded to its fish sauce by-product and is now no longer known as a fish species. Dr. Carl Semper, a German scholar who visited the country during the mid-1800, cited the case of "other enormous quantities of fish with barely the size of a finger," and natives "caught them by the millions, using a great variety of ingeniously made contrivances," and which are "salted and stored in earthen jars (where) they are preserved for a long time and then sold everywhere in the Archipelago under the name *bagoong* (preserved fish), whose role in domestic trade is not negligible."

The variant song consigns the *sapsap*, or the toothpony (*gazza mintua*, Bloch 1795) to the role of street-sweeper. In earlier times, and today as well, *camineros* wore red-colored pants, probably for greater visibility to reckless drivers.

The *canduli* (*Iates calcarifer*, Bloch, 1790) is assigned as a mere observer since it is generally an outsider, preferring more the brackish or sea water (*dayat malat*) and only occasionally visits the rivers, like during the spawning season, as the prized *apajap* (bass) of the Pampanga River in Apalit.

The *basulto*, surprisingly, failed to include the *liwalu*, which was a hackneyed tenant in Kapampangan waters, as attested by a number



BUNDAQUI, DALAG OR BULIG (MUDFISH) is the *capitan* (president) because it is the biggest river fish of all



BALULUNGI is the *teniente* (chief of police) because it constantly patrols the river.



TUYU is the *sundalo* (footsoldier) because it is common.



BANGUS (MILKFISH) is the *governador* because it is always surrounded by fingerlings.



PARO (SHRIMPS) are the *cuñeras* (deputies) because they look like assistants crowding government offices

of toponyms attributed to it, e.g. Maliwalu in Bacolor, Pampanga and Tarlac City and Caluluan (Ca-liwalu-wan), in Concepcion, Tarlac. The Historical Data Papers of Concepcion called it archer fish (*toxotes jaculatrix*, Pallos 1767}. However, Herre, who called it *lawalo*, classified it as *anabas testudineus* (Bloch), or climbing perch.

This fish, again according to Herre, comparing it with other freshwater species, is "of even greater ability to live without water" and could have been named by Kapampangans for such ability: *liwalu*, from *lual* or 'outside (the waters)'. But in spite of this prowess, the *liwalu* is no longer widely distributed and is now quite rare. Aside from its small size, Herre attributed its being "less desirable" to, as Kapampangans would say, *maduyi ya* (it is bony); and it could be the 1700s *buanbuan* which Bergaño called *pescado espinoso*, delicious but spiny.

THE PRESIDENT'S PROFILE

And these lead us to the biggest of them all, the *bundaqui*, mudfish, being elected *capitan* or, as the variant song proclaims, the *presidenti*. Most Kapampangans call it *bulig*, as it is commonly called in many Southeast Asian countries (Original Austronesian clue?); a few refer to it as *dalag*.

Bergaño orients us on the proper terms applicable to the fish's stages of growth: the yellow-striped fingerlings are known as *bundalag*; the intermediate size is the *bundaqui*, and the fully grown is the *dalag*. There are related terms in this orientation: *bundalagan* means 'where there are *bundalag*;' *pabundaquian*, 'where there are *bundaqui*;' and *pamundalagan*, 'where one could catch *dalag*.'

J. Mallat wrote on the predominant role of this fish in the Kapampangan terrain, especially during the rainy season: "it is more or less during this period that they catch in this lake (Candava Swamp) a great quantity of *dalacs*, a fish of which the Indios are extremely fond and which is in fact delicious. It is claimed that this fish could be found in fields, because during the period of great floods, they penetrate through the mud up to places where there is only several inches of water. The *dalac* resembles a very large and very short eel and its way of swimming makes it prefer muddy places.

What is not consumed locally is transported to Manila where it arrives still alive."

In 1863, Dr. Carl Semper observed that "there is a fresh water fish belonging to the genus *ophiocephalus* (*dalag*) which is found all over the Archipelago, as well as in Malaysia and India and which has a special importance in characterizing the climatological differences between Luzon and Mindanao. (It) belongs to the group of fish which are equipped with receivers on the sides of the head to retain water so that they can remain on land for some time and they even go up the palm trees without lacking humidity in their bronchial tubes and being prevented from breathing." Sixty years

later, W.C. Herre was to concur that: "the *dalag*, or *haluan* (*Ophiocephalus striatus*, Bloch) is a fish of remarkable tenacity of life, grows rapidly to a large size, is of fair food quality, and has therefore been widely distributed by Malays in their wanderings. As a result, it occurs in all parts of the Philippines."

But what baffled early Kapampangans and other Filipinos was the ontogenesis of the *dalag*, as well the *ito* and other fishes such as the gobies. Where had they come from? For centuries, answers were offered in the form of *cuentung balen* (folktales), often ludicrous and fantastic enough to make one guffaw or puke.

In the 1800s, Fr. Joaquin Martinez de Zuñiga, O.S.A., a confrere of Bergaño, tried to solve this enigma. He wrote at that time:

"Some believe that the fish come from the rivers when floods occur. I shall not deny this may be true many times, but there are times when I have seen places not reached by the floods; in the first downpour of the rain, the fingerlings of these two kinds of fish could be seen, which leads me to believe that these fish leave their eggs in the soil and are not destroyed by the dry weather; when the rains fall the eggs hatch and out come the fish. Some people deduce from this that these fish thrive in putrefied matter, not believing that the eggs could last long without being destroyed. They also allege, in support of their opinion that these fish thrive in putrefied matter, that whenever tombs are opened they find *dalag* in them and in all marshy places where there is always standing water. I have been a curate of Hagonoy and Calumpit, the lowest towns in the Manila Archbishopric, and have tried to find out if this kind of fish could really be found when graves are opened. But I never found any."

And who were the perpetrators of these nauseating stories about the *dalag*? Again, Martinez de Zuñiga had the answer: "the idea came from a joke told by Augustinian fathers to their brethren when they still administered parishes in Pampanga (writing in the late 1700s, most of the parishes were then ceded to the secular and native clergy). In order to emphasize the abundance of mudfish in this province (which is the main fare during Fridays) they jokingly told them that if they had no fish, they could order the sexton to open a tomb and catch what is need for the day."

Mallat, however, had another suspect :

"Besides all these fishes, there is one whose flesh gives very sound nutrition and is the common food of the natives; it is the *dalac*: it is found abundantly in the lakes, the rivers, the marshes and even, during the season of rains, in the ricefields called *cimenteras*, a word which several authors have improperly given as *cemeteries*."

YANASA: HELL, PURGATORY, AND HEAVEN

Of course, as the *basulto* concludes, the fate of any fish is the dining table; it is even metaphorical: the *calang* (clay stove) is



ITU (CATFISH) is the *cocinero* (cook) because its sharp whiskers resemble kitchen knives



BIANG PUCPUC is the *fiscal* because it has unknown origins



LICAUC are the *consejales* (councilors) because they are numerous



SAPSAP is the *camineru* (street-sweeper) because its red scales are like the red pants of street-sweepers



CANDULI is the *magmasid* (observer) because it is an outsider from the sea who visits the river only occasionally

compared to Hell and the *curan* (clay pot) to Heaven. The song variant, however, is more picturesque and complete with the Judgement Day motif:

*Ligaya ya ytang dulang
macabulaclac lang pinggan
Infiernus ya itang calan
purgatorio ya itang curan*

Aside from the stove being Hell and the *curan* being Purgatory, Paradise is now ascribed to the *dulang* (or low table, usually regarded as a plebeian fixture) where plates are arranged, like petals of a flower, waiting for a serving of fish aromatically boiling in a pot, their place of agony, similar to tormented humans who died in a state of sin.

The *mamasulto* could be imagining the *sigang asan*, or *sinigang* in other Philippine languages. "They ate the fish," wrote Mallat, "with certain grasses and tamarind making thus a dish called *sinigan*, which was much relished by them." Or, it could be the *bulanglang*, known as the Poor Man's Lunch, with the use of guava instead of tamarind.

But Kapampangans, known for their sophisticated and gourmet taste, have an array of *pescado* or fish recipes, especially for species they can catch in their rivers. Affluent households have placed much emphasis on the cosmopolitan style of Spanish cooking, characterized by the dominant hue of the tomato sauce, as in stews like *escabecheng asan* and the redundant term *pesang dalag* (since *pez* is already 'fish'), and the richness of the ingredients, as in *rellenong bangus* (stuffed milkfish), *pescado al gratin*, and *chuletas* (fish fillet).

It follows that the poorer Kapampangans have simpler fares for their fish: *daing* (dried/marinated with salt, sugar, or vinegar), *derang* (or *ningnang*, broiled), *pacsi* (braised in vinegar with ginger, green pepper, and other spices, as the *pacsing licauc*), or simply *titi* or *fritu* (fried) in pork lard. Yet, in reality, even the rich bisect social ranks, forget table manners, and betray their true gustatory selves as they devour such crude cooking, especially when these are supplemented with fish condiments as *patis*, *baguc*, and *buru* (fermented rice and fish).

The variant *basulto* ends with a di-

dactic couplet:

*Matas ya't mataluctuc
Masaldac ya pangabaldug.
(Higher and loftier,
the fall is harder.)*

After a hefty *pescado* meal, thanks to the bounty of his river and its tenants of fishes, the Kapampangan of yesteryears probably imagined this couplet appropriate as a lasting aftertaste: *Nanung pagmayumu* (what's for dessert)?

BIRDS FOUND ALONG THE PAMPANGA RIVER



DUMARA, Philippine mallard
(*Anas luzonica*)



PUGU, quail (*Coturnix*)



WIS, black-tailed godwit
(*Limosa*)



PATURIUK-TURIUK, white-headed stilt
(*Himantopus*)



SIBAD ILUG, Pacific swallow
(*Hirundo tahitica*)



SALAKSAK OR KULIAUAN, kingfisher
(*Ceyx cyanopectus*)



DENAS BALE, tree sparrow
(*Passer montanus*)



KANDUNGAUK, purple heron
(*Ardea purpurea*)



TARATPIPIT, common fantail warbler
(*Cisticola juncidis*)



TAGAK MALUTU, reef egret
(*Egretta sacra*)

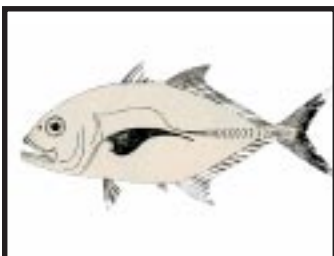


TAGAK PALE, little egret
(*Egretta garzetta*)

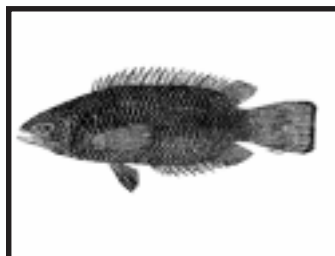


LARUS, whiskered tern
(*Chlidonias hybrida*)

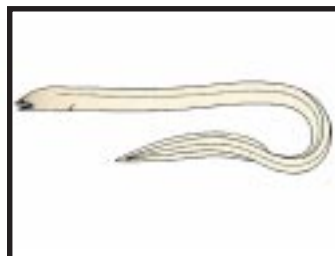
OTHER RIVER FISH FOUND IN PAMPANGA



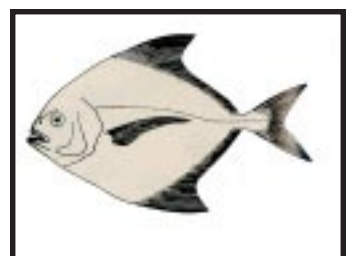
TALAKITOK, long-finned cavalla
(*Caranx* species)



LIWALU, climbing perch
(*Anabas testudineus*)



TALUNASAN, swamp eel
(*Simbranchus bengalensis*,
McClelland)



DUE OR DUAY, black pompret
(*Stromateus niger*,
Bloch)

ing ilug

biyáyan na ka ning ilug
nung mapibabatâ ka,
anang ápu ku.

baluán me ing kimut da reng asan
ustung mabilug ya ing bulan,
ustung káuran ampong ing danum lalapo ya,
mamanggá ya lalam,
ustung panaun kuaresma.

deng mánanan
mengari lang anak-ilug
uling karin ing bie—
balamu gabun keng ortelano—
nung mapibabatâ ka mu
ampong balu me kimút ing danúm.

deng bangka, sagwe, byakus
pakamálan mu la
lalu't deng mánanan
e mu la tatábi
nung sampá la keng gulut
tanggapán mu la
mengári kapatád, káluguran.

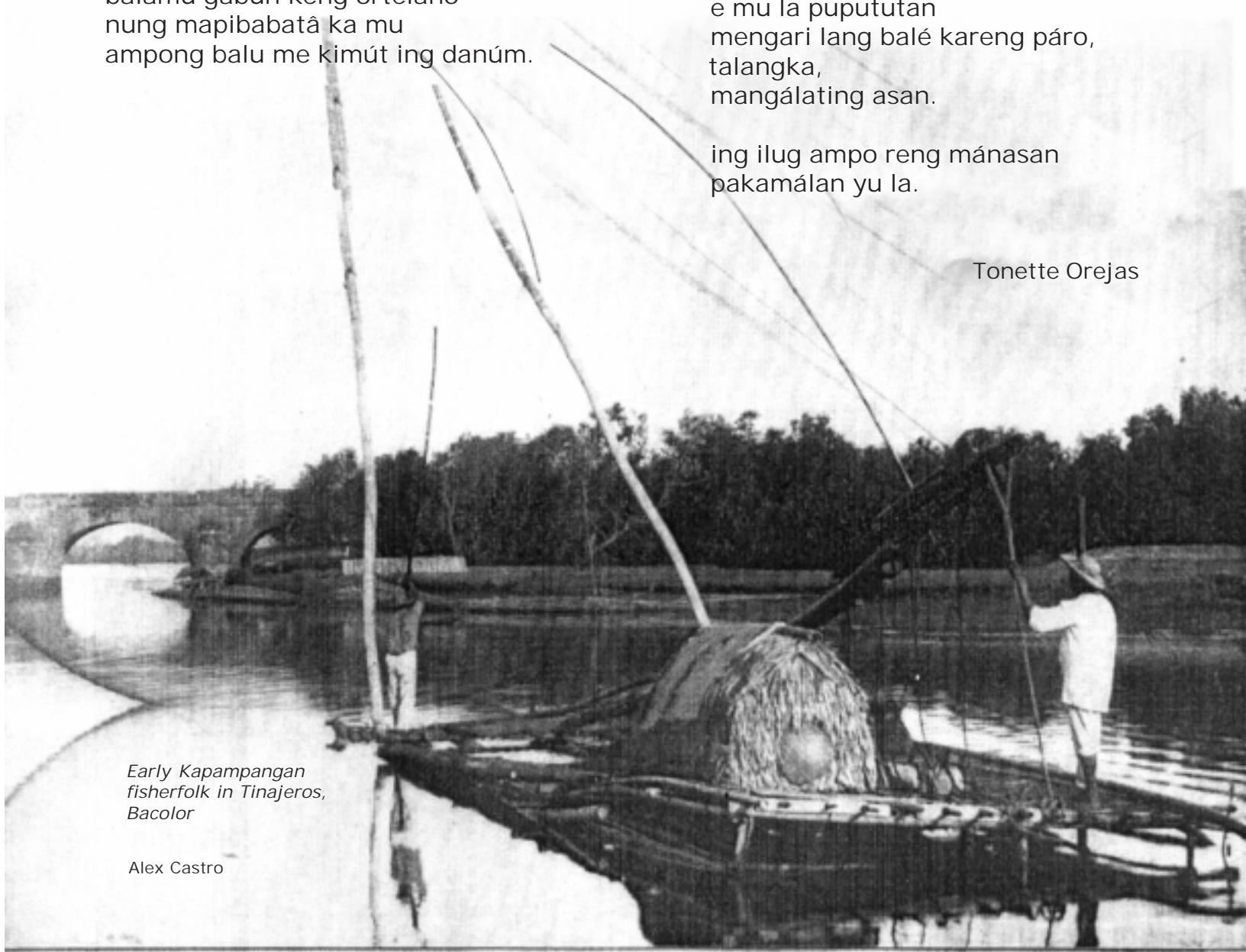
ding palapat
e mu la pupututan
mengari lang balé kareng páro,
talangka,
mangálatiing asan.

ing ilug ampo reng mánanan
pakamálan yu la.

Tonette Orejas

*Early Kapampangan
fisherfolk in Tinajeros,
Bacolor*

Alex Castro



In 1940 when I was 10 and in the fifth grade, the strict German Benedictine nuns required me and many other classmates at the Holy Family Academy in Angeles, Pampanga to become SACRISTANS. The nuns personally took charge of our training and after classes each day we spent one and a half hours for this purpose. It was very systematic but intensive and in less than three months' time we were not only able to memorize all the Latin prayers of the mass, but we actually succeeded in serving in our "first masses", with flying colors and a guaranteed 95% grade in religion. The regular SACRISTANS and the "MAYUL" (Sacristan Mayor or Head Acolyte) of the church took charge in teaching us the actual motions of altar-serving. Our parents were particularly proud of us and would always comment that we were potential candidates for the priesthood, which turned out to be true for a few classmates.



"TO 'KIRISUTO' WITH ALL OUR LOVE"

By Daniel H. Dizon

Suddenly, about 12:30 p.m. on December 08, 1941, our sleepy town was violently flung into World War II when around 150 Japanese bombers and fighters rained bombs and bullets on nearby Clark Field and Fort Stotsenburg, as I watched in horror the largest U.S. military base this part of the globe go up in smoke. Little did I know then that it would mark the beginning of the end of American military rule in the Philippines, that culminated in the fall of Bataan and Corregidor in April-May 1942. The Japanese occupation was a total shock for all of us. We had to adapt abruptly to a new and foreign way of life full of rules, regimentation, imposition of personal and public discipline, etc. Physical violence became a daily occurrence. A pall of gloom and fear descended upon the land. On the other

hand, the Japanese tried their best to keep everything as normal as possible, although clumsily. The town's Japanese military commander, a Col. Suzuki Tatsuzo of Tokyo, was a highly educated officer who graduated from the German Military University of Berlin and who spoke fluent German. The German nuns reopened their school in June 1942 and were ordered by the Japanese to include Filipino nuns in their faculty. We enrolled again to resume our intermediate course; but added to our old subjects were Nippongo, a separate subject on Japanese songs like: KIMIGAYO, AIKOKU KOSHINKYOKU, KOKUMIN-SINGUN-KA, SAKURA, HAMABE-NO-UTA, HINOMARU and others including the new Tagalog March,

all things and he said our heroes proved this fact to the world! He explicitly stressed that a nation whose people were without discipline and patriotism would never prosper and would surely perish. He delivered his speech in bombastic German and was translated into English by our Mother Superior, Sister Lucilla Boegner, O.S.B.

During all this time I continued to serve at holy mass, even after graduation, and I usually stayed in the church helping in its upkeep. I also became a junior "KUMPANERO" (bell-ringer) for all occasions. I joined some friends in working partime in the kitchen of the Japanese garrison beside the church to stave off hunger.

In the summer months of 1944 the

"TINDIG AKING INANG BAYAN". Our expert Nippongo teacher was a young Filipina Benedictine nun named Sister Agustina, who was ordered by the Japanese to take up intensive Japanese in Manila in three months' time and came out of it speaking like a native HAPONESA. Col. Suzuki periodically visited our school, animatedly conversing with the German nuns to further sharpen his German to the nuns' delight. At the same time Sister Agustina sharpened her Nippongo with the colonel's staff officers to the delight of the Japanese. Col. Suzuki made sure that the school's faculty staff religiously taught us the new additions to our Reading Subject – the biographies of Rizal, Bonifacio, Gen. A. Luna, Mabini and other Filipino heroes, which were never taught to us before. The biographies of great Americans in our Readers book were ordered covered up. During our commencement exercises in April 1943, Col. Suzuki was our guest speaker and he emphasized his strong belief in the capability of the Filipino in

Japanese constructed four large airfields around the town and by the time they were completed some three months later, squadrons of warplanes came to use them. At the same time tens of thousands of airfield personnel also poured in and were augmented by regiments of infantry and field artillery units that concentrated in Angeles and Clark Field. One afternoon while I was sweeping in the church, I was startled to behold a Japanese soldier kneeling in front of the large statue of Our Lady of Lourdes in one of the side altars. He was praying the rosary fervently. The next afternoon there were two! I could not believe my eyes. From then on they would come to pray the rosary in the same corner daily until the last day of their young lives. They would stay for benediction and were enthralled at the angelic voices of the Benedictine nuns singing the "O SALUTARIS" and "TANTUM ERGO". Many times they would linger a while more to listen to the monastic melody of vespers sung by the nuns in Gregorian chant, at around 6 p.m.

Soon they introduced themselves to the nuns and regularly brought some token gifts like a few pounds of refined sugar or one or two cakes of soap--rareties at that time. The elder one was named JOSEPH and the younger one, ANTONIO. They spoke a mixture of broken English, Tagalog and Nippongo. Parishioners always became very emotional every time these two "enemy" soldiers were seen praying in church. As the months passed, their friendship with the nuns grew, as well as with the parish priest, Rev. Fr. Cosme Bituin, the MAYUL and the SACRISTANS. When the smelly carabao lard candles ran out, JOSEPH and ANTONIO secretly supplied the church and the nuns with small amounts of diesel oil which they brought in small tin cans, one at a time, in the dead of night, to fuel oil lamps. Many times, usually around midnight the two Japanese Catholics would secretly show up at the school and request for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Communion. A Filipina nun named Sister Eugene would quickly summon Fr. Bituin who obligingly heard the confessions of the two "enemy" penitents,

and gave them communion immediately after. Eventually this became a fortnightly ritual.

The war situation turned from bad to worse especially after the commencement of American air raids in September 1944. The Angeles and Clark airfields were bombed almost daily by U.S. Navy carrier planes and later by U.S. Army heavy bombers. Furthermore, HUKBALAHAP guerrillas intensified their ambushes and assassinations

GERMAN NUNS, JAPANESE SOLDIERS PRAY TOGETHER WITH A KAPAMPANGAN PRIEST IN THE DARKEST HOURS OF WORLD WAR II

on Japanese patrols and Filipino puppet constabulary and police forces. Starvation had spread and public executions by the puppet police became frequent. In January 1945, U.S. liberation forces were advancing from Tarlac and were poised for a siege of Clark Field, which was heavily defended by Japanese forces. One day, after a devastating aerial bombardment of Angeles and Clark Field by low-flying U.S. bombers, JOSEPH and ANTONIO, in full battle gear, came rushing to the Holy Family Academy and frantically asked Sister Eugene if she could quickly arrange for confession and communion. At the same time they were bidding the nuns their farewell for that night, they were ordered to fight to the last man at the frontlines. The Benedictine nuns instead collectively decided for a special holy mass to be said for their departing Japanese friends. Soon Fr. Bituin with his MAYUL, a Mr. Pablo Basilio, came carrying all their mass paraphernalia. In a jiffy the nuns converted a second floor room into a makeshift chapel to conceal the secret ritual and then quickly dressed up in their all-black habits.

After hearing the confessions of the two Japanese, the holy mass began in all so-

lemnity. JOSEPH and ANTONIO knelt right at the foot of the makeshift altar in deep concentration, as the Benedictines intoned the "REQUIEM AETERNAM" in angelic Gregorian chant. This was then followed by several hymns that were sung softly, like: "NEARER MY GOD TO THEE", "HEART OF JESUS", "BLESS O DEAREST MOTHER", "THEE WILL I LOVE", etc. During the consecration, JOSEPH and ANTONIO, with hands clasped at their foreheads, uttered loudly the word "KIRISUTO" three times, then followed by an emotional Japanese prayer. After the last blessing, as a parting gesture, Fr. Bituin performed the ritual of General Absolution on the two "enemy" souls that were about to depart into eternity. Then everyone shook the hands of the two Japanese soldiers in a last farewell.

Sister Eugene came forward and said to them: "JOSEPH-san and ANTONIO-san, please give our love to KIRISUTO when you see Him tomorrow, *nel!*" To which they both nodded with tears welling in their eyes and bowed low as they profusely expressed their deep gratitude to all and uttered their last SAYONARA. They then donned their steel helmets and backpacks, shouldered their rifles and walked slowly away. That evening several army trucks transported the troop reinforcement to the battlelines.

By nightfall the next day only two trucks returned to the Japanese motorpool at the Holy Angel Academy beside the church. The MAYUL inquired from one driver and he was told the unit of JOSEPH-san and ANTONIO-san had been entirely wiped out to the last man. Indeed, the two enemy soldiers were the Japanese Emperor's loyal warriors, but they were Christ's first!

SOME WARTIME FILIPINO ACQUAINTANCES OF JOSEPH-SAN AND ANTONIO-SAN:

1. MR. GREGORIO HENSON, 1944 Senior Acolyte of Holy Rosary Parish Church, Angeles City, ORAL TESTIMONY given to the author ca. 1975.
2. MR. PABLO BASILIO, 1944-1945 "Sacristan Mayor" of Holy Rosary Parish Church, Angeles City, residing at #146 Ma. Myrna Drive, Villa Gloria, Angeles City, ORAL TESTIMONY given to the author ca. 1977.
3. REV. FR. ADRIANO "SILVESTRE" H. LACSON, 1942-1945 Senior Acolyte of Holy Rosary Parish Church, Angeles City, now the Treasurer of the Alabang Benedictine Abbey, Muntinlupa City, ORAL TESTIMONY given to the author on 24 January 2004.



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CENTER STAFF: Robby Tangingco (Director), Kaye Mayrina Lingad (Public Relations Officer), Erlinda Cruz (Cultural Activities Coordinator), Joel Mallari (Archaeologist/Researcher), Anton Prima (Translator/Researcher), Sheila Laxamana (Events Organizer/Administrative Staff), Ana Marie Vergara (Computer Graphics Artist/Researcher), Arwin Paul Lingat (Church Heritage Researcher), Dr. Rosita Mendoza (Consultant), Francisco Guinto (Language Consultant), Felix Garcia (Language Consultant), Jimmy Hipolito (Visitors Liaison Volunteer).

Museum Curator/Consultant: Alex Castro

Historian/Consultant: Prof. Lino Dizon

Betelgeuse

Belatrix

M78

M42

Rigel



Atsing Rosing



O atsi cung Rosing pa - ma - tu - lan da - ca,



Tungi co ring batuin pa kwint - tas co que - ca,



Ba - nga - lan queng bu - lan, ga - wan queng co - ro - na



I - pu - tung que que - ca, I - pu - tung que que - ca, la



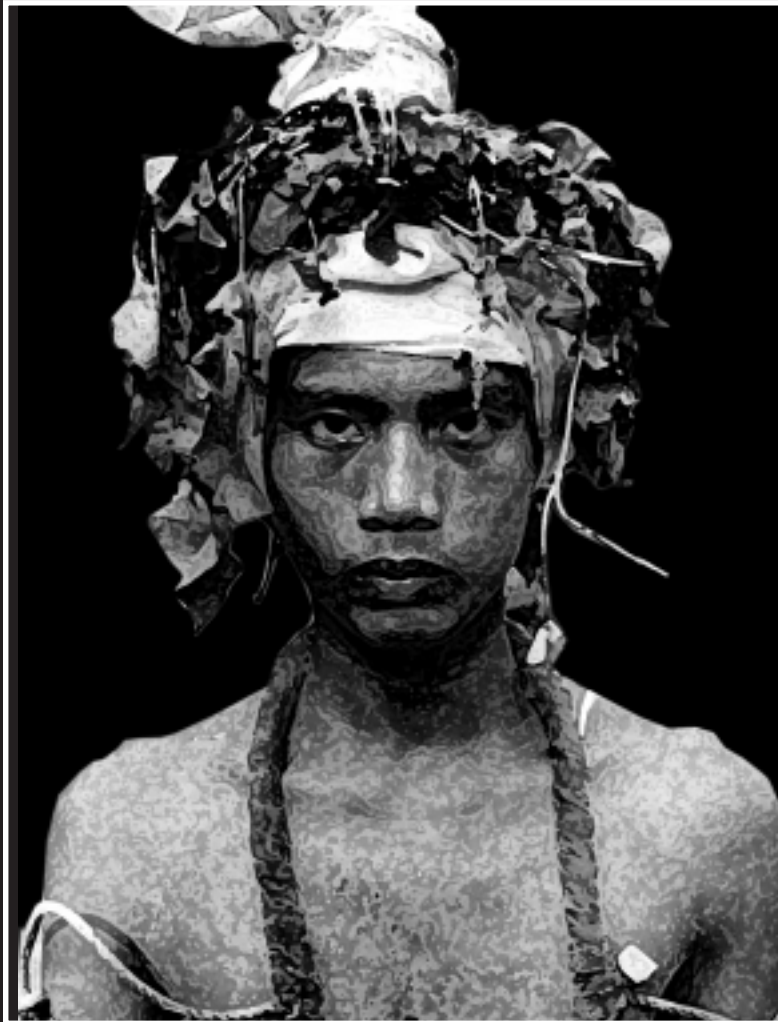
lam ning bio - le - ta.

2. Gawa ra cang duyan quing bigang maputi
 Gawa ra cang tali asul pinanari
 Ding magbante queca, tau lang bayani
 Dr. Jose Rizal, Andres Bonifacio
 Lai ring komanggi.



folk music

ATSING ROSING IS ONE OF THOSE TRADITIONAL SONGS OF KAPAMPANGANS THAT ARE FADING FROM MEMORY. IT WAS USUALLY PERFORMED DURING THE CORONATION OF A LOCAL BEAUTY QUEEN.



suffering folk

magsalibatbat (N). A KIND OF FLAGELLANT WHO CRAWLS AND RUBS HIS SKIN AGAINST THE DIRT ROAD, USUALLY SIGHTED IN FARMING VILLAGES IN MAGALANG, PAMPANGA ON MAUNDY THURSDAY AND GOOD FRIDAY.
(Photographs by Robby Tangingco)