

# A Chronicle of the Japanese Occupation in Catabangan Proper, Ragay, Camarines Sur

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.808071>

Received: 13 July 2024; Revised: 23 July 2024; Accepted: 27 July 2024; Published: 31 August 2024

## ABSTRACT

This study traced the historical events that took place in Catabangan Proper, Ragay, Camarines Sur during the Japanese Occupation from 1942 to 1945, the historical background, significant memoir, and historical implication of these historical events to the development of Catabangan Proper, Ragay, Camarines Sur in order to come up with an Instructional Material in teaching local history. This study made use descriptive-qualitative method of research to cite the historical events to come up with a historical information's. Informants who have direct knowledge of the events will be asked prepared questions. A thorough study on the available gathered data and events in Catabangan Proper.

**Keywords:** Japanese Occupation; Local History; Historical Events; Contextualization; Educational Material

## INTRODUCTION

Local history contains wealth of details and stories that reveal how societal changes impacted the lives of small communities. Studying local history fills us with the knowledge that history is all around us. Learning about local history can help us realize the grand scheme of historical change which is made up of countless individuals who in their own ways contributed to the ongoing story of their community. And this story likely contains fascinating information that is worth finding and preserving. Without local history, the larger pattern could never be completed. However, the basic obligation of every locality is to provide a proper and an adequate account of the historical experience of its own people.

For Cicero<sup>1</sup>, to be ignorant of the past is to be forever a child. It explains how a lack of historical understanding can respond to modern intolerance. In 21st century comes to different changes, knowing our roots means being conscious of what makes us who and what we are.

For almost seven decades history of Catabangan, Ragay Camarines during Japanese occupation are not written. It must be awakened, should be studied, learned, and improved. Having no ideas and knowledge about local history will affect its origin. Furthermore, without ideas and knowledge of the results and happened during World War II can result another difficult of transferring knowledge locally. History gives us a sense of self-identity. We will better understand who we are if we understand where we came from. Our lives and nature have a sense of meaning thanks to history. It enables us to comprehend the current situation and how we could proceed in the future.

During the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, which lasted from 1942 to 1945, the invaders sought to integrate the archipelago into the so-called Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, a self-sustaining economic bloc that would serve as a counterweight to Western imperialism. The GEACPS' underlying theory was Pan-Asianism, which promoted the liberation and unification of all Asian peoples. For almost three years of invasion, Filipinos witnessed the economic, social, and political changes in the Philippines.

Despite the fact that more than half a century had passed since World War II ended, there were many

unrecorded incidents that learners might have gained great lessons from it. The realization of the unrepresentative and limited existence of Philippine history was the impetus for creating a local history. Most history books are focus on Central Luzon and Tagalogs. According to Henry F. Funtecha, Ph.D. <sup>2</sup> author of *Bridging the Gap from The News Today*: “what is generally considered to be the history of the Filipino people is essentially the history of Central Luzon, most especially the Tagalogs. Important events and developments, including personages, particularly in the Visayas and Mindanao, are, at best, mentioned in passing and, at worst, altogether left out”.

Learning materials was defined as one of the curriculum support systems in the teaching-learning process by Republic Act No. 10533 <sup>3</sup>, also known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. The Department of Education adheres to the K–12 Basic Education Program's standards and principles, which empower and allow schools, divisions, and regions to localize, indigenize, and enhance the program based on their educational and social contexts. Students learn better when classroom interactions have meaning and significance in their lives, according to the concept of localization and contextualization. Things students’ do and associate with them are the learning that last forever. Applying the rule for learning by doing, applied learning, and manipulative learning is also a must in executing localization and contextualization in teaching. Deep learning can be ensured and realized if students are placed in an actual learning environment that allows them to exploit, connect, and adapt to various learning opportunities and tools available within the locality or society. By relating and introducing lessons in the light of the current local community, history, and resources, it aids teachers and students in comprehending concepts. As a result, lessons are becoming more practical, personalized, and relevant.

Aside from local history, cultural heritage continues to be a concern. In the Philippines, where culture changes from one island to another and is very diverse, cultural heritage is given importance through Republic Act 9470<sup>4</sup>, National Archives of the Philippines Act of 2007, which states that: It is the policy of the State to conserve, promote and popularize the nation’s historical and cultural heritage resources. The State shall pursue, conserve, and promote the Filipino cultural heritage and resources including the documentary records of Filipino culture, history, and governance (Art. I, Sec. 2). Medina (1977) <sup>5</sup> noted “No documents, no history” is one dicta of historical research. Such a reminder often depresses, considering that one of the greatest problems confronting research on local history is accessibility of materials” (p.185). The inaccessibility of research materials for the writing of local history became a problem of many historians and researchers. This then was a challenge to educators how we will provide rich examples, and illustrations to develop conclusions to local history among learners.

The researcher, a public-school teacher teaching Araling Panlipunan 8, believes Japanese Occupation in Catabangan should not be forgotten. Each happens to past should be recorded, documented, and reminisced it will be our basis on adopting and reserving the community itself. Localized instructional materials are our weapons to bringing the past and telling the story about it. Learners will be gained and relating to ideas and concept that can easily comprehend, appreciate, and relate lives. In history books, the heroes, and their valiant participation in the war of resistance against the Japanese were only unofficially remembered. The researcher believed local knowledge developed over centuries of experimentation and are passed orally from generation to generation. Thus, I adhere to utilize the contextualize and localize instructional materials in purpose of learners intact the value ideas of events and heroic act of local heroes during past war. Promote local history provide inspire learning and promoting Makabayan.

Since it represents their own identity, memories, and desires, local history is expected to be nearest to people's hearts and minds. It is an interpretive reconstruction of their community's history, encompassing its political, social, economic, and cultural existence. This involves the growth of the geographical unit's institutions as well as the achievements and shortcomings of its citizens. "A Teacher presents the past, reveals the present, and creates the future “. – Unknown <sup>6</sup> it implies to us we need to impose bright and significance of this uncounted evidence of the past.

## Statement of the Problem

This study aims to trace the chronicle of the Japanese Occupation in Catabangan Proper, Ragay, Camarines

Sur, it seeks answers to the following questions:

1. What is the historical background of Catabangan Proper, Ragay, Camarines Sur?
2. What are the significant events and its implication in Catabangan Proper, Ragay, Camarines Sur during the Japanese Occupation in terms of:
  - 2.1 Politics
  - 2.2 Economics
  - 2.3 Education
  - 2.4 Social Environment?
3. What educational material can be developed based on the findings of this study?

### **Assumptions of the Study**

This research is based on the following assumptions:

1. The historical events that occurred prior to World War II have played a crucial role in the development of Catabangan Proper. These events are not merely memories but are an integral part of the area's history.
2. The events that transpired before World War II had substantial contributions across various aspects of the entire community of Catabangan Proper, including politics, economics, social environment, and education. The historical implication from various people narrating their experience of the Japanese occupation.
3. A contextualized-based book in teaching local history can be made.

### **Significance of the Study**

The following people, according to the researcher, would profit from the study:

**Students.** The present study aims to enhance people's knowledge and appreciation of the local history that has directly impacted their lives. By delving into this history, students' enthusiasm for the subject will be reignited, fostering a sense of respect, value, patriotism, and shared values. Additionally, they will have the opportunity to learn new aspects and gain fresh insights into the past. Overall, the research endeavors to foster a deeper understanding and connection to local history, benefiting individuals and the community as a whole.

**Teachers.** In Araling Panlipunan, high school teachers face a lack of reading materials that focus on local history. The study's findings could be used to supplement educational materials about the Japanese occupation of Catabangan Proper. The teaching materials will be used to teach local history. The findings of this study can assist them in creating a productive learning environment that will develop a sense of nationalism and patriotism.

**Local Folks.** This study holds the potential to provide the people of Catabangan Proper and Ragay with a better understanding of how the Japanese occupation has influenced the present state of their society. By examining historical records and gathering firsthand accounts, the study's findings will shed light on significant events and their consequences. This will serve as a reminder for present generations who may have unintentionally overlooked or forgotten these historical events amidst the numerous environmental changes that have taken place over time. The research will contribute to filling gaps in knowledge and ensuring that the impact of the Japanese occupation is acknowledged and remembered.

**Local Government Unit.** The outcome of this study will offer valuable documentary records of the Japanese occupation, specifically for the local government unit and barangay officials of Catabangan Proper. These records will serve as important historical documentation that can be utilized for various purposes, such as educational resources, preservation of local heritage, and informing decision-making processes. The study's findings will provide a comprehensive understanding of the Japanese occupation's impact on the community, enabling the local government unit and barangay officials to have a more informed perspective on their history

and effectively communicate it to future generations.

**School Administrators.** This research responds to a pressing need for materials focused on local history. As a result, it is recommended that the administrator provide full support to the faculty conducting local history study.

**Researchers.** Other researchers will benefit from the findings of this study because they will be given data to use in their own analysis. Future scholars will be inspired and motivated by this study to write their own local history. They may be able to reveal a historically significant incident in a specific location as a result of their efforts.

### Scope and Delimitation

The study's focus is specifically delimited to the documentation of the chronicles of the Japanese Occupation in Catabangan Proper, Ragay, Camarines Sur. The primary informants for the research are residents of Catabangan who directly experienced the World War II. Their personal memories and perspectives have been collected and documented as historical facts to construct an authentic historical narrative of that period.

### Definition of Terms

The following definitions are given to help you understand the words used in this research.

**Catabangan Proper.** A barangay in the municipality of Ragay, in the province of Camarines Sur.

**Chronicle.** A factual account of historical events written in chronological order. This refers to the chronology of events that occurred during the Japanese occupation in Catabangan Proper.

**Contextualization.** Refers to the practice of connecting academic content and learning experiences to real-world contexts and situations that are relevant and meaningful to the learners.

**Economics.** This aspect is concerned with the factors that influence the production, distribution, and consumption of products and services. It describes people's economic activity during the war years.

**Education.** The transmission of knowledge, skills, and character traits. This refers to the educational system implemented in Catabangan Proper under the direction and administration of the Japanese.

**Guerilla warfare.** A form of irregular warfare in which small groups of independent forces, generally in the rear of the enemy, with the objective of harassing, delaying, and disrupting the military operations of the enemy.

**Historical Significance.** This refers to the cultivated concepts that have been derived from the historical narratives collated from the people with encounters and experiences with the set scope.

**Informant.** Someone who gives an agency privileged information about a person or organization. Key informants are those with direct experience of living, such as local officials, professionals, or residents.

**Japanese Occupation.** This refers to the occupation of the Japanese in the Philippines during WW II 1942-1945. In this study, it focused on the people in Ragay who have lived during the Japanese occupation or have heard stories about the Japanese occupation as a secondary source. (Japanese Occupation in the Philippines, 2023).

**Localization.** The process of relating learning content specified in the curriculum to local information and materials in the learners' community.

**Oral History.** Is a method of conducting historical research through recorded interviews between a narrator

with personal experience of historically significant events and a well-informed interviewer, with the goal of adding to the historical record.

**Politics.** The actions related to the governance of a certain area. It refers to the Japanese government's operations concerning the political relations between an occupied nation and the invading force.

**Social Environment.** This refers to permanent structures such as buildings, residences, roads, and establishments that are constructed when a catastrophe breaks out in Catabangan Proper.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is of the qualitative type of historical research, which is a social science method of examining historical events to build explanations which are valid beyond a particular time and place, whether through valid connection to other historical figures, theory testing, or counterpoint to the present day. Instead of using numbers, the research presentation used phrases and graphics. Dual refers to, “a study of events, processes, and institutions of past civilizations, for the purpose of finding the origins or antecedents of contemporary social life and thus understanding its nature and working.” It discusses what happened in the past and then conducts a critical investigation of whether what happened was true.

Oral history was used to augment this strategy. According to Baylor University<sup>2</sup>, Oral History is a sound recording of historical information, obtained through an interview that preserves a person's life history or eyewitness account of an experience—but read on. In the pages that follow, this manual invites you to explore the full implications of the terms recording, interviewing, and preserving as you learn to create oral history.

The researcher used this methodology to bring to light major occurrences in Catabangan during World War II, interviewing key informants who had first-hand knowledge of the conflict years and recording them on audio in order to acquire critical data regarding the war.

### Informants

There were nine (9) key informants in this research residing in barangay Catabangan Proper who witness the Japanese occupation. The identified key informants are the following: WW II veterans, guerillas, and local folks.

In the evaluation of the interview, the researcher considered the narrator's role in relation to the events he or she is describing. Also, the consistency of the entire account was weighed. The veracity is measured based on the remaining documents and pictures. The account's overall reliability was also considered. The researcher assumes the level of authenticity of the statements. Whether the interview falls in line with other evidence, or if it logically and meaningfully draws on it or enriches existing evidence.

### Data Gathering Tools

In this study, the main source of data was an unstructured interview. The researcher also looked at written records from the community, such as magazines, published memoirs, diaries, photographs, and history books. The following tools were used by the researcher to attain the study's goal:

**Table 1 Informants of the Study**

Key Informants	No. of Informants
Descendant of the Veterans	4
Guerilla Member	2
Local folks	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>

**Unstructured Interview.** The data was gathered thru unscheduled interviews. The remaining living guerrillas will be individually identified to provide information. With the assistance of barangay officials, they will also guide the descendants who can provide information about the events that occurred during the Japanese occupation.

**Pictures.** Photographs depicting the development and prosperity of Catabangan Proper, as well as the remaining infrastructure affected by World War II.

**Preparation of the Instrument.** Using a questionnaire for data gathering in an interview is a common technique employed by many researchers, especially in historical research. Close-ended questions were utilized in this interview to make it easier for the informants to respond, as these types of questions typically require basic knowledge or specific responses. The convenience of close-ended questions lies in their ability to provide structured and easily quantifiable data, allowing for efficient analysis and comparison of responses.

**Validation.** The evaluation of the accuracy of the output is based on a tool used for assessing the content, wherein it is measured if the output adheres to the standards of the Department of Education (DepEd). The validators and master teachers from DepEd Camarines Sur are the individuals involved in this process. To ensure that the words used are correct, it will undergo language editing. The goal is to guarantee that the output can be effectively utilized and understood by students based on their abilities.

**Administration of the instrument.** The study was conducted by the researcher themselves, who personally distributed the questionnaires to the intended informants and requested their responses.

The researcher opted for conducting personal interviews to gather firsthand information from the informants. A one-on-one interview approach was utilized, employing a question-and-answer strategy. The data obtained from the informants were then organized, summarized, and analyzed to address the research problems at hand.

### **Preparation of Instructional Material**

In writing the module, the researcher will consider the necessary steps to make it interactive for the students who will be reading it. Starting from the title, it should be appealing and able to capture their interest in reading it. It indicated the grade level and type of learners for whom the module is intended. It provided students with a design platform and development environment view of the module's content. The backdrop is necessary in order to build their mental settings and encourage learners. Learners should understand explicitly what is supposed to be measured of instructional goals as they progress through the curriculum. The instructional material was written in terms of learners' particular and measurable performance in order to make all objectives understandable. Each part should also have clear instructions and various activities that will challenge the students' abilities. It is also ensured that it will awaken their Filipino spirit and understanding of history, especially in their own community.

## **RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

### **A Chronicle Of The Japanese Occupation In Catabangan Proper, Ragay, Camarines Sur**

This chapter includes an account of the informants as well as important events related to the Japanese occupation in Catabangan Proper, Ragay, Camarines Sur, including Historical Background and The Significant Events of Japanese Occupation.

#### **Historical Background of Catabangan Proper, Ragay, Camarines Sur**

The Americans stayed in the Philippines in such a short span of time, but they left a great influence on the Filipino people. Notable of which were their influence in education, public health and sanitation, public service, women's rights, beliefs, fashion and culinary arts.

The American occupation opened an array of opportunities to the people of Catabangan Proper. Foreigners flocked and opened many opportunities including establishment of facilities, opening of school among others that it was considered “Little City” then.

**Philippine Lumber Company.** A Filipino-Chinese named Dee C. Chuan, a successful businessman and famous during the American Period for establishing a logging company in Catabangan Proper, Ragay, Camarines Sur. In 1928 he incorporated Philippine Lumber Manufacturing Company to oversee its new franchise of logging and sawmilling at this place. He was so called “Lumber King” during 1920s until 1930s, however, it was a great dismay when their sawmill at Cadiz was caught by fire. Plate Number 1 were remnants of the pillars of the office of the Philippine Lumber Company. It is here that every minute details of the logging process were undertaken. It served all their employees. Based on the accounts of Salvacion F. Carcido a former resident of Sinuknipan, Del Gallego, Camarines Sur mentioned that:

“Dakulaon yan, (Philippine Lumber Comapany), dakulaon talaga halangkawon. Garu bakal ito. Duman nagkukuyan ang aso sa pabrikang ito. Duman pig-aagi ang aso sa pagpuktol kang troso. Ta aram mo diyan sa lumber di baga piridaso na riritratuhon kung pirang laba may para putol naman yan. Iyo itong mga arog kaning bakal na pig-aagihan. Ngunyan mayo na. kahuyan garu yan kadto ay naubos na si kahoy ta dakulaon ito de eskalon na lumber na ito. De eskalon na ibababa tapos isasakay na sa barko. Mga Instsik ang dakol duman na may-ari ng tindahan, dakulon yan. Pano yan Catabangan kadto ning harong na dakulaon. Ang mga tindahan dakulaon man. Garu mga anom ako kadto. May padi ngani diyan na mestizo. Nagduduman kami sa padi ta nagtataong tsokolayt saka gatas. Naghahagad kami sa kumbento.”

Chuan, with the company he established brought new opportunities for the residence of Catabangan Proper to enjoy a fair living condition. Railways were improved and stretched towards the logging source from the mountain of “Susong Dalaga”. It was called “tramo” that hastens the activities leading to bigger opportunities and resulted to a better living condition. A port was built where lumber was loaded for export to other countries. The Philippine Lumber was one of the biggest suppliers of lumber in America. It has the capacity to produce 10,000 board feet per day. Beside the natives of Catabangan Proper, there were also those coming from Visayas and other race from the neighboring countries in Asia working in the sawmill.



**Plate No. 1**  
**Remnants of the once office of the**  
**Philippine Lumber**

Plate Number 2 showed a huge edifice which served as water reservoir for enough supply of water in cleaning the lumber to ensure its durability and measure the quality before exporting to other countries.

The Philippine Lumber also supplied the power energy in the place which was considered as the “Little City” of the Town of Ragay it being once the center of commerce. The trains hauled the lumber from the mountains

to the harbor. Lumber was processed in the production area to ensure that it is of export quality. Usually, large ships would dock in the pier waiting for lumber.



**Plate No. 2 Reservoir of water coming from the falls of Catabangan Proper that supplied water in the lumber production.**

The Philippines was said to be among the biggest supplier of lumber in the world. Plate number 3 showed the employees of Philippine Lumber Company. They were the so called “pugonero”. They put furnace on the train to run.



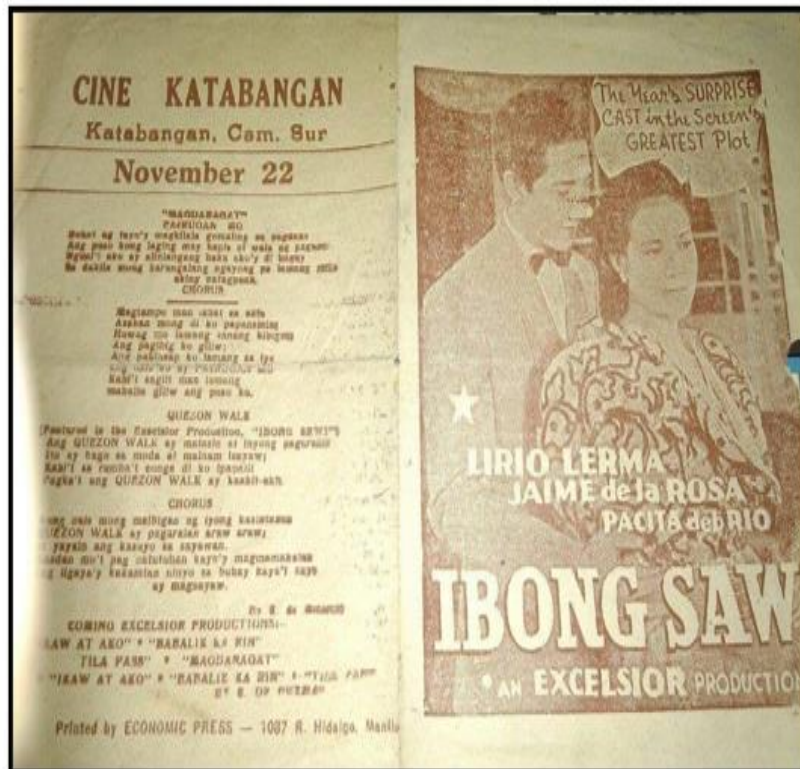
**Plate No. 3  
The Workers of Philippine Lumber Company  
“Pugonero” circa 1936**

**Lighthouse.** Dr. Jones built it out of concrete stones and steel with a carbide-powered light or lamp, serving as guide for exact location of the travelers.



**Hospital and Morgue.** The health condition was one of the priority programs of the Americans. They ensure to contain the spread of cholera and chicken pox epidemic which hit some parts of the country during their administration. There were doctors and nurses who took care of the health of the residents. Health facilities were built to separate patients with contagious diseases and be given special attention. Preventive measures to contain insect causing diseases were conducted. Adjacent to the hospital was a morgue to ensure proper handling of the dead and proper disposal for those who died of contagious diseases. There was also a dentist to ensure the healthy teeth of the residents.

**Recreation.** A tennis court, basketball court and even movie house were built. People enjoyed their leisure hours when done with their work and daily chores. The people then in Catabangan Proper enjoyed a happy and colorful life. Their happiness during the American administration were beyond compare, a sign that they were experiencing a fairly good way of living. They were not much affected by tiredness or exhaustion from work since there were places for leisure and recreation. Even foreigners who docked at the place watched at the movie house and so with the residents of neighboring barangays who were also entertained of the shows at the movie house. Movies were usually of talented Filipino actors and actresses. Plate No. 4 was a movie ticket in Catabangan Proper, watching movies was one of the forms of entertainment then.



**Plate No. 4**

**Movie ticket entitled “Ibong Sawi” starring Lirio Lerma, Jaime de la Rosa, and Pacita del Rio.**

**Port.** The trade served to speed up the course of the economy in a certain place. The Port of Catabangan Proper was built to serve as a harbor of goods and foreign investors. It was indispensable since it became the primary transportation system for the goods to be brought to different destinations and the docking place for those going to nearby places. It opened opportunities for foreign investors to put up business and the local products of Catabangan Proper be known. It stimulated the sawmill industry and the residents landed permanent jobs and regular source of income. It also served as entrance for those from neighboring places who came to watch movies, had check-ups at the hospital or joined activities during fiesta.



**Plate No. 5**

**The old port of Catabangan Proper now only has a few remaining posts. It made a significant contribution to the local trade in the past.**

The place was always colorful and in a festive mood. According to old folks, everything that they wanted to have, do and wish for can be found there just like in a city. Plate No. 5 showed pillars remnants of the port situated in the place.

**Education.** The dream of the American conquerors to effectively and totally influenced the Filipino people with their culture materialized. Through education they were able to partake in their culture to them. They put up schools and taught Filipinos how to read and write. Eventually, the Filipinos learned the English language and value everything that was taught to them including the influence of the American culture to the natives.

#### **Significant Events of Japanese Occupation in Catabangan Proper, Ragay, Camarines Sur (1942-1945)**

In the annals of history, on every page therein, none was mentioned about the Japanese conquest of Catabangan Proper, Ragay, Camarines Sur.

**Politics.** A “puppet government” was established with regards to the political aspect. The conquerors established a colony which led the country. However, they still controlled all activities of the government, which can be regarded as indirect governance. This was what happened to the political system in Catabangan Proper. During that time, every statement by the Japanese was considered a law in the society. At that time, no one was known to lead the place when the Japanese seized it. The statement was seconded by Juanito Tabios<sup>2</sup>, a resident of the place:

“Hindi masasabing may politika sa panahong iyon. Hindi alam kung tunay nga bang may politiko na lumalaban sa kanila”.

Under Japanese occupation, the Filipino population faced strict control and colonial oppression. 14 of December 1941, the Japanese invaded Bicol. They first went to Legazpi, Albay. The Japanese occupation ended the silence and abundant living of the people of Catabangan Proper. At that time, no one was known to lead the place. And it was the main reason why it was easily conquered by the Japanese. According to Romeo Magtaca Gupong<sup>3</sup> coming from a former guerilla informant, Solidaridad Magtaca who is already 20 years old then:

“Nakaranas ang Catabangan Proper ng mahigpit na pamamalakad sa ilalim ng hukbo ng Hapon. Ginawa nilang kampo ang paaralan. Natigil ang mga negosyo at ang pabrika ng troso.”

During that time, people of Catabangan Proper were not able to practice their civil and political rights. Instead, they were forcibly controlled in every movement and activity. The Japanese must be informed of all their movements and were heavily guarded in order to avoid untoward actions by the Filipinos against them.

The Japanese invasion was the igniting force for the Filipinos' hearts and minds be awakened. While others rebelled that led to organized guerilla movements. Because of cruelty and merciless killings that the Filipinos awakened which eventually forced them to organize movements called Guerilla to address the worsening situation. Their common strategy was to ambush the Japanese forces. Guerilla had an enormous contribution in fighting against the Japanese empire for the individual rights and freedom. Pacifico Arquibel<sup>4</sup>, recounted the painful account he experienced:

“Ang aking personal na karanasan noong panahon ng mga hapon ako ay kinalbo, pinintutahan ng alketran at ibinilad sa initan sa Ateneo de Naga upang paaminin kung ako ba ay isang guerilla.



**Plate No. 6**

**Pedro Simbajon was one of the guerrillas who fought against the Japanese**

Plate number 6 showcase the image of Pedro Simbajon, demonstrating bravery in liberating from the hands of the Japanese.

The painful experience of their countrymen forced them to harbor hatred against the Japanese. Brothers Pedro and Alvino Simbajon were famous for organizing guerilla units in the mountains of Catabangan Proper together with siblings coming from Sinuknipan namely Guillermo, Pancho, Antonio, Alfonso and Elioterio Yglip. Out of need for more members, they recruited Pedro Loyola who is the caretaker of Philippine Lumber and became the runner for messages from information gathered on what will be the next step the Japanese plans to undertake. While Geronimo de Paz and Ramon Flores were the eyes of the Guerillas. They guarded the actions of the Japanese and run to the mountains once information was gathered.

Other Filipinos became Makabayang Katipunan ng mga Pilipino or MAKAPILI according to Santiago Berroya. Wearing “bayong” on their heads, they informed the Japanese on who were members of the Guerilla groups. Some members of the Guerilla stayed away and were cautious about their plans. A lamp in front of the house would mean that the household does not support the actions of the leftist. The Yglip siblings established their quarter at a mountain in Pamplona and beside a mountain falls in Salvacion, del Gallego. They planned

there on how to force Japanese to surrender. They asked for food supply at the sawmill company for their daily needs. The Simbajon brothers also bravely seized the mountains.

The Japanese announced the establishment of Military Command which they claimed would free the Philippines from the tyranny of the United States. This was the effect of absence of unity and orderliness in Catabangan Proper. Under the Japanese administration, there were no assurance on the life of the residents. The compatriots were hopeful that with the dawn would come true independence and peace in their place.

**Economics.** The once-progressive place was engulfed with sadness. Businessmen, workers at the sawmill and foreigners particularly nurses and doctors left. Pacifico Arquibel<sup>5</sup>, a resident of Catabangan Proper who was forced to work in the garrison mentioned that:

“pinanghawakan ng mga hapon ang Philippine Lumber Company, napasakamay sa mga ito at sila ang komontrol”

At that time the company was left idle, and people found it hard to work for fear that the conquerors might think harshly of them, worst kill them. Others headed to the mountain of Nagkalit, Del Gallego, Camarines Sur. Carlito de Paz<sup>6</sup> recalled from the accounts of his grandfather, Santiago Berroya, a “Pugonero” at the Philippine Coconut Lumber that:

“nagpatayo ng garrison ang mga Hapon noong dumating sila na malapit sa pinagbahayan ng mga Gupong na dating eskuwelahan noon. Iniwan nila ang Catabangan Proper at namundok sila. Sa may Nagkalit sila tumira at mayroong lupa sila noon”

There was no way that the painful memories be forgotten even unto death. Still according to the accounts of Carlito De Paz<sup>7</sup> from Santigao Berroya that:

“Wala na kaming makain ng panahon na iyon. Puro kamoteng kahoy at saging na lamang ang aming kinakain. Hindi rin kami makakababa at makapunta sa Catabangan Proper dahil kami ay natatakot. Kapag mayroong nagkakasakit wala kaming magawa kundi tiisin na lamang ito hanggang sa gumaling”

The Japanese invasion resulted to a halt in the production, transactions and other economic activities. Businesses, factories and offices closed shops including the production of lumber. Many would contain themselves of whatever can be found in their place for subsistence. For lack of crops and farm implements, farmers cannot continue farming. Most farmers pleaded to a place they thought they would be safe from the cruelties of the Japanese. This resulted in many idle farmlands and lack of supply of primary needs and clothing.

Catabangan Proper became famous when in 1928, the Philippine Lumber Company was founded in the place. It was considered a “little city” it being self-sufficient, and everything can be found in the place, where commerce opened which gave an immensely huge profit and contributed to a large revenue to the government. There were Chinese and Americans who put up business in the place that resulted to more revenues which a big part were enjoyed by the people. However, the Japanese invasion resulted to a halt in the production, transactions, and other economic activities. Businesses closed shops including the production of lumber which resulted to economic depression. From the accounts of Soledad Magtaca<sup>8</sup>:

“Bumagsak ang lahat ng negosyo sa Catabangan Proper, umalis ang mga negosyante at ilang mga dayuhan. Natigil ang proksiyon ng Philippine Lumber Company sa po-prodyus ng mga torso”.

Residents decided to leave the place and headed up the mountain where their daily foods consist of bananas, coconuts and other forest plants and crops. It resulted in the decline of the economy of the place and poverty. Others decided to barter with their goods.

**Education.** Aside from the established businesses and factories, a school was also built in Catabangan Proper.

It was the first school ever established in the area. This brought significant benefits as it opened up opportunities for children to gain knowledge. Moreover, students from neighboring areas also attended this school, further expanding its impact on education in the place.

Upon the arrival of the Japanese, all schooling activities came to a halt. They converted the school into a garrison due to its elevated location, which provided a clear view and knowledge of people's movements. They also placed sub-machine guns, posing a constant threat to the residents living below the school. Any perceived wrong step or action could result in the firing of bullets towards the inhabitants residing beneath the school. This created an atmosphere of fear and oppression, further hindering educational pursuits and instilling a sense of vulnerability among the local population.

Plate number 7 shows some of the remaining portions of the school that were converted into a garrison by the Japanese.

Rather than a place of learning, it turned into quarters of death, where people were brought there to be killed and raped. On the other hand, nothing can hinder the school children's quest for knowledge. They continued their studies at home. Nihongo, a language of the Japanese became a part of their lesson. Though education was one of the institutions that had its dark period during the Japanese colonization but there were those who persevere to finish their studies while many were left with no choice but to stop due to the threat of war.

In order to advance their objectives, the Japanese government change the curriculum including the textbooks before the war. The portions in the book encouraging support for the Americans and disagreement with the Japanese were deleted. Teaching of Filipino as a language were encouraged in their propaganda that Asia is for the Asians and Philippines for the Filipinos. While teaching of English language was prohibited and books authored by the Americans.



**Plate No. 7**

**The remaining portion of the school and was converted into a garrison during the Japanese Occupation.**

**Social Environment.** Regarding the social aspect, usually Filipinos gather to celebrate commemoration of special occasions. But with the strict administration of the Japanese, any form of gathering was prohibited, including meetings, forums, and parties. They strictly monitored the activities of established movements of those against their administration. They prohibited organizations of groups and movements however, much as the natives of the place were against it, still they were powerless when compared to the forces of the oppressors. Residents of Catabangan Proper were left without recourse but to follow the iron hands of the Japanese. Whoever were suspected members of the Hukbalahap Guerillas and other movements were captured right away and killed without evidence to prove of being so. Their strict governance was even emphasized when they put up garrison in the mountain overseeing the entire barrio. A sub-machine gun was always ready for any unlikely actions, once use will result to death of many.

From an emotional recount of Veronica Escobar<sup>9</sup> who was also forced to work in the garrison:

“matinding takot, gumuho ang aking mundo at nawalan ng pag-asang magtatagal pa ang aking buhay dahil sa mga karanasang ginawa ng hapon.”

Fear spread throughout the area, enveloping it in sadness, and the customary joys could no longer be pursued. Various forms of violence reached neighboring areas, as reported. Other than those mentioned accounts of hostilities, Marcial Embudo was part of the most complicated and inhumane treatment in the Philippine history. In the Death March in Bataan and Corregidor, 76,000 Filipino and American soldiers surrendered to Japanese forces. They were made to march from Mariveles, Bataan to San Fernando, Pampanga. It was a 100-kilometers difficult journey where many died along the way. According to Marcial Embudo<sup>10</sup> as recounted by his daughter Cecile E. Griarte who is already 72 years old,

“Hindi makatao ang pagtrato sa kanila ngunit sa kanilang paglalakad may nagaabot sa kanila ng pagkain at inumin ng mga Pilipinong nadadaan nila. Kapag mayroong bukal na nakikita sila sama-sama silang makakahilera na patakpong iinom ng tubig kung mahuli ng Hapon sila ay kinokolata ng baril. Nang makarating sila sa Capaz, Tarlac doon sila nakulong at nakaranas ng hirap. Kanilang kinakain ay lugaw, nagkasakit at ilan ay namatay.”

Amidst the sad reality, there were those who were still hopeful that the war would come to an end. They believed that the guerilla could defeat the Japanese. Plate No. 8 is Marcial Embudo, a war veteran during the Second World War.



**Plate No. 8**  
**Marcial Embudo, War Veteran**

To restore freedom and reclaim the stolen prosperity, various forms of resistance were carried out by the guerrillas. Some rebelled while others connived with them. And still others did not cooperate and instead waited for the return of the Americans.

They courageously fought and escaped from the Japanese forces in order not to be held captives. From the forest of Salvacion to the mountains of Pamplona, Del Gallego they established a camp where they made plans how to attack the garrison and ambush the Japanese. Pelacio Arquibel<sup>11</sup> recounted that:

“ang ginagawa naming noon ay naghanda ng mga pang-ambush at nilabanan naming ang mga Hapon. Minsan tumatagal ang engkuwentro ng isang araw.”

Through the collaboration of two forces, the brothers Yglip and Simbajon they were able to surround from the mountains a hundred Japanese who surrendered and was brought at the Catabangan Proper port. It was a triumphant move that freed Catabangan Proper from the hands of the Japanese.

To regain the lost freedom of our compatriots, their common tactics was to ambush the Japanese army, to advance their forces and consume the enemies. Without fear and so much courage was their only strength, like the testimony of Leila Gupong<sup>12</sup> as she recounted:

“ang ginagawa ng mga Guerilla sa Catabangan Proper at karatig lugar ay nakipag-laban. Maraming sibilyan ang sumali sa mga guerilla. Ipinaglaban ng mga guerilla ang mga mamamayan ng Catabangan Proper at karatig lugar kahit na ito ay kanilang ikamatay.”

Marcial Embudo was held captive in Capaz, Tarlac after he passed that excruciating test of near death. They were fed daily of rice porridge, many got sick and some eventually died. Marcial Embudo survived the harshness of a prisoner when he befriended a Japanese who gave him food and medicine. While held captive, he was oriented and forced sworn to the Japanese Empire, based on the documents he left behind which states the following:

“To His Excellency, the Commander in Chief of the Imperial Japanese Forces.

I, the undersigned, hereby solemnly pledge myself that I will strictly comply with the following:

1. I shall never in future resort to any hostile action against the Imperial Japanese Forces, and I will not way make any utterance or commit any hostile conduct against Japan;
2. I will submit to the Japanese Military Administration and do my best to serve of the realization of the objective of the said administration;
3. I will in no way make any utterance or commit any conduct which may benefit Japan's enemies;
4. I will in no way make any utterance or commit any conduct which may be harmful to the tranquility, peace and order, and economic stability of the country;
5. I will in no way employ or instigate others for the execution of any act which I have pledged myself not to commit in the proceeding paragraphs;
6. I will never fail to present myself at an appointed place when I shall be called up by the Japanese Army.

He swore as a prisoner of war that paved the way for his freedom. Aside from the sworn statement, somebody, a relative, vouched for him and his full independence. After which, he stayed at San Fernando, Pampanga for a long time. When he went home to Catabangan Proper, he worked at Mata's Guerilla Unit, Camarines Sur. The place was not yet free from the hands of the Japanese. Based on the documents he left of his account of the events that in 1943, he personally met Moises Estrope, a member of the guerilla “A” Co., of Capt. Arsenio “Pancho” Eglip of 1st Ba., of Major Guillermo “Emong” Eglip part of 1st Regiment of Col. Rodrigo “Goy” Rodriguez. Plate no. 9 stated in the affidavit of Marcial Embudo who his companions in fighting were and serving the guerilla group. They continued their fight in order to regain the true independence of Catabangan

Proper. Because of their united forces, they succeeded in all the plans they made. It resulted for the Japanese to finally surrender.

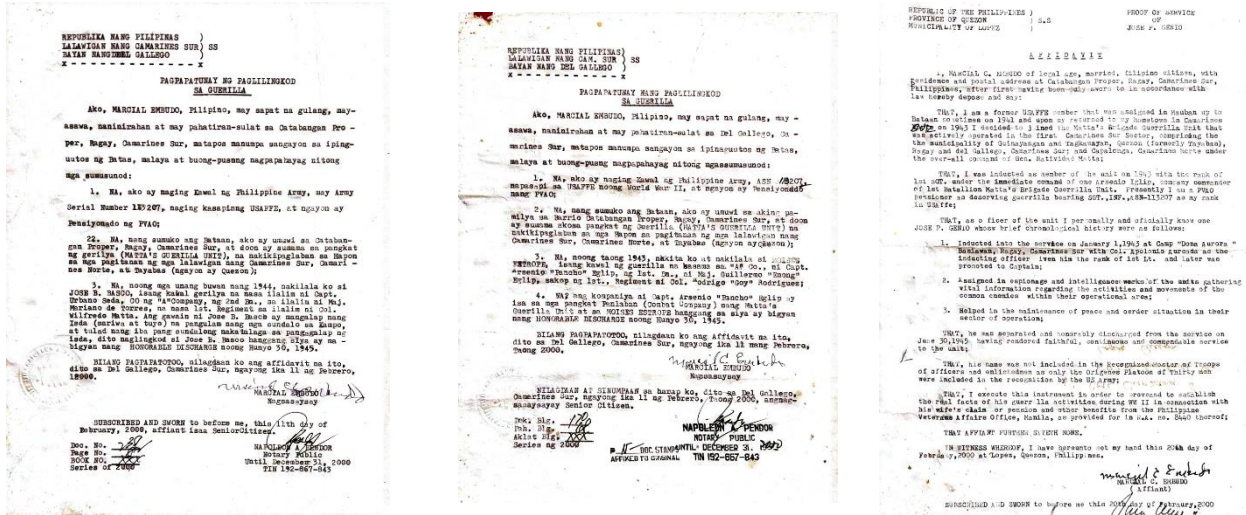


Plate No. 9

### Affidavit of Serving of Guerillas

An American ship fetched the Japanese, but were first cleansed, given medical attention, changed clothes. According to Solidaridad Embudo<sup>13</sup> as recounted to her daughter Cecile E. Griarte that:

“nakakaawang pagmasdan ang mga kalagayan ng Hapon noong panahon na iyon nakusotang ng pangyapak ng saha ng saging at namamaga ang paa ng mga ito. Halos ang kalagayan ng mga nahuli ay payat, maysakit at hindi rin makalakad dahil sa gutom na naranasan ng mga ito”.

Note from the affidavit among the documents left by Marcial Embudo that they continued to fight until they succeeded in regaining the freedom of their community. They gradually saw the light in their eyes and hope was at sight when the Americans returned as promised by MacArthur.



Plate No. 10  
The celebration of the Patron of San Vicente Ferrer.

Plate number 10 showcases the festivities in Catabangan Proper, held on April 30 and May 1, 1949, as a



symbol of gratitude following the end of the Second World War. Catabangan Proper gradually recovered. Its once activities came back. Under the Philippine Lumber Company, logging concession started again. Fishing improved and were able to supply nearby barangays of Catabangan Crossing and Tagkawayan. The culture of celebrating the feast of the Patron Saint Sr. San Vicente was revived. Musicians from Naga City were invited to entertain and every rabus had their muse to compete for a beauty pageant. There was Zarzuela, every story is a masterpiece of Santiago Berroya. Commerce improved with the establishment of Oriental Bakery and Grocery. The needs of the community were sufficient when it came to its commerce. Visitors came to the place for a sports competition. The place was peaceful, with no disagreements and gaiety.

The Philippine Independence was made possible because of our heroes who courageously fought against the conquerors. They were the symbol of hope and independence. The Philippines may have traversed the tunnel of darkness in an unimaginable nightmare, but it does not hinder the Filipinos to seek the path towards the light of independence. We may be astounded in awe at the complexities of our history, and for that we love our country and protect our independence.

### **Contextualize-Based Book In Teaching Araling Panlipunan**

"Catabangan Proper: Bakas ng Kahapon" delves into the history of Catabangan Proper during the Japanese era. It explores pivotal events that had significant implications on politics, economy, education, and the social environment. This module was designed to ignite a sense of patriotism and to introduce local heroes who made sacrifices for our country's independence. The researcher guarantees that reading the contents will expand the learners' knowledge through this context-based book. The module begins with a pretest to assess the learner's understanding of the lesson, followed by engaging learning activities and exercises that will challenge their abilities.

To measure the authenticity of the instructional materials, it will undergo quality assurance. The validators are from Magsurat and are also Master teachers. Using evaluation tools for content and design and layout, this ensures that it aligns with the standard of DepEd Camarines Sur learning resources. It will be according to the respective level of understanding of the learners. This was conceived to awaken the value of nationalism of the learners and to catch their interest.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Hereunder are the conclusions derived from the findings of this research.

1. Catabangan Proper is a self-sufficient, progressive and an economically viable place. The fact that numerous foreigners established enterprises there, the place was a center of commerce and economic activities. The Philippine Lumber Company was well-known back then for providing the populace with employment opportunities and a reliable source of income.
2. Catabangan Proper was filled with sorrow when their worst fears became a reality – the Japanese took control of their place. They were controlled politically when they were dictated to what to do, left with no other choice. The people in charge abandoned the movie house, sawmill, and hospital when Japanese occupied the place. Citizens were monitored, guarded, and controlled of their every action, and those suspected of supporting or allied with the guerillas were arrested and killed. The school became a garrison since it overlooks the entire place. Nihongo was used in school, but many parents feared sending their children to school due to the threat of war. As to their facilities and environment, were affected and damaged were the sawmill company, school, movie house and the port.
3. The history of Catabangan Proper, particularly regarding the Japanese occupation, should be documented to foster understanding and evoke Filipino sentiments. By creating a contextualized-based book, it will provide clarity to the history of the place.

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