

COMPLETION REPORT

University of San Carlos Museum

Jose Eleazar R. Bersales

Subject of Research Project: **The Japanese Community of Cebu in Peace and War (1900-1945): A Research and Publication Project**

This is a study of the Japanese community in Cebu, Central Philippines, during the American colonial period (1898-1942) and what happened to it during and immediately after World War II (1942-45). This is the first ever to be carried out on an important part of Cebu's history, aimed at reconstructing the social life of an expatriate community using published and unpublished records. In order to achieve this, research was conducted at archives and libraries in the Philippines as well as in Japan. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and the unavoidable difficulties that ensued, however, the project had to be extended for one more year. In all, this study was able to document 24 Japanese firms, mostly merchandise shops based in the provincial capital city of Cebu and identify some of their owners as well as trace their whereabouts during and immediately after the war. There were about 600 Japanese merchants and workers in Cebu in the few years leading to the war. But only 300 of them were in Cebu when the first Japanese troops arrived and freed them from incarceration on April 10, 1942. The rest may have returned to Japan before this. The number of Japanese civilians eventually reached to about 1,700 between 1942 and 1944, augmented by new Japanese firms that were set up in the city as the war progressed. This, however, pales in comparison to the number of military personnel, which was about three to 15 times more. Toward the end of the occupation period, Japanese troops retreated to the northern part of the island of Cebu ostensibly to join other troops in Luzon. Together with them were the Japanese civilian population that included recent arrivals from Palau. It is during this period of extreme stress and deprivation that we noted atrocities committed by Japanese troops not only on Filipinos but, surprisingly, also on Japanese children as well as some of their mothers who were poisoned on orders of Japanese military officers.

These and other results of the study were then initially presented at a conference in Tokyo in November 2022 and then published shortly in March 2023 into a book entitled, "The Japanese Community in Cebu, 1900-1945" by the project proponent and his Japanese collaborator, Dr. Taihei Okada of Tokyo University

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

26 November 2022, University of Tokyo-Komaba Campus, “Focusing on Regions, Connecting Individuals: The Cebu Japanese Community in Peace and War”. Presenters: Dr. Jose Eleazar R. Bersales and Dr. Taihei Okada

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)

Publisher and Date of the Book: Tres de Abril General Services Inc., March 2023

Title: The Japanese Community in Cebu, 1900-1945

Authors: Jose Eleazar R. Bersales and Taihei Okada