

Cannibalism among Japanese Soldiers in Bukidnon, Philippines, 1945–47

Rolando ESTEBAN

Abstract

This paper examines why survival cannibalism occurred in Bukidnon, Philippines from 1945 to 1947 from the point of view of the Japanese. Utilizing contemporaneous sources such as the *Japanese War Crimes* and universal theories of cannibalism, the paper shows that starvation, malnutrition, and salt hunger impelled cannibalism. The paper questions the assumption that cannibalism during wartime is mere aggression, not for survival purposes.

Keywords: Cannibalism, World War II, Japanese soldiers, salt hunger, starvation.

Introduction

THE ORIGIN OF THIS PAPER GOES BACK to the time when I was conducting a research on the “Yellow Peril” sponsored by the Sumitomo Foundation (2005–2006). One day, my research assistant brought me photocopies of World War II documents from the National Library on the occurrence of cannibalism in Bukidnon during the war. Although I knew they were irrelevant to the research, I gladly accepted them anyway. I was teaching history in the Division of Social Sciences at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, Laguna at the time. Unexpectedly, the Division sponsored a conference on the Japanese Occupation in the Philippines, and this gave me a reason to write on cannibalism based on the documents. My paper did not trigger any discussion in the conference, and my

colleagues were not interested in it either. Ten years later, my present colleagues at the Department of Anthropology, University of the Philippines Diliman, where I am now teaching, are as disinterested in the subject. I received, though, a number of remarks on cannibalism as an exoticization of non-Western peoples in European literatures, which appear to me as disputations of cannibalism. These reminded me of the debate on the subject among anthropologists since the 1960s, between those who believe in the practice and those who do not.

This paper does not counter the representation of cannibalism in Western texts such as those of White (2003) Sahlins (2003), Wisniewski (2004), and Borofsky (1997), among others. It is rather a narrative, based on contemporary sources, of cannibalism practiced by Japanese troops in Bukidnon, Philippines in 1945–1947. It aims to know, from their perspective, the types and causes of cannibalism. It examines three sets of documents from the Japanese War Crimes, a collection of documents relating to the atrocities committed by the Japanese during the World War II in the Pacific, including those on the Philippines that are deposited at the National Library in Manila. Documents examined include (1) the summation of the prosecution and arraignment of Hajime Ainoda, et al.;¹ (2) the analysis of the case, which consists of 13 affidavits;² and (3) a report on cannibalism in Mindanao involving Minotaro Tadokoro and companions.³ The last consists of two affidavits, a map by Tadokoro, and an extract of police reports (Extracts, Report No. 360, 119–22). I hypothesize that desperate war conditions such as starvation, malnutrition, and salt hunger compelled the Japanese soldiers to resort to cannibalism. This paper hopes to contribute to the understanding of the links between war and human behavior in light of current concepts of cannibalism.

The paper in its present form only differs from the original manuscript on a theoretical level.⁴ The first section provides a background on cannibalism by discussing briefly the key concepts on the topic and by providing relevant examples. The second deals with cannibalism in Japanese history. The third section discusses the Suzuki Unit's activities and movement in Cagayan in 1944 and until their surrender in Bukidnon

in 1947. The fourth section examines the links between war and cannibalism. Lastly, the fourth explains cannibalism in the light of universal theories of cannibalism.

Background

There was a time when disbelievers of cannibalism tried to differentiate cannibalism from anthropophagy. Arens (1979) argued that cannibalism is “the man-eating myth”—a representation of the “Other” in Eurocentric texts since 1493 used to justify conquest and enslavement (Sahlins 2003). Hulme (1986) further insisted that “[c]annibalism does exist. It exists within colonial discourse to describe the ferocious devouring of human flesh practiced by some savages” (183). Taking off from this argument, Obeyesekere (2005) posited that cannibalism is only a term, while its Greek equivalent—anthropophagy—refers to “the actual consumption of flesh” (14–15). Hulme (1986) justified the distinction by saying that anthropophagy is “a much more neutral term” (184). Obeyesekere (2005) further argued that cannibalism in the Pacific, especially as posited by Sahlins (1995), is only “cannibal talk,” meaning, it is “essentially a fantasy that the other is going to eat us” (14–15).

In contrast to the claims of Hulme (1986), Obeyesekere (2005), and Arens (1979), Jehlen (1993) insisted that, “anthropophagy is equally a charged term is suggested by the fact that its exact translation, ‘man-eating’, returns us to cannibalism; anthropophagy would then be a way of not saying cannibalism” (190). While it is true that cannibalism only became a part of the European vocabulary only since 1493 (Arens 1979; Hulme 1986; Lindenbaum 2004; Obeyesekere 2005), the Europeans had known cannibalism as anthropophagy since ancient times. Vandenberg (2010) finds the distinction unnecessary because cannibalism and anthropophagy refer to the same act. Henceforth, I use cannibalism instead of anthropophagy.

Cannibalism refers to the act of eating the flesh of one’s own kind (Fernández-Jalvo et al. 1999). Historians attribute its origins to Columbus

during his second voyage to the New World. Columbus narrated that while he was in Hispaniola in 1493, the Arawakan—natives of the island—told him that their neighbors, the Carib, ate human flesh. Whitehead (1984), citing Coll y Toste, stated that Spanish accounts transliterated “Carib” into “canib,” which was later on coined as “canibal,” which means “eaters of fresh meat, of adventurous and warlike instinct, blood thirsty” (70). When translated into English, it came to mean “man-eating” (Jehlen 1993, 180). The penetration of cannibalism into European consciousness thus goes back to 1493 only.

Cannibalism remains a contentious field of inquiry (Vanderberg 2010, 149). Anthropology views it as normative behavior (Arens 1979; Martingale 1993); Archaeology considers it a thing of the past (White 2003); and Psychology attributes it to schizophrenia (Carlin 2011). Disbelievers of cannibalism dismiss it as mere profanity (White 2003), while others question the methods employed in its study beyond its mortuary and survival types (Arens 1979).

Archaeology (White 2001) and biological anthropology (Low 2012) though, have addressed the challenge posed by disbelievers of cannibalism. Methods for its study developed by C. Turner and J. Turner (1992, 1995) and White (2001) have gained global acceptability. Consequently, it has become more challenging to establish why cannibalism happened than proving that it did happen.

Bioarchaeology and biological anthropology show that cannibalism is ancient, while historical accounts and ethnographies illustrate that it is modern and contemporary. Paleolithic and Neolithic peoples practiced it (Fernandez-Jalvo et al. 2011; Jacobi and Higham 2009). The Spaniards, French, and English colonists attested to aggressive cannibalism among the Iroquois (Abler 1980). The Aztecs committed it against their neighbors (Ortiz 1978; Isaac 2002), while the Maori chief ate the flesh of an enemy to increase his *mana* (Jennings 2011). Environmental collapse (De la Croix and Dottori 2008) led to “an orgy of cannibalism and starvation when the “sole remaining large source of protein was other human beings” (Diamond

1994, 365) in the Easter Islands. Another example is the Fijians, who have practiced cannibalism since 2,000 B.P. (Degusta 1999). Noble (2011) stated that cannibalism was practiced because of the belief that it had curative effects based on its resemblance with the Eucharist in England during the 16th and 17th centuries and beyond.

Cannibalism is practiced by various species, including humans, for different reasons. Female mantids and spiders devour their smaller mates to avoid starvation or to increase fecundity (Wilder, Rypstra and Elgar 2009). Chimpanzees engage in it for dominance and food (Goodall 1986). The practice was part of a “paleoeconomic system in the European Lower Pleistocene” (Carbonell et. al. 2010, 539), when human flesh was a staple in their diet (Vanderberg 2010). The *Homo* antecessor, a member of the genus *homo* that lived in Gran Dolina in Atapuerca, Burgos, Spain at around 800,000 years ago practiced it (Carbonell et. al. 2010; Vandenberg 2010), and the Neanderthals, too, in Moula-Guercy 120,000–100,000 years ago (Defleur et. al. 1999).

Studies on cannibalism from around the world show that the practice is complex and diverse. These studies “[give] rise to an abundant anthropological literature and to numerous classifications” (Boulestin et. al. 2009, 979). For Boulestin et. al. (2009), cannibalism is either accidental or institutional. On the one hand, accidental cannibalism, usually survival cannibalism, happens during desperate times. On the other hand, institutional cannibalism has two forms: endocannibalism and exocannibalism. Endocannibalism involves the eating of the flesh of a member of one’s group who died due to disease, encounter, and execution for food or for mortuary purposes (White 2003; De la Croix and Dottori 2008). A most curious case of endocannibalism was observed among the Fore in the Okape Area in New Guinea that caused an epidemic of kuru⁵ in the 1950s (Zigas and Gajdusek 1957). Exocannibalism is aggressive and directed against the enemy in times of war. Also, cannibalism is either normative—which includes nutritional, ritual, and aggression cannibalism—or accidental/occasional.

Fernandez-Jalvo et al. (1999) offers a typology that differentiates the social types of cannibalism from the functional kinds. The social types are endocannibalism, which refers to the “consumption of individuals within the group;” and exocannibalism, which refers to “the consumption of outsiders,” the “consumption of enemies” (593). Endocannibalism is characterized as affectionate, while exocannibalism is characterized as aggressive.

The functional types include nutritional, ritual, and pathological cannibalism. Nutritional cannibalism is essential to survival during short “periods of food scarcity or due to catastrophe, i.e., starvation induced,” or during long periods in which “humans are part of the diet of other humans” (593). Meanwhile, ritual cannibalism (magic, funerary, or mortuary) is practiced “in relation to belief or religion.” Lastly, pathological cannibalism is a “mental disease: parapatric” (Fernandez-Jalvo et al. 1999, 593)—something practiced for political reasons like in China. Aggression cannibalism (Lindenbaum 2004) is directed against enemies (Gat 2000) while sexual cannibalism pertains to the satiation of sexual needs (Thiessen 2001; Carlin 2011; Kushner 1997).

My interest concerns survival cannibalism impelled by desperate situations during wartime. However, what constitutes such situations remains varied. Examples of cannibalism induced by desperation include the unfortunate fate of the Donner Party (Rarick 2008; Hardesty 2005), Alfred Packer (Di Stephano 2006; Curry 2002; Rautman and Fenton 2005), and the Franklin Expedition (Keenleyside et. al. 1997). Other cases are accidents, as in the case of Dudley and Stephens (Simpson 1994) and in the plane crash in the Andes (Read 1974). Some are pushed to cannibalism because of famine (Vandenberg 2010). Another point of interest is survival cannibalism in times of war as told in the *Bible* (Deuteronomy 28:53–57; Jeremiah 19:9; Lamentations 2:20, 4:10; Ezekiel 5:10; 2 Kings). Fulcher of Chartes, a survivor of the First Crusade (1095–1100), personally witnessed survival cannibalism among the Crusaders (Peters 1988). Vandenberg (2010) mentions cases of survival cannibalism during famine in France in 868 and in 1032–1033. Indeed, the generally accepted examples of cannibalism happened in recorded history.

Cannibalism in Japanese History

In particular, I am focusing on cannibalism among the Japanese in Bukidnon, Philippines during World War II. It is in and by itself a field of inquiry in relation to war crimes in the Pacific. A bit of historical perspective would be helpful in trying to illumine aspects of a complex issue in Japanese culture and history.

Archaeology in Japan proves that cannibalism was not only practiced by the Ainu (Morse 1880; Ikawa-Smith 1982) but also by the Japanese during the Jomon period (Low 2012; Ikawa-Smith 1982). The *Nantôjin* (Southern Islander)—the natives of Ryukyu—are of Japanese descent. In the debate involving the *Nantôjin*, Tomiyama (1998) recalled that, “The main sticking points involved descriptions of tattooing, birth customs, funereal rites, and—above all else—cannibalism” (174).

Cannibalism has been a recurring motif in Japanese literature from medieval to present times, wherein the *oni* (spirit of the dead), feasts on human flesh (Reider 2003). The cannibal has undergone transformations from a diabolical male figure to a sexy cosmopolitan, which accords with the evolution of Japanese society from feudalism to modernity. It appears, though, that the abomination that the Japanese have toward cannibalism may be born out of the predatory behavior of the *oni* towards the weak in society.

The literary scene in Japan in the 1970s was a curious one because of the appearance of several books on cannibalism. The most popular of these novels is *Nobi* by Shohei Oōka (1951), translated into English as *Fires on the Plain*. It is about Private Tamura, a Japanese soldier in Leyte, who, together with other soldiers, was turned away by headquarters and left to die because they were no longer worth the support they received. They tried to stave off hunger by resorting to cannibalism. In one instance, Tamura encountered a Filipino couple; he killed them and ate their flesh to survive. Some critics disliked the novel because they thought the author went too far about moral degeneration during wartime, and because it was not Buddhist or Shinto, but Christian, in orientation. Kon Ichikawa adopted *Fires on the*

Plain into film in 1959, starring Eiji Funakoshi. Novelists like Shôhei (Lehman 1997) and filmmakers like Ichikawa kept public interest alive on the horrors of World War II that included cannibalism. Decades later, it appalled Shôhei to know that the public read the novel as history, not as fiction, because its author fought in Mindoro, Philippines.

Cannibalism during World War II was the subject of several books towards the end of the 1950s. *Knights of the Bushido: A Short History of Japanese War Crimes* (Russell 1958) is a companion volume to a larger work, *The Scourge of the Swastika*, which looks at World War II through the lens of fascism. It is a compilation of documents chosen from the Internal Military Tribunal for the Far East and other sources on war crime trials. It recalls the “horrors,” including cannibalism, committed by a minority of Japanese soldiers on American prisoners of war (POWs) and civilians. The book, though, only deepened the distrust of the West against Japan. Moreover, Ion (1980) considers an exaggeration the assertion that the behavior of Japanese soldiers in war is rooted in *bushido*. Friday (1994) suggests that one may find clues, instead, “in the specific circumstances of the war, the political atmosphere—both domestic and international—of the 1930s, and the process through which Japan emerged as a modern nation” (348) than on fascism alone.

On and beyond the front lines, La Forte, Marcelo, and Himmel (1994) mentioned that documented Japanese atrocities on POWs and civilians include medical experiments involving vivisection, dismemberment, and cannibalism, among others. In *The Nanking 100–Man Killing Contest Debate: War Guilt amid Fabricated Illusions, 1971–75*,” Wakabayashi (2000) cited Yamamoto as witness to cannibalism in the Philippines and for his cruelty.

A former lieutenant, Yamamoto caused the death of Philippine civilians under his command through inadvertent abuse, cut off the limb of a dead comrade with a sword, and witnessed cannibalism among Japanese troops. Thus he was an untried B– or C–class war crimes suspect, who, unlike Mukai and Noda, chanced to escape trial.” (361)

The advance of the Americans in New Guinea caused the Japanese to flee from the coasts to the interior, thereby disrupting life in Bumbita. Because of the Allied blockade, the Japanese suffered deprivation, and as their condition became more desperate, they resorted to cannibalism. “Villagers told me that in extreme circumstances some Japanese resorted to cannibalism of Bumbita youth to stave off starvation” (Leavitt 2004, 313). Strathern (1985), citing Tuzin, stated that cannibalism by the Japanese horrified the Arapesh of New Guinea and that they rejected fending off starvation as its purpose during World War II. For the Arapesh, cannibalism, which occurs in the absence of social control, distinguishes the human from the non-human and therefore represents a threat to humanity.

Books on cannibalism in the Pacific during the war such as *The Hidden Horrors: Japanese War Crimes in World War II* (Tanaka 1996) only mention cases relating to the Philippines. The book documents Japanese atrocities such as murder, rape, prostitution, the Death March, and cannibalism. It shows how hunger compelled Japanese soldiers to consume the flesh of their fallen comrades, as well as those of POWs. Tanaka also wrote that the Imperial Army command had prepared the soldiers to accept cannibalism as an eventuality. Prior to their deployment to the war fronts, part of the indoctrination of soldiers involved making them believe that their enemies were pigs. American and Australian POWs were white pigs and Indians and Pakistanis were black pigs.

Without a Hangman, without a Rope: Navy War Crimes Trials after World War II (Welch 2002) discusses the Navy trials in Guam and Kwajalein, evaluates the conduct of the trials, and examines the philosophical questions pertaining to “victor’s justice” and “the legal questions of the status of such trials in international law” (Welch 2002, 1) It raises first the issue of fairness. The trials charged the Japanese for the crimes they committed during the war, but not the Americans for the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The second pertains to the arraignment of cannibalism under murder. Like Welch, Maga (2001) considered the problems that the trials for cannibalism presented. They brought to the surface moral issues and forced a legal system to deal with a novel, complex phenomenon.

The Japanese on Trial: Allied War Crimes Operations in the East, 1945–1951 by Piccigallo (1979) relates more closely to the Philippine experience than any of the writings cited. It is the first account of the War Crimes Trial in the Pacific (WCTP), which involved 5,700 accused and 2,200 trials, including the 31 trials related to cannibalism in Mindanao, and cases of looting and multiple rape in Cebu. It describes the procedures, details of the trials, and conduct of the counsels. Like many authors before him, Piccigallo (1979) observes that historians have “forgotten” the WCTP since the 1950s.

Most of the writings on the involvement of Japan in World War II emphasize the war as an effect of fascism. Despite the number of books written on the subject, the photographs of Japanese atrocities that surfaced in relation to the war crime trials remain untapped by scholars outside Japan. Conroy (1981) calls attention to Mainichi Shimbunsha’s collection, *Ichi-oku-nin no showa shi* [The history of 100 million people during the Showa era], that came out in Tokyo in the 1970s. The collection includes the section, *Nihon no senshi* [Japan’s wars], which shows photographs of Japanese atrocities during the war. The closest that we have in the Philippines could be some photographs about the war that came out in the *Philippine Free Press* beginning in the late 1940s, and partly in relation to media coverage of the war crime trials. These photographs can help paint a pictographic history of wartime violence.

The dominant literature on World War II in the Pacific may be classified into three broad categories: The first category is historical, which probes into the events that precipitated the war, particularly the deterioration of US–Japanese relations; the war itself, and its end. The second category deals with military strategy and, more specifically, how the United States prevailed. The third category—where this paper may be classified—focuses on the effects of the war and the atrocities committed by the Japanese on soldiers and civilians. It contributes to the understanding of the kind of cannibalism that happens at wartime in light of current theories of cannibalism and of the reasons for its occurrence.

The Running War

The Japanese occupation of the Philippines lasted from 1942 to 1945 (Agoncillo 2001). It started with the attack on Davao—where the largest Japanese population existed at the time—only hours after the attack on Pearl Harbor on 8 December 1941 (Prange, Goldstein, and Dillon 1981). Shocked and overpowered by the Japanese, the American Asiatic Fleet withdrew to Java on 12 December 1941. McArthur later escaped to Australia on 11 March 1942, and former President Manuel L. Quezon, together with his family, fled to the United States. These events left the fight for freedom to Filipino resistance fighters (Saulo 1990). The Japanese occupied the Philippines for over three years. However, following the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Hogan 1996), the position of Japan in the war became untenable.

American strategy in the Western Pacific involved retaking lost territories in the Philippines by advancing first in Leyte and then in Mindoro. The Japanese suffered irreversible losses in the Battle of Midway in 1942 and in Saipan in 1944. By the summer of 1944, Generals McArthur and Nimitz had combined the Central and Southwest forces for a return to the Philippines. This involved destroying the last Japanese naval forces in Leyte, and by December 1944, there were no Japanese in Leyte and Samar. On the strategic importance of the landing in Leyte, Baldwin said that

We had chosen the islands of Leyte and Samar as the focus of our invasion for several sound reasons. It is a central position, and our forces there automatically neutralized Mindanao to the south. Leyte Gulf has a fine harbor, and Leyte had good airfields which we wanted. And control of Leyte and Samar gave us control over the two straits—San Bernardino between Samar and Luzon, and Surigao between Leyte and Mindanao—toward which these Japanese forces were now advancing. (1945, 172)

The Americans advanced to Palau in March 1944 (Hallas 1994), causing anxiety among the Japanese in Leyte over their tenuous position in the island (Smith 1996). In anticipation of the American landing there, Lt. Col. Fumio Suzuki organized the 15th Embarkation Unit in Ormoc in early March, which he completed later in the month (Ishimura 1947). He and nine officers held the command of the 400-strong Unit, composed of new recruits from Japan, soldiers from other parts of the Philippines, as well as those from New Guinea (R.P. vs. Ainoda 1947). The Unit began abandoning Ormoc for Cagayan de Oro in late May 1944 (Ainoda 1947). The Unit stayed in Cagayan de Oro for almost a year until the landing of the Americans in Tagoloan on the north and Opol on the south in March 1945 (Ishimura 1947). The main group of the Unit arrived in Barrio Agusan near Cagayan de Oro in late June 1945, while the headquarters group arrived in late July.

As a tactical move, Suzuki immediately reassembled the Unit in Carmen, Cagayan de Oro on March 1945 in preparation for the retreat to Bukidnon to escape the Americans (Ishimura 1947). From Bukidnon, he hoped for the arrival of reinforcements and the right time to attack the Americans (P.P. vs. Ainoda 1947). Meanwhile, 200 men were detached from the Unit and sent either to Manila or to Negros. Suzuki organized the 200 men that remained into the Unit (P.P. vs. Ainoda 1947). The officers were: Suzuki, Commander; 1Lt. Kazuyoshi Ishimura, Assistant Commander; 1Lt. Hajime Ainoda, Medic; and Yukio Inui, Adjutant (Kai 1947). From then on, what began as a tactical move turned into a running war that the Japanese had no chance of winning. Their weapons included rifles for soldiers, side arms for officers, one light machine gun, and one heavy machine gun (Ainoda 1947). Their medical supplies included 10,000 tablets of quinine, 1,000 tablets of Atabrine, 500 tablets of Plasmochin, 100 tablets of *izai*, 200 tablets of aspirin, 100 tablets of morphine, 100 tablets of opium, a supply of bandages, 300 grams of mercurochrome, 500 grams of iodine, and a surgical kit. They abandoned a truckload of rice and burned a sedan loaded with documents when the vehicles broke down at the start of the march in Carmen (Hanada 1947).

Figure 1 is a map of Bukidnon, a province located in northern Mindanao. It is bordered by Misamis Oriental in the north, Cotabato and Davao Oriental in the south, Agusan del Sur and Davao del Norte in the east, and Lanao del Sur in the west. The name “Bukidnon” (Visayan for “mountainous”) describes the terrain of the province. Some of the highest mountains in the country are located in the province, namely: Mt. Dulangdulang (2,938 meters above sea level) which is the second highest mountain in the country located in the Kitanglad Mountain Range; Mt. Kitanglad (2,899 meters); Mt. Kalatungan (2,860 meters); Mt. Maagnaw (2,742 meters); Mt. Lumuluyaw (2,612 meters); and Mt. Tuminungan (2,400 meters).

Bukidnon is a landlocked province, with Malaybalay as its capital. The province has an estimated population of 1,299,192, composed mainly of indigenous peoples called “Bukidnon” and settlers from Visayas and Luzon. It was part of Misamis in 1850 as “Malaybalay,” and eventually became Bukidnon province in 1917.

The first Japanese forces arrived in the area in 1942. Some Japanese from Leyte and other parts of the Philippines arrived in 1944, hid in Mt. Kitanglad, committed survival cannibalism, and surrendered to the Philippine Constabulary in 1947.

The Japanese marched from Carmen on 10 May 1945, moving towards Basak, passing through Imbatug, Quiliog, Nanca, Cosina, and Miarayan (Ishimura 1947). They did not stay long at any point to keep their whereabouts secret (Hanada 1947). By the time they reached Miarayan on 25 May 1945, they were only comprised of 180 men because 20 had died from malaria, beriberi, and diarrhea (Ainoda 1947). On 1 June 1945, Suzuki decided to withdraw into the mountains of Basak. They reached the place on the same day where they stayed for almost a year. However, as the Philippine Army (P.A.) closed in on them, Suzuki ordered his men to move to and set up camps in Mt. Kitanglad in March 1946, during which only 90 men had survived disease and war (Kai 1947). They split into two groups and encamped on two rivers: the headquarters camp, composed of eight huts, west of Atugan River; the pompom camp comprised four huts, west of Sakumata River (Tadokoro 1947).

The headquarters camp was located east of Impalutao, Dalwangan, Kalasangay, Malaybalay, and Linabo and south of Buncaon and Katuan (Ainoda 1947). In fair weather, Impasug-ong, Impalutao, and Dalwangan could be seen from the headquarters camp and Intavas from the pompom camp. Failing to find a new campsite, the Japanese stayed in Mt. Kitanglad for almost a year (Ishimura 1947). As their situation became more desperate, Suzuki decided to surrender to the P.A. In preparation for this, he ordered the pompom camp closed and recalled the men to the headquarters camp from 9–12 February 1947 (Homan 1947). On 14 February, the 33 Japanese who survived the war surrendered to Lt. Alejandro Sale at the headquarters camp (Ainoda 1947). They marched to Sumilao on 16 February and reached the town on the same day.

War and Cannibalism

The conventional notion of war as “organized aggression between autonomous political units” (Thorpe 2003, 152) militates against the formation of a consensus on survival cannibalism during wartime (Wilson 1978). Lindenbaum (2004) regards violence against enemies as aggression cannibalism, in which conflict is over the scarcity human flesh (Gat 2000). At any rate, wartime cannibalism is aggression and nutritional at the same time among the *H. antecessors* in Gran Dolina (Carbonell et al. 2010; Fernandez-Jalvo et al. 1999), and the Neanderthals in Moula-Guercy (Defleur et al. 1999; Valensi et al. 2010). It is aggression and survival in the Western Pacific in World War II (Tanaka 1996; Welch 2002; Keeley 1996), including cannibalism in Bukidnon during World War II. However, I believe that a dispassionate, less-politicized consideration of war would show that severe conditions could compel survival cannibalism.

Foraging

The Japanese were ill-provisioned because a truckload of rice had to be abandoned when the vehicle broke down in Carmen (Ainoda 1947). Besides the small amount of rice that each soldier had, they obtained

BUKIDNON



FIGURE 1
A map of Bukidnon, Philippines
Source: www.bukidnononline.com

additional rice from the supplies of those who perished during the march (Hanada 1947). Rice gave out on 1 June 1946, prompting Suzuki to withdraw into the mountains of Basak (Ainoda 1947). For the time being, they lived off on the pack animals that they brought from Carmen; the last animal was butchered between August and September 1945 (Kai 1947). Thereafter, they had to procure food from the forest.

The Japanese had guns but the command prohibited their use for hunting to keep their whereabouts secret. Kai (1947) recalled that, “In order that our plan will not be revealed, we were forbidden to use our rifles in obtaining birds or living creatures. This was the order of Ishimura” (16). This security measure had set the stage for foraging in the forests and in the villages. High mobility prevented the Japanese from growing food. However, even after they had encamped in Mt. Kitanglad, they still were not able to cultivate rice, corn, or cultigens like camote or vegetables. Kobata (1947) recalled that the Suzuki Unit did not plant rice and that their supply had been consumed by September 1945. Thus, the rice in their diet after September came from outside the camps. Hanada (1947) confirmed this.

We were not able to grow any rice for ourselves, because we were constantly on the move. We stayed at places over an extended length of time and built huts like those we occupied when we were captured; but since we had no seeds we did not grow any. Whatever the reasons may be, it is the fact that at no time did the Suzuki Unit grows any rice. (30)

Proscribed from hunting with guns and unable to plant, the Japanese foraged in the forests. Since that did not suffice, they shifted to the villages, which created opportunities to engage in cannibalism. As happened, patrol duty, reconnaissance, the search for a new campsite, and foraging turned to pillaging (Ishimura 1947). Sometimes resisted but always shunned by the civilians for fear of capture, torture, and death, the Japanese looted abandoned huts and scavenged for camotes, coffee, bananas, rice, corn, pepper, salt, a few farm animals, and house pets for food (Sasaki 1947; Ito 1947). However, the loot was small because war disrupted food production and trade cycles in Bukidnon.

Because of the scarcity of food in and outside the camps, the Japanese foraged 40 to 50 kilometers away from the camps and beyond for days on end with very little success (Sasaki 1947). Salt, a rare food element in the Bukidnon plateau, was acquired by the community through trade with those on the coast. It became the rarest commodity on the plateau because the war stalled its trade (Kobata 1947). When foraging was successful, which was seldom, the poor diet of the Japanese consisted of pilfered food and meat of small forest animals (Kobata 1947). Their diet regiment in Mt. Kitanglad “consisted of pumpkins, camotes, and other vegetables, and the meat of birds, cats, pigs, and rats” (Kai 1947, 16).

Malnutrition

Malnutrition resulted from food hunger. Ainoda (1947) mentioned that the Japanese suffered from beri-beri or thiamine deficiency and, possibly, protein deficiency. Salt insufficiency is also a form of malnutrition that increases the risk of malaria and death (Shankar 2000).

Ainoda identified wet beri-beri or cardiac beri-beri as the type that affected the Japanese. Inadequate bodily storage and absorption of thiamine or Vitamin B1 causes wet beriberi (Roman-Campos and Cruz 2014). Shoshin beriberi is the severe form of Vitamin B1 deficiency, which the Japanese may have been most familiar with. The symptoms include “right heart failure, shock, metabolic acidosis, and renal failure in varying combination... with paraparesis” (Prakasha 2013, 687). The symptoms also include neuropathy of the motor and axonal type. Besides muscle wasting with function loss or paralysis of the lower extremities, potential brain damage and death can arise from beriberi when it is left unchecked.⁶

Wet beriberi took its deadly toll on the Japanese during the march and became deadlier thereafter (Kai 1947; Ainoda 1947). They tried to arrest fatalities from the disease by foraging for rice, which is a rich source of thiamine, in the villages to little avail. They mentioned in a few instances that they acquired rice from outside the camps (Kobata 1947), but none

of the affidavits mentioned rice as part of the loot (R.P. vs. Ainoda et al. 1947). The Japanese mentioned small amounts of corn in four affidavits, but not rice (Ito 1947). Being deficient in thiamine, corn was a poor substitute for rice. Had the Japanese planted rice, they could have prevented deaths from wet beriberi.

As mentioned, the Japanese first addressed the need for meat protein and minerals by butchering and consuming their pack animals (Ainoda 1947; Hanada 1947). After the last pack animal had been consumed by September 1945, they had to forage for protein-rich food. The choice of Atugan and Sakumata Rivers for campsites could have been dictated by this need. However, except for catching frogs (Kai 1947), there is no mention of how the Japanese used the rivers as a resource. When forbidden to hunt with their guns, they trapped frogs, small birds, and rats for meat (Hanada 1947; Kai 1947). Since protein from these sources did not suffice, they foraged for farm animals, also with little success (Sasaki 1947). During the one and a half years that they stayed in Bukidnon, their measly loot consisted of a carabao, a horse, a pig, and two cats and kittens (Ishimura 1947; Kai 1947).

The severity of protein insufficiency in their diet, according to Ainoda (1947), impelled them to resort to cannibalism. The reason that he gave constitutes a physiological/medical argument for cannibalism in wartime. It also provides a view to the health condition of the Japanese and their regard for human flesh as food and source of thiamine, protein, and salt. He said that “since it was extremely difficult to obtain animal meat such as pigs and cattle, etc., we began eating human flesh. It was not mere diversion which provoked this act; desperate necessity was the reason for this” (36). The purposiveness by which they foraged in the environs, including the assault of armed men, suggests the importance that they gave to human flesh for protein (R.P. vs. Ainoda 1947). Foraging created opportunities for cannibalism as they scoured abandoned villages for food (Tadokoro 1947).

Salt Hunger

Salt is a nutritional substance that is a “necessity of life” (Brown 1989, 236). Modern historians write so little or nothing about it, and, if they do, they usually discuss it in relation to famine and subsume it under food hunger (Moxham 2001). Whether studied apart from food hunger or in relation to it in times of famine or war, salt hunger or salt deficiency remains largely uninvestigated (Denton 1982). Besides taste, the main benefit of salt is physiological. Although it occurs naturally in unprocessed food, salt from natural food does not suffice for bodily needs (McCance 1936; Schulkin 2001). Groups that subsist on predominantly meat diets have less need for salt than those who do not, which implies that salt hunger increases with reliance on non-meat based diet.

People who live largely on an animal diet obtain the salt they need in their meat. On the other hand the appetite for free salt grew with every increase in the part played by plant food, and it is notable that in prehistoric Europe ostensible indications of salt-working first appear with the establishment of settled agriculture. (Clark 1952, 127)

The calcium in salt helps metabolism and regulates electrolyte balance in and outside the cell.⁷ Unlike food, man does not hunger for salt; rather, mild salt hunger manifests in lassitude or chronic fatigue (Marriott 1959). Thus, man cannot survive salt deficiency for a long time. Salt hunger is most serious in hot climates due to rapid salt loss through perspiration. Sweating from strenuous activity, such as hiking or trekking or exercise, hastens rapid salt loss (Dill 1938). According to Marriott (1959), a British doctor posted in Bengal during World War II, “salt deficiency is perhaps the commonest of all deficiencies” (22) in tropical countries like the Philippines. Since water intake leads to further salt loss, oral saline rehydration is necessary to replenish loss of body fluids and salt.⁸ Salt insufficiency leads to desiccation and ultimately death (Bloch 1963). Marriott (1959) also noted that several deaths among British and Indian military personnel were due to salt depletion, which high temperatures exacerbated.

The Japanese were aware of the importance of salt in their diet, for which reason they brought to the Philippines salt refining companies such as The Hyo Unit which left with the 15th Embarkation Unit for Cagayan and up to Bukidnon. In addition, at the start of the march, each soldier carried a two-month supply of salt. The Japanese used salt sparingly, such that what could have lasted until July gave out only in August or September 1945. It was among the food elements that they recovered from fallen comrades during the march. When it gave out, they had to forage for it with little results because of the interior location of Bukidnon and the interruption of trade by the war. As in other countries at that time, “salt scarcity... was part of the complexity of war economy” (Falola 1992, 430).

The Japanese only found small quantities of salt twice. In the middle of August 1946, Ishimura led a group composed of Ito, Kyuma, Sekiba, Asanabe, Shirohira, Yorimoto, and Tsuji in twenty-day search of a new campsite. Ten days after leaving the camp, they chanced on a hut and, determined to acquire salt, assaulted its armed occupants. “To obtain salt, Shirohira entered the house, alone... We took some salt” (Ishimura 1947, 23). Sometime in September 1946, Ainoda led for 20 days a foraging group composed of Saiho, Tadokoro, Sasaki, and Maekawa east of the camp. Two or three days after leaving the camp, they looted a hut for clothing and a little salt (Tadoroko 1947).

As a doctor, Ainoda knew the adverse effects of salt deficiency on the soldiers in a high altitude, humid interior forest environment like Bukidnon. It was for this reason that he cited salt insufficiency as among the reasons why the Japanese resorted to cannibalism (Ainoda 1947). He witnessed the desiccation and death of the soldiers partly attributed to salt hunger during the march, high mobility, building of huts, patrols and encounters, and foraging (Isimura 1947). Salt depletion is linked to malaria and diarrhea.

Malaria

Salt insufficiency was a contributing factor to fatalities from malaria. Studies on the situation in New Guinea show that *Plasmodium falciparum*

and *Plasmodium vivax* (Arévalo-Herrera et. al. 2015), the two most common malaria vectors, infected many of the Japanese. The Japanese in Bukidnon had insufficient supplies of cures for malaria like quinine, Atabine, Plasmochin, including opium (Ainoda 1947). Atabrine, a trademark for quinacrine derived from acridine and processed in the form of dihydrochloride, became the universal cure for malaria in 1934 (Esteban 2004) because it was superior to quinine (Condon–Rall, Cowdrey, and Cowdrey 1998). Plasmochin, a trademark for pamaquine (Uphoff et. al. 2012) and administered with Atabrine, was also a cure for malaria. Ainoda did not provide information on the administration of the drugs, except that the Japanese had quinine, Atabrine, and Plasmochin for malaria (Ainoda 1947). The sources, though, do not mention how the Japanese in Bukidnon administered anti-malaria drugs.⁹

Diarrhea

Ainoda cited diarrhea as among the causes of death, but he did not mention whether bacteria caused it or that it was a symptom of malaria (Ainoda 1947). Nevertheless, in severe diarrhea, an individual could lose 1 ³/₄ ounces of salt from the body in a day, which could be replenished through oral saline rehydration (Marriott 1959). O’Neill (2002), an American who fought in New Guinea, mentioned that many American soldiers suffered from diarrhea. The cure for diarrhea includes oral saline rehydration to replenish loss of body fluids, counter salt depletion, and ensure recovery (Moxham 2001). The Japanese had supplies of *izai*, an antidigestive disorder drug, but had none for diarrhea. Death from diarrhea resulted not only from the lack of medicines but also from lack of salt for oral saline rehydration.

Survival Cannibalism

The redirection of foraging from the forests to the villages encouraged exocannibalism.

The reason human flesh was eaten by the Suzuki Unit was the desperate physical condition of our men by malnutrition, salt deficiency and food shortage. Since it was extremely difficult to obtain animal meat such as pigs and cattle, etc., we began eating human flesh. It was not mere diversion which provoked this act; desperate necessity was the reason for this. (Ainoda 1947, 35)

Exocannibalism

The police reported the first instance of cannibalism on 17 July 1945 when a group of Japanese captured a woman and three children in Nabandasan, Sumilao (P.P. vs. Ainoda 1947). The woman managed to escape, but the children were never seen again and were presumed to have been eaten by the Japanese.

Two instances of cannibalism occurred in August 1945. Based on the testimony of Alfreda Damonya, the prosecution tried to indict Hanada, together with three other Japanese, for the murder of her father, mother, brother, and sister in their house in Intavas, Bukidnon in August (P.P. vs. Ainoda 1947). Hanada was a member of the Suzuki Unit from the time it was organized in Ormoc in March 1944 to the time of their surrender in Bukidnon in February 1947 (Hanada 1947). The bodies of the four victims were never seen again and were presumed to have been consumed by the Japanese.

The police also reported that on 30 August 1945, an unknown man with a Japanese rifle shot another man to death in Hindangon, three kilometers northwest of Valencia (Extracts, Report No. 360). With the help of the son of the victim, they found the body, with his left leg and gold-capped tooth missing. They also reported that four Japanese soldiers murdered four civilians in Kitanglad on 24 September 1945 (Extracts, Report No. 360). A witness named Yabonan identified Yamamoto, a member of the Suzuki Unit, as one of the perpetrators. This happened after carabao meat had given out, when the Japanese had to forage for food in the villages. The police also reported that on 10 October, a group

of Japanese captured a man and his two daughters in Sumilao. The Japanese raped the women, who eventually managed to escape. The Japanese cut up the man and ate his flesh. The perpetrators remained unidentified.

At least three groups of Japanese roamed and hid in the mountains of Bukidnon: the Yasao group; the Tadokoro group; and the Suzuki Unit. Lt. Yoshiyuki Yasao of the 30th Engineering Regiment was the leader of the 57 Japanese who surrendered to Sale in Pangatocan, Bukidnon on 17 May 1946 (P.P. vs. Ainoda 1947). The Tadokoro group was originally composed of Cpl. Fukumatsu, Tadokoro, Teshima, Okumachi, Nakamura, and Miyata. Led by Fukumatsu, the group pulled out of guard duty in Buncaon to form a unit with other Japanese stragglers in the middle of August 1945 (Tadokoro 1947). In the middle of October 1945, Fukumatsu died; and Tadokoro came to lead the group. It cannot be established whether they committed the reported incidents of cannibalism from July to October 1945 because the police reports before 10 October are sketchy (Extracts, Report No. 360) and the Japanese did not admit to the crime (P.P. vs. Ainoda 1947). What is known is that the incidents occurred from the time they left Buncaon to the time they joined the Suzuki Unit in Basak in November 1945. Nonetheless, these events do not only suggest that the Japanese engaged in exocannibalism as early as July 1945, but also provide a view to the unpredictability and chaos of events in Bukidnon at that time.

October 1945

On 5 October 1945, Fukumatsu, Tadokoro, Miyata, Teshima, Okumachi, and Nakamura chanced on a hut, captured the four occupants, and stayed in the hut because Fukumatsu, the squad leader, was ill, probably due to malaria (Tadokoro 1947). While in the hut, one of the male captives tried to escape, so Tadokoro and Miyata shot him, along with the others (P.P. vs. Ainoda 1947). They cut up his body and took 200 *momme* (1.5 pounds) of flesh, pieces of which they gave to Fukumatsu, while they ate the rest.

December 1945

On 27 December (Extracts, Report No. 360), Sgt. Maj. Izumi led Tadokoro, Nishikawa, Miyata, Nakamura, and Sasaki to gather pepper in Batangan, Sumilao (Tadokoro 1947; Sasaki 1947). They chanced on a man and a boy in Batangan, whom they captured and used as guides (Extracts, Report No. 360). The man tried to escape, so Tadokoro shot him with a rifle, and Nishikawa cut him up (Tadokoro 1947).¹⁰ Tadokoro, Nishikawa, and Sasaki brought the flesh to a hut, and the six Japanese ate it. The boy tried to escape, so Miyata killed him. He and Sasaki cut the boy up and brought pieces of his flesh to the hut (Tadokoro 1947). At daybreak the following day, they escaped towards Intavas and returned to the camp, bringing pieces of flesh.¹¹ Izumi reported the incident to the Commanding Officer, except the cannibalism.¹²

March 1946

In early March 1946, Ito led Tadokoro, Teshima, Nakamura, and Sasaki to forage in the vicinity of Putian and Kulaman in Sumilao (Sasaki 1947). They captured an old woman and used her as a guide. They found a carabao near the woman's hut and a little corn and some clothing inside the hut. They searched the vicinity and found six individuals hiding in the grass. After taking the carabao, a man, and a boy, they withdrew to the Kulaman canyon. According to Sasaki, Tadokoro cut up the man and the woman, and that evening, Teshima cut up the boy. However, according to Tadokoro (1947), it was Sasaki who cut up the woman. The Japanese then ate pieces of her flesh. The following morning, they discovered that the man and the boy had survived and escaped, compelling them to withdraw to the camp.

The prosecution, however, had a different version. Ito, together with five Japanese, committed murder, rape, and cannibalism. On 14 March 1946 (P.P. vs. Ainoda 1947), they chanced on Bonifacio Kayano, Epifanio Kinuyog, and Faustina Tondalas in their *camote* (sweet potato) field in Sumilao and brought them to Kulaman. Ito hacked Kayano and Kinuyog with a bolo. The prosecution also charged Ito with the murder of Juliana

Saguinuan, Juanito Homonlay, Vicente Sanguinuan, the rape and the eating of the flesh of Emiliana Saguinuan and Feliza Homonlay, and the torture of Felix Saguinua, Emiliana Saguinuan, and Felisa Homonlay. They forced their captives to eat the flesh of Vicente Saguinuan and Marta Bacunan.

September 1946

The prosecution is rather confused on the incidents and dates of September 1946, for which it gives two, 16 and 26 September. Moreover, at one instance, it identifies the names of the victims, and on another it only provides the number of victims. Such confusions give the impression that two incidents happened when, on a closer look, there was only one. According to the prosecution, Ishimura granted a group the permission to go on a reconnaissance trip on 16 September. The group encountered armed civilians, leading to the wounding of four or five people on midnight, 16 September, in Impasug-ong. The Japanese took a man and a woman prisoner. They killed the two women and ate their flesh, while the man died later (P.P. vs. Ainoda 1947).

I am hereby presenting a reconstruction of the event based on the affidavits of the accused. On 26 September 1946 (P.P. vs. Ainoda), Ainoda led Saiho, Sasaki, Tadokoro, and Maekawa on a patrol in Upper Dalwangan, Bukidnon east of the camp (Sasaki 1947). Within four or five days since they left the camp, they captured an old man and an old woman. The following day, they looted a hut for clothing and salt and captured another old man and woman in a *camote* (sweet potato) field (Tadokoro 1947). According to Paulino Timoan, son of Agustin Timoan, the victims were Agustin Timoan, Maria Umarol, Filomeno Mantata, and Maria Mantata (P.P. vs. Ainoda 1947), and that the Japanese killed the four captives, cut them up, and ate some of their flesh.

Tadokoro (1947) testified that he stayed in the hut to rest because he had fever and sweat seizures from malaria. Sasaki, Saiho, and Maekawa left and came back with human flesh. However, according to Sasaki (1947), he, Tadokoro, Saiho, and Maekawa cut up the body. They ate some of

the flesh; they sun-dried the rest and brought it to camp (Tadokoro 1947). Back at the camp, Tadokoro gave some dried flesh to Teshima and Nakamura. The prosecution, however, also named Kamachi and Nagasawa among the perpetrators, stating that it was Saiho and Maekawa who killed the two women, while Tadokoro and Nagasawa killed the two men. Moreover, the prosecution also remarked that “[a]ll the affiants abovementioned stated that they ate the flesh of the four persons they killed” (Exhibit No. 20–A, P.P. vs. Ainoda 1947, 11). However, Tadokoro (1947) claimed that he, together with Saiho, Sasaki, Maekawa, killed the four persons with a bolo.

December 1946

In early December 1946, Tadokoro, Sasaki, Matsumura, Sata, Kamachi, and L/Pvt. Tsuji went on a week-long foraging for corn in Intavas east of the camp but found none.¹³ In the evening of the third day since they left the camp, they came upon a hut whose occupants shot at them (Nakamura 1947). They returned fire (Sasaki 1947).¹⁴ They found a dead girl inside the hut, including a rifle, a shotgun, some ammunition, and some coffee and bananas; the rest of the occupants of the hut escaped (Kamachi 1947; Matsumura 1947). Fearing pursuit from armed Filipinos in the vicinity, they hid in a hut in the jungle (Tadokoro 1947; Matsumura 1947). Sata brought the body to the jungle, and each of them cut a piece of the body and ate it (Sasaki 1947).

Endocannibalism

The Japanese also practiced endocannibalism—the consumption of the flesh of those who died due to disease, encounter, and execution from one’s group (White 2001; De la Croix and Dottori 2008). They admitted to three instances thereof, but only Ainoda gave the reasons why they did so. “Whenever possible, we avoided killing people by eating the bodies of those who died from illness, or were killed in action or executed for crimes” (Ainoda 1947, 36). The statement implies that they committed the act more

than three times, but it does not suggest scavenging for casualties in the field, much less suggest that cannibalism started in the camps.

Because of deaths from wounds, disease, and executions, it is possible that the Japanese in the headquarters camp practiced endocannibalism earlier than 1946. Special Prosecutor Luis Buenaventura's description of the headquarters camp paints images of the camp as a cannibal's lair. However, unconcerned with Japanese as victims, he made the facile but erroneous conclusion that the victims were all Filipinos. He said that

When Lieutenant Alejandro Sale captured the Suzuki [U]nit, he found human bones [and] human flesh in the process of cooking, human skulls and fragments of human body around the premises of the camp of the Suzuki [U]nit in and around the houses occupied by the members of the [U]nit and it can therefore be concluded that the killing of Filipinos and the eating of their flesh were of common knowledge to all the members of the [U]nit who were encamped together in one place...(P.P. vs. Ainoda 1947, 7)

Buenaventura based his opinion on the report of Sale to whom the Suzuki Unit surrendered in February 1947, which was about a month and a half since the last instance of exocannibalism occurred. At that time, the Japanese had confined foraging near the camps because of intensified mop-up operations by the P.A. The flesh more probably than not belonged to Koda, not to a Filipino. It appears that nearing their surrender, the headquarters group engaged more on endocannibalism than those in the pompom camp.

The following accounts of endocannibalism, however, deal only with the three instances to which the Japanese admitted.

October/November 1946

What happened sometime in October or November 1946 was a case of scavenging. Three days after an encounter with the P.A., Ito led Hanada, Gushiken, L/Pvt. Tsuji, and Homan to dispose the casualties and recover the wounded (Ito 1947).¹⁵ According to Homan (1947), the

three casualties involve Cpl. Tsuji, Hakawa, and Katsuma; wounded were Koda and Yamamoto.¹⁶ After disposing off the dead by covering them with grass, they went back to the camp but had to stop by a hut because of heavy rain and cold (Homan 1947; Ito 1947). While they kept themselves warm by the fire, Ito discovered that Gushiken had brought in putrid meat from one of the dead (Ito 1947; Homan 1947.). He warned the men about the meat and ordered them to go back to the camp individually because of the rain and darkness (*ibid*). This suggests that the Japanese had been practicing cannibalism earlier than admitted.

December 1946

Aoyanagi killed Hirano and attempted to desert (Matsumura 1947). Suzuki ordered the capture and execution of Aoyanagi by firing squad, which was composed of Saiho, Tadokoro, Sasaki, Matsumura, and Nakamura. According to Sasaki (1947), “one man from each of the Headquarter huts cut the body [Aoyanagi],” and he presume(d) that they ate the human flesh (6). This implies that cannibalism was a group behavior. It was imitative and replicative, and made automatic and expedient by the vagaries of war.

This occurred at a time when food was scarcest as the mop-up operations of the Philippine Army intensified and limited foraging in the villages. The headquarters group was as famished as their comrades at the pompom camp. This demolishes Tadokoro’s (1947) testimony that the headquarters group produced “sufficient” food. Assigned to the pompom camp, he had little knowledge of the availability of food at headquarters, which was bigger and therefore needed more food. How the Japanese in the camp managed to have sufficient food raises some questions. Presenting food sufficiency at the camp could have been a myth, a fabrication to dispel suspicions about endocannibalism.

February 1947

Koda died from disease and his comrades buried him at 4 p.m. on 9 February 1947, four days before the Suzuki Unit surrendered (Matsumura

1947). At 10:30 p.m., Yamamoto and Nakamura requested permission from Inui to dig up and eat the body of Koda. Yamamoto, Nakamura, and Nakashima disinterred the body, cut it up into small pieces, and gave each hut at the headquarters camp a piece of flesh. There were 11 men at the headquarters at that time: Maj. Kotani, Ainoda, Inui, Nakashima, Sasaki, Matsumura, Teshima, Nakamura, Yamamoto, Homan, and Fukui. They accepted the meat and said nothing. Sasaki testified that he “receive(d) a small piece of human flesh from Sgt. Nakashima’s hut and ate it” (Sasaki 1947, 6).

Yamamoto gave a small piece of flesh to the hut where Homan stayed, together with Ainoda, Sasaki, and Nakamura. Homan partook of the flesh as a gesture of *esprit de corps* with his companions in the hut. It was an act of commensality, an intimate gesture of belonging and association, which war and desperation intensified.

All that day, I was with the eleven men mentioned above. The night before we left, a small amount of human flesh was brought to my hut from the hut of Yamamoto. The members of my hut accepted the meat, and ate it at mealtime. I joined the others in my hut (Ainoda, Sasaki, Nakamura, and Homan) in eating the flesh since I felt it as my obligation to them to do so. (Homan 1947, 26)

That Inui permitted endocannibalism dispels the notion that the officers did not know about it, let alone disapproved it. Ainoda (1947) shared the flesh, which implies that the officers also lost the compunction toward cannibalism as wartime conditions became more desperate. The silence of the officers over it tells that while they considered it reprehensible, they knew it was necessary for survival. Incredulous over the feigned ignorance of the officers about it in the camp, Buenaventura, arguing about its extent, said that

To substantiate further, when Lt. Alejandro Sale, a P.C. officer, captured the members of the Suzuki Unit in their camp at Malaybalay mountains, human bones, human flesh in kettles in the process of cooking, human

skulls and other fragments of human bodies, were found scattered around the premises of the camp and even inside the houses where the different members of the Suzuki Unit were living (P.P. vs. Ainoda 1947, 16).

Contrary to notions of cannibalism as ghoulish and devilish and of cannibals as deranged and without scruples over the profanation of the human body, the Japanese were aware of the possibilities of contamination from infected meat. Faced by the such possibilities, they sought the expert advice of Ainoda about the safety of eating the flesh of someone who died from malaria or other diseases.

I have been asked whether it was not dangerous to eat the body of one who died from [m]alaria or other diseases. My answer as a doctor, is that if the meat is cooked well, there will be no danger of infection. (Ainoda 1947, 37)

The Office of the Special Prosecution in Tankulan, Bukidnon, tried 19 POWs for war crimes. However, Tatsumosuke Ueda died in prison in Manila, while Masateru Gushiken was tried in Manila because he spoke only Okinawan Japanese. Thus, only 17 stood trial. Buenaventura, arguing on the heinous nature of cannibalism and conspiracy, recommended death by hanging for 16 of the accused and one acquittal. The decision of the Military Commission in Manila, though, was quite different. Because there was no law on cannibalism, as in other trials, the Commission tried the accused under “class ‘B’ war crimes such as murder, ill treatment of prisoners, etc.,” variably phrased as “in violation of the... International rules of warfare and the moral standards of civilized society”, or “murder and the “prevention of honorable burial” (Welch 2002). On 20 September 1949, the Commission arraigned 10 Japanese soldiers for execution by hanging: Hajime Ainoda, Ishie Hanada, Katsumi Ito, Jisuke Maekawa, Takechi Nakamura, Keiji Saiho, Tamotsu Sasaki, Minotaro Tadokoro, Hiroishi Tashima, and Rikimi Yamamoto. Three were arraigned for imprisonment and hard labor: Hiroshi Kamachi, Takeshi Sata, and Choichi Tsuji; and it acquitted, three: Kazuyoshi Ishimura, Kikuo Nakaizumi, and Mitsugo Nakashima (P.P. vs. Ainoda 1947).

Conclusion

Cannibalism and its Greek form, “anthropophagy” refer to the same practice (Vandenberg 2010), which is contrary to the distinctions that anthropologists like Obeyesekere (2005) try to make. It refers to the practice of eating the flesh of one’s own kind (Fernández-Jalvo et al. 1999), not something that exists only in texts as “the man-eating myth” (Arens 1979) or “cannibal talk” (Obeyesekere 2005), which is usually colonial in nature, as Hulme (1986) would like to make it appear to justify conquest.

Studies on cannibalism have produced not only sound methods to determine that cannibalism did happen (Turner and Turner 1992, 1995; White 2001), but also theories to explain why it did. Some of these theories are applicable to survival cannibalism, both endocannibalism and exocannibalism, that the Japanese practiced to survive disease and hunger in Bukidnon during World War II. It was accidental and occasional (Boulestin et al. 2009), something impelled by desperate war conditions. Endocannibalism involved the eating of the flesh of fallen comrades. Sharing the flesh with others as *esprit de corps* suggests an affectionate aspect to it (Fernández-Jalvo et al. 1999).

Exocannibalism involved eating the flesh of Filipinos. It was aggressive, something done to enemies (Gat 200; Lindenbaum 2004; Boulestin et al. 2009; Fernández-Jalvo et al. 1999) because the Filipinos were allies of the Americans. It appears unlinked to revenge, although it had the effect of ‘control’ by constraining the movement of civilians (Lindenbaum 1975). The few instance of the rape of victims of cannibalism may also suggest sexual function (Thiessen 2001; Carlin 2011; Kushner 1997).

The idea that salt hunger (McCance 1936; Schulkin 2001; Marriott 1959) compelled the Japanese to engage in survival cannibalism needs decoding. Salt hunger was an idiom used to denote cannibalism as physiologically driven, a natural impulse, perhaps calculated to clear its perpetrators of culpability for the act. It is an effect of starvation, just as malnutrition is an effect of starvation, that, together with disease, compels survival cannibalism. In many societies around the globe, including ours,

survival cannibalism, in the sense of consuming the dead, is the only acceptable form of cannibalism. Even that, however, horrifies other groups like the Arapesh (Tuzin 1983), who consider it non-human because of the loss of social control, a role performed by culture and makes us human (Strathern 1985).

Notes

- ¹ Index, Witnesses, Exhibits, Documentary Evidence, in P.P. vs. Hajime Ainoda, Summation of the Prosecution, *Japanese War Crimes* (Closed Reports), Bundle 2, vols. 17–27: 124–135, henceforth cited as P.P. vs. Ainoda 1947.
- ² Analysis of Report of Case, Republic of the Philippines vs. Hajime Ainoda, et al., *Japanese War Crimes* (Closed Reports), Bundle 2, vol. 60: 1–52, henceforth cited as R.P. vs. Ainoda et al. 1947. The affidavits from these source that were used in this paper include those by Kazuyoshi Ishimura 7 May 1947, Hajime Ainoda 3 April 1947, Yasuo Kai 9 April 1947, Ishie Hanada 10 April 1947, Tomatsu Sasaki 14 May 1947, Katsumi Ito 14 May 1947, Zenichi Kobata 11 April 1947, Hiroshi Kamachi 2 May 1947, and Kazumi Homan 8 May 1947.
- ³ Cannibalism in Mindanao, (Original) Report No. 360: Mimotaro Tadoroko, vol. 1, *Japanese War Crimes*, Bundle 36, vol. 360: 17–61. The documents from these source that were used in this paper include the following: Extracts from Police Reports Concerning Atrocities and Other Crimes in Bukidnon, henceforth cited as Extracts, Report No. 360; the affidavit executed by Minotaro Tadokoro 26 April 1947, henceforth cited as Tadokoro 1947; and the affidavit executed by Toshio Matsumura 10 May 1947, henceforth cited as Matsumura 1947.
- ⁴ The manuscript upon which his paper is based is entitled, “Anthropophagy: Cannibalism in Bukidnon, 1945–1947.”
- ⁵ *Kuru* is related to *scrapie* in sheep and goats, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (mad cow disease) in cattle, and Creutzfeldt–Jacob Disease in humans (Nelson 1996; Wilson 2010). It had since then decreased because of the proscription of cannibalism by Australian authorities (Radford and Scragg 2013).
- ⁶ Wet beriberi is a highly preventable disease through the intake of thiamine-rich food because thiamine occurs naturally in a variety of food, such as whole grains, legumes, raw fruits, vegetables, seeds, nuts, and meats. Thiamine occurs sufficiently in the outer coat of rice (Fujiwara and Kiyoo 1953). Evidence from the warzone show that from 2009 to 2010, 241 soldiers of the African Union in Mogadishu, Somalia admitted to the hospital had lower limb edema, four died, and four of 31 patients admitted in Kenya had right heart failure (Watson et al. 2011). The hospital administered thiamine to sick soldiers with immediate results. Left unattended, beriberi increases the probability of acquiring cerebral malaria that causes headaches and delirium, fever, shock, and anemia.

⁷ Salt Institute. 2015. “The Dangers of Low Salt Diet.” *The Salt Institute*, 18 September.
⁸ Ibid.

⁹ How the Japanese in New Guinea tried to cure malaria would help in this regard. The dosage was .2 gm of quinine for six days and one tablet of Plasmochin every seventh day, which was not effective against the disease caused by either *P. falciparum* or *P. vivax* (Hawk n.d.). The effective cure was .5 gm three times a day, sometimes in combination with Atabrine and Plasmochin. Atabrine and Plasmochin were administered in combination with opium, a stimulant. However, according to Hawk, the combination “may impair liver function and worsened the patient’s chances of recovery” (Hawk n.d.). Given the insufficient supply of medicines and the number of deaths, it could be inferred that in Bukidnon lower dosages were given than were deemed effective. Since opium was among the medical supplies that the Japanese had, it was possible that the combination of Atabrine, Plasmochin, and opium was also used with deleterious effects, as the New Guinea experience would show.

Malaria sufferer’s experience fever sweat, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Except for nausea that leads to vomiting, the three symptoms result in salt depletion. In his evaluation of medicated salt treatment of malaria caused by *P. falciparum*, the more deadly vector, Payne (1988) shows that iodized salt in chloroquine has been effective in curing malaria. It would be preposterous to claim that the combination of salt with Atabrine and Plasmochin could have helped cure malaria effectively. In the first place, the Japanese did not have enough of these drugs; otherwise, deaths from the disease could have been significantly reduced. Rather, it is safe to presume that the combination could have abated salt depletion from fever sweat, vomiting, and diarrhea.

¹⁰ Sasaki (1947), though, provided a different story: he testified that it was Tadokoro who killed the boy, while it was Izumi who killed the man. That it was Tadokoro, Nishikawa, and Sasaki who cut up the man and brought the flesh to the hut.

¹¹ Tomatsu Sasaki and Miyata were identified as among those who cut up the boy and brought pieces of his flesh to camp. This is based on Exhibit No. 20–A, which states that “a boy who attempted to escape was killed by Miyata and Sasaki who brought the flesh to camp which was eaten by a group of six Japanese (P.P. vs. Hajime Ainoda 1947, 14).

¹² However, according to Tadokoro (1947), he did not know whether Izumi reported the instance of cannibalism to the Commanding Officer.

¹³ The other members of the group who testified against Kamachi were Tadokoro, Sata, Sasaki, Matsumura, and Tsuji (P.P. vs. Hajime Ainoda 1947).

¹⁴ Kamachi (1947) provided a different date for the incident, that is, it happened in November 1946.

¹⁵ However, Ishimura (1947) gave a different date for the incident. According to him, it happened in late September 1946. He did not provide the names of the dead and the survivors.

¹⁶ Ishimura (1947), however, neither gave the names of the dead or wounded, although he mentioned that three died.

Archival Sources

(Including Ainoda 1947; Handa 1947; Homan 1947; Ishimura 1947; Ito 1947; Kai 1947; Kobata 1947; Sasaki 1947; Tadokoro 1947)

Japanese War Crimes (Closed Reports), National Library, Manila, Philippines.

Bundle 2, Vols. 17–27: 120–35 includes: P.P. vs. Hajime Ainoda, Summation of the Prosecution (120–35); Index, Witnesses, Exhibits, Documentary Evidence (124–35); and Exhibit No. 20–A (14).

Bundle 2, Vol. 60: 1–52 includes: Analysis of Report of Case, Republic of the Philippines vs. Hajime Ainoda, et al. (33–37); Affidavit of Kazuyoshi Ishimura 7 May 1947 (22–23); Affidavit of Hajime Ainoda 3 April 1947 (33–37); Affidavit of Yasuo Kai 9 April 1947 (15–16); Affidavit of Ishie Hanada 10 April 1947 (29–30); Affidavit of Tomatsu Sasaki 14 May 1947 (5–8); Affidavit of Katsumi Ito 14 May 1947 (19); Affidavit of Zenichi Kobata 11 April 1914 (10); Affidavit of Hiroshi Kamachi 2 May 1947 (13); and Affidavit of Kazumi Homan 8 May 1947 (26).

Bundle 36, Vol. 1:17–61 includes: Cannibalism in Mindanao, (Original) Report No. 360: Minotaro Tadokoro” (17–61); Extracts from Police Reports Concerning Atrocities and Other Crimes in Bukidnon (199–22); Affidavit of Minotaro Tadokoro 26 April 1947 (17–18); and Affidavit of Toshio Matsumura 10 May 1947 (60).

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