

SAGADA LAKBAYAN - 4 - FINAL

We had reached the first rest and view stop after a little over an hour from Sagada. The zig-zag dirt road from Sagada to the main road didn't seem that bad after all, since it was daytime, and we were going downhill. In the 3 photos below, Tony surveys the magnificent view, Romy & Edna pose, and the south-east view of the valley seems shrouded in mist.



The Halsema Road southward to Baguio wasn't bad after all. As a matter of fact, it was great. It was vastly improved over the past 8 years or so, and even Mercy admitted that one has to give credit for GMA for this. Remember how one of her deputy directresses perished in a helicopter crash while surveying the road progress?

The Banaue to Bontoc road was scary only because of all the on-going upgrades, but certainly, in due time, it would be just as good. For comparison, here again is a blow-up



map of the areas in consideration. I would say that the Baguio to Manila road would be relatively A class, while the Bagabag to Manila would be B class. Baguio three-fourth northward to Bontoc would also be B class.

Anyway, the next stop was a coffee break at the Mt Data



Hotel, somewhere halfway to Baguio. Mimi remembers it 50 years ago when it was new. Now, it was government run, a bit run down, but service was excellent. The waiters set up a table on the veranda, above photo, and served good coffee and delicious cake. We agreed that we did not expect to see Joanne here. But then as now, it did not have much surrounding attraction such as Banaue or Sagada, except perhaps for honeymooners. Its P1,200 room rate seemed just about fair. If I were to go to Sagada again by private car driving, I'd stop here overnight.

Lower photo shows the group of ten at the garden prior to boarding the van, and showing off political affiliation.

Sagada to Baguio took almost 8 hours, and that included the rest/view stops, the coffee break stop, and a long late lunch at Trinidad Valley just outside Baguio. Besides, we had instructed Rico the driver to go slow. Views were fantastic, including many more rice and veggie terraces.



But when we got to approach Baguio at about 3:00 pm from La Trinidad (capital of the province), the views were of congested areas among the hills. Tony commented that it looked like Hong Kong. To some of us, it was like a hilly Quiapo. This was not the Baguio we knew of the 60's.



Session road was at a standstill in traffic, and we got lost trying to look for Naguilan road that would fork off to the Asin road to Bencab's museum. We did get there, however,



helped by the conspicuous road signs. Entrance fee to the museum was P80 each, well worth it, especially when no less than National Painter Artist Ben Cabrera personally welcomed National Poetry Artist Jimmy Abad, and took us all around on a grand tour. Picture taking was allowed so we snapped away. I must admit that I am an ignoramus when it comes to art, so here are just a few examples of the hundreds of exhibits of paintings, sculpture, etc. Photo below is an example of the magnificent outside views of his 4 hectare property which included gardens, fish ponds, private river, etc. I included above one artsy shot of the late afternoon view from his studio. And finally, an ID of all of us: L-R Jimmy Abad, Bernie Muller, Mon Pasicolan, host Ben Cabrera, Mercy Abad, Danny Gil, Edna Manlapaz, Mimi Pasicolan, Lisa Gil, Romy Manlapaz and Tony Estrera.

We were the last visitors to leave the museum that late afternoon, and so we decided to go for an early dinner before flopping to bed at Romy & Edna's place. Even with Romy up front guiding the driver, it took some time to wade through traffic to get to the "Cafe by the Ruins" restaurant which I believe was near Mansion House. Food was great but we had to transfer tables when it started raining hard. It's about time, we all thought, after all this drought. Good thing we were out of the zig-zag dirt roads we had come from earlier today.

The Manlapaz condo was huge, easily accommodated all of us, and was nestled somewhere in the suburban part



of town where the roads were clear, lined with pine, and genteel houses graced the neighborhood. Of course we did not see it that way at night, but only the next morning on our way to breakfast at the famed Camp John Hay. Many of us felt relieved after seeing all the congestion in the downtown area. There still was an old Baguio after all.

We actually wanted a simpler breakfast, but at 7:30 in the morning, the 2 restaurants suggested by Edna were still closed. We saw a Jollibee, but it also was still closed.

Camp John Hay with its golf course, and hotel, and other amenities used to be an exclusive place for US personnel, but now was open to the public. Its restaurant, though expensive, would surely be open even this early.



And it was, at P550 per head for eat-all-you-can. But the food was so plentiful and varied that it actually could also be considered lunch, so we all agreed that we were having an early "brunch" at 7:30 in the morning. We gorged ourselves. And no, Joanne could not be here. Not surprisingly, the dining room was almost full. Many of the affluent lowland crowd already had started their traditional trek during Holy Week to the summer capital.

Then we had a quick drive by Mines View Park, and a shopping stopover at the famous Good Shepherd outlet, prior to picking up our baggage at the condo, then the trip back to Manila. There are three routes: Kennon road, which is slow and steep, Naguilan road which is gentler but swings too far north, and the Marcos highway in between. We took this route because we wanted to see the famous Marcos statue that had been carved into the mountain ala Mt Rushmore, though since partly dynamited and defaced. Perhaps we could add more defilement.

But before we knew it, we were in the lowlands, and no one seemed to have missed it.

We got stuck in Urdaneta, Pangasinan, for some minutes while the political caravans held up traffic in the main road. This was the first day politicians could officially rally. We



had to drive on the riverbed as the Sison (?) bridge was still undergoing repair from the floods some months back. And



momentarily got a scare of an erupting volcano which turned out to be nothing but some smoke being superimposed on a hill in Tarlac. Finally, after a brief break in Bulacan, we got back to UP at 5:30 pm, shown above.

The five day Sagada Laktayan was over.

Danny Gil, 4 Apr 2010

Inns / Guesthouses

Central/Westwards	
Alapo's	0921-327-9055
Alfredo's Inn	0918-588-3535
Ganduyan	0921-273-8097
Sagada Homestay	0919-702-8380
Sagada Guesthouse	0919-357-4377
Saint Joseph	0918-559-5934
Eastwards/Northwards	
A-7 House	0921-287-6093
Billy's House	0921-603-2745
Churya-a	0906-430-0853
Mapiyaaw Pension	0921-390-0560
Rocky Valley Inn	0918-403-6018
Rock Inn	0920-909-5899
Yabami Lodge	0920-411-9976
Gecko Inn	0920-289-5471
Southwards	
Canaway	09107092631/09182915063
George Guesthouse	0918-5480406
Green House	---
Igorot Inn	0928-630-5479
Kanip-aw Pines View	09282897507/09266092960
Olahbinan	0928-406-7647
Residential Lodge	0919-672-8744
Travelers' Inn	0920-799-2960
Yellow house	---
Hotel rates ranges from P200-500 per person per night	

SAGADA-BONTOC / BONTOC-BANAU / BANAU-MANILA

Sagada-Bontoc	
Jeepney: 50 minutes	
1 st	6:30 AM
2 nd	7:00 AM
3 rd	7:30 AM
4 th	8:00 AM
5 th	8:30 AM
6 th	9:00 AM
7 th	10:00 AM
8 th	11:00 AM
9 th	12:00 NN
Last	1:00 PM
Bontoc-Banau	
Bus: 2 hours	
1 st	7:00 AM
2 nd	7:30 AM
Last	8:30 AM
Jeepney: 2 hours	
1 st	7:00 AM
2 nd	10:00 AM
Last	1:00 PM
Banau-Manila	
Bus: 8 hours	
Auto Bus	5:30 PM (0915-984-9266)
Florida Bus	8:00 PM (0918-522-5049)

Epilogue: the van owner refunded P5,000. Average for each person:

Transp - P2,500
Dbl occ room - P2,700
Meals & all other shared exps - P3,250

See Schedules on left from the Sagada Tourist Office. May be old.