

To the spanish nation

The **Dominican friars**, who owned the **Hacienda de Calamba**, raised **land rents** and used **forceful and legal means** to evict tenants when they couldn't pay. The Rizals and other families resisted the unfair rents and filed a legal case, but the friars **won in higher courts** and carried out **mass evictions** to maintain control over the land.

In "***Sa Mga Kababayan***," In "***Sa Mga Kababayan***," written in December 1891, Jose Rizal explains the **agrarian conflict in Calamba** and defends the Filipino tenants—including his own family—who were **unjustly evicted** by the **Dominican friars**. Rizal clarifies that the people of Calamba were **not rebels**, but peaceful citizens fighting for their **rights to land and fair treatment**.

He exposes the **abuses of the friars**, including the increase in land rents, threats, legal manipulation, and the **violent evictions** that left many families homeless. Rizal also refutes the accusations made by the Spanish authorities that the tenants were causing rebellion or disorder.

Through this writing, Rizal urges his fellow Filipinos to **seek justice peacefully**, to **unite**, and to remain **morally upright** despite oppression. He calls for **truth, justice, and reform**, hoping that the Spanish government would listen and act fairly.

Una Visita A La Victoria Gaol” (A Visit to Victoria Gaol), March 2, 1892:

Jose Rizal wrote this piece after visiting **Victoria Gaol**, a British-run prison in **Hong Kong**, during his stay in early 1892. In the article, he **compared** the **humane and orderly treatment** of prisoners under the British system with the **harsh, abusive, and corrupt** conditions in **Spanish prisons** in the Philippines. The essay served as a **subtle criticism of Spanish colonial rule**, highlighting how prisoners elsewhere were treated with dignity and fairness. Rizal used this comparison to advocate for **justice, reform, and better treatment** of Filipinos under colonial rule.

Context of “Colonisation Du British North Borneo, Par De Familles De Iles Philippines”:

Jose Rizal wrote this in 1892 to explain his plan to **resettle Filipino families** in **British North Borneo** (now Sabah, Malaysia). The goal was to offer Filipino farmers, especially those affected by the Calamba evictions, a **peaceful and productive life** free from friar abuse and Spanish oppression. Rizal believed the British would allow more **freedom and land ownership**, giving Filipinos a chance to prosper. The article justified the project as a **humanitarian and practical solution** to colonial injustice in the Philippines.

Context of “Project of the Colonization of British North Borneo by the Filipinos”:

Rizal wrote this to explain more details about his idea to move Filipino families to **British North Borneo**. He believed that life there would be better because the British were more fair than the Spanish. In Borneo, Filipinos could farm, live in peace, and have more freedom. This plan was Rizal’s way of helping people who were suffering under Spanish rule.

Why and How José Rizal wrote “La Mano Roja” (The Red Hand):

Rizal wrote “*La Mano Roja*” in 1892 while in Hong Kong to **expose the mysterious and suspicious fires** frequently happening in Manila. He believed these fires were **deliberately set**, possibly by corrupt officials or powerful groups, to **threaten or punish Filipinos**. Rizal, as a reformist, wanted to **warn his fellow countrymen** and **criticize the Spanish colonial abuses** that endangered people’s lives and property.

Rizal printed “*La Mano Roja*” as a **broadside (sheet form)** to make it **easily distributed and read by many**. Using **clear and direct language**, he described the incidents and hinted at the **possible masterminds** behind the fires. He used this simple format to **quickly spread awareness** and ignite public attention and resistance.

Why and How José Rizal wrote the “Constitution of the La Liga Filipina”:

Why he wrote it:

Rizal wrote the *Constitution of the La Liga Filipina* in 1892 to **formally establish a peaceful reform movement** that aimed to unite Filipinos and push for social, economic, and political improvements under Spanish rule. He wanted to **organize Filipinos** to work together for change without using violence.

How he wrote it:

While in Hong Kong, Rizal drafted the constitution in **clear, organized points**, outlining the goals, membership, duties, and structure of the Liga. It focused on **mutual support, education, and cooperation** among Filipinos. Rizal presented it when he returned to Manila, and *La Liga Filipina* was officially launched

Why and How Rizal wrote “Specimens of Tagal Folklore”:

Why he wrote it:

Rizal wrote *Specimens of Tagal Folklore* to **showcase the depth of Filipino culture** and to **preserve traditional wisdom** found in proverbs, riddles, and folk expressions. At a time when Filipinos were often seen as inferior by colonizers, Rizal aimed to **prove the richness and intelligence of native traditions**.

How he wrote it:

He collected these proverbs and riddles from everyday life in the Philippines and compiled them into an article, which was **published in May 1889** in *The Journal of the Folklore Society* in London. Rizal translated the texts into Spanish and English, making them accessible to both Filipino and foreign readers.

Why and How Jose Rizal wrote “Two Eastern Fables” (June 1889):

Why he wrote it:

Rizal wrote this essay to **show the cultural connections between Asian countries**, especially the Philippines and Japan. He wanted to highlight the **common values and moral teachings** found in their folklore, such as justice and the triumph of the weak over the strong.

How he wrote it:

He **compared two traditional stories**—the Filipino fable “The Tortoise and the Monkey” and the Japanese “Saru Kani Kassen.” Rizal analyzed their **similar structure and moral lessons**, and suggested that these shared elements may point to a **common Malay origin**. He presented the essay in a scholarly manner to emphasize that Filipino folklore deserved serious attention and respect.

Context of “Two Eastern Fables” (June 1889):

Jose Rizal wrote this essay while he was in Europe, during a time when he was actively promoting Filipino culture and intellectual identity. He aimed to show that Filipinos had a rich cultural heritage similar to other Asian civilizations. By comparing Philippine and Japanese folklore, Rizal wanted to highlight the shared cultural roots among Asian peoples—especially those influenced by Malay traditions. This work was part of his broader effort to prove that Filipinos were not inferior and had a deep, native wisdom worthy of respect and study.

Context of “Pensamientos de un Filipino” (Reflections of a Filipino):

Rizal wrote this piece between 1883 and 1885 while studying in Madrid. At that time, he was deeply exposed to liberal and reformist ideas in Europe. The work reflects his growing criticism of the Spanish friars’ abuse of power in the Philippines. Through it, he expressed the thoughts of a Filipino who longed for justice and reforms, even if it meant suffering punishments like exile for standing against oppression.

Context of “Por Telefono” by Jose Rizal:

Written in 1889 under the pen name *Dimas Alang*, “Por Telefono” is a satirical pamphlet that mocked Fr. Salvador Font, one of the friars who pushed for the banning of *Noli Me Tangere*. Rizal wrote it in Barcelona to cleverly criticize the friars’ hypocrisy and abuse using humor and wit. The piece imagines a telephone conversation between Font and a friar in Manila, which was a futuristic concept at the time. It reflected Rizal’s intelligence, creativity, and his subtle yet powerful way of exposing injustice through satire.

Context of “La Instrucción” (The Town Schools in the Philippines):

Jose Rizal wrote “*La Instrucción*” under the pen name *Laong Laan* to critique the poor quality of elementary education in the Philippines under Spanish rule. Having studied in Europe, Rizal compared the systems and found that Filipino students were not benefiting from an education conducted in Spanish—a language most could not understand. He proposed reforms, such as using native languages in instruction, to make learning more meaningful. His forward-thinking ideas foreshadowed current educational policies in the Philippines like the use of mother tongue in early education.

El Señor mira a las islas Filipinas (Spanish: “*The Lord Gazes at the Philippine Islands*”). This is an unfinished satirical piece in Spanish, often treated as Rizal’s next novel. It was included (posthumously) in the 1962 *Rizal’s Prose* collection published by the Centennial Commission mb.com.ph/thehaguepe.dfa.gov.ph. In this work God the Father sends Jesus and St. Peter to visit the Philippines and witness the social ills under Spanish rule. As the Philippine Embassy notes, it is “one of Dr. Rizal’s unfinished novels” and a “satire on the situation of the Philippines during the Spanish colonial period” thehaguepe.dfa.gov.ph. (In a 1957 English translation by Encarnacion Alzona, it was titled “*The Lord Gazes at the Philippine Islands*” mb.com.ph.)

El Señor mira a las islas Filipinas: Written in **Spanish** (satire of colonial society), date uncertain but found among Rizal’s manuscripts. Included by the Jose Rizal National Centennial Commission in *Rizal’s Prose* (1962) mb.com.ph/thehaguepe.dfa.gov.ph. Theme: God/saints exposing friar abuses in the Philippines.

Makamisa: Written in **Tagalog**, begun in early 1892 (Hong Kong), only ~2 chapters; tone ironic/anticlerical (parody of parish life) archive.org. Discovered by Ambeth Ocampo in 1987; believed to be composed in Dapitan (circa 1894)