

# Sampaguita: (Our National Flower's Journal to Decay)

The Philippines

Francis Xavier PASION



Genre: Drama  
Format: 35mm  
Estimated Running Time: 100 min.

Budget:  
US\$300,000  
(HK\$2,300,000)

Producers:  
Ferdinand LAPUZ

Writing Credits:  
Francis Xavier PASION

Production Company:  
Pasion Para Pelikula Productions

HAF Goals:  
Funds

Contact:  
Pasion Para Pelikula Productions  
(Ferdinand LAPUZ)

Address:  
84 JEM Building Unit 304,  
Scout Fernandez St.,  
Quezon City 1103 Philippines

Tel: +63-9945326  
+63-9178520208 (mobile)

Email: ignatiusfilmscanada@yahoo.ca  
fxepasion@yahoo.com

## INTRODUCTION

The sampaguita is the national flower of the Philippines. It is a small, white flower that is harvested at the foothills of the mountain in Pampanga, then transported to Manila to be strung into garlands and sold on the streets or to churches. Known for its sweet fragrance, once it's picked it immediately starts to decay, and only has a day before it loses its pure, white color, thus it's important that it be harvested, transported and sold within 24 hours.

The stages of the its journey are:

Harvesting (early morning) by children in the countryside.

Transporting (morning to noon) by bus from the countryside to the city.

Stringing into garlands once they arrive in the city.

Selling (mid-afternoon to night) by children who peddle the garlands to churches (they are offered to the saints). These kids often risk their lives to sell sampaguita garlands on the streets of Manila, and some are even lured into prostitution.

## SYNOPSIS

This film depicts the journey of the Philippines' national flower, the sampaguita. As the flower undergoes a journey of decay from the time it is plucked to the time it is sold at night on the streets we also see the slices of life of the children involved in its journey.

The Harvest (morning). We see Anita, twelve years old, begin her usual day as a sampaguita picker in the foothills of Pampanga. This day is different because she had her first period. Her mother practices a ritual for her rite of passage to womanhood. Anita collects all the flowers in a sack, and a person riding a motorcycle fetches the sack. We see the sack being bought by a woman, and the woman brings the sack onto a bus. The sampaguita is on its way to Manila.

We see the landscape of the provinces change to the cityscape. The flowers are now being sold in the chaotic marketplace. We see Evalyn, a pregnant mother buying a sack of sampaguita at the marketplace.

Making the Garland (noon). We see Evalyn and her 3 sons, Uhog (10), Eli (8), and Bitoy (6) helping her make the sampaguita garland in the middle of a busy street. We see Tey, Eli, and Bitoy sniff solvent out of plastic bags so they won't feel hungry. They have no food.

We see Tey, the oldest of the children, getting high. His brothers follow his lead. We see their artificial dream of the future. We see them scavenge for leftover food at a local restaurant.

The Selling (night). Then we see the last children on this journey are Jay (8), Michael (12), and Karen (14). They buy their sampaguita garlands from Evalyn. Jay and Michael are brothers who peddle their sampaguita on a busy street. We follow them as they risk their lives to convince the drivers of jeepneys and buses to buy their sampaguita garlands.

Karen is pregnant and she peddles her sampaguita garlands in Quiapo Church. We see how this flower is used to honor the saints in the church. Jay and Michael roam the streets of Tomas Morato, a place full of hookers and partygoers. A car passes by and an old man invites the brothers to his condominium nearby.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

More than just showing the journey of the sampaguita, this film will make a statement about the failure of the educational system in our country. Our national hero, Jose RIZAL says, "The children are the future of our nation." This film will repudiate that claim by showing the exact opposite. The children are NOT the future of the nation. How can they be if they are already forced to be adults at a very young age?

I have already interviewed the children who sell the sampaguita garlands at night. Most of them speak and behave like adults. They bear no traces of childhood. To them, the future is non-existent. They are living day to day, with no dreams except how to fill their empty bellies.

The film's form will follow content. The first part, where the flowers are being plucked, will feature camerawork that is idyllic, serene, hopeful. The children involved in the plucking are also hopeful. They speak of their dreams of the future. As the flowers are transported to the city, the camerawork turns chaotic. The children here are engaged in the affairs of adults. The visuals speak of a world that is harmful for the innocent and pure.

The film's time frame will only be one day, just like the life span of the sampaguita. In that single day, we get a microcosm of Filipino society.

## DIRECTOR

Francis Xavier PASION was a soap opera writer for a major TV network and was later assigned to be head writer and producer for a public service program that features Filipinos abroad and their families in the Philippines. It was his experience in dealing with real people and the shocking

murder of his network's reality TV producer that inspired him to write the screenplay for *Jay* which won Best Film, Best Actor and Best Editor at the 2008 Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival in the Philippines. *Jay* was the first Filipino feature film by a first-time director to be shown at the Venice Film Festival, and it received a Special Mention at the 2008 Bangkok International Film Festival and has been invited to the Pusan, Vancouver, London, Rotterdam and the Sydney film festivals, amongst others.

## PRODUCER

Ferdinand LAPUZ has executive produced several films by Brillante MENDOZA, including *The Aeta Teacher* and *Slingshot* as well as *Serbis* which was selected for the main competition of the Cannes Film Festival. He has also worked as a sales agent for a number of independent features in the Philippines, including *Magnifico* and *The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros* and he represented *Woman of Breakwater* (2003) which was selected for the Cannes Film Festival Director's Fortnight and was the first Filipino film to play in Cannes since 1989.

## PRODUCTION COMPANY

Pasion Para Pelicula Productions is a newly established film production company founded by Francis Xavier Pasion, which produced the award-winning, highly acclaimed motion picture, *Jay*.