

Conservation of Ifugao Values

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HANYUAN JIANG

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DAVIS

Approved:

Ryan Galt, Chair

Kate Scow

Jim Hill

Committee in Charge

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Abstract

The Ifugao culture in the Philippines is experiencing various cultural changes as it connects increasingly to the non-Ifugao societies. These changes in Ifugao society, such as agriculture, religion, and tourism, are examined, and the stakeholders' perceptions reported. Mirrored by economic, social, and environmental problems occurred in the prevailing trend of global development, the value of the traditional Ifugao culture is discovered as the values of communal cooperation and a sustainable relationship with nature. While existing conservation measures focus on Ifugao's cultural practices, it is argued that the conservation of Ifugao values is key to maintaining the culture, and has significance even to the modern world.

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Preface and acknowledgement

I started my Master's degree education in the fall of 2014 at the University of California, Davis, hoping to study sustainable agriculture and its techniques. Graduating with a Bachelor's degree with a plant sciences background, I tried to learn the broader aspects of agriculture such as its interconnections with society and economy. These experiences greatly transformed and opened my understanding of agriculture from food production to a much more complicated system incorporating human interaction with nature, distribution of resources among farmers and consumers and the subsequently formed social interrelationships, and sometimes even a philosophical understanding of human self in the physical world.

With this understanding I became interested in indigenous agricultural cultures. These cultures are diverse; some are in the temperate areas and some are in the tropical zones; some are nomadic, and some are sedentary; some feed more on meat and some are more herbivorous. Yet one similarity of them is that over the past centuries as the people survived through environmental and social changes, they each developed a set of practices and thoughts as unique as the natural environment they are in¹.

But these indigenous cultures are disappearing today. People are moving into homes with air conditioners, televisions, and running water, only travel for tourist or business purposes, and are eating similar foods year round. The indigenous Ifugao people from the Luzon Island in the Philippines are living these changes.

This thesis is not written to introduce the indigenous Ifugao culture, but with the purpose of

¹ Examples from Native American culture described in appendix A.

discovering the value² of the Ifugao culture and its conservation measures (to retain the cultural elements) by discussing the changes in the traditional Ifugao culture and the stakeholders' perception of them. With this, I hope that not only the indigenous Ifugao people, but also those living in relatively more modern³ societies, will reflect from an individual level on what a world our life has shaped and how to sustain it for the future centuries as the indigenous people have done in the past.

I am privileged to know Professor Koji Nakamura and Dr. Rizalita Edpalina from the Kanazawa University, Japan, who introduced the Ifugao Satoyama Meister Training Program to me. Also the acceptance from Professor Napoleon Taguiling from Ifugao State University was crucial to this research.

My original plan was to include 30 participants, but soon after the research started, I realized I would achieve a higher number with the generous assistance from many of the participants. In the end, there were almost 90 participants in this research. Months after the interviews, as I transcribed and coded them thousands of miles from the location where they took place, memories of the faces, the surroundings and the atmosphere of these records are still fresh. It is the love of these people for the Ifugao culture and their concern for its future that encourages me to do my best in writing this thesis. Apart from some who I was not able to note down their names during the interviews, they are Dustin Lee Addug, Emily G. Alberto, Remelies D. Allaga, Julia Amehna, Julia B. Argawa,

² The word "value" here refers to the worth, the use or the importance. In this thesis I use the singular form of the word "value" to refer to the worth or significance of something.

³ Modernity is often linked with western societies or cultures but in my thesis I do not mean to link them together, as many modernity values, such as efficiency and liberalism, have been criticized and welcomed both in oriental and western societies (see example of traditional value in California agriculture in appendix B).

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One afternoon in Ifugao when discussing the future of their culture, I was given an Ifugao name Aliguyon by my Ifugao friends. Later I realized Aliguyon is the name of an Ifugao hero who brought peace to the people after an epic battle. If my research can do anything comparable to his achievement, if this research can bring a better understanding and conservation of the Ifugao culture as it interacts with the modern world, I will be deeply honored.

Chapter 1 Introduction

The northern part of Luzon Island in the Philippines differs greatly from the southern part, both culturally and geographically (Figure 1). Its mountains host diverse indigenous cultures and the Ifugao culture is one among them. The word “Ifugao” originally meant people from the mountains, and is now also the name of their culture and their province. It is the home to mainly three ethnic groups, the Tuwali, the Ilocano, and the Ayangan who speak different dialects. Unlike the lowland areas, Ifugao was not conquered by the Spanish regime in the 16th century and was only accessed by outsiders after the American occupation of the Philippines in 1898⁴. Over this long independent time, the Ifugaos cultivated their indigenous culture, which makes them unique and proud today.

⁴ Because of this history, the songs popularly played in Ifugao today are still American country music.

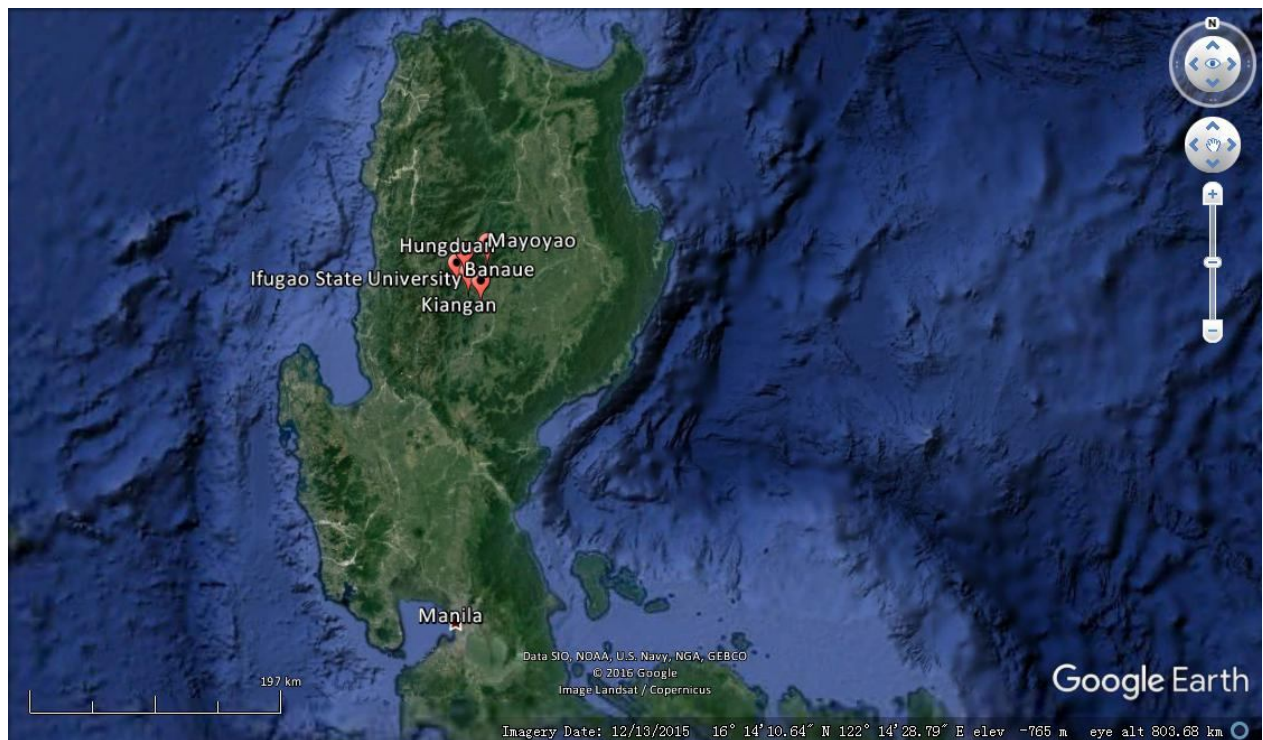


Figure 1: Ifugao province in the Luzon Island, the Philippines (Source: Google Earth)

A big event in contemporary history for the Ifugaos was the designation of the Ifugao Rice Terraces as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site (Rössler, 2006) and later as one of the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Among the total 11 municipalities in Ifugao, rice terraces in the four municipalities of Banaue, Hungduan, Kiangin, and Mayoyao were thus designated. My research was done in these four municipalities, composing 32.35% of the total Ifugao population⁵ (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2015) and 33.85% of the area⁶ with a focus on the municipal centers and the villages where the designated

⁵ The total population is 202,802. (Retrieved 2 December 2016.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ifugao#Administrative_divisions)

⁶ The total area is 262,821 hectares.

rice terraces are located (Figure 2). All on-site research activities were conducted from June 27 to August 19, 2016.

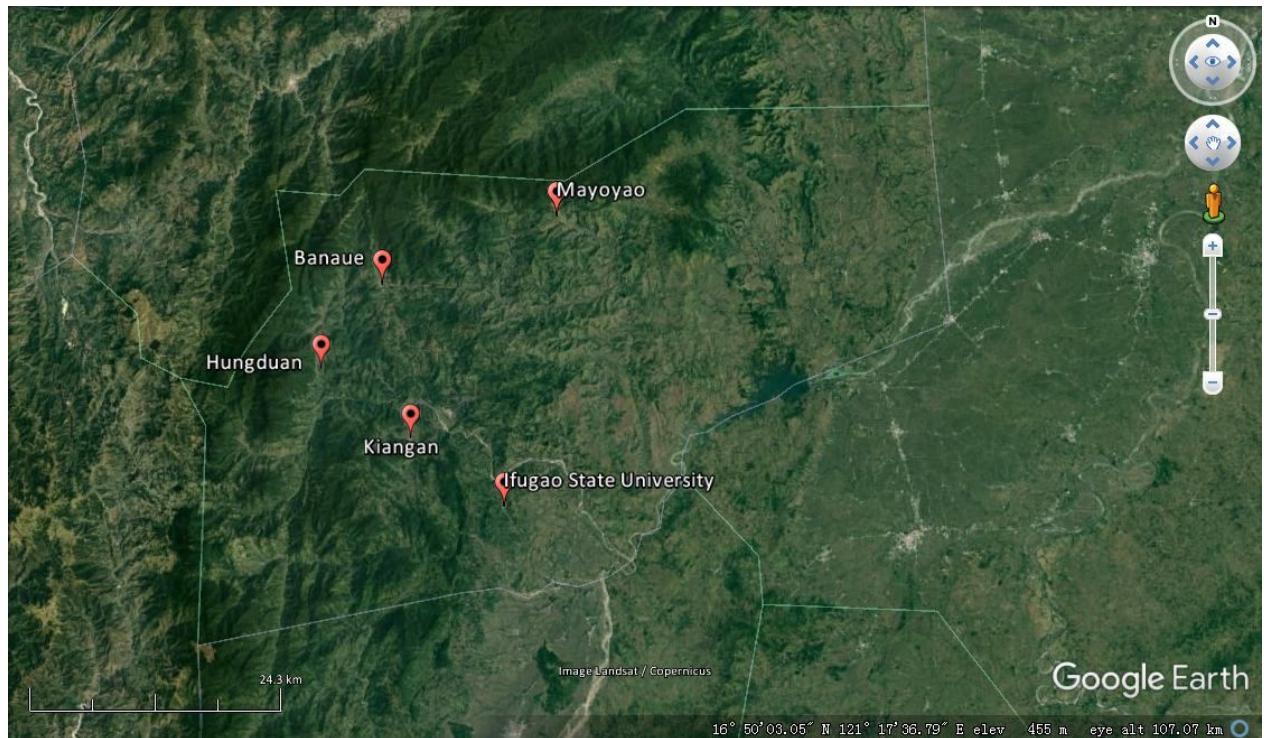


Figure 2: Centers of researched Municipalities and Ifugao State University in the map of Ifugao

(Source: Google Earth)

Since its first encounter with the Spanish, the Ifugao culture has been of interest to anthropologists. But it is not until recently, under multiple social changes, such as the increasing standard of living and education level, that the traditional culture has been experiencing dramatic changes. While many previous researches were conducted on such changes and the conservation of the original culture (Albano and Takeda, 2014; Dulay, 2015; Madangeng, 2015; Respicio, 2013), few focused on people's perception (Dizon et al., 2012; Joshi et al., 2000; Tilliger et al., 2015). And to my knowledge, there has not been any research that uses qualitative methods to

examine and analyze the complexity of people's perceived reasons for the cultural changes and their perceptions of them.

In this research I am trying to answer two questions: 1) What is of value in the Ifugao culture?⁷ 2) If there is something of value, how should it be conserved? I looked for answers of these questions by inquiring about the interviewees' perceptions on various cultural topics. The reason for focusing on the perceptions of cultural changes is that human factors of those changes (such as preferential change) may be revealed, without hypothesizing that all cultural changes are undesirable. And by reporting the findings in a qualitative fashion, these complex perceptions can be represented in order to foster sound conservation measures. To that end, I used three research methods:

1) Semi-structured interviews,⁸ with usually a single individual but up to four participants, were conducted, with a typical length of approximately 45 minutes. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Quotes from the interviews were then coded using NVivo software. Afterwards, I analyzed them by comparing coded quotes on the same topic. A selection of quotes that reflect a typical idea were then collected and reported. Two interviewees were also lent a digital camera to take photos of what they found of interest or importance to their life.

2) Seventeen young students (IL⁹) (above 18 years old) from the Ifugao State University participated at a focus group activity on the "comparison between the ideal life of the young and

⁷ The evaluation is conducted by combining the internal ideas of Ifugaos and also my external thoughts from the global scale.

⁸ All interviews were conducted in English. Six interviews where the interviewees did not speak English were assisted with the translation from the research assistants. For interview questions, please refer to appendix C.

⁹ Refers to "ideal life".

elder generations.” They were asked to first draw a picture of their ideal life. And later, they asked their grandparents about their ideal life and also drew a picture of it. After comparing the grandparents’¹⁰ ideal life with their’s, the young participants wrote down their thoughts. The drawings were analyzed based on their components and the writings of the participants’ thoughts were analyzed in the same way as the transcripts of the interviews.

3) Field observations in the form of photography, video and field notes were taken for analysis. Other than the time spent on interviews, events such as an engagement, a wake ceremony, and festivals were observed. The villages and surrounding terraces were also visited and photographed. The field notes were usually immediately written onsite or later in the evening.

Moreover, in order to inquire about the different perceptions from people in different social roles, the research participants included major stakeholders of the Ifugao culture, including rice farmers (RF), business workers¹¹ (BW), government officials and workers (GW), knowledge experts¹² (KE), young people (YP) and visitors¹³ (VI). A random number code was given to each of the interviewees. The code following the quotes signifies the source of the interview.

In total, I conducted 60 interviews with 70 interviewees. These interviewees were recruited by local research assistants based on their representativeness of the group of people sharing their background, influence, and knowledge of the subject. Among them, 36 were male and 34 were female. Their specific age was not noted but by judging from appearance, there were 26

¹⁰ Only eight drawings of the grandparents’ ideal life were returned because some participants could not meet their grandparents over the research period.

¹¹ Business workers are people whose living depends on private sectors, such as tour guides, store keepers, and craft makers.

¹² Knowledge experts include school teachers, religious and cultural workers.

¹³ Visitors (VI) include tourist, researchers, recent immigrants and employees from outside Ifugao.

interviewees younger than 30 years old and 44 older than 30 years of age. Twenty of them were working as rice farmers, 25 in public services¹⁴, 26 in business and 11 tourists^{15, 16}. Among all interviewees 28 (40%) were from Banaue, 16 (22.86%) from Hungduan, 14 (20%) from Kiangan, 10 (14.29%) from Mayoyao, and 2 (2.86%) from other municipalities.

This thesis covers various topics about the Ifugao society, from agriculture to tourism and it is difficult to divide chapters and sections because many aspects of the Ifugao society are interconnected. Generally, the first part of the thesis, from Chapter Two to Chapter Six, is on the findings. The data like direct quotes¹⁷ from the interviews, photos and field notes were used.

Chapter Two is on Ifugao agriculture where aspects of Ifugao agriculture are introduced and the relevant changes and people's perceptions of these changes are discussed. Readers will find that Ifugao agriculture had a close connection with the Ifugao religion and thus in chapter three, the traditional Ifugao religion and the relatively new Christianity are analyzed to compare their effects on society. While rice terraces are connected to Ifugao agriculture, the physical being of them to Ifugaos has more significance than producing food. In chapter four, changes that take place in the rice terraces are analyzed and some proposed measures are discussed based on interviewees' perceptions of the changes. Tourism, a new but crucial industry for Ifugao, also plays a role in reshaping the traditional society now. How local people and tourists think of each other and the new Ifugao they are making together can be found in chapter five with a highlight on a festival in

¹⁴ Occupations for public services include government workers, teachers, researchers, NGO workers and religious workers.

¹⁵ The tourist interviewees include 7 international and 4 domestic tourists.

¹⁶ The numbers add up to more than 70 because some interviewees were doing multiple jobs.

¹⁷ Additional words within quotes are only inserted for grammatic purposes and are in brackets.

Hungduan. From agriculture to tourism, many factors are altering the lifestyle of Ifugaos. Young people live in houses and wear clothes different from their parents and grandparents. In chapter six, such changes in Ifugaos' lifestyle are discussed. From chapter two to six, I try to be objective by focusing primarily on reporting the responses from the interviewees, but in chapter seven, I share my thoughts on the current global development model. And in contrast to that, I explain the reason why some of the interviewees and I commonly found Ifugao values to be of value in the Ifugao culture. The values, here, in defines as a series of principles that guides people in their actions and decision making. In the last chapter, I discuss the primary measures proposed by interviewees to conserve the Ifugao culture and suggest conserving the culture through the conservation of Ifugao values.

Again, the purpose of this thesis is not to describe detailed aspects of the Ifugao culture but to try to find from people's perceptions what is of value in the culture, and find ways to conserve it. At the end of some interviews, I asked the interviewees how they thought of the interview and its topic. One reply was that "sometimes we Ifugao people, no one is interested in how you feel...there is no time we ask our coworkers or neighbors about how they feel towards our rice terraces" (RF8). I hope that this research can provide information for the Ifugaos on conservation of their culture and initiate discussion from the inside, and at the same time provoke reflections by the non-Ifugao people on our life and the current trend of global development that we are shaping.

Chapter 2 Ifugao agriculture

When learning about Ifugao culture, it does not take long to realize that almost everything evolves around agriculture in Ifugao. Traditionally Ifugaos follow a chronological cycle of agricultural work. Other than the well-known wetland rice cultivation, they also manage swidden agriculture on the slopes of a mountain above the rice terraces, and use the forest on the mountains for hunting and collecting timber for firewood and construction.

2.1 Rice farming



Figure 3: Tinawon rice (on the left) and two new varieties

The traditional rice variety of Ifugao is called tinawon, literally meaning “once a year.” The tinawon rice has different variants in different colors, but generally, it grows to up to 1.5 meters tall, has a growth span of 5 to 6 months and the grain is short (Figure 3) and semi-sticky after

cooking.

If agriculture is the core of the Ifugao culture, the tinawon rice may be the core of the Ifugao agriculture, as almost all agricultural activities, in the rice fields, swidden farms, or forests, are arranged based on the growth period of the tinawon rice. To understand this, a legend of tinawon may be a good place to start.

In Ifugao, it is believed that the tinawon rice was given to the people by an Ifugao God. People have different versions of the legend. One of them (Dulnuan-Habbiling, 2014) says that, on a hunting trip two young Ifugao brothers followed their dog into a place where Liddum, an Ifugao God resided. The brothers' hunting of a wild pig prompted Liddum and his people to investigate. After explaining the purpose of the hunt, which was accepted by Liddum, the two brothers shared some of the pork with Liddum and his people. To their surprise, Liddum and his people gobbled the meat with uncooked rice. The two brothers realized that people did not know how to cook their food and so they cooked the meat with some rice and invited Liddum and the people to eat with them. The people were amazed at the aroma and taste and also found out that cooked rice was filling with only a small amount consumed.

Liddum then offered to share some of his animals for the brothers' fire but the brothers would rather trade for the aromatic large grain rice. Liddum accepted. Before he handed over two bundles of his Skyworld rice, he taught the brothers rice rituals and told them that it is important to perform the rituals starting from sowing up to after harvest.

Before the brothers went home, Liddum told them "by observing the rituals properly and religiously this rice variety will maintain its aroma and taste and also be free from pests and

diseases.” He continued, “and there will be good harvests which can last for an entire year.”

The two brothers then returned home with this rice and later shared the seeds with other Ifugaos. After getting the rice and tasting it, Ifugaos started building rice fields on mountain slopes. Now the rice fields are known as Ifugao Rice Terraces and the rice is called tinawon.

However, the tinawon rice is being phased out from the terraces as farmers change their rice variety to high-yielding ones with a shorter growth span¹⁸.

2.1.1 Reasons for the fading of tinawon

One major reason of giving up growing the tinawon rice constantly mentioned by all farmers interviewees is that the low productivity¹⁹ cannot sustain the growing population²⁰. According to one, the tinawon rice is susceptible to pests and that the plant “gives very few tillers, only 4, 5, or 7” (BW3). Therefore, “economically it is not enough even for food consumption. It cannot provide food for the family. So when they learned about second cropping [producing an additional season of rice in a year], they tried and they found it effective” (KE7).

What makes the tinawon relatively less productive is the long growth span. Therefore, it is naturally not comparable with the newer varieties, which take “only 114 days and we can harvest, [but] with the tinawon I think 4 to 5 months” (BW1). While drying her just harvested new variety rice, a woman told me that even though she did only one cropping, she still planted the new variety because of risks of typhoons in July and later months. Therefore, with these new varieties “at least

¹⁸ These new rice varieties Ifugao farmers are growing are mostly bred by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

¹⁹ In Conklin’s research, the average productivity amounted to 2,427 kilograms per hectare (Conklin, 1980).

²⁰ According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (2016), the population in Ifugao has been constantly increasing since the 1990’s (with a population growth rate at 1.6% in 1995 to a 1.8% in 2007). In 2010 there were 4.8 people per household on average.

they will have a better provision for the whole year” (KE3).

Besides low productivity, the difficult practices of harvesting and processing the tinawon rice were mentioned as well. One interviewee said, “the hardest thing to do with the tinawon is you have to get it one [panicle] by one [panicle], unlike the new variety [which] you can gather in a group. There is a big difference in labor and time, and you can do [thresh] it with a mechanical thresher so the work becomes easier” (BW12). Another interviewee admitted, “I am lazy to pound my native rice” (BW2). Apart from these disadvantages of the tinawon rice, one additional reason farmers, especially those who have large areas of rice field, tend to grow the new varieties is that with the higher yield they can sell the rice “as an additional income to the family.”

2.1.2 Effects of growing the new varieties

This change in rice variety has extensive effects on the practices of rice farming. Ifugao farmers are proud of their traditional way of growing rice. Everything is done by human labor and there is no use of synthetic chemicals.



Figure 4: Farmer trampling rice stalks in the soil as fertilizer after harvest

Fertilizers

When growing tinawon rice, farmers “do not use fertilizers for the native rice because it is naturally grown” (BW16), instead they “got grass from the forest as chemicals [organic fertilizer]” (BW9) (Figure 4). This practice of organic farming is changing. “Now nobody does that. They use the chemical water [synthetic fertilizer]” (BW9), said one interviewee. This happens as a result of growing an extra season for rice “because the rice stalks will not decay and [therefore there is] no organic fertilizer” (KE10) and “when we don’t use fertilizer, it will not produce more” (BW1). Explaining the advantage of the synthetic fertilizers, one farmer said, “it is very easy. Just broadcast...After you till, you apply, and after how many days and months you can see the effects... But you know in the past, you see the effect of the organic fertilizers after a long

time. People cannot wait for that because they want it as fast as possible” (GW8)²¹.

However, most interviewees disagreed on the use of fertilizers. One of them said, “if the farmers think of the reason of reduction [in production], it is they are not cleaning²² the rice field” and “they [who use fertilizers] are lazy. That is the accurate answer. They are lazy to clean” (GW5). Meanwhile, some farmers also think there are environmental consequences of using fertilizers because “those commercial [synthetic] fertilizers in the field, they destroy the soil” (BW4) and “when you put commercial [synthetic] fertilizers, maybe by the third year you will need more fertilizer. ...The soil changed. That is the problem. But if you plant once a year, [there is] no problem” (RF4).

While opinions divided among the interviewees on the use of synthetic fertilizers, almost all, including the farmers who use fertilizers, shared the same opinion that rice grown with synthetic fertilizers tastes different and is not as healthy as that grown in the traditional way.

Some alternatives to the use of synthetic fertilizers were promoted by both the government and some farmers’ cooperatives. The government and some agriculturalists are teaching farmers “to use organic [fertilizers] and not the fertilizers they [stores] are selling” (KE3) and some farmers are “trying little by little dispensing [with] commercial [synthetic] fertilizers” (GW8). Meanwhile, a farmers’ cooperative is also “encouraging them [cooperative members] to do the natural farming system, the organic farming system that they were doing in previous years” (BW3).

²¹ This government worker also farms.

²² Weeding is often referred to as cleaning the field.

Pesticides

Pests were believed to be a result of the introduction of the new rice varieties as well. A research on the status of apple snails (Ampullariidae) infestation in Ifugao determined that farmers believed when the new rice varieties were promoted, seedlings raised in the lowlands were transplanted to the terraces and the seedlings could have borne eggs of the apple snail (Joshi et al., 2001). Another reason mentioned by some farmers was that the snails were introduced as a weed control agent, without awareness of the damage to the rice crop²³ (Joshi et al., 2001).

Many farmers believed that the infestation came with the intensification of rice farming from an annual cropping cycle to a double-cropping cycle. Originally, when there was a uniform annual cropping season, farmers synchronized their work in the field. After harvesting the rice, they “made all those mounds (Figure 5) and cleaned the place and put the stalks underwater. So the pests had nothing to eat, and they all went away...But now there is always rice there” (KE10).

²³ One claim was that the snails were brought in as food. But it was criticized by Marlon Martin, a culture expert.



Figure 5: Mounds of rice stalk compost for vegetable plantation

Now, this is also changing. An interviewee told me “if you don’t apply pesticides the crop will also be attacked because there is always rice” (KE10). For those who are still growing rice once a year, it is still difficult to not be affected. One interviewee said “in the rice field, there are several rice patches, even if I like to do the traditional way, my neighbor is not following [it]. It affects [me] because they introduce insect pests and many [other] things not only affecting their own product but also mine. That is the difficult situation I have observed” (KE9).

According to some farmer interviewees, what affects rice production most is the apple snails. Previous research also found that farmers perceived a 41 to 50 percent yield loss due to the pest (Joshi et al., 2001). In contrast to the use of pesticides, the traditional control over the pest is

handpicking²⁴. A newer attempt was made by introducing ducks into the rice terraces. In her interview, Febe Bummael²⁵ said, “it is useful because they really feed on the snails.” As the first in Hungduan to use ducks to control the apple snails, she mentioned the problem of not having enough ducks but said “they [the government staff] are trying to reach some suppliers to give the ducks to some farmers.”

Another pest mentioned by multiple interviewees was rats. Accordingly, what was done traditionally was that “we [used to] clean the stone walls of the rice field because the rats hide there. We cleaned the stone walls and put grass in the holes so that the rats would not be able to come out. And we cleaned the edges of the rice field. I learned that from my mother” (KE10). But now only a few government agricultural technicians are advising to clean the fields, instead of applying rodenticides after planting (Catudan et al., 2003)²⁶.

Like the rice grown with fertilizers, most interviewees thought that the rice grown with pesticides was not safe or healthy. However, one interviewee believed that “they spray but it is ok because it [the pesticide] is only in the soil” (BW2). In fact, if not more than the concern of the damage to rice safety, farmers worry equally about the effects of pesticides on other organisms in the rice terraces, such as some shellfish and mudfish they used to catch for food. It was believed that the farmers “started spraying and all the diversity²⁷ in the rice field is lost” (KE8).

²⁴ Handpicking pest insects and removing weeds are jobs many non-farmer interviewees did when they were younger.

²⁵ Febe B. Bummael is a trainee of the IFSMTP who researched rice-duck integration to control the golden apple snails (*Pomacea canaliculata*).

²⁶ It was also found out that more educated farmers and those who had alternative income sources were more likely to use rodenticides (Catudan et al., 2003).

²⁷ Detailed of this alternative food source from the rice field is discussed in the later section on diet.

Mechanization

As mentioned in the beginning of this section, all farm work in Ifugao was traditionally done by hand. Only some wood or metal tools were used for heavy work. For tilling the field, farmers used their feet and wood paddle spades. For harvesting, they used the transverse rice harvesting knives (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Harvesting rice with the Ifugao harvesting knife

During the first month of the research, it was harvest season in Hungduan and I experienced harvesting rice by hand²⁸. As I observed, a skilled farmer could easily harvest one panicle per second which took me twice the time after I learned the work. Another difficulty was that when

²⁸ To use the harvesting knife, loop the string of the knife around the wrist and the hold the handle with either only the little finger or the little and ring finger below the blade. To start harvesting, hold one or two rice panicles at below the flag leaf by the thumb and index finger and use the middle finger or together with the ring finger to cut. Then transfer the panicle to the other hand and before placing them aside, remove all the flag leaves when there is a full handful. A bundle (usually 1.5 to 2 kilograms) is then tied (Figure 77) when there is enough. It is not very difficult to learn the job but getting skillful takes some practice.

there is a lot of tall rice stalks and panicle in front of you, being able to quickly grab the panicle without the stalk requires skilled eyes. Walking in the muddy soil with buried stalks was not easy as well but the warm soil was satisfying.



Figure 7: Bundling newly harvested rice panicles

That evening, after harvesting the rice, we followed the traditional way of pounding it²⁹. It appeared to be easy but pounding with the wood pestle did not take long to wear me out³⁰. The real difficulty for me was the winnowing³¹ (Figure 8). It usually takes two times of pounding and winnowing until the rice is ready to be cooked. With me slowing down the process and throwing

²⁹ A handful of pre-dried un-husked rice grains was hand threshed and put in a wood mortar about 50 centimeters tall and 30 centimeters in diameter with a hole around 25 centimeters in it. A wood pestle about 1.6 meters is used to pound the rice.

³⁰ The wood pestle was about one and a half meter long and weighed two kilograms. It was also not easy to hit the rice at the center of the mortar hole; if done otherwise, some rice would spill out from the mortar.

³¹ After putting a handful of the rice mixture in a square basket, one winnows the mixture by throwing it in the air and catching the rice without the husks. Then the mixture is put back to the mortar for pounding again.

out rice with the husks, this frequent chore took us more than 25 minutes for about 1 kilogram of rice, a meal enough for a typical Ifugao family of five people. Were I an Ifugao farmer, I would not have been able to feed myself. But chickens would love my work as they would feast over the rice I would “generously” throw out.



Figure 8: Winnowing pounded rice next to a stone mortar

The experiences I described above are under change as well. For farmers who grow two seasons of rice, harvesting panicle by panicle is impractical if they want to have enough time to prepare for the next season. Their way of harvesting, despite still being done manually, is by cutting at the plant stem with all tillers from the same seedling like many other Asian farmers. Diesel powered threshers are used to thresh (Figure 9) and the grains are then carried in plastic

rice sacks for milling by machine.



Figure 9: Using a mechanical thresher in the rice terraces

One clear advantage of using machines to thresh and to mill is that it saves labor. Many interviewed Ifugaos told me that in areas near town, farmers have their rice milled by machines to save time in order to do other activities that generate income. Yet some interpreted this as making “people lazy to pound.” Moreover, compared with the manually-pounded rice that can “sustain longer,” the milled rice is believed to be “so easily consumed.”³² Some also think that the milled rice is not as tasty because “there are chemicals in the milled rice” (RF11). Based on my observation of pounded red rice, the bran layer was mostly kept, while for milled rice, the layer was removed (Figure 10).

³² It is believed by many interviewees that the tinawon rice or even new varieties which are grown more on human labor would be more filling when eaten.



Figure 10: Contrasting milled rice (left) and pounded rice with more bran (right)

Another major move toward mechanization in the rice field is the hand-pulled tiller³³. Many farmers agreed that the machines would make their work easier compared to the manual way. One interviewee said, “if we cannot allow that, you go one [step] by one [step] and stepping [on] one [piece of] those [hard soil], how many days would you work on that” (GW3). For some, the motivation to mechanize came from foreign countries. After visiting Japan, one of the interviewees said Japanese farmers “use machines so 30 minutes of work is wide [efficient]. And here, even if you work for a week or a month [manually], maybe it is just a little [area]” (GW3). The problem according to another interview was that “we don’t have that [machine] here. We

³³ No farmer interviewee mentioned that they use this machine but in Hungduan, Kiangan and Mayoyao about 1 in every 10 farmers observed working in the field were using or had one hand-pulled tiller.

sometimes invite researchers from other countries to introduce those technologies”³⁴ (GW1).

However, Ifugao farmers also see some limitations in using machines for their work. The first is “the terraces are small. It [all big machines] cannot be brought across the river” (KE1). The second is “if you use your hand or feet to clean, the soil is firm. And if you use the machine the soil is soft. And when you plant and look at the panicles, you will see the difference” (RF4). However, these limitations may be solved with some technical improvements, such as making the machine more portable and adjustable. The greater difficulty for Ifugao farmers in using machines is rooted in their culture. One interviewee pointed out, “we don’t have big machines here. But that is precisely the reason we value our terrace even [if] it is small” (GW2). And one farmer said, “if you go to the field and clean the area using your hand, you can feel it even though it is hard... Deep in your own heart, you really feel and love the work you do. And when you do that, in your mind this is the way our forefathers had before. And you must do it also. And it reminds you [of] way back... Just doing it the easy way, you can not feel” (RF4).

Community calendar

Another effect of the change in rice variety is in the timing of agricultural activities. When farmers grew the tinawon rice uniformly, the flow of the work formed a relatively fixed cycle. This synchronized agricultural cycle has facilitated Ifugaos in coordinating labor for labor-intensive work, such as weeding, tilling, and harvesting³⁵, and other social or religious

³⁴ In May 2015, two professors from Japan visited the Philippines and shared their ideas for using agricultural machines in the terraces. In their report, one of them claimed “mechanization can solve the insufficiency of workforce issue” (PhilRice Release, 2015).

³⁵ According to a farmer interviewee, for a 400 square meters rice terrace, it takes 14 person days to weed the terrace and around the walls, 5 person days to till the field, and 14 person days to harvest.

activities.



Figure 11: Rice plants in non-uniform growth stages

However, as some farmers are growing new rice varieties that have shorter growth spans, this unified agricultural cycle is shifting or breaking apart (Figure 11). Previous research found that the present calendar³⁶ shifted one or two months later from the earlier one and some farmers began growing two crops per year (Nitapa and Ognayon, 2016).³⁷ This shift towards later time was also experienced by most interviewees. One farmer said, “time changes and people change. By February you will see people planting now. But then 6 to 8 years ago, it should be January when all rice was planted” (RF8). At the same time, “there is already a trend that they do not follow

³⁶ The new and old agricultural calendar is attached as appendix D.

³⁷ Janice Mercy O. Nitapa was a trainee of the Ifugao Satoyama Meister Training Program from Ifugao State University. She and her mentor Generose S. Ognayon researched *Factors of Change in the Rice Production Calendar of Selected Ifugao GIAHS Sites*.

anymore the rice farming calendar” (GW6). Some farmers are now growing two seasons of rice.

This disturbed calendar in Ifugao may have further social consequences. A farmer said “I prefer the old time because there was unity. Everyone would follow the same rule. When the community needs something, everyone cooperate[d]. Based on my observation, it seems that each one is going their own way now. So the answer is that I would rather go on the old way. Before we talked but now we are on [an] individual direction. In the old days, during critical times, people act[ed] collectively, just like growing rice” (KE9).

Influence on religion

The influence of the change of rice variety extends to the Ifugao traditional religion (more details of changes in religion are discussed in the chapter of religion). As the Ifugao God Liddum instructed in the legend of the tinawon rice, Ifugaos have been observing rituals in the process of rice production. However, with the new rice varieties, one farmer told me that they “can’t do the rituals³⁸. There is a big difference with these new varieties introduced” (KE9). Yet, some of those who are growing the new varieties argued that the new varieties “will not totally affect the rituals, just 30% or 40%” (GW8) because farmers can still do the rituals during the time they sow the seed and transplant the seedlings. While that is true, the rituals in this sense lost their meanings: as one cultural expert explained, “it is very explicit in the rituals that the people of the Skyworld gave this tinawon rice to the Ifugaos and told them this is the tinawon and you [have] to perform all these rituals for you to be able to have a good harvest” (KE8).

Preservation of the tinawon rice

³⁸ More on rice rituals is discussed in the chapter on religion.

Perhaps whenever society changes for practical reasons, sentiments from the past memories would be stirred up, and the changes would become very controversial. In this case, many Ifugaos, not only farmers, still feel nostalgically attached to their traditional tinawon. One interviewee explained that he doesn't want "the old variety to [become] extinct because there is a unique taste. Because if you loose it, where can you get these varieties?" (BW12). There were also complaints against authorities that "they just say we feed how many thousands Filipino every year with our high yielding rice varieties. They are destroying the Ifugaos. It is actually cultural genocide, but nobody is looking at it as we do" (KE8).

Efforts are being made to keep and revive the tinawon variety. A farmers' cooperative was established. They encourage farmers to plant the tinawon and sell to the cooperative at a premium price. The cooperative advocates that "[the production] is not enough [for family consumption] so you'd better sell a part and then you can buy some rice that is lower priced. If you sell at premium price, you can [then] buy [commercial] rice at 40 or 50 pesos³⁹ (U.S. \$1) [per kilogram] at the market" (BW3). The cooperative also made it clear that they "are not encouraging them [the farmers] to sell all the rice. So it is up to them. But some farmers will sell more and some sell less" (BW3). While the cooperative hopes that as farmers start growing tinawon again, they will return to the traditional organic way and stop using chemicals that damage destroy the environment, they also advocate some research on the productivity and pest control of the tinawon rice.

³⁹ In 2016, the exchange rate of U.S. dollar to Philippine peso is about 1:50. The equivalent amount in U.S. dollar will be given when necessary.

2.1.3 Swidden farming and forests

Other than the rice terraces, traditionally Ifugaos also produce food in the unirrigated swidden farms on the slope of the mountains (Conklin, 1961). During the fallow season in the rice terrace, they would plant crops in swiddens. The importance of this farming system may be best shown by Conklin's research findings that the average area ratio of the swidden fields to rice terrace was about 1:4 (Conklin, 1980: 9). Unlike the rice terraces, the swidden fields on slopes can be easily created and extended. In his book, Conklin (1980: 25) wrote that the "swiddens furnish the bulk of the food consumed by most families except the wealthy and they provide insurance against times of economic stress". The most widely produced crop in the swidden had been the sweet potato (Brosius, 1988). It was estimated that on average, up to 360 kilograms of sweet potatoes were consumed annually per person (Guthrie, 1964: 9). The importance of the swidden agriculture may also be represented by this crop that it is the main staple crop for much of the year with the young tips used as vegetables and stems used for pig foods.



Figure 12: A small swidden field

However, swidden fields can rarely be seen now in Ifugao (Figure 12). Farmers are no longer going to the mountains to cultivate. Just as the importance of swidden farming can be represented by the wide and popular use of sweet potato, the decline of such farming system may also be reflected as the crop disappears from the Ifugao table.

One interviewee told me “when we were young, we ate local products like sweet potato, but now sweet potato is gone” (RF11). When asked for the reason, one interviewee explained that “there is now a pest destroying those crops” (BW9). Another reason has to do with the perception of this crop. One interviewee compared the past to now and said “it is better now because we can buy rice because in the past all people eat sweet potato” (BW7). Therefore, although some swidden agriculture can still be seen in rural villages in Ifugao, the main crops in them are ginger

and winged bean for sale rather home consumption (Figure 13).



Figure 13: Winged beans ready for export to cities and abroad

In addition to swidden fields and the rice terraces, Ifugaos also used to go to the forest to hunt and collect wild vegetables, fruits and other material such as wood and grass for construction, fuel, and clothes (Balangcod, 2010; Balangcod and Balangcod, 2011; Klock, 1995). But very few Ifugaos now go to the forest. The fundamental reason may be expressed by one interviewee, as he said, “one thing that is different is that now there are many jobs, but in the past, we just focused on the rice field and farming on the mountain slopes for sweet potatoes” (RF6).

2.2 Diet

Walking into a market in Ifugao, one who is familiar with Asian food may find nothing too surprising or new. However, the existence of a market itself, perhaps, for many traditional Ifugaos

is already new. As one interviewee explained “the rice terrace was a marketplace [where Ifugaos produced rice, harvested vegetables, and collect shellfish]” (BH3).

While rice is still the major staple for Ifugao, the variety of foods people eat has changed. In his research in the 60s, Conklin (1980: 10) summarized the three major starch staples as rice, sweet potatoes, and taro, making up 40%, 38% and 4% of the weight of the diet. As mentioned above, the importance of sweet potatoes has decreased and the only time I ate taro in Ifugao was after I bought some from the market. Rice on the other hand, is gaining a greater portion (Figure 14).



Figure 14: Rice in lunch boxes prepared by an Ifugao mother for the children

For side dishes, those on the top of the list were shellfish, chicken, and pork as meat and taro tops, leafy greens, and beans as vegetables. One interviewee mentioned an experience when he

was asked by a researcher to “to pick everything that can be cooked”, and the researcher “asked if we are eating them every day, and we said no”⁴⁰ (GW3). Other than meat like chicken and pork, Ifugaos also used to eat insects as a protein source. One example is the flying termites. In his diary on May 21, 1969, Mark Conklin, one of the sons of Harold Conklin, wrote “the people wait near the nest openings with water in their large laundry basins and a kerosene lamp sitting in the middle of the basin...then you take large handfuls of termites and put them in a flat pan and toast them over a fire” (Conklin, 2003). In Guthrie’s account, he described the taste as “a strong resemblance to Rice Krispies and a bacon taste” (Guthrie, 1964:12). Today, during my research period, eating flying termites was unseen and unheard of.

Except for these changes that the “shells and fish [from the rice fields] are gone” (BW3) and wild vegetables and insects are no longer eaten, the general variety of other ingredients has not changed but the amount shifted greatly towards the meat of chicken and fish. Many interviewees shared the same observation that “at present, the carnivore people are eating more meat” (KE10) while “in the past, it was really rare that you eat meat every week” (GW3). While parents are pleased that their children have a bigger portion of fish than they had when they were little, some elder people complained that their young grandchildren “always prefer the meat. [And] unless there is no meat at all, they [will] eat vegetables, but only a little” (KE10).

Other than this shift in food ingredients, interviewees mentioned a change in the processing and cooking as well. While in the past, Ifugaos “would just cook the rice and boil some vegetables

⁴⁰ But the interviewee said young people still could recognize the edible materials from the terrace.

and put some salt and mix” (KE3) (Figure 15), there is now a heavier use of sugar and oil⁴¹, which used to be expensive and limited only to some areas. Perhaps the greatest change in diet is the rise of processed foods or frozen foods. Interviews summarized that “the diet before was more organic” (GW1) and now there are “frozen foods and processed foods and sometimes they don’t buy the organic ones” (GW1).



Figure 15: A traditional Ifugao meal with boiled pork, rice and winged beans served in a bowl made of bamboo trunk

Many interviewees expressed concerns over the processed and frozen food. One of them said “I don’t know what is being mixed in those canned goods. Like frozen foods, I don’t know how sure that it is really safe” (KE10). Comparing the diets in the past and that of the present, an

⁴¹ Ifugaos used to plant sugar canes and make sugar from the plants. But the sugar and oil being used today are imported from elsewhere.

interviewee told me that “people are having a luxurious life, eating good food, but nowadays there are many diseases and illness, like high blood pressure, strokes and cancers. In the past, we did not hear anyone with those diseases but all of us lived a simple life and lived longer. As I observed, people grow fast but die fast too⁴²” (RF6). One explanation of this is the changed preference as told by an interviewee that “people are going outside and they taste the food and found it was very nice because they could not taste that here. So it seems that they already adapted [to] that. So even if that is not part of their ordinary food, they will buy because they want the flavor and maybe that is the likes of today” (GW5). An Ifugao grandparent also explained what happened in her family, “the children are already used to frozen foods and canned food [that are] easy to cook because their parents have no time to prepare to cook for them because of the work [outside of the household]” (KE10).

Another thing to my surprise was Ifugaos’ love for coffee⁴³ and bread. At a typical reception to an Ifugao family, visitors are usually served with coffee. I was soon told that despite no mention in the articles and books I read about Ifugao before I arrived, coffee is not a new drink. Elderly people aged over 80 said their parents had drunk coffee and it continues to be a daily drink for them. While the elder ones usually simply mix some brown sugar in their instant black coffee, young generations seem to prefer the 3-in-1 instant coffee⁴⁴ and chocolate drink⁴⁵. While coffee has

⁴² In Batad, I saw an Ifugao farmer, allegedly at the age of 94, bundling dried grasses for roof.

⁴³ Coffee has been grown in Ifugao for a long time but it was only until recent years Ifugaos tried to start seriously cultivating coffee for business.

⁴⁴ 3-in-1 is a kind of instant coffee drink popular in Asian countries. In Ifugao, this coffee product comes in small 20 grams plastic aluminum packages.

⁴⁵ I still remember seeing a young boy pouring Milo chocolate powder over a plate of rice, adding some seasoning to his meal of carbohydrates.

been on many Ifugao tables for a long time, bread became affordable relatively recently. While in the past, Ifugaos living outside the towns needed to walk for many hours to buy a loaf, they can now have bread “anytime. You just buy when you want to eat” (RF11). In an afternoon in an Ifugao family, I saw a young boy eat 6 pieces of white bread with peanut butter and instant coffee.

In sum, most of the Ifugaos today have different diets than previous generations. What Guthrie wrote in 1964 can be seen as true now. He wrote:

“We can see that a balanced diet is possible for the Ifugaos. But their health is threatened not only by new diseases but also by new food preferences and by population pressures. This area now supports as many as four hundred people per square mile. Many of the items of their diet will be dropped as outside influences are felt. As rice is more highly polished and as such sources of protein as bugs and bats are rejected they will become more civilized and less well fed.”

2.3 Food self-sufficiency

In the past, the food market was around Ifugaos’ homes, terraces, swidden farms, and forests. From there, they got rice, sweet potatoes, shellfish, snails⁴⁶, taro, vegetables, and their meats like pork, chicken, and beef. This is no longer the case. As discussed earlier, the techniques of farming rice have changed. According to some interviewees, shellfish and native snails disappeared from the terraces with the use of chemicals like fertilizers and pesticides⁴⁷. The sweet potato is not grown anymore in swidden fields and people’s side dishes depend increasingly on processed food.

⁴⁶ Allegedly young Ifugaos today are shamed of eating snails.

⁴⁷ One interviewee thinks this is also a result of climate change.

No matter how important agriculture is to Ifugao in the past and now, what is clear is that Ifugaos are no longer self-sufficient in food, as both the amount and the kinds of food consumed can no longer be produced locally.

Elderly people remember the past when they had enough rice from local production. One elderly farmer said, “I still remember when I was young, the rice was enough... I still remember we were selling rice to the adjacent municipality, but we had to carry [it]... we sold [it] to buy a can of sardines or soap. And if there [was] enough, I could buy a pen” (RF5). But today, even after some Ifugaos switched to the new high-yielding rice varieties and two seasons of rice production in a year, almost all interviewees told me the rice production was not enough. They would have rice for some months after harvest but generally before they harvest again they would need to buy rice produced with synthetic inputs in the inorganic way in the lowlands in the Philippines or from abroad, as was also found out by earlier research (Gomez JR, 2013). And in terms of the meat, although much pork and chicken are still produced locally, “the feed is still from outside” (KE9), and fish like sardines come in a can or frozen. Therefore, despite saying that “I will farm as long as I am strong, and I don’t like the idea of buying food” (KE9), even the elder generation of Ifugao farmers admitted that local production is no longer sufficient for the demands.

Population growth and dietary change are the reasons agreed upon by most interviewees for changes in agricultural practices. In order to produce enough rice, farmers are facing struggles of giving up their traditional agricultural practices, or even their career as farmers. With the loss of self-sufficiency, the original agriculture-oriented society began its journey of dramatic social changes. One example of such change is on the traditional religion.

Chapter 3 Religion

In terms of religion, Ifugao remained relatively closed until the arrival of American missionaries who brought with them the Christian religion. Today, there are multiple religions in Ifugao, which may be broadly categorized as traditional Ifugao religion and introduced religions. While almost everyone is Christian, the traditional religious rituals, the *mumbakis* (traditional Ifugao religion priests), still play some role in Ifugao social life, especially in agricultural production and curing sickness.

While the purpose here is not to make a detailed documentation of these religions, for unfamiliar readers, it may be necessary to roughly describe the scene of activities of the two major religions in Ifugao⁴⁸. A ritual of the traditional Ifugao religion usually takes place under or in the house or rice granary. The *mumbaki* dressed in traditional Ifugao clothes says the prayers and drinks fermented rice wine (Figure 16). After finishing the prayers, he butchers a chicken. The outcome of the ritual, whether successful or not is shown by the position, color, and form of the gallbladder and the liver of the chicken. If the ritual is big or important, more animals will be butchered and the meat will be shared with the relatives and neighbors⁴⁹. In Christianity, the most routine activity is the weekly Mass, when believers in the village or town gather together in the local church to sing and pray together.

⁴⁸ The description here may not be accurate as it is based on the observation and introduction from a limited number of interviewees.

⁴⁹ It was noted that this sharing of meat was a mechanism for equal distribution of family wealth (Guthrie, 1964).



Figure 16: A *mumbaki* before performing the ritual (Credit: interviewee KE9)

3.1 The traditional Ifugao religion

The traditional Ifugao religion used to be reflected by the constant rituals done by the Ifugaos. According to Conklin's account, there were 191 days in a year on which a ritual occurred (Conklin, 1980). These rituals relate to almost every aspect of the Ifugao life.

3.1.1 Practices of the traditional religion

Conklin categorized the rituals into 37 types and among them, 17 had to do with rice production and consumption. These rituals fall at different stages in the agricultural cycle, from the beginning to the end. One interviewee said, "after planting, there is a ritual and until the harvest time, there are rituals done by the *mumbaki*" (GW8). Take pest control as an example: "the pesticides of the ancient people, our fore parents, were the rituals. Because when they see

something wrong in their rice field they perform the ritual to drive the pest [away]. They asked the Gods, the Gods of all those [natural creatures] to improve the products” (KE10). What made Ifugaos believed in such rituals were experiences when they were effective. “And you know I witnessed one. After the typhoon, the rice plants were weak from the rain, and the *mumbaki* saw that, and he offered chicken and prayed. The following day, I saw that the rice plants were standing again. I was surprised being a Christian, I had said I did not so much believe in the *mumbaki*. I was surprised” (KE10).

Another major type of the rituals has to do with people’s health. Ifugaos believe that what is visible is only an individual’s body, but the individual also has a soul or spirit which remained attached to the family members after the death of the individual. When a person in the family gets sick, a possible reason is that a deceased relative’s spirit is not pleased. What needs to be done is to perform a ritual to find out who the spirit is, and pray and butcher sacrificial animals to him or her, and then check and clean the bones of the person from the tomb. If you ask Ifugaos about these rituals, likely they can tell many personal experiences they had when the *mumbakis* cured some unknown diseases. One example was “my son was sick and I went to the hospital, but they said he was normal. So we had a doctor *mumbaki*, then he said my grandfather held my son. So we went to clean the tomb of my grandfather...and after a day, my son was good” (KE2). Such connections between the deceased and living do not break even when a member of the family move out from the community. One interviewee shared an experience, “just like my nephew, who stays in the States, when [his family] came for a visit, their son got sick. They were in Manila, but they could not find out the reason. So they went to the *mumbaki*, and the *mumbaki* said it was because on an

occasion here you forgot to mention your brother. And so they went to clean and pray and offered some animals. And immediately after they cleaned, the son's fever disappeared" (GW2).

Other than agricultural production and curing sickness, Ifugao religion also plays a part in Ifugaos' life in terms of personal events, from birth to cutting hair, and social events such as engagements and funerals. A traditional Ifugao engagement is often arranged by elders in the family. When the elders of the male's family meet the female's family, "usually they bring 3 pigs of different sizes, or sometimes they will bring a buffalo" (GW2). In the engagement I experienced, the groom's family arrived at the bride's house with a pig tied on a big bamboo pole carried by a number of men (Figure 17). One woman brought sticky rice cooked with sweet coconut milk in a rattan box. Neighbors of the bride's family came out to get a share of the pastry and try to find as many coins hidden in the pastry as possible. At the engagement, there were about 100 elders in the families and the town. They interacted telling stories of the couple and their families and mocking the young and old by singing songs until lunchtime. Pork from the pig and beans and vegetables were put separately in huge stainless steel basins and a line of people scooped the dish on a paper plate and passed it to the participants. Approximately 200 more people from the town shared the lunch.



Figure 17: A pig sacrifice for an engagement

At weddings, more animals are butchered. Typically for a rich family, a skeleton of the carabao, or water buffalo, is put up in the family house as decoration (Figure 18). One interviewee shared her experience, telling me that “my children brought animals when they got married. Usually, we use that to decorate our home. So they have to bring that” (KE3).



Figure 18: A carabao skull in memory of the wedding of the grandparents of an elderly interviewee

Before a funeral, there is a wake service. An interviewee told me briefly about the procedure. “Usually here it is three days. The first day is when they put the body in the coffin, and during that night, one pig has to be butchered, not any kind of pig but a female pig that has given birth to baby pigs. And the second day, another pig has to be butchered. The third day is the most important day. During that day the married children will have to give their contribution. In the morning, the families will come with a pig, a bottle of gin [liquor] and the blanket for the dead. Then that is complete” (GW2). At the wake service that I attended (Figure 19), the deceased was placed in a coffin under a newly built concrete house. Relatives and neighbor, about 100 people ate the pork and rice lunch together. Donations to the family were collected and a woman was noting the

amount of money collected from each individual (Figure 20). Some people, relatives of the family held bags of pork they shared.



Figure 19: A wake ceremony attended by about 100 people

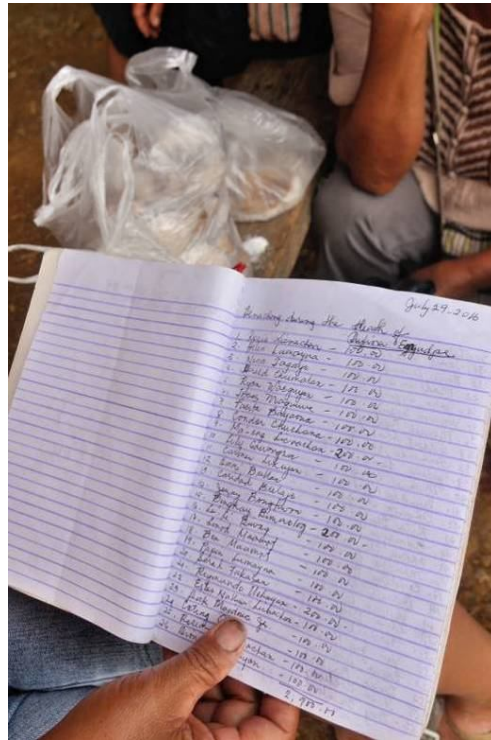


Figure 20: At wake ceremony, bags of pork are shared and notes of donations are kept

The last kind of practice of the Ifugao religion may be the settlement of a crime or a dispute. When someone is murdered, the family of the killed would perform *him-ong*, a vengeance ritual. In this case, “you don’t put the body in the coffin. You just let it sit down. They don’t preserve it” (BW10). And all the male relatives come from trails and edges along the terraces, banging wood shields and clappers to the burial site. They danced into a circle to decide which would be responsible for revenge⁵⁰. A chicken with the head cut off is released in the center and whoever is near where it falls down is selected (Bulilan, 2007; Conklin, 2003). A lighter example of the ritual for a dispute was experienced by Bruce Conklin, the other son of Harold Conklin. In his diary on June 15, 1969, he wrote of the boiling water ordeal. While playing slingshots with his friends, he

⁵⁰ The revenge of killing involves, but not necessarily, killing.

hit a girl in the forehead. Although he was accused, he refused to admit and decided on a “play as usual” strategy. His father Harold Conklin decided to settle this with the boiling water test where each suspect would have to reach for an egg in a pot of boiling water and only the guilty one would be burned. The test was effective. Bruce confessed with a “whole body sweating just thinking about it” (Conklin, 2003).

3.1.2 Dying *mumbaki*

As readers unfamiliar with Ifugao may find these religious practices unfit to the present time, these traditional rituals are under dramatic changes. Today, the traditional religion is being followed by fewer Ifugaos.

Mumbaki is a role inherited from the father in a family. In 1960's when Conklin did his research, there were still many *mumbakis*. The sons or grandsons of the *mumbakis* normally learn to perform rituals after assisting their father or grandfather, but usually, it is on a special occasion or time in their life they decide to officially engage in being a *mumbaki*. The *mumbakis* I interviewed shared the stories of how they became *mumbaki*, “we had no house at that time, a snake went inside where we were boarding. That was a bad sign. I went to look for *mumbaki* but no one was available. And when I realized I need to learn, I went to one *mumbaki* to ask how I could learn. And he said it was good my grandfather was a *mumbaki* and I was interested. He asked me to go to find six chickens for me to be accepted. When we did the ritual and butchered the little chicken, the vein was not protruding. So it could not be. They did not allow me. And after three days, I dreamed of one other shaman. I saw in my dream that he and I perform[ed] a ritual. So the next morning I told the *mumbaki* the dream I dreamed of and he said I could become a real shaman.

I told him my first attempt and he said that *mumbaki*'s level was not high enough. Then that night we came to our house and when we butchered the little chicken and saw the vein, the vein was out. That was an acceptance. So I continued praying to God to grant me as a *mumbaki* and then all the chickens were good" (KE2).

However, his experience is becoming rare. The *mumbakis* in Ifugao now are mostly above the age of 60 and there are few young *mumbakis*. In every municipality I researched, interviewees told me things like "for now old *mumbakis* are dying" (RF8) and "most of the *mumbakis* died and they don't teach it to their children" (GW1). The more fundamental trend in religion in Ifugao, repeatedly mentioned in all interviews, was Christianization.

3.2 Christianity and the traditional Ifugao religion

If one of the reasons for believing in *mumbaki* is the effectiveness of the rituals, this reason is failing. One farmer interviewee told me, "when I was a child and everything was done in the *baki* way [the prayers of the *mumbakis*], I have been seeing our field being infested by pests and one time [it] was even infected by some virus at the fruit of the rice. We harvested just a little and some of those harvested had no grain in spite of all the ritual we were doing so I don't see any different whether there is *baki* or not. That is why I don't believe in those superstitious things because I saw it personally [that] there was no difference. When our father died we cultivated our rice field in [our hometown, and] there is no rice ritual and nothing, [but] we harvested plenty" (BW12). Following the logic that a religion is worth believing provided its prayers work, Christianity found its foundation as well. An interviewee told me her story. When she was young, she returned home every weekend and helped her parents work on the field, but she also needed to attend the Mass at

the church. She said, “I planned so that I can work as long as I would not miss my Sunday Mass because that is my responsibility as a Christian. So I did that, but you know the temptation is very strong.” After a season long of this mental struggle, “during harvest when I came home I went to see. I said ‘beautiful’. Nothing was attacked by the pest, so thank you Lord. It was the blessing you had given me because I always defeated the devil, my temptation” (KE10).

Perhaps such experiences of the interviewees can at least partly explain why during my time in Ifugao, signs of Christianity could be seen everywhere, from as big as a church, posters in people’s houses, t-shirts to as small as a sticker on a tricycle (Figure 21). I did not meet anyone in Ifugao who did not believe in Christianity at all.



Figure 21: Signs of Christianity inside a local jeepney

Although many people still take *mumbaki* as their last option in human disease treatment,

apart from the effect of praying in the Christian way, there are many aspects of the traditional religion influencing why Ifugaos are not following it now.

3.2.1 Expenses in performing rituals

As can be shown by the above examples of traditional religious practices, animals are required as the sacrifice. Even without the sacrifice of large animals like pigs or carabaos, on the smallest scale, a chicken is needed. One interviewee said, “the *mumbaki* believes that without killing, there is no effect of his or her prayer, because once you see an animal, you will see the vein to see if your prayer is accepted” (GW8). Many interviewees complained that “in our culture if you want to pray, you always butcher and butcher and buy and buy” (BW3) and “it is good that you are rich so you can spend but how about if you are poor? It is a big sacrifice to the family. Because in my observation some cultural practices are being done because the children [and] the grandchildren can afford so they go, but how about if they are poor, you can not do it” (BW12). The traditional belief for offering sacrifice is collapsing as one interviewee elaborated that “in the stories of *mumbaki*, the Gods give people chickens, pigs, and rice, but the people have to give every now and then, so you are paying more than the Gods give” (BW12). Therefore, in some cases, the religious practices become a burden, as one said, “in my opinion that is an improvement because they will not be burdened with all the cultural practices. Actually, I see some cultural practices as a burden” (BW12).

Compared with that, “the Christian way is easier” (KE7). One interviewee told me “if you pray, you just pray in the day and no more. It is so quick. You are happy” (BW10).

3.2.2 Confusion in Gods

Traditional Ifugao religion can be described as pantheistic. Even those who are knowledgeable of culture may not be able to explain all the spirits, deities, and Gods. One cultural worker told me “it is really hard to understand because we have more than two thousand Gods, so it is better to adopt Christianity, just one God” (KE8). This not only poses an obstacle to understanding the religion, when faced with a more “user-friendly” one, but the difficulty can also be a reason for Ifugaos to give up the traditional religion. One interviewee shared his experience, “as time goes by I realized there is no truth in *baki* because they are offering to different Gods. They have different Gods and if you look, those are just superstitious beliefs” (BW12).

3.2.3 Revenge practices

Compared with Christianity, the traditional Ifugao religion may appear more aggressive. As shown in the above example of vengeance ritual, revenge against a crime is allowed and may even be encouraged in the traditional religion. Rather than perceived as a precautionary warning against crime, it is viewed as a source of consequential crime. One interviewee told me, “when someone kills a member of the family, the family will also kill [someone in] the killer’s family or at least do something. So there is a sense of killing and killing. That is why we have the practice of head hunting and that is why some books call Ifugaos head hunters because of the practice of revenge” (KE7). In Bulilan’s account of this ritual, the researcher mentioned objections from the community such as “that should not be done anymore, we are Christians today. It's a shame” (Bulilan, 2007).

Apart from revenge, Ifugao religion allows believers to put a curse against unfavorable people. One interviewee described a sample case, where “if you do not like your neighbor, you have to do

all the practices with chickens in order that the person will suffer and die because the prayer calls the bad spirits” (RF5). And with Christianization, this practice is today viewed as “one of the bad sides of the *baki* is they can beg to the devil to do bad things to a person” (BW12).

The reason this may happen is that in Ifugao religion, there are certain spirits or deities that are evil. A son of a late *mumbaki* introduced, “one personality of God is *buluhan*, meaning snake and one of the personalities of God is the *dayaban*, meaning the flying fire during the night. Those are dangerous devils. According to the belief, they can eat a person. If they chant upon you, you die” (BW12). And it is believed that some diseases can be caused by these devils. Therefore, the rituals of curing people “according to them [believers] it is a good thing because the sick person will get well. But they don’t understand the evil spirit will make somebody sick and if you offer something to the evil spirit, then the evil spirit can have the power to remove the sickness” (BW12).

With such perceived risks from traditional religion, the Christian response was that, “if the person has a weak belief it can happen. But in Christian life there is a big belief that if you pray to God, God is higher than these evil spirits so even [if] they will do something bad to you, they will not succeed because your prayer is stronger than the prayers of the *mumbaki*” (BW12).

3.2.4 *Mumbakis*’ personal sacrifices

Another part of the reasons why traditional religion is not being followed falls on the *mumbakis*. There are fewer and fewer *mumbaki* because there are multiple rules and restrictions on them, which may be very difficult to comply with. Being a *mumbaki* is somewhat like a lifetime volunteer job, from the beginning of which performing rituals is the highest priority in his life, but with no payment. A *mumbaki* told me “as a shaman, it is a sacrifice, but you need to endure. A

shaman is not only a shaman, it is a sacrifice. Being a shaman must be a priority. So if someone comes and asks me to perform, I will make a leave and ask my boss to allow me to leave. It will affect my [work] hours and my income” (KE2). The way he endures is through the thinking that “the *mumbaki* is sacrificing. So the God will provide for him because as a *mumbaki*, he follows the God. So you sacrifice for the people and the people are created by the God. So you as a *mumbaki* chosen by the God need to protect the community” (KE2).

However, for a child of the *mumbaki*, this is not the case. One interviewee whose father was a *mumbaki* told me that working is more important because “you are producing money if you are working” (YP4). As a child of the *mumbaki*, it is also worrying because “sometimes the spirits can harm the body of my father because he can be thrown here and there” (YP4).

Apart from the voluntary nature and possible risks of being a *mumbaki*, there are also taboos he needs to follow based on the rituals he performs. One taboo is that “when you do *baki* and butcher a pig, you have to consume the meat of the pig that is used without adding vegetables or spices, especially vine vegetables and also fish and other shellfish” (KE6). And according to another interviewee, for some rituals “there is the taboo of taking a bath for three days” (GW5) and for some other rituals “until a new moon you can not take a bath, have sex, eat vegetables or fish” (GW5). Therefore, “the taboos are very hard to undergo especially for the young people” (GW5).

3.2.5 Relations between the traditional religion and Christianity

Although there seems to be some controversy about the two religions, most Ifugaos I interacted with did not see this as bothersome as I would think (Figure 22). From their daily interactions, it seemed that there was a collective agreement that it is acceptable to go to church

during Sunday and pray to the Christian God, but also invite *mumbakis* to perform rituals when a family member is sick or when there is some special event. Even religious workers from both religions seemed to agree that there is no direct conflict between the two religions. Yet still, some intricacies may be seen from the interviews. One *mumbaki* said, “our ancestors told me that there is no harm in doing the Mass and reading the Bible because when they read the description of God, it is similar to what they have known as our Ifugao God” (GW5). One Christian priest told me that “we do not necessarily ignore or object to the *mumbaki*. There are things we do not follow and we try to purify it” (KE7).



Figure 22: The tinawon rice from the Skyworld with a Christian T-shirt

What lies underneath the surface, however, may more controversial opinions. Opinions and emotions toward the change are very different. Some of those who still believe in the traditional

religion were sad. They shared with me their feeling that “most of the leaders of Christianity are considering our practices as evil practices and I don’t like that. And I don’t think so. In my opinion, they still have to respect it” (KE6) and “I prefer the older times because there was no religious intervention. It is no longer our freedom which is to follow but has to confer to what the church said” (KE9). Some of them felt upset. They said Christian priests “demonized the old religion, introducing Christianity as the only religion that can save their souls from internal determination” (KE8). But for some Ifugaos, they are indifferent. “For me, from now on I say it is ok. It depends on what you like. If you lose our tradition, it is also good. No problem. From now on no one is praying *baki*” (RF7). And on the other hand, there were people who prefer Christianity. They said, “I think it is a very good change and we are thankful for the missionaries that they introduce us to faith and education” (KE7). Some of them have strong opinions against the old religion, claiming that the *mumbaki* believers “have been fooled by their Gods. Because in the story of the *baki* the God will always say that you need to do this and that, and good things will happen. That is their belief so they offer offerings, which is the instruction of their Gods so they follow. It is just superstitious belief” (BW12).

3.3 Ifugao under dual religions

What happens to Ifugaos when the soul of their culture is at conflict? What do they think the future will be like?

3.3.1 Unity in action

In the past when “everyone here believed in *mumbaki*, it was strong” (BW9). They were united in action as they were in religion. One example is the ritual when a *mumbaki* “prays the *baki*

before the day when nobody should go to the rice field. Then they would not really go. They would all stay at home. Maybe they would go to the gardens, the men would gather fuel, but not to the rice field” (KE10). According to an interviewee, what happens to this ritual is that “nobody is actually following this now. In the old time it was actually community effort in following the ritual but now it seems like each one only minds his own business and there is no way to control” (KE9).

It may be arguable but when “they are not united in terms of faith” (GW5), they may not be as united in the community. This is because for the clan, the rituals and other events “are binding like a reunion. When they clean the bones, all family members will come, so there are the fellowship, the binding, and the reunion, and of course the storytelling of the past” (GW2). What interviewees argued was that “we do family reunions. And it is there when all the family members will be introduced and the relationship explained. So it is not that the *mumbaki* dies, we no longer remember our loved ones. This time we have different ways” (KE7).

With the disappearing religion from which Ifugao social unity developed, will practices of united actions by Ifugaos change as well? This question is analyzed in more detail in Chapter 7.

3.3.2 Future of the traditional Ifugao religion

No matter how Ifugaos think of the traditional religion, the apparent fact is that the number of *mumbaki* is decreasing and fewer people are following the rituals and practices. It seems to me that Ifugaos are quietly waiting for time. One interviewee mentioned his farther who was a *mumbaki*. “He told us when they die, never mind, forget about the *mumbaki* because no one can perform already. And we also do not know that” (BW1). However, the interviewees were not really feeling secure about the future. This uncertainty originates from the ideas of diseases caused by the evil

sprits. Some hoped that “maybe the spirits will be dead if there is no *mumbaki*” (YP3), while some feared “all Ifugao will die from traditional illness because [there are] no more *mumbaki*” (GW8). Therefore, Ifugaos now “don’t expect we need many *mumbakis*, but at least we need some people to be *mumbakis*. Let the others be tricycle drivers or do other business” (GW8).

3.3.3 A threat to both religions

After all, as said by some religious workers, there are perhaps some common threats to all religions in Ifugao, whether it is the traditional or the Christian ones. Religion “is challenged by technologies and [the] modern world” (KE7). The sacrifice animals in the traditional religion became less valuable because, “nowadays you raise pigs in pig farms, you are not offering anything to the God and pigs grow fast because of feeds” (BW12). It was also said “our world offers us to process many things, but in the Christian way, we should live a simple life and entrust our life to God.” He continued, “because of what they see in TV and around them. Somehow these things also change their mind. For example, they say in TV that you need to wear this kind of pants and use this brand of shampoo or whatsoever. People already forget the old way of simple living” (KE7).

These are what Ifugaos are faced with today, an implicit religious struggle between traditional religion and the new Christian religions, and at the same time a dilemma between the religious beliefs and the temptations of the modern world.

Chapter 4 Rice terraces

The Ifugao Rice Terraces were believed to be between 2,000 to 3,000 years old (Barton, 1919; Beyer, 1955), although a more recent archeological study found the construction date to be after 1585 AD (Stephen Acabado, 2012). No matter how old or new the terraces are, what is certain is that these terraces, covering 17.4% of the area in north central Ifugao (Conklin, 1980), were all built and routinely maintained manually with limited tools.

This history of the terraces reminds Ifugaos of their ancestors' work, which is much appreciated "because the pioneers of the rice fields did them for us [present Ifugaos] not for themselves alone" (GW5). The terraces, according to interviewees of all walks of life, are their pride and their identity⁵¹. One cultural expert said, "in Ifugao, the way we look at the land is very different from [the way] the rest of the country [who] would look as simple property. Ours is that we inherited the land from our ancestors. For us to make it worthy of the ancestors' blessing, we have to maintain that" (KE9). To many Ifugaos, the rice terraces are their inheritance, which if damaged or abandoned would be shameful. After telling me her experience of leveling the field even under moonlight, an elder interviewee said, "I would be very angry if they sell it. It is not their labor. It is not their endeavor. They just inherit it so you should be ashamed" (RF2). And the majority of young Ifugaos do bear that sense of responsibility. "It is an inheritance from our ancestors. And if we can not work for it, we feel uneasy. We feel not good since our conscience is

⁵¹ The history of the rice terraces meant a lot for Ifugaos. In a seminar I attended where the reporter claimed the history of the terraces to be only 300 years, a question was raised from the audiences that Ifugaos had been proud of the long history of the terraces and if that the wrong, what if tourists would not come any more. The reporter responded that it should make Ifugaos equally proud as their ancestors were able to build the terraces in a relative short time.

being troubled” (GW5).

Aside from that, there is practical value of the terraces. For the farmers, the rice terraces can “support the family instead of buying the commercial rice. It is very expensive” ⁵² (BW2). At the same time, the terraces are supporting the family, for those who work in tourism. One interviewee admitted, “if we don't have the rice terraces, there will be no reasons for tourists to be coming here” (BW18). However, no matter how spiritually or practically Ifugaos perceive the value of the terraces, the terraces are changing.

4.1 Changes in the rice terraces

Seeing the famous rice terraces in Ifugao for the first time was memorable (Figure 23 to Figure 27). At some turn on a road or a trail, between houses and trees, terraces appeared. As I approached, the full view opened. At the valley of the mountains, a creek was running through a settlement of houses. Surrounding the settlement were large flat terraces where tall rice plants swayed with in te wind like waves on a lake. Eyes lifted up, at the mountainside, only walls of the terraces could be seen. While looking vertically as the terraces became steeper made me nervous, zooming out to the panoramic view of these hundreds of absolutely parallel horizontal curves of terraces walls was greatly soothing.

⁵² The commercial rice is cheaper than tinawon rice at the market, but relative to the low income, it can be a major expense in a family.



Figure 23: Rice terraces in Nagacadan, Kiangnan



Figure 24: Rice terraces in Batad, Banaue



Figure 25: Rice terraces in Viewpoint, Banaue



Figure 26: Rice terraces in Hapao, Hungduan



Figure 27: Rice terraces in Mayoyao

However, the more one enjoys such views, the more he or she may feel sad if shown contrasting photos of the rice terraces from the past and now (Figure 28 to Figure 39).

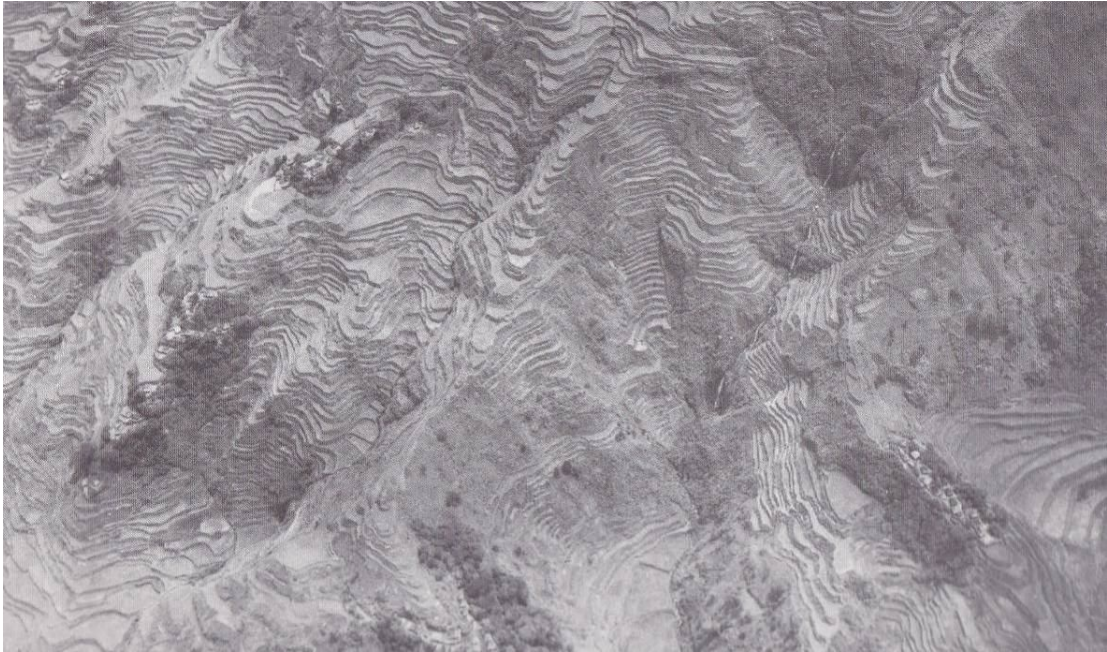


Figure 28: Rice terraces in Banaue in 1960s (Credit: Harold Conklin)

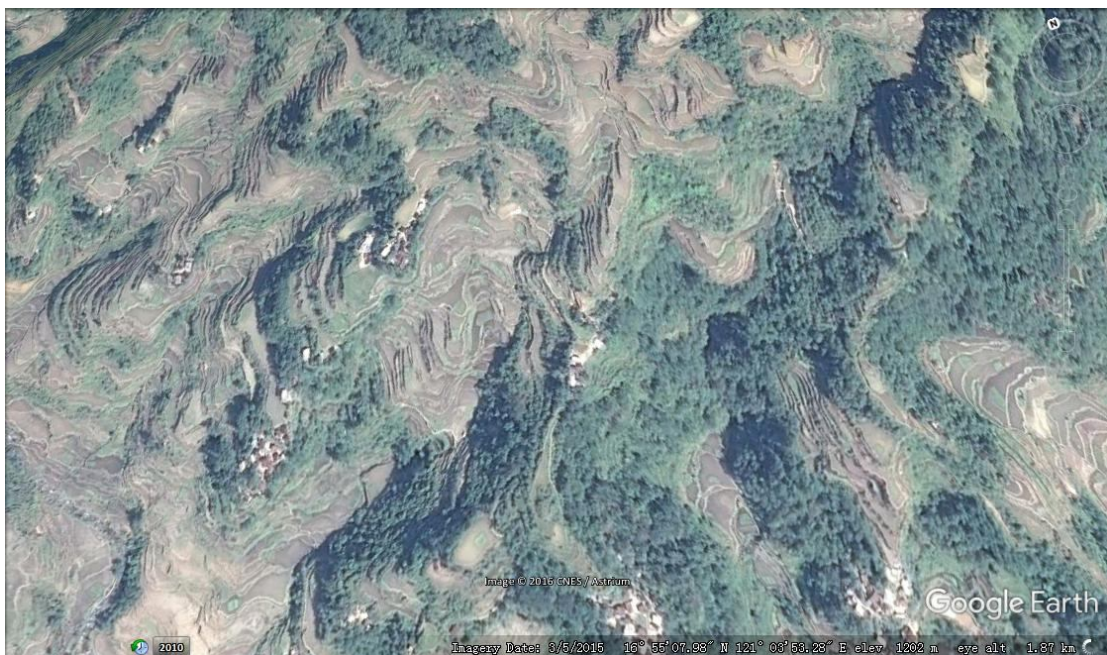


Figure 29: Rice terraces in Banaue in 2013⁵³ (Source: Google Earth)

⁵³ Comparing the photo taken in the 1960s, an increase in forestation is apparent.

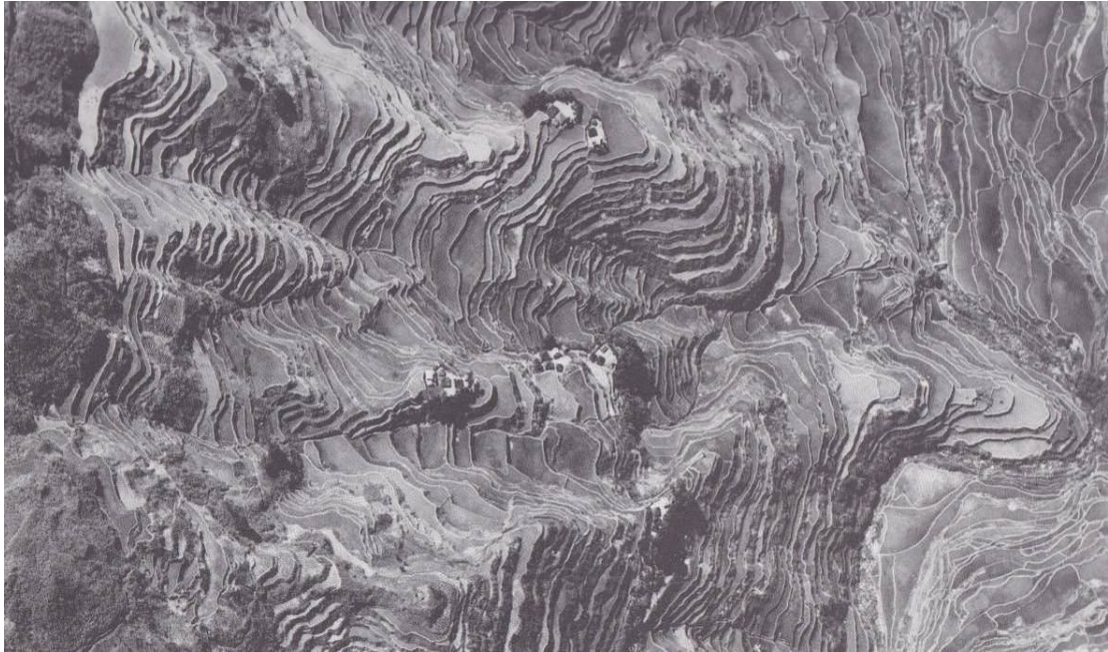


Figure 30: A central section of rice terraces in central Banaue in 1960s (Credit: Harold Conklin)



Figure 31: A central section of rice terraces in central Banaue in 2010⁵⁴ (Source: Google Earth)

⁵⁴ More grasses on the edge of the rice terraces.

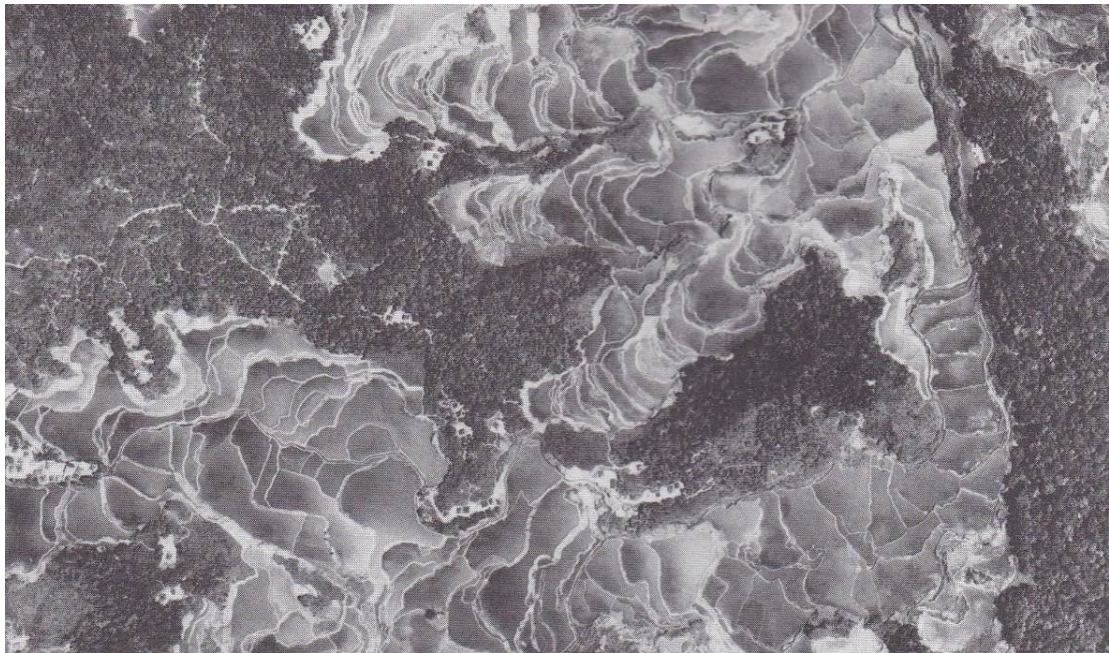


Figure 32: Rice terraces in southern Banaue in 1960s (Credit: Harold Conklin)

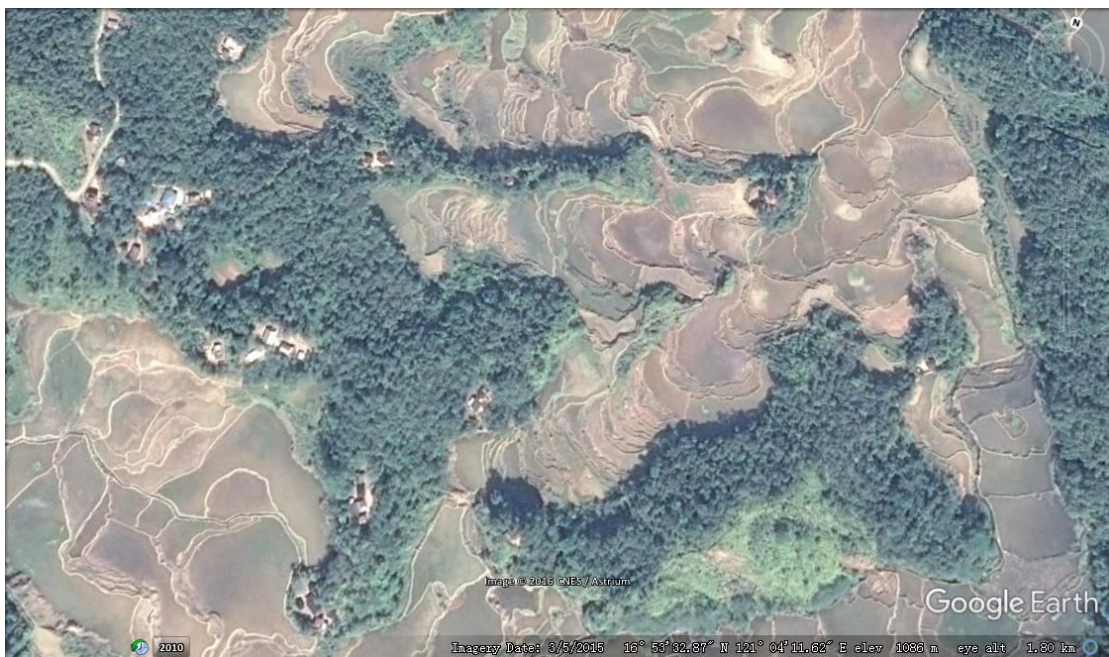


Figure 33: Rice terraces in southern Banaue in 2010 (Source: Google Earth)

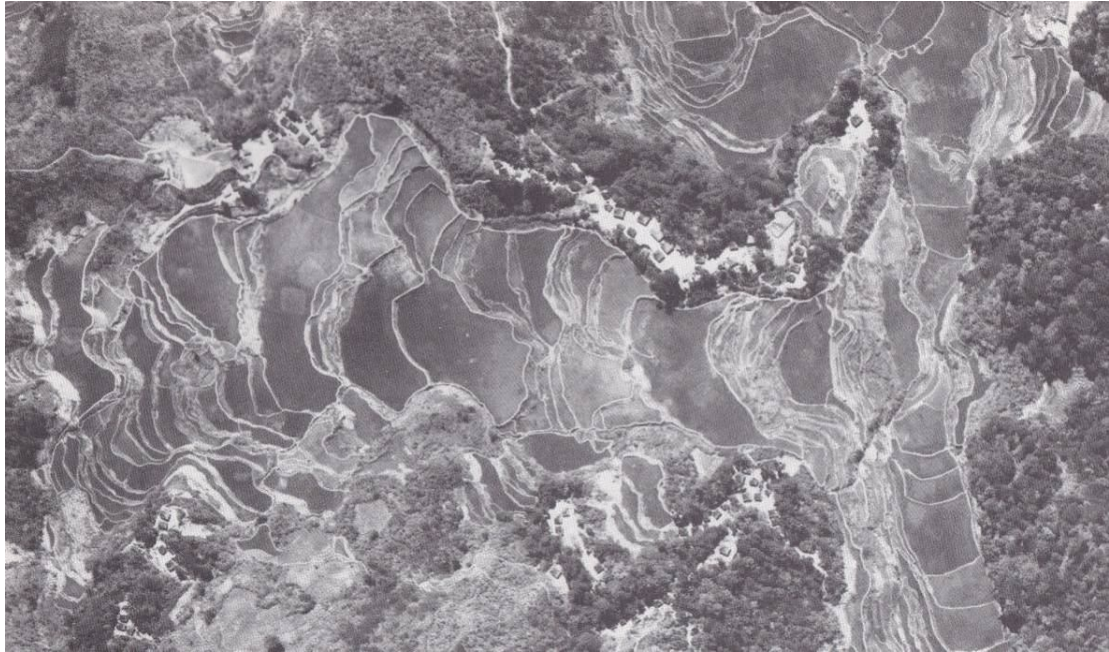


Figure 34: Rice terraces in southeastern Banaue in 1960s (Credit: Harold Conklin)



Figure 35: Rice terraces in southeastern Banaue in 2010 (Source: Google Earth)



Figure 36: Stone walls of Batad rice terraces in 1960s (Credit: Harold Conklin)



Figure 37: Stone walls of Batad rice terraces in 2016



Figure 38: Rice terraces in central Banaue in 1903 (Credit: Harold Conklin)



Figure 39: Rice terraces in central Banaue in 2016⁵⁵

4.1.1 Degradation

There are two kinds of degradation in the rice terraces, those that have partial walls collapsed due to landslide (Figure 40), and those that are no longer well-tended. Landslides in the rice terraces have been a problem and that is the reason that, whenever conditions permit, Ifugaos would use stones to build the terrace walls and irrigation dikes⁵⁶. Despite this continuous effort to maintain the terraces, up to a quarter of the walls and dikes were still damaged in recent years (Bantayan et al., 2012; Calderon et al., 2015; Gomez and Pacardo, 2005).

⁵⁵ Comparing with the area in 1903, the large rice terraces in the center are converted to buildings and residential land expanded.

⁵⁶ Sources of the stone are from the river and the mountain. The stones of the walls of lower rice terraces are usually rounded while those of higher terraces are square (from breaking boulders).



Figure 40: A farmer planting corn in a recently collapsed terrace

Although some rice terraces are still standing, Ifugaos consider them degraded when they are no longer tended by farmers. Signs of such degradation are weeds on the walls or complete abandonment. The interviewees told me, “now you see there are so many grasses here. But before no, it was very clean” (RF1) and “now it is different. There are a lot abandoned. During 1960 to 1963, all rice fields in all mountains were cultivated. That was a unique and beautiful view” (RF6). Compared with the damage from landslides, the degradation of rice terraces due to poor maintenance or abandonment may be more prevalent (Figure 29 and Figure 37).

The interviewees explained the reason for the degradation. For landslides, one said, “now this kind of worm that was brought from other countries, causes landslide” (RF6). These large earthworms are believed to be able to dig holes deep into the soil and through the wall and thus

washing the soil off and collapsing the terrace⁵⁷ (Gomez and Pacardo, 2005; Hong and James, 2008). Yet this problem also existed in the 60's (Conklin, 1980), but "in the past, if some terrace was eroded, all people would work on the stone wall" (BW7). Another interviewee explained further that "those who know stonewalling are all very old. Now what the young do is only study and work outside [Ifugao] so they did not study on how to make a stone wall. So nobody can repair it" (BW9).

And the reason for the less-tended terraces is that "[farm] labor is low [paid] and most of the young people prefer to study or go to the city to find jobs and make money"⁵⁸ (BW17). While the population of Ifugao is increasing, it may be surprising that farm labor is shrinking. What I observed was that many farmers are tenants, leasing the fields from their relatives who were temporarily living outside or had completely migrated to other areas. Despite still farming rice, most of these tenants have other jobs in business or public service to have income to supplement daily expenses and thus are not able to spend much time tending to the terraces. Moreover, "if the relatives all migrated, as I observed, many are not here. And now farmers are also investing in the lowland [farms], so some [terraces] are abandoned" (BW3).

All reasons for tending less to the terraces can be concluded as economical and preferential. One interviewee frankly said, "in order that my children have a better life, I am in favor that they not to work in the rice field, if they can find a job instead of working in the field from morning to

⁵⁷ Deforestation in the mountains above the rice terraces was believed to be the reason for landslides in terraces (Eder, 1982). However, it was not mentioned by the interviewees. I believe that the reason for terrace wall collapse is the contraction and expansion of soil which drags and pushes the wall, weakening its stability.

⁵⁸ A research found out that only one forth of young people would likely be involved in farming (Dizon et al., 2012).

sunset. Then it is ok. Nowadays money is more powerful and rice is easy [to get]. That is why money buys everything and rice cannot. So I guess to have a job is better so that if you also have children, whatever they want, you can give [to them]. If you concentrate in the rice field, you will not progress. If you are at a restaurant, you meet other people and you eat good food” (RF5). Another interviewee said, “for example, this young girl⁵⁹, she has not lived in a native house and she is used to these modern houses. And now few have tried to work in the rice field because they have no time because they are studying. So even if you teach during vacation, now especially if you are living in town, of course, you have no time to work in the rice field. So somehow they lose attachment to the rice terraces culture. So the more they are away from the terraces, the more they are getting out of the Ifugao culture” (KE4).

4.1.2 Conversion to residential use

A number of interviewees disagreed that the terraces will be degraded, but they saw a change in the terraces at the other extreme. Rather than being abandoned and becoming a jungle, “Ifugao rice terraces may become urban jungle”, as reported in an article in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*⁶⁰ (2015). Not only in the municipality of Mayoyao as reported in the news article, but also in Banaue, Hungduan, and Kiangan, the problem of converting rice terraces into residential use was reported by the interviewees (Figure 41). A tourist once complained to me that “if you live in the city and look at the pictures and postcards, you see only the terraces, but here you see the houses in the terraces” (VI10).

⁵⁹ The interviewee was referring to a ten-year-old girl, who according to her grandmother, walked on the edge of the terraces with hands on the ground.

⁶⁰ The *Philippine Daily Inquirer* is the widest read newspaper in the Philippines.

The observation by an interviewee was “the children study outside [of Ifugao]⁶¹. And when they finish their courses, they find a job outside. And after how many years they would come back, and soon one of the terraces would be turned into a house” (GW6). Another interviewee shared the same observation and explained, “they destroy the plant fields to put up a building because maybe they don’t have anywhere to put [it] up and there is no regulation, no provincial or municipal regulation that forbids building along the rice terraces” (KE6).

While it is true that in Ifugao land for residential use is limited, there actually has been regulation. A municipal government worker told me “one UNESCO policy is that in the heritage site, there should be no destruction in the rice terraces area” (GW6) and “the previous mayor (of Hungduan)⁶² made a law prohibiting owners of rice fields from building houses in their fields, but still it was not followed because of the growing population” (GW6). But many more interviewees explained to me their opinion “because the rice field is privately owned by members of this community, they have the right to convert it to whatever they want” (GW6) and “the parents have nothing to give to the children, so they have to build for their children to stay. That is sharing in order that the family will not go away” (RF5).

⁶¹ Many interviewees, if graduated from a college, studied in Baguio city.

⁶² There was such regulation also in Banaue.



Figure 41: A hotel overlooking rice terraces built on a terrace

It is obvious that Ifugaos are facing a dilemma with their inheritance of the rice terraces. The choices seemingly are either to turn away from local rice production and let the terraces degrade with time or convert them into residential use. Are these the future of the rice terraces in Ifugao? What are the reasons and what are Ifugaos planning to do?

4.2 Future of the rice terraces

4.2.1 Inheritance system

When passing their rice fields onto their children, Ifugao parents do not divide the land. The inheritance system according is that “for families who have rice terraces, their eldest son gets the property from the father and the second child gets the property of the mother and whatever is bought, that will be for the younger ones” (KE3).

This pro-primogeniture inheritance system, designed to maintain the economic status of the family by keeping the main property undivided (Dumia, 1979), has been termed as unfair to the younger children as it creates a relative advantage for the eldest child.

Two social effects of this inheritance system were observed having the same result. The first effect is that the eldest child, with this initial capital from the parents, would be able to focus more on income generating activities, instead of rice farming. Therefore, the result is that they often lease the rice terraces, and with that capital, they are able to move out of agriculture to risk in investing in other businesses or migrate to other provinces or even foreign countries. The second effect is that the youngest child, inheriting almost nothing from the parents, naturally has no practical advantage of staying and working as a farmer. With opportunities from other places (such as working as a labor in a foreign factory) or tourism businesses in Ifugao, the youngest children in the family tend to move away from farming as well. While this inheritance system does maintain the economic status of the family, with the social change in occupations, it becomes a possible reason for Ifugaos to give up the terraces.

4.2.2 Tenant system

For those who do not inherit any land from their parents, they can lease a rice field from the landowners, which is what more than half Ifugao farmers are doing now. Although there are some cases where tenants paid a fixed amount of rent and own all the harvest, the traditional tenant system is most widely observed, where the tenant and the owner of the field split equally the harvested rice. One interviewee described the system where “the tenants will do the work of cleaning, cultivating and planting but the owner will help during the harvest. So we provide the

drinks, the foods and the snacks” (KE3). But with the owner moving farther away from their fields, “the farmers do not like the fifty and fifty [system] anymore, so that [has] changed. If we use the fifty and fifty system, I help during the harvest” (KE3). When I asked how this change happened, the interviewee continued, “when they got educated. When they knew that they are at a loss so they said we suppose we [should] do it this way. Of course, because we cannot go to the rice field we said ok” (KE3). So in such new cases, tenants are getting two-thirds of the harvest. However, there were objections to this change. Some interviewees complained that the tenants “can not ask for more [than half] because actually, that is what they have been following...that is the culture” (KE1).

The tenant system worked in the past by providing those with no land with a way to feed their families. But today, with increasing opportunity cost of farming, the incentive for leasing rice land is not high enough and thus farmers have to work for other businesses to earn enough money to feed the family, regardless of other expenses such as health care and education of their children. Therefore, if this tennant system is not adjusted (to redistribute revenues made in non-farming sectors to farmers), the number of farmers in Ifugao may continue decreasing and thus more rice terraces may degrade.

4.2.3 Future farmers

It is important to note that although Ifugaos admit various challenges exist for the rice terraces, most of them do not believe that the rice terraces will disappear. Constantly I was told that, “for sure it will always continue that there are people tending to these rice fields” (GW2) and that “we will still maintain our rice terraces even we are busy in [our business]. For example, we can hire

one woman to clean our terraces” (BW13). Indeed, for many interviewees who are no longer working as farmers, hiring a tenant or day laborer is the solution for maintaining the rice terraces.

I asked why they were confident that there would be farmers or laborers in the future and I was repeatedly told similar answers. “Most of us, we go to school, but when we reach high school, some don’t like to go to school anymore, and some due to finances, they don’t go to school. And some, even if they finish their studies, if there’s no available job, will get married and stay here. They need to work in the field” (BH18), said one interviewee. Another interviewee questioned back to me saying, “you think everyone will finish their education?” (BH16).

While Ifugaos are proud of their heritage and do want to preserve it as indicated by the interviewees at the beginning of this chapter, the idea that this heritage will be maintained by the “unfortunate” people, who have no other choices, inevitably seems to be a paradox.

Some interviewees, witnessing this long trend, felt that “in fact, sometimes when I am alone at night, I thought of what will happen 50 years from now to my little rice field that I have given to my children, who don’t take care of it and just rent to the tenants. Suppose it will be eroded and all destroyed. It can be a loss of ancient engineers who had done that and gave us a great aesthetic beauty and if that will be lost, I will not believe [the terraces will be all destroyed until] at that time. But at least I will not see. I really do not know” (KE10).

4.2.4 Proposed intervention measures

Seeing the threats to the rice terraces, Ifugaos proposed several measures to conserve the terraces. Many interviewees and previous researches called for government intervention (Calderon et al., 2011). Because “if ever a rice terrace has a landslide, it will take a big amount to

put it back” (KE4), Ifugaos are calling for government assistance in repairing terrace walls. One interviewee suggested that “it is high time the government should help to subsidize the farming if they want to maintain the rice terraces, especially when the terrace is eroded. The government should help, and give funds” (BW12). Or else, since the rice terraces are World Heritage, and “some of the UN countries are very rich, they should help us subsidize our rice field” (BW12). However, an interviewee pointed out an interesting premise of government intervention that “if there is no tourist coming in, the government will not improve the rice terraces here” (RF7).

As mentioned earlier, one reason farmers are not spending much time tending to the terraces is that the incentive, compared with other work, is too low. One proposed solution is to encourage farmers to make money by selling the traditional tinawon rice at a premium price. An interviewee told me in the above-mentioned cooperative office that sells the traditional rice, “all the members who are selling the rice are active in maintaining the rice terraces, but those who are not participating [at the cooperative], abandoned their fields” (BW3). However, it is controversial as one interviewee said “I do not like to sell, because my father before said if you have rice to eat for food, do not sell it, because even if you sell at high [price], the money will come and go. I don’t know, but that is the advice from my father. Never sell the rice at home because it is a gift from God” (RF4). The cooperative was challenged by some government officials as well. But farmers from the cooperative defended themselves saying to the officials that “it is good to you because you are politicians, and you have a salary. We would not sell if you give us money” (BW3). And some said, “I have a cell phone, but not money. I have children so why you are telling that [I should

not sell]. So it is up to us because we don't have money"⁶³ (BW3).

The last solution is family education. Many Ifugao families have the tradition where elders in the family would bring their grandchildren to the rice field to show and teach them farm work. Elder interviewees told me that "we must implant in the mind of the children that even if you are educated and have good jobs, do not forget where you are from" (RF5) and it has worked for the current generation of farmers. When reflecting on the most important lesson in life, one farmer interviewee told me "what is very important for me now is from my childhood what my parents taught me, which is that you know how to work in the field because if you have no job you have no way to get your food" (RF8).

In the past, Ifugao ancestors built the rice terraces for food and applied their spiritual beliefs onto the production activities in the terraces. Today, the rice terraces provide Ifugaos with food and income from tourism and are a key source of their identity. No matter how much effort is being made to conserve the physical appearance of the rice terraces, the one change in the terraces is that they are no longer ancillary to Ifugaos (as mentioned by the tinawon legend)⁶⁴ but a necessity both practically and spiritually.

⁶³ The speeches of the farmers were not from direct interviews but reported from an interviewee.

⁶⁴ The relations between Ifugaos and their rice terraces may be confusing. As the tinawon legend says, the rice terraces were built after Ifugaos obtained the rice seeds. A recent archiological research also argued that rice was not central to Ifugaos (Stephen B Acabado, 2012).

Chapter 5 Tourism

With not only the rice terraces but also the history and the indigenous culture, Ifugao attracts researchers and tourists from countries all over Europe, Asia, and Americas, as well as domestically.

The development of tourism and research activities was witnessed by the interviewees. One of them told me “in the past there were very few [tourists] but now there are many” (BW10). A weaver of native attire told me “the first time I sold this one [Ifugao woman’s attire] was 10 pesos, then 15 pesos, and when the price became 50, there came the first tourist” (BW7). And today the attire costs around 2,000 pesos (U.S \$40). One interviewee from Hungduan told me “last year we had around 12,000 [tourists], and the other year we had around 9,000. So it is increasing a little” (GW7). And in terms of researchers, one interviewee told me that “Ifugao is the most researched place until now” (VII).

5.1 Tourism and the local community

With an increasing number of tourists arriving in Ifugao, people’s lives is experiencing various changes. It may be necessary to note here before getting into the details of the advantages and disadvantages of tourism for local Ifugao communities that, generally, Ifugaos find tourism of benefit to their life.

5.1.1 Value of tourism for the local community

Ifugaos generally welcome tourists. They see value in tourism, including increasing the income of local people. A farmer interviewee said, “many tourists come here so we have more income” (RF1), and another interviewee told me “they live in hotel, eat in a restaurant and some

need a massage. Store owners have business. If someone buys something, it is helping us” (BW7). In Batad⁶⁵, a sign at a small souvenir store reads “Helping poor families” and “buying local products.” Ifugaos also enjoy learning new things from the tourists. One farmer told me “sometimes they [the tourists] tell us stories about their countries. And we learned that their countries are different from ours and they dress differently from us. That is why I know a little bit of English” (RF09). Another interviewee told me “the hotel owners’ life changed. In the past they were all in native huts and now they are all in hotels. They can make money and their children can study” (BW7). Because of these practical benefits, Ifugaos are happy to see more tourists. I was told by interviewees that “I will earn money and I hope that foreigners will come to our country and we will have our jobs” (BW13) and “We like them so much. We are praying. We always pray for tourists to come” (BW10).

The other value of tourism for Ifugaos is to promote their culture. An interviewee who works in the tourism business told me that “we explain to them about our culture, let them ask some questions and make them satisfied” (BW17). Another interviewee said, “I think the reason why tourists come to Ifugao is not just for aesthetics, they come to Ifugao because they also want to experience the culture, especially the cultural values we have here” (KE 14). Some of the interviewees also mention that tourism can promote the Ifugao culture among local communities. One interviewee told me that tourists “come here to see the culture which I think would encourage them [other Ifugaos] to continue in their traditional ways” (VI9).

⁶⁵ Rice terraces in Batad, Banaue are one of the most touristic spots in Ifugao.

5.1.2 Tourism business

Tourism created new livelihoods in Ifugao. Tourism-related businesses like tour guiding, souvenir stores, hotels, and native dance performances emerged. As a tourist gets off a jeepney or tour bus at Banaue, the tourist center of Ifugao, it is very likely that he or she would first be greeted by some young tour guides asking where they are going. The tour guides, usually wearing a polo T-shirt, would then unfold a worn-out flier of the tour packages with their color-faded laminated certificate, and start introducing the places of interest around Banaue and adjacent municipalities. Other than these freelance tour guides, there are those who work under an organization. The price varies depending on the tour, starting from about 500 pesos (U.S. \$10) for an hour.

Interviewees told me that the tour guides “did not have jobs. They did not earn much from farming. Usually they are basically farmers. They have farms and after planting, they don’t have anything to do so they engage in tour guiding⁶⁶” (GW7), said an interviewee. Interviewees who worked as tour guides told me how much their job had helped them. “[It] is a good mark of the business of local people also, especially for us for tour guiding because it is [a] big help that gives us work and provides us our everyday life, especially for younger generations like us” (BW17). The business of tour guides depends greatly on the flow of tourists, and thus the tour guides have to look for alternative jobs such as drivers or construction workers. “There are a lot of guides and you know the guides don’t work everyday. Especially now low season, I think at this moment no one went on tour, [there is] only one driver [doing tours] because it is very low season and we are

⁶⁶ Since the peak season of tourism falls around October to January, which is the slack season when farmers do non-agricultural work, most of them now engage in tour guiding. But the number of full time tour guides is still higher than that of the farmer tour guides.

like 80 members and we take turns everyday so we must also think about any jobs, so sometimes we drive” (BW17).

After dealing with some tour guides, the tourist may be attracted by the many souvenir stores. A typical souvenir store would have native attires and hand woven bags hanging on the walls or from the ceiling, rattan products like baskets or bags on shelves together with wood carvings and bags of tinawon rice⁶⁷.

Some interviewees in this business told me that most of their products were bought from people in the villages. An interviewee explained that the farmers “have free time, especially after working. I just order from them and they will bring it here” (BW11). Among these products, woodcarving is the most popular. An interviewee who was selling woodcarvings said, “I buy from my relatives who are carvers. I give them the sample and they carve it” (BW10). I then asked about the process of making woodcarvings and the interviewee replied that, “they plant, from the forests. And they get the wood from the forests. Some buy from other people especially if they need a big log.” And after carving, still by traditional hand tools, the products are brought to the store where they will be painted black, “but the antique is naturally black because of the smoke” (BW10).

Among the woodcarvings, the most popular one is the Ifugao rice granary guardian, the *bulul*. When asked if the commercialization of the rice guardian would make the statue less sacred, interviewees expressed no worry, replying, “no I think not. Most of the tourists know what the *bulul* is” (BW10). Apart from traditional Ifugao carvings, newer styles that originated from other

⁶⁷ The mission of cooperative souvenir store reads “encourage members to produce quality products that will outgrow competition and conquer the world.”

places are made in Ifugao as well. Interviewees explained to me that “actually some tourists came here and we did not have elephant, and they asked if we have elephant. And they asked us to make elephant. I said ok” (BW8). Such wood carving styles with external origins can display a totally different image, such as a Buddha wood statue and a wood ashtray with a penis carving.

Again, like the tour guides, the life of the owners of such souvenir stores depends greatly on the flow of tourists. Unlike the part-time craft makers who are also farmers, full-time storekeepers shared one difficult time with me, saying “maybe I didn’t have sales for three days to five days. Yes, during the global crisis especially when the World Trade Center was bombed, that was the time, and then the global crisis...It was really hard time for me. I have my two kids. I didn’t know [what] other business to divert [to]. It was so hard to decide” (BW10).

5.1.3 Competition

With tourism came competition among various businesses (Figure 42). An interviewee said “some people here, they sell the rice God, the *bulul*. And if I sell it and the others also sell it, and my price is not the same with their price and that is a bad competition. They will talk to the tourist. Don’t buy others’ rice God because it is not good and mine is good. The wood is good” (BW14). Another interviewee said, the owners of some hotels would “give some money to the guides”⁶⁸ (BW10) and “some will tell the staff at the information center to convince the tourists to go to their hotel, even though the tourists decide which [hotel] to go [to]” (BW14).

⁶⁸ Also discussed Bulilan’s research (2007).



Figure 42: Billboards of hotel advertisements at the first sight of Bata rice terraces

Perhaps the fiercest competition is among tour guides. An interviewee shared an experience where tour guides “fought, in front of the tourists” (BW14) because “when there were four tourists, [they] talked to [some] other [tour guide] to lower the payment so that he would be the one to guide. And when he guided them, the others were angry because he lowered the price” (BW14). Competition is also seen between tour guide organizations, as one interviewee explained that “we have our organization and I work for this kind of organization and we don’t lower the price. We have our standard rates. And next, there are freelancers outside. And if you see [the other organization] there, it is crazy here I tell you. They lowered the price. It is crazy. It is a big competition. It is funny. They are the ones who made the price and after they made it, they lowered

the price. We are following the price because we are following the government price” (BW17). This competition extended even to the tour guides from different places. An interviewee complained “the tourists come from [the other place] so they usually have tour guides from there accompanying them, unless the tour guides turn their guests over to us then we have an opportunity to earn. It is really a big fight because we have to argue” (GW7). Yet an interviewee from the place mentioned explained that “I think how they explain their own hometown is not satisfying, because from my own experiences, the tour guides just keep on going. So I advise them to go on training then we can hand [the tourists] over” (BW17).

When I asked what the interviewees thought of the competition, many told me that they were sad. One of them said, “It is part of the generation. It is part of the job. It exists only when tourists are here because competition is not a part of traditional Ifugao” (BW17).

5.1.4 Tourism and agriculture

Previous research suggested a positive relationship between tourism and Ifugao agriculture as tourists were willing to pay to restore terraces (Calderon et al., 2009). And by that, tourists are helping local communities appreciate their culture as well. An interviewee said “when they [the tourists] come here [and say] ‘Oh, your rice field is damaged, so I will give you something to fix your rice field’...they are coming to help the farmers” (BW3). An interviewee told me that farmers “are the ones being picture-taken. They are introduced to other countries. I hear that they are happy because their pictures will go to other countries” (BW10) and “maybe here it is a shame if you see the picture and you see your own rice field is not planted” (KE6), said another interviewee. However, bad feelings can occur when tourists complain. One interviewee shared his experience,

telling me that “some [tourists] said ‘Oh, I came here to see grasses.’ Sometimes I feel sad because I am from here so why do you come here to say things like that” (BW17).

Moreover, although these interviewees emphasized the positive effects of tourism on local community, others told me about their different experiences. When farmers saw that the people engaged in tourism were making a profit but they were not, they suggested a plan for the restaurant managers to help them by buying their rice. However, according to an interviewee, the reply from the restaurant managers was that “we won’t buy because [it’s] too expensive” (BW3). The interviewee continued explaining to the manager that “without us, you have no business also. Please buy our rice so that you can direct the money to the farmers,” but the managers were not convinced. The interviewee told me that he thought the managers were “not aware of the hardship of the farmers” and therefore he was “thinking maybe farmers have resources in the town, and we will also put up an [business] establishment.”

Another example is that although there were tour guides who were also farmers, some young people were only engaged in tour guiding and had given up farming. “Now the young generation, they just wait for guiding and they don’t know how to help their own parents in the rice field” (BW10), complained one interviewee. The reason for this, according to another interviewee, is that “if you go to the rice field and work for one day, you will just receive a pay of 200 pesos (U.S. \$4), but if you guide a tourist even just for one hour or even less, you get about 500. That is why one time previously, they were asking for funds to restore the terraces since they were damaged by a landslide. [One] million [pesos] was [given to] resolve the terraces. But they are not working in restoring. They said you work [on the restoration] from six to six and [are] paid 200 or 300, while

if you guide a tour, in one hour you can make 500” (GW3).

Seeing the dual effects, both positive and negative, of tourism on agriculture, the interviewees summarized that “our values, our attitude sometimes changed [also] because of the visitors. There are many businesses and [business] establishments...when they learn something more profitable, other activities will not be sustainable. Look at the farmers at [a tourist destination]; when there are lots of tourists there, they prefer doing some weaving and carving. They don’t like to go to the rice field” (BW3). The solutions proposed were that “we still maintain our rice terraces even [if] we are busy in the tour guiding. For example, we can hire one woman to clean our terraces” (BW13) and from a government level, “we need to make sure that the farmers who are growing the crop in the rice terraces are being paid their fair share, if not given more incentives to keep growing rice by [the] tourism department to make sure that there is something beautiful for the tourists to want to come and see” (VI9).

5.1.5 Violations by tourists

Being a rather isolated society for a long time, it was not easy for all Ifugaos to accept the sudden arrival of tourists. An interviewee said, “I noticed during the earlier years that when they [community members] saw foreigners walking in the terraces, they had the feeling of being intruded [upon]. Sometimes they did not even talk to tourists.” Nonetheless, the interviewee continued saying, nowadays “they talk to foreigners. They are a little [more] friendly to other people coming in” (GW7).

One way Ifugaos deal with this is to suggest that all tourists hire local tour guides. An interviewee told me that “some guests in the past climbed in the mountain and fell down and died

in the center of mountain. The community was bothered” (BW13) and “we don’t like the guests [to] come here and die, so we want to prevent that from happening.” Therefore, with tour guides, the tourists “will follow our policies and our rules to avoid damage [and injury]” (BW13). However, while local Ifugaos see that as a protection for the tourists, the tourists think that it is their freedom to explore. One interviewee told me “[when] somebody asks to guide them [the tourists], they would say ‘no need. No need to guide, my eyes are my guide.’ They are philosophical” (BW8).

It is understandable that tourists come to Ifugao with a different lifestyle and view on life. Ifugaos saw that as “the Ifugao values are somehow threatened, especially on the taboos” (GW7). One example of this violation mentioned by the interviewees was that they found some tourists dressed improperly. An interviewee complained to me that “some tourists we see here are only wearing their underwear while walking. That is bad” (BW14). I then mentioned that in the past Ifugaos did not wear much clothes either and the interviewee explained to me that “in the past there were no clothes. If you had clothes, you had only one. You had no other [clothes] to change. But now there are more clothes to wear but why you [tourists] don’t use [them]?”

An example of this happened to me one evening in the dining area at a guesthouse. As I was gathering my notes, a group of European female tourists and their tour guide came for dinner with one of them wearing a pair of low rise jeans showing the back string of her underwear. After they were full from their over-ordered dinner, they start chatting with the tour guide over beer. One of them asked the 30-year-old-looking tour guide whether he was married, and the tour guide replied he had children already. The group shouted out a mix of laughter and pity. I saw the tour guide

embarrassed with an awkward smile on his face.

The other instance happened when I was interviewing at the hot spring in Hungduan, I saw four French tourists. Smoking in the hot spring pool, the man was in his swimming shorts and the three women were in their bikinis. I asked the staff at the site and she told me those clothes were allowed only at the hot spring, but added that being naked is not allowed anywhere.

While there were other complaints about the tourists' habits such as walking in the room with wet, muddy shoes, talking loudly at night, and smoking, some interviewees brought up the problem of drug abuse. More than a couple interviewees told me that "some of them [the tourists] may bring the drugs here, like the marijuana" (BW14) and "some of them share with the people here." Moreover, noticing that young tour guides use words more lightly than their parents, I asked about the wording tourists used and a tour guide told me "the young tourists speak a little bit bad words like 'fuck', 'oh fuck', especially young guests" (BW17). The tourists not only make changes in the wording in language, but also in people's behavior. A mother interviewee told me that sometimes "our children learn to beg [for] money because the tourists are the ones starting to give money to our children. That is why our children start to beg" (RF9).

Environmentally, tourism also posed a problem as "some of them [tourists] do not know how to throw [away] their garbage. They just throw it, or leave it anywhere" (BW14). One interviewee said "some tourists or locals are not very responsible. When they eat something they just throw [the remains] anywhere. And the neighbors came to me sometimes and told me that the guests just threw some bottles. So for me, I with my cousin do the cleaning. And once a month my family leads a clean up drive" (BW12).

5.2 Tourists' perspectives

It is often the case that when seen from different cultural perspectives, a particular society appears differently, and these different images may provoke new realizations in the people in this society. As pointed out by some interviewees, one of the benefits of tourism for the Ifugao community is to provide them with such different images of their own culture and hopefully they will find a perspective on their own culture that they have overlooked.

While local Ifugaos generally appreciated the development of their society supported by tourism, tourists, on the other hand, have very different perspectives. They not only have different perspectives from the local Ifugaos', but also have diverse opinions and perceptions of the Ifugao they saw. Although most tourists, foreign or domestic, come to Ifugao to see the scenery of rice terraces and perhaps to experience a bit of the Ifugao culture, their different backgrounds and personal preferences give them very different impressions of the identical Ifugao they experience. In general, these diverse perceptions originate from several very different ideologies related to the development of Ifugao society.

5.2.1 "I want some places to be preserved as they are"

Some tourists came to Ifugao expecting not only to see the sceneries but also to experience a different society from the modern one where they came from. A tourist said, "we want to rejuvenate ourselves from our daily stress from office, our home and from the traffic in metro... we don't want the modern style in the cities, the concrete jungle there. That is why we are expecting something different" (VI13). For some of them, Ifugao did not satisfy this expectation. One told me that "we are totally shocked. You can say this place is much modernized. It is all concrete"

(VI8). She complained that “you don’t see the half naked women. I think just the elders wear the native clothes here.”

I continued to ask these tourists why they expected so, and their reasons varied. Some interviewees enjoyed cultures different from their own. One of them said “people like different things. Dark people like whiter skin, white people like darker skin...we have city life, so we want the old Ifugao traditional houses and culture,” (VI10) and that “the native way is more cultural-characteristic [or unique]” (VI8). And for some tourists, the traditional Ifugao could evoke nostalgic memories of their childhood. I was told that “running around in the neighborhood, knowing everyone around you, being able to interact with everyone around you without fear of being killed, and growing up farming was my childhood. This is my childhood, similar to this and I miss that” (VI11).

Such perspectives originated from their perception of their own, usually more modern life. They told me that Ifugaos “are luckier because they have the peace in mind. They don’t have to worry too much. They just need to worry about food on the table. Maybe they have a little bit [of] money while for me I have to worry a lot, about the bills. So it is different” (VI10). They added that the modern life “devastates everything you know, the culture and the places” (VI8) and complained that in their modern life, the food was not healthy and people lacked connection to nature and other people. However, ironically, they said they could not live without “all the modern things. I can’t live without the clothes, modern clothes, the AC in the house and the television” (VI10).

The question then became, if modern life is something the tourists found a necessity, what is

the difference that made them prefer Ifugaos to preserve their lifestyle? The tourists responded “I think we are just born with a different way of living” (VI3) and Ifugaos “did not experience the life that we have. I meant they were born with a simple life so they did not want something like the modern life. But we [tourists] were born in the cities. I got used to this kind of [city] life and they got used to their [Ifugao] life” (VI10). And because “they have their skills to survive. The thing in the developed areas is that they [people] need to combat the changes. They need to adapt with the new things. Whereas here [in Ifugao] changes are coming but they are not as rapid as those happening in the cities. That is why they [Ifugaos] choose to live in the same way as before. And I guess they don’t want to change their way of living because they are happy with that right now. If there is an option for us to live here right now I guess we cannot do that more than a month because we [have] already experienced the things we need everyday...we will not live like this...if you choose to live here everything will change” (VI13).

But when I asked the tourists what the reasons were for the modernization in Ifugao, they admitted that “we are the reason they changed” (VI10), and “because of tourists, the place changed. In some way it is our fault that what we expected for this place did not come up” (VI10). So while they preferred that the Ifugao society remain traditional, they also think that Ifugaos “have to put lots of lodges and inns here because tourists are coming, and they [Ifugaos] need to accommodate the people so they [Ifugaos] need to adapt, so they build a lot of lodges and inns. So in some way the tourists are the reason why the place changed. If there is no tourist coming here they would still live the life they had” (VI13), and that “you cannot survive as a simple farmer for the rest of your life. You need to have improvement. There is a change coming [and] you have to adapt to it. You

need to be competitive toward other farmers” (VI13). At the end of the interview, it was said “we are disappointed at this moment but we understand that they want change” (VI10).

5.2.2 “I pity them. I want them to have the good life I have”

To some tourists, especially those from foreign countries, the Ifugao way of life is pitiful. Their idea of Ifugao life is that “all I know [is that], if I have to work one day like the woman I saw yesterday I would die for sure” (VI12). At first I interpreted it as a compliment for the amazing work Ifugaos were doing, but soon realized their pity for Ifugaos as they continued to say that “the [Ifugao] woman there who is 30 years old looks like 60 years old. This is not normal. This is not natural. This is not fair...I don’t like them to go to the river and wash their clothes in the river by hand. I want them to put clothes in the washing machine and then in the drier. And then go to a coffee house and drink coffee with her friends.”

To these tourists “the world around us evolves and we take from that. I don’t think it is fair to expect people to be living in a hut just because it is part of their culture. That shouldn’t determine they have to live in huts forever like that” (VI6). And tourists agreed with the local Ifugaos that by their coming, income would be brought to the local communities. As one tourist said, “more or less the [Ifugao] people can make some money by selling products. With this they can buy some clothes for kids or school. The progress is going on and we cannot stop that. They should not live like in the jungle anymore” (VI4). Furthermore, they believed, “we don’t see any angry faces so they [Ifugaos] are not unhappy with the tourists,” and “I think they want this to be. They want it” (VI12). A tourist explained “the nature of the human is to be more modern...I don’t believe that anyone wants to stay primitive. I don’t think that anyone wants it” (VI12). “Everyone wants more.

If they see something better, they want to achieve that, every time [by] small steps” (VI7), said another tourist.

As mentioned in the chapter on the rice terraces, this social change may extend to the traditional agriculture. The tourist interviewees agreed that “For [the] long run, if you want to buy TV or other machines for the house, then you need to earn much more money. So you need to go to other works [jobs] and farming is the lowest income” (VI7). Yet they were not worried that the rice terraces may be threatened “because they will grow the rice maybe with modern techniques, modern machines” and “they will be open to other ways of growing things [and] they will use new techniques to grow some other products, not only the rice.”

5.2.3 “It is a great experience. How simple life is sometimes”

Some other tourists, also from very different backgrounds from the Ifugaos’, found appreciation rather than pity for the Ifugao lifestyle. When asked about their impression of the Ifugao lifestyle, they replied that it was “not stressful, [but instead,] simple and not complicated,” (VI9) and that Ifugaos “always have a smile” (VI4) and “offer more than [what] they have” (VI5).

This impression came from the contrast between the Ifugao life and theirs. They told me, “we have more stress on the job, [and in] private life. The boss expects more and more from you” (VI4) and that “coming from close to Manila, your first instinct is to not trust people. That is the first instinct. And once I got here in the north part I still felt the same way. I still had the fear of interacting with people, asking for their services because I was afraid that just like in the city, they would lie to me or cheat me. But it turned out [that] the more I interact with them, I wondered why was I thinking that. These were the nicest people and I felt very guilty by that time because I didn’t

have to fear that” (VI11).

Although these tourists appreciated the Ifugao life, like others, they foresaw some changes. One of them told me, local Ifugao young people “can go to school, find a job elsewhere or work as a tour guide here instead of working in the field” (VI4). And another said “this happened in our place. No one is going to look after the rice field” (VI11).

As the interviewees continued on their impression of the Ifugao lifestyle, they began reflecting on their own lifestyle. “It is really difficult because the people have to develop because, for us as tourists, you see this and you think it is really good but maybe they have the opportunity to go to the cities and improve with a better job” (VI14), the conversations soon turned to a larger scale and sometimes even a philosophical level. I was told “if you live in a country developed so much, they always teach you since you are a kid to compete. You have to compete to have better advantage, a better house, and a better family. So it is always compete, compete, and compete and so it is difficult for the people to be happy, more friendly and open-minded” (VI5). And he continued “when you visit a country less developed, for example, one guy has to prepare his house, and maybe all the guys from the village come to help him. It is impossible to see something like that in developed countries. In general, you cannot always meet friendly people in those countries.” They were impressed by “the attitude with most of other [Ifugao] people. For example, within Europe or Spain, people are not very friendly. If a tourist asks something, they answer and then go. But here if somebody has a problem with a motorbike, anyone [would] stop and ask if you are ok, or need something. It is so different.” After experiencing that, they told me “I think you have to learn how to be happy. Because if you have to have the latest iPhone and the good car like

Ferrari. Okay, I reach that and then what? I need more? I think we have to try to learn to change” (VI14). And likewise, after experiencing being helped by strangers, one said, “it is something I always try to teach my students. The thing is that they may not learn what I teach but I want them to be compassionate. That is the thing no matter how upset they are to me, or whatever [score] they give me, I always try to be compassionate because when I receive it myself, I feel so great. I will not forget the person for the rest of my life” (VI11).

Accordingly, the difficulty was “sometimes people think it is impossible to change the world...it is like a circle. If the people don’t change their minds, nothing will change” (VI5). It was added that “we have friends who never go out and they don’t know anything outside there. They only see their place. It is normal. They cannot imagine this” (VI14). In the end, I was told “you have to see. Yes, you have to see. You think that the entire world is like that but it is not” (VI14).

5.3 Harvest ceremony and celebration festival

In Hungduan, the harvest ceremony, *huowah* and the harvest celebration festival, *punnuk*, are the biggest events of the year. *Huowah*, which takes place the day before *punnuk*, is a private ritual done by the leader family in the village. At *huowah*, a *mumbaki* arrives to the family in the morning and performs the ritual where he thanks the God for the harvest and prays for the next good one. According to an interviewee, the prayer “is a response to our survival, because it has something to do with food, help, and well-being of our children” (VI1). Animals are then butchered as a sacrifice and shared by the relatives as lunch. After lunch, the group opens jars of rice wine which the family prepared in advance. Over the rice wine the *mumbaki* chants out the names of the ancestors and invites them to join. After that he stands up, faces the village and shouts

revelry to signal the other families to start their celebrations (Respicio, 2013).

This originally private event, together with the well-know *punnuk*, is getting attention from visitors as well. And as more people attend, the amount needed to feed the participants increases,⁶⁹ but a member of the host family said “since we accept the responsibly it is not a burden” (VII). According to another member, they continue performing the rituals since only the one performed by their family has been effective over history, as if they were the selected family. And thus there is less worry on providing enough food, but more on what others and their ancestors would do to them if they stop this ritual.



Figure 43: Visitors documenting *huowah*

From my observation of the ritual, there were approximately 30 participants, but more visitors

⁶⁹ According to an interviewee, 18 bundles of rice and two chickens were needed for the ritual, which was not a small cost.

than local participants. Mostly from foreign countries, the visitors had dyed hair, tattoos, and professional outdoor and photography equipment. During the ritual, cameras were all around and pointing directly at the *mumbaki*. I asked some of the visitors if a permit for photo was needed and was told that since it was a special event, it was allowed (Figure 43).

The next morning after the *huowah*, fully dressed in their native clothes, men and women, young and old, from the three barangays, or villages, of Hapao, Baang, and Nungulunan walk down shouting from their homes over the mountains to the junction of the three rivers that separate the barangays. There in the river, they hold the *punnuk*, the harvest celebration festival. Using the trunk of a tall thin tree, people from different barangays play tug-of-war and other games. The event ends when the winner from the three barangays is announced.



Figure 44: Tug-of-war game during *punnuk*

At the event there were almost 500 people. Most Ifugaos were wearing their native clothes and participated at the games (Figure 44). As they played, tourists and researchers rushed into the river as well trying to get the best photos. After the game, results were announced and prizes⁷⁰ from the sponsor were given. During the break after lunch, I asked some players what the prize they won was and they said money. It was the money from the sponsor⁷¹, who told me that the donation in 1999 was 8,000 pesos and this year 12,345 pesos (U.S. \$250).

Many local interviewees were concerned about the influence of this change on participants' motivation. "In the past, people came voluntarily. But now even if you call them, they would not come if they have no time. But if you ask them to come for a prize, naturally, people will come" (RF8). While some saw the positive side of keeping the traditional festival, concerns were that "they will think of the prize, not the value" (KE1). While the original value of this festival was "binding of community people" (KE1), showing gratitude to God and imploring his continued assistance (Respicio, 2013), some did think the event was "just an amusement" (KE1).

5.4 Future of tourism in Ifugao

However tourists viewed Ifugao, the future should still be in the hands of the collective Ifugaos. Discussions are taking place not only among the general public, but also among government officials. The primary consideration is "to include local people in the planning and implementing because it is those who really have the heart to keep their rice fields and land. That is why they are part of the stakeholders" (GW2). And many Ifugaos told me they would like to

⁷⁰ On average, the prize for each player was about 300 pesos.

⁷¹ *Punnuk* stopped for many years until 1999 and this individual sponsor donated money as "kickstarter."

propose the eco-tourism programs where “tourists will also be involved in the progress. They will go to the farmers’ house or village, and if they are interested in the culture, or how to make or prepare the rice field, it is open” (BW3). It seemed to a lot of these interviewees that, the benefit of such programs was that farmers “will earn income directly from [the] tourism industry” (GW7).

Indeed, tourism can be an industry, but for societies like the Ifugao, it can also be a cultural bridge. With this widening bridge, Ifugao is as open to external cultures as tourists are to the Ifugao culture. The irony with this bridge may be that, on one hand, it opens a path for Ifugaos to exit their traditional culture, but, on the other hand, it offers a new perspective from which they may be able to see a different image of their own culture, like many tourists have shared. The future, not just of tourism, but also of the culture itself, may depend on whether and how Ifugaos change their mind when they are on this path of cultural change partly in service of tourism and how far they will go on it.

Chapter 6 Lifestyle

In this chapter, changes in Ifugao lifestyle will be examined, with the first emphasis on changes of houses in Ifugao will be first examined. In Ifugao families, houses are not only the place every daily activity takes place, but is also a physical connection to their cultural beliefs. Therefore, the changes in houses may represent changes in life and culture. Then, the Ifugao clothes and dances will be examined. The Ifugao clothes, the attire for women and the g-string for men are still the most iconic element of an image of indigenous Ifugaos today. Yet at present, changes are also taking place. In the third section, the topic turns to betel nut chewing. The importance of betel nut chewing in Ifugao society will be explained, as well as how this old habit is going to change in the future.

6.1 Ifugao houses

The traditional Ifugao houses vary slightly in different municipalities, but typically have a structure of four wood posts that supports a two-story room and a thatched roof. Despite the seemingly simple structure, the building of one of these houses, from laying the foundation and collecting the material to the finish of the construction, could require years of time. Moreover, the houses need to be reroofed ever five to ten years as the roofs wear out.

6.1.1 Changes in houses

Houses in Ifugao are changing. The majority buildings now are square and multi-story with vertical walls built of concrete and rebar and topped with a corrugated metal roof (Figure 45). Only at some corner on a road or in some remote villages would one find native houses. Unlike the native ones, the new concrete houses are usually equipped with electricity, glass windows,

television satellite dishes, water tanks, and so forth. Interviewees in every researched municipality witness this change as two of them said that in the past “the houses were all native [and there was] no roof like the metal ones” (RF1) and “now, you can see mansions here. No native house” (BW14). At the same time, there were modifications in the native houses. Although overall, the structure of them remains, the thatched roofs are replaced by the metal ones and windows are installed, as is electricity.



Figure 45: New houses in Banaue

6.1.2 Perceptions of the changes and proposed measures

Comparing the new and native houses, most interviewees agreed that it was a positive change. The primary reason for building concrete houses is population growth, as well as better protection from natural calamities. It was said, “it is good to have a modern [house] because one native house

can only serve one family or a few people” (BW9), so “even if they only have three or five children, the house is still not big enough. And [so] they have to build a modern house” (RF5). And at the same time, “with changing weather patterns and the fact that storms are stronger and stronger, you are going to have to build concrete houses that can withstand storms, landslides and earthquakes and all these things” (VI9). Some interviewees also found the new houses more comfortable, as one of them recalled that “we used to sleep on the floor so it was not comfortable, but now there are foams and good blankets so people [can] have sound sleep” (RF6). And in terms of the change in the roofing material, one interviewee said “the reason is that it is very difficult to maintain [the native roof]. And the cogon grass⁷² is not suitable here this time. One reason may be the climate change; it is getting hotter here so that may affect the grass. So there is continual [grass] disappearance here. The second is that people want to adjust to strong winds or typhoons. It takes time to maintain the cogon grass roof. When I asked them why they changed their roof to metal, they said they want to reduce the effort, cost, and time in maintaining the roof. They [also] want to go with the trend, since they see their neighbors changing to metal and they also want that” (BW12).

It was pointed out as well that despite these benefits, there are also undesirable effects of these modifications. When talking about the new metal roof, one interviewee said, “when you take photographs and the roofs of the huts are bright, it does not look good” (BW12). The advantages in the structure of the native Ifugao houses were also recognized. One interviewee

⁷² Ifugaos refer to the grass material for native roof as cogon grass but the canegrass (*Miscanthus* sp.) appears to be more similar to the actual material used in roofs.

explained that she still preferred living in a native house because “in a native house we sleep there [and] we cook there. It is very warm and it is not cold in night time⁷³ because we build [a] fire inside. And when it is raining you cannot hear any sound⁷⁴” (RF1). Another one said, “why are there four wood discs under columns⁷⁵ here? They are for the rats and typhoon. And if there is a flood, it is not easy to be flooded. One thing unique about the Ifugao hut I consider is the roofing also. If there is a typhoon, the strong force of the typhoon is not forced on one direction but the whole. It is a balance” (BW12). Other than these practical reasons, nostalgia can be one reason. It was said that “although the roof is changed, the original structure is remained [maintained]. We do not like to change it total because it is where our forefathers grew [up] and where we were born. So the native houses are still there although we build modern houses” and “we are thinking what if this generation passes and what if the next generation doesn’t want to build the native house any more. That is the fear” (RF5).

While most Ifugaos were slowly giving up their native houses, some non-Ifugao people, even from abroad, wanted to preserve them. Tourists are typically disappointed at the loss of the native houses, as one of them told me the native houses were “more matched with nature” (VI8) whereas the modern ones were “little boxes, that is all” (VI8). Sometimes this difference in perspectives can cause conflicts. An interviewee told me, “I am against those foreigners who said we should not

⁷³ In Nagacadan, Kiangnan, there are native houses that are museums. In a sunny day in late June, I found it very hot being in one with metal roof whereas in a one with thatch roof, it was much cooler. Also during my research in Batad, I slept in one native house with thatched roof. I did feel warmer that night than the rest of the nights spent in guesthouses.

⁷⁴ Some interviews were conducted in rooms with metal roof when it was raining. Even though the interviewee and I was almost shouting, it was still very hard to hear each other. (Imagine transcribing those interviews!)

⁷⁵ The wood columns of the native house are each attached with a flat wood discs with a larger diameter than the column about two thirds of the way up the columns.

put any electricity in the hut. For them, they just experience it for a day, so they don't like that we are using electricity" (BW12). And he recalled that "an Australian family once bought a small hut for 250,000 [pesos] (U.S. \$5,000). The [owner] family and local government agreed to sell but when they [the Austrailians] moved it to Manila, the Indigenous People Agency said they would buy the hut at double price, and keep the hut in the national museum⁷⁶. But the Australians insisted. Then I do not know what solution or settlement they had" (BW12).

Such anecdotes raised concerns that "those foreigners [would] come here to buy huts and move [them] to their country to make money" (BW12). Thus, calls for preservation were made in the Ifugao communities. It was suggested that "the government can make donation of the roof, and the family who owns the hut can do some community service either in their homes or in the school as payment" (BW12). Another interviewee said "now the government gives some cogon grass here. That is why you can see some new roof" (BW8).

6.2 Ifugao clothes

Consisting of red and black or white stripes, the Ifugao tapis and g-strings appear in every photo of traditional Ifugaos. An elderly interviewee recalled "our uniforms in the past were tapis and g-string, and our clothes were the bark of a tree⁷⁷. They wove [it for] clothes and blankets" (RF7). However, as one interviewee said, "in the year 1963, the children of a German researcher were the first girls to wear pants. At this moment, only a few women are wearing their traditional clothes" (RF6). An elderly interviewee remembered the time he take off his g-string. He said "I am

⁷⁶ When I visit the Museum of the Filipino People next to the National Museum in Manila during the research time, there was a native Ifugao house on display.

⁷⁷ Possibly abaca fiber.

still proud [that] when I was a little boy, I could remove the g-string because my parents could work and buy short pants” (RF5). Nowadays, one can hardly see anyone wearing these traditional clothes. Only in rare instances can one meet an elder woman wearing the tapis skirt on a jeepney, who takes the same journey from some village along the route. However, although it is rare to see Ifugaos wearing traditional clothes everyday, they still keep them in the wardrobe. One interviewee told me that “we don’t use our [traditional] dress every time, only once in a year” (BW4). It is now during festivals or on special occasions when the Ifugaos still put on their tapis and g-strings. An interviewee once jokingly told me he would like to wear g-string not in Ifugao, but outside, because he would immediately become the center of attention. Similarly, one reason the Ifugao tapis is still being made is tourism (Figure 46). A storekeeper said, “the people from the homestays⁷⁸ would come here to buy souvenir items for their visitors. They don’t buy for themselves” (BW16).

⁷⁸ Homestays are local homes that accept tourists for accommodation.



Figure 46: Elderly dressed in traditional clothes for photography

Along with the change in the use of tapis is the change in the techniques of weaving. Traditionally, during the dry season, Ifugao women would sit on the ground floor under their houses and use the back straps to weave. But now some professional weavers are using loom machines. However, an interviewee said, “there is something unique in the handwoven ones” (KE11), but passing this skill can be a problem as the weavers said, “I want to teach them if they want to learn. So when I die or be[come] old, there will be people making this still” (KE 14).

While beng woven by hand made the traditional clothes unique, it also made them more expensive. “Actually the traditional dress is very expensive because it is handmade. So take the ordinary women’s native dress [as an example]. Now it is about 700 pesos (U.S. \$14), but with 700 pesos you can now buy many new dresses” (KE4). Meanwhile, the interviewee also said “you

cannot always wear g-string or tapis. There are inconveniences.” Apart from the objective reasons in the traditional clothes, people’s perception changed as well.⁷⁹ Some interviewees said, “sorry, I don’t like to wear it [the g-string] so much because of much hair here [on the legs]” (KE4) and “children now are ashamed of wearing native clothes” (KE7). Another interviewee admitted that “what do they [other Ifugaos] want me to wear, like g-strings? Well, we talk about cultural change. There are things that need to change” (KE8).

One of the possible measures, according to an interviewee who went to Thailand for a cultural exchange trip with a group, was to “put [in] some improvement” (KE3). So “we designed a new blouse to replace our tapis”, but they were criticized for not following the tradition, “but one from our group, a young member, said, if you want to follow the tradition, in the old days of our grandparents, they did not even have any tops. They were naked. So if we are to follow the tradition, we should not wear any upper garment.” Compared with that, a more commonly accepted measure was through festivals, as one said, “that is why during the fiestas, they bring all the g-strings and the tapis to wear [so] the children will see and know the culture here in Ifugao” (BW1).

6.3 Ifugao dances

In several interviews, the Ifugao dances were brought up by the interviewees as the symbol of the Ifugao culture. These dances, along with the music by the brass gongs, used to occur often and had religious and social significance in the traditional life (Figure 47). But now, “they [Ifugaos]

⁷⁹ In the 16th century, Spanish colonizers regard the Ifugao clothes as improper and immoral.

only dance on occasions, because most of them find the music not good⁸⁰, and even though we asked them to join, they don't" (GW4) (Figure 48). At an official event I attended, there was spare time before lunch and the moderator invited the officials from different municipalities to dance on a lawn by the stage. None came until several minutes later when one walked up and a couple more slowly joined. But they were shy and their movements were stiff. Soon the small group was dismissed.



Figure 47: Performance of Ifugao dances

In order to conserve the dances, a performing group has been organized and in schools, students are being taught to dance. One interviewee related to these activities said, "[the students] know that some movements symbolize a kind of bird. Well, we accept that sometimes it is boring,

⁸⁰ On various occasions, like talent competition, engagement and at home, I heard Ifugao young people singing and listening the popular music only.

but with the awareness of the performance and the *hudhud*⁸¹, at least people will not forget” (GW2).

However, a majority of the interviewees said, like one of them, that “there are meanings [in the dances] but I don’t know” (BW15). At the same time, as many performances of traditional dances are being put on for tourists (Bulilan, 2007), critics said “the people are abusing the culture. They commercialize the culture. They dance and then tourists will pay them” (RF2).

Perhaps, as the young people learn to dance in school they will also learn the meaning and conserve it as a part of their culture. An elderly interviewee shared her experience, saying, “I was not interested in the cultural dance especially [since] I did not know how to dance, and then whenever I went for viewing, it was so boring because I saw [the dances were] almost the same, the same movements and the same clothes. And I could not understand what the point was. But when I started joining this cultural activity, I learned and I developed to love that culture. And I enjoyed [it]” (RF2).

⁸¹ *Hudhud* is the native chants of Ifugao, which is inscribed as Intangible Cultural Heritage by the UNESCO.



Figure 48: Learning popular dances outside a municipal hall

6.4 Betel nut chewing

In houses, jeepneys, stores, rice fields, or on roads, almost everywhere, one can see Ifugaos, young and old, with a “chewing mouth.” What they chew is called *moma*, which consists of a betel (*Areca catechu*) nut wrapped in a piece of piper vine (*Piper betle*) leaf and some lime powder, some also with a piece of tobacco leaf to add to the flavor. So ubiquitous is the chewing that according to an interviewee, “there is a culture that we have, a tradition of chewing betel nut” (RF4). It also became a social skill. An interviewee said, “if they [Ifugaos] are along the trail, and they are chewing the betel, they would invite the friend to also chew the betel because that is an important part of Ifugao culture. That one has many purposes for us. That alone helps you strike up a conversation. For example, you can ask others if they have an ingredient. So the communication

starts from there” (BW12). While this “snack” is believed to make people warm and strong, a young Ifugao told me that “it dirties the teeth” (YP1). Because of new perceptions like this, some places like schools and hospitals are forbidding betel nut chewing.

In Banaue, which is the tourist center of Ifugao, people were concerned that the red spits of *moma* along the roads are damaging the image of the town and thus they are considering regulations. One possible solution is for people to “always use the waste can to put [in] the betel nut [spits]. That is a matter of discipline”⁸² (GW3), said one interviewee.

6.5 Impression of places outside Ifugao

While it may be true that “there is so much division and separation that I think it slows down some of what maybe the western world would call progress but maybe it is really slowing down the invasion of other cultures” (VI9). Through tourism, media and a number of Ifugaos travelling to the lowland Philippines (Figure 49) and even foreign countries, Ifugaos are getting to know more about other places. From their perceptions, clues about the change in their own lifestyle may be found.

⁸² At a jeepney from the nearby city back to Ifugao, I was sitting next to a young Ifugao man who was chewing much less obviously. He spitted into a water bottle and put it carefully back in his backpack.



Figure 49: The most popular form of transportation in Ifugao

The common impression of the life in foreign countries is that “everybody is so busy and disciplined. They are catching the time⁸³. When they meet together, they need to have appointments” (BW18) and that “people there are very disciplined, because if their government asks [them] to do something, they do [it]” (RF11). One young interviewee told me that to him “they have everything. Yes. They have cars [and things] like that” (BW4). One of the pieces of evidence of such perceptions influencing Ifugaos is pointed out by an interviewee as she said “colonization taught us to prefer to work in the office and write, write and write. And it is too hard carrying stones for many people” (KE1).

However, at the same time, as a few learned more about other places, they saw that “there are

⁸³ I was told repeatedly after arriving at a meeting on time, that Ifugao time runs at least half an hour later than the actual time.

a lot of young people in the western world who become farmers and work as carpenters and do more manual jobs. So maybe it is changing” (KE1). And at the same time, some realized some dark sides of other places. “In Manila I can see the very rich people and the very poor, but in Ifugao I think people are almost the same. There is no very poor or very rich but just the middle” (YP1). Another interviewee said, “I guess I won’t be happy there” (BW1).

6.6 Intergenerational changes

The life of present day Ifugao’s young people has changed greatly from their grandparents’. All elderly interviewees recalled that when they were young, they “helped their parents” (BW14) who “were only thinking about the work in the field” (BW4). Back then, material goods were not abundant, as one interviewee said that “we didn’t have slippers. We had only one [piece of] clothes. In the past, there was not so much paper. That was why we used the banana leaves to draw. And like now it is raining and when we got wet and arrived home and put [our clothes] on top of the fire to get dry and tomorrow it will be dry. We didn’t have shoes so we tied the betel nut stalk. But it was slippery so sometimes we slipped” (RF9).

Nowadays, Ifugaos are using electric lights, gas stoves, and computers. Smart phones are getting more and more popular as well. Many Ifugaos, especially those who experienced the “difficult” old time are pleased with these changes. One said, “we are happy having all these gadgets around because we will not be far behind. At least we are keeping up with the modern things. You know, with all these things around, we cannot help. Especially, the children are educated to these things. They are very helpful when [the children] use them for research or communication. In fact, I have just learned to use text with cell phone” (KE3).

Similar lifestyle changes took place in the life of Ifugao young people as well. They told me during vacations that, the time they spent on “basketball [was] almost three hours, but internet games [was] maybe five [or] six hours” (Figure 50) (YP1), likewise on the TV⁸⁴ and cell phones. In terms of future plans, young interviewees all “want to have a better life” (YP2) by working as a government employee or running a private business. This is also reflected in their drawings of the ideal life (Figure 51).



Figure 50: Internet game room full of young Ifugao men

⁸⁴ The most popular program on TV in Ifugao during the reseach period was the Voice Kids, a reality singing competition show. During the break time, commercials about instant powder drinks, dish soaps, and hair shampoos are most played.

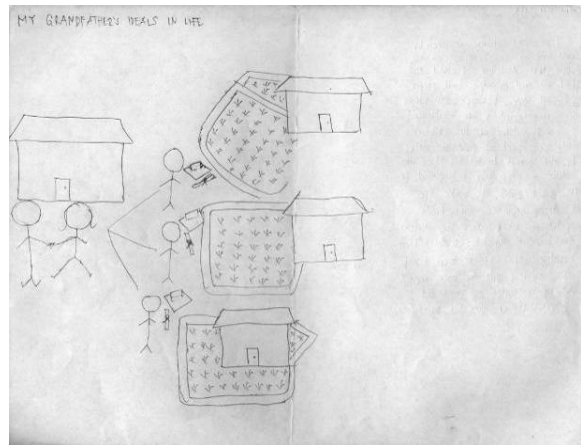
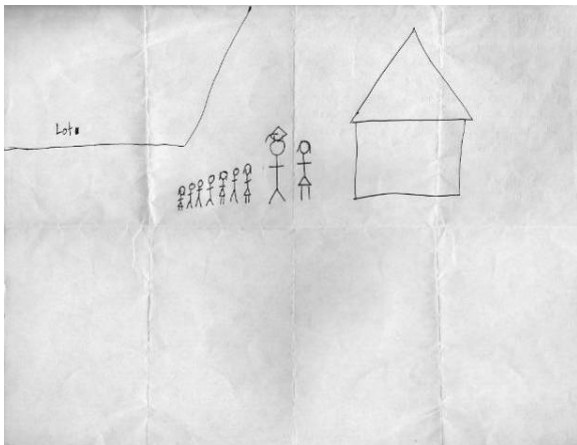


Figure 51: Four drawings of young generation's ideal life⁸⁵ (IL 02, IL5, IL10, and IL15)

However, the trend that the Ifugao young are neglecting the terraces is not desired by the elders (Catajan, 2015). Two of them complained to me that “young people are lazy. They cannot do what I did in the past” (BW9) and “they are already spoiled. They are not used to hard works. Do not expect them to go to the field” (BW12). Even the middle age interviewees complained about the young. One of them said, “my nieces speak English in the house and want nothing to do with anything traditional Ifugao. They were like ‘No, I will wear my skirts, not the Ifugao skirts’” (KE8). Nevertheless, some of these middle age interviewees admitted that the changes happened in themselves as well. One told me “in the past my parents would cook everyday and after eating,

⁸⁵ These four drawings are chosen here because they represent all major components of all of the drawings.

they would pack their lunch and then they go to the rice terraces to work. And in the afternoon, they [would] return home. Even [if] it is raining or the sun is hot, they also work. But me, when it is raining, I am [too] lazy to go to work because I don't like to work in the rain" (BW14). Another said, "our parents would wake up at four or five o'clock, cook, and leave for the rice field at six o'clock. But now, they wake up at eight o'clock, sit down, chew betel nut, go to market, and even though the population is growing, there is a shortage of man power. I have a harvesting now, and I was telling them to invite six people to go but only four showed up. So the next day, they needed to harvest again" (BW3), said another interviewee.



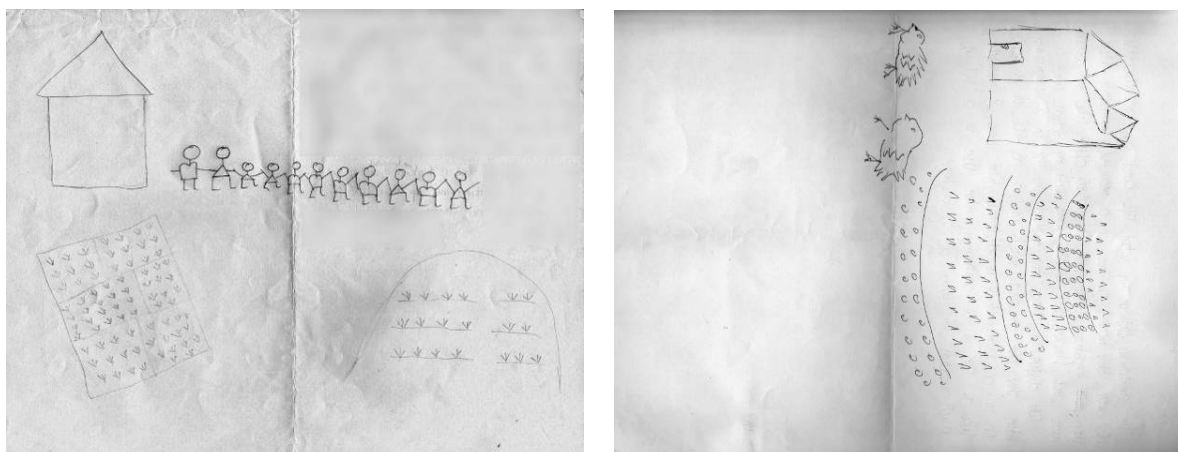


Figure 52: Four drawing of elder generation's ideal life⁸⁶ (Grandparents of IL1, IL2, IL4, and IL8)

In the afterthoughts of the “ideal life drawing” activity⁸⁷, young participants after comparing their ideal life with their grandparents’ (Figure 52), realized the differences that the elder generations “always look forward for a simple yet happy life” (IL7) and “concentrated on life existence” (IL2) while the younger generations “would like to live in a community where there is a bit of modernization in terms of technology” (IL6) and “want a luxurious life” (IL4). Through this activity, the young participants recognized that “time and changes in society could have a great impact on how people think” (IL2). And hopefully, this can help bring the generation gap closer as one of them wrote, “I always look at myself and never consider others...but I have to consider also, the people and the family around like my grandma did” (IL7).

⁸⁶ Likewise, these four are chosen because they show the commonality of all of the drawings.

⁸⁷ In this activity, young students participated at a focus group activity on the “comparison between the ideal life of the young and elder generations.” They were asked to first draw a picture of their ideal life together at class. And later after they each returned home, they asked their grandparents about their ideal life and also drew a picture of it. After comparing the grandparents’ ideal life with their’s, the young participants wrote down their thoughts on the back of their drawings.

Chapter 7 Value of the Ifugao culture in the face of global development trends

In this chapter, I examine how the changes in the Ifugao culture mentioned in the previous chapters are connected with the prevailing trends of development around world and share some of my thoughts on it. My purpose here is not to evaluate whether these cultural and lifestyle changes in Ifugao are positive or not. Rather, I aim to place the Ifugao culture before the mirror of the global trends of development and identify what is of value in the Ifugao culture that should be conserved, and what may be of referential value for non-Ifugao societies in their development.

7.1 Economic change

In Ifugao today, most farmers no longer go to the swidden fields, let alone to the woodlots or forests. Compared with the farmers in the past, they also spend less time in the rice terraces. Despite that, their production has not decreased dramatically due to agricultural changes. For the farmers who are growing two seasons of the new variety rice with machines, synthetic fertilizers, and pesticides, the production has increased (Chapter 2). Considering all this, the agricultural productivity or efficiency in Ifugao has actually improved when measured as output per labor hour.

Although the means of production, the land, can still be inherited, the original purpose of the tenant system, to allow landless people to have a means of production, is giving way to the new mechanism of concentrating land with a few owners who can specialize and perform professional production (Chapter 2 and 4). Tenants are asking for a larger share of the harvest, so that they have more incentive to increase production (Chapter 4). Others, who are driven out

from farming, also specialize in income-generating jobs. Meanwhile, small terraces where production is inefficient are being abandoned (Chapter 4).

With these changes in production, subsistence for many individuals or small households decreased. Rice farmers, who now only grow rice in their field and swidden farmers, who produce export crops like winged beans, are dependent on the income to buy food produced in other places (Chapter 2). While business workers make money from tourists, their life becomes difficult when their amount of business decreases (Chapter 6).

As a result of the decreasing level of subsistence, Ifugaos, farmers or not, need to increase income in order to have enough for living. Yet the mechanism of increasing income is highly dependent on external resources, like synthetic fertilizers or feed for animals, and the number of tourists for business workers. Some Ifugaos are being proletarianized and at the same time, some, those who own land and capital and hire labor in farming or business keeping are becoming capitalists (Chapter 4 and 6). All of this shows that the social classes are being differentiated. With that, the cycle begins and develops the capitalistic economy that prevails in the present world (Wood, 1998).

After World War II, developmentalism became a theme of the world (Truman, 1949). Increasing the income per capita became the goal of agricultural development in many developing countries (Johnston and Southworth, 1967; Staatz and Eicher, 1998). This was believed to be achievable by a very capitalistic notion that external capital investment in agricultural production for export could assist a country to develop (Sachs, 2006).

However, while the absolute materialistic standard of living in many developing countries

might have increased, it was found out that by exporting primary products and importing manufactured products, their relative economy to the developed countries would deteriorate (Harvey et al., 2010; Singer, 1950). At the same time, deep globalization and integrated value chains can cause various domestic social issues in these developing countries (Byerlee et al., 2009). Summarizing the lesson from Japan, Soda (2006) wrote that agriculture, under the logic of free trade rather than differentiating based on regional differences, may cause serious problems in related regions which affect the survival of local people. Moreover, even within a nation, it was argued that the capitalistic economy would widen, the disparity between rich and poor (Piketty et al., 2014).

Thus, the problem of capitalistic development is that it inevitably widens the disparity between rich and poor, affecting both individuals and countries. At the same time, it extends beyond the scope of the economy, but also to society and environment.

7.2 Social change

The capitalistic economic change mentioned above runs on a utilitarian principle where actions are governed by its hedonistic efficiency of pleasure over hardship. Despite the known unhealthy effects, Ifugaos are eating more processed and frozen foods because these foods take little time to make but taste better (Chapter 5); the difficult traditional religious practices that require economic sacrifice and place taboos on pleasure are being replaced by “easier” Christian prayers (Chapter 4); and less labor intensive jobs like tour guiding and more leisure hobbies like computer games and online chatting are being favored by Ifugao’s young people (Chapter 6 and 7).

While the problem of hedonism is philosophical and can be controversial, it is argued that people can be blinded by materialistic hedonism⁸⁸ (Figure 53), the hedonistic treadmill⁸⁹, and dehumanized, when value of people is measured by their material prosperity (Adas, 1990). After the period of economic boom in Japan, opinion poll from 1970 to 2000 marked an increase in the number of people (from 40% to 60%) pursuing spiritual richness rather than material richness (Japanese Satoyama Satoumi Assessment, 2010). While it may be argued that such spiritual searching and realization comes after material prosperity, living with no modern technology, ancient Chinese poet Tao⁹⁰ (living in a much lower materialistic standard than today) responded to the hedonistic life philosophy of “when you can get wine, be sure to drink it.” In his poem⁹¹ he wrote, “let us strive and labour while yet we may. To do some deed that men will praise. Wine may in truth dispel our sorrow, but how compare it with lasting Fame” (Waley, 1946).



Figure 53: Spending all on a wallet (Source: endlessorigami.com)

⁸⁸ It refers to the thinking that personal pleasure is sufficient for happiness.

⁸⁹ The short time of happiness from a new material good or experience which promotes the pursuit for new happiness and results in no permanently stable level of happiness.

⁹⁰ Tao Yuanming (365–427 AD).

⁹¹ The poems, Substance, Shadow, and Spirit are attached in the appendix E.

From this hedonistic ideology toward life, individualism also develops. The traditional Ifugao religious practices become expensive as people no longer want to share their food (Chapter 4). As the traditional religion that stresses community connections disappears (Chapter 4), Ifugao farmers no longer follow the synchronized agricultural calendars, but base agricultural activities often on personal considerations (Chapter 3). At the same time, tourism is creating tension among community members as they compete for business (Chapter 6). Young people are thinking more for their small family rather than for the clan (Chapter 7).

Similar developments of individualism in Western societies were examined by the political scientist Fukuyama. He found an “increasing levels of crime and social disorder, the decline of families and kinship as a source of social cohesion, and decreasing levels of trust” (Fukuyama, 1999:60). The combined philosophy of individualism and hedonism strengthens the zero-sum game of political ideology, where individuals’ and parties of individuals’ well-being depends exclusively on the materialistic enjoyment. And thus, a competition on the exploitation of natural resources is initiated, creating more environmental changes. While modern liberalism argues that one’s actions should not be prevented as long as there is no harm to others (Mill, 1966), it is arguably impossible to make any action that consumes natural resources without affecting any other people. Moreover, unfulfilled wishes for a better life are explained as not trying hard enough and therefore misfortunes are not understood or sympathized with. Malice accumulates until violence breaks out.

7.3 Environmental change

Many economic and social changes have environmental costs. In Ifugao, higher productivity

from the rice terraces depends on synthetic fertilizers which are produced often with fossil fuels that emit greenhouse gases (Chapter 3). Compared to the native Ifugao houses, more energy is needed for the new houses, from the making of the material such as cement and metal, to the running of them (Chapter 7). Apart from higher energy consumption, the current lifestyle also creates more pollution than the traditional one, such as pesticides killing native shellfish (Chapter 3) and garbage from packaged snacks (Chapter 6).

The danger of environmental degradation may be learned from history. When analyzing the reasons for the fall of the four ancient river valley civilizations (the Nile, the Mesopotamia, the Huang he and the Indus), historians concluded that environmental change played a big role (Sivers et al., 2011). It was found that together with the shifted purpose of technological advancement from farm production towards the pleasure enjoyment of higher classes, the slow but accumulating environment degradation was the last straw.

However, people today are not learning this lesson of history. The slow but accumulating environmental changes are taking place today as scientists warn about global climate change (Parmesan and Yohe, 2003), among many other environmental issues like biodiversity loss (Cardinale et al., 2012) and soil degradation (Blaikie, 1985). Ironically, the focus of technological development today also seems to be more on the enjoyment of life rather than on environmental protection. Any negative feedback from nature, such as a disease or pest outbreak, is muted by solving the syndrome (Read et al., 2011) instead of the cause, only adding to the “debt.” Signs of regional and global environmental changes are neglected because actions would be “too costly and not efficient.”

Perhaps, from the examination of these problems above, economically, socially, and environmentally, the prevention or solution starts from a sustainable culture (Holthaus, 2012; Japanese Satoyama Satoumi Assessment, 2010; Soda, 2006).

7.4 Communal cooperation

Contrary to the current global development trend, in which the problems mentioned above occurred over a short period of merely half a century, Ifugao culture has existed for at least three centuries (as old as the youngest dates given to the rice terraces), and probably much longer. Although some may argue the fact that Ifugao people are more or less adopting the modern culture shows the relative value between the two, to me, the long sustainable history of this culture is more convincing that there are very valuable aspects of the Ifugao culture relative to the modern one.

One element of the Ifugao culture interviewees regarded as valuable was the *bayanihan*, the communal cooperation spirit. Interviewees said, “our culture has the trait of helping someone in need. For example, when someone needs help from others, he can invite people and [in return] serve food for them” (GW1). At the same time, “[the help people offer is] voluntary. They go and cut wood, they prepare everything, even the big cooker. That’s free. They just come even if you don’t invite them. It’s our culture to help” (BW18). In addition to sharing work that requires labor, Ifugaos also share what they have for others in need. An international worker said “in Ifugao it is sort of shameful if you allow somebody in your family to go hungry, homeless or wanting something. So people here take care of their families and take great pride in providing to their families” (VI9). A farmer told me something that seemed contradictory. He said, “never sell

the rice at home because it is a gift from God. If you have enough, you can share it when someone is in need” (RF4).

This spirit sometimes extended to be a kind of universal love. “The basic unit of Ifugao society is the family. But not the family as defined by the Filipino standards because the Filipino family would be the father, the mother and the children. For the Ifugaos, it extends to [a] wider membership. So I would refer to it anthropologically as [a] ‘kinship group,’ [which includes] your immediate family, your cousins, and a village eventually” (KE8). Therefore, to some interviewees, “that value is what has made the Ifugao community intact because with that you honor your relatives and you cannot kill anyone because you consider them relatives, and you cannot steal from anybody because you consider them relatives” (GW7). Another interviewee said “one important thing about the culture is being in a good manner, trait and character as a human being. And you should be good and responsible to human fellows” (RF6).

The value of cooperative action and assistance can be found in many tropical and subtropical countries. Various studies explained that the formation of it is of benefit to the communities in coordination for intensive work and adapting to the climatic patterns⁹² (Madangeng et al., 2015; Talhelm et al., 2014; Tetsuro and Bownas, 1961).

This value of communal cooperative is of value in today’s world because it undermines the capitalistic value of life based on personal materialistic enjoyment. Instead, the communal cooperative value emphasizes the non-exclusive spiritual gains when sharing and being shared with. Misfortune can be alleviated before any violence takes place, creating a strong unit of

⁹² Also see appendix B for this value in traditional California agriculture.

humankind where individuals act as one. At the same time, by multiplying the enjoyment of a single unit of material when it is being shared, the well-being of humankind is no longer linearly limited by the amount of natural resources. Therefore, the urgent problems of environmental change due to over-exploitation of natural resources can be avoided by a collective action to minimize environmental disturbance⁹³, but at the same time maximizing human well-being.

In addition to facilitating the solution of existing problems that require collective cooperation, valuing collective cooperation may have the potential in creating a new world order. Take abolishment of the inheritance of political power for instance. The social problem of serfdom in feudalism was solved when political power was returned to everyone, and the belief of “all men are created equal” became the consensus. Yet while it may be surprising if any serf in the past took the inheritance of political power for granted, modern people seem not to have any question with the idea of inheritance of economic power and nationalism, which arguably are the causes of rich and poor disparity and war. Yet with the communal spirit, material is no longer the only consideration in life and thus can be shared with children of others. Likewise, due to the geographically uneven distribution of natural resources, people would be allowed to migrate wherever so that a geographically balanced standard of living may be achieved.

⁹³ In 1945, after the atomic bombs Albert Einstein alerted that “there is no other salvation for civilization and even for the human race than the creation of a world government with security on the basis of law” (Einstein, 2007). And more recently, Stephen Hawking also warned in December 2016 that “the really concerning aspect of this is that now, more than at any time in our history, our species needs to work together...we are at the most dangerous moment in the development of humanity...right now we only have one planet, and we need to work together to protect it. To do that, we need to break down, not build up, barriers within and between nations” (Hawking, 2016).

7.5 Human and nature

Ifugaos understand the importance of sustainability of their agricultural activity. This can be seen in beliefs in the traditional Ifugao religion. Religiously it may be explained “because the animals are given by the God. They believe the animals were given by the God so they have to appreciate or offer to the God before they ate” (KE10). And an interviewee, after demythologizing the phenomenon, explained the reason why after harvest, *mumbakis* forbid eating any shellfish. She said that, “when I think about it, it is because during that period, the shells lay eggs. Even [if] there are many shells in the rice field, we do not catch them” (KE05).

This understanding of the importance of agricultural sustainability develops into a special perception of the relationship between human and nature. One interviewee explained that “if they [people] look at the typical Ifugao lifestyle, one has to look at it from a philosophical perspective not something materialistic” (KE8). That is why for some farmers, even though they are economically poor, they “do not depend on the rice field for finance, only for food. They don’t want to sacrifice the fertility of the soil for gaining more income” (RF8). To them and many other Ifugaos, “[the value of nature] is spiritual, not economic” (KE1). Therefore “the land is a very important part for Ifugaos and they will fight and do everything to preserve and take good care of it. You know we are connected with our land. We value it” (GW2). This relationship even places nature beyond a physical object. An interviewee said, “it [the environment] is not just a source of timber, not a source of gold or any material thing. It is a brother. It is a sister. You need to work with it harmoniously, not just extract everything from it” (KE8).

Agriculture is the most crucial connection of mankind and nature, which in essence is a

series of human activities to collect consumable primary energies and resources such as food and fuel. The Ifugaos understand that such activities satisfy human survival, but at the same time inevitably alter the environment on which human survival depends. Although agricultural production is highly specialized and technical today, the fact that human survival depends on the primary energies and sources has not changed. And therefore, the paradox between production for survival and production affecting survival still exists. It is easy to continue the debate on insufficient production and environmental damage. But what may be needed is our realization that all food and essentially everything we are using has a cost of production higher than what the price tag shows. It includes the direct environmental cost and thus the cost on those (human and other species) whose well-being is harmed, and the indirect opportunity cost of the resources or energy to be used for other purposes.

Apart from production, agriculture also involves demand and distribution. The difficulty today is that modern people seem to believe their living is independent from nature. A community composed of those who have no interest to learn the miracle and difficulty of agriculture production naturally would not value the material they enjoy. And therefore this community would not appreciate the fruit of any production. The value of the Ifugao relationship of humans and nature is that it extends the boundary of morality beyond humankind. And together with the communal cooperative value, people's well-being can be achieved by "sharing with nature", or without any materialistic consumption.

Chinese scholar Liang Shuming⁹⁴ pointed out three key relations for human life: the humans versus the matter or the natural world; human versus human; and human versus the spiritual self (Liang and Alitto, 2013). The two sets of values of the Ifugao culture, the values of communal cooperation and sustainable relationship with nature, originate from the relationship between human versus the spiritual self (as the values denote spiritual or conscious judgements of the worth and importance of an action), but answers as well the other two relations. I believe that all practices of Ifugao culture, from agriculture (the relation of humans and matter) to the collective work (the relation of human and human) animated and evolved from these two values. Therefore, although practices may be different, the two values may have universal value even for non-Ifugao societies. A farmer interviewee concluded, when asked for any final thought of the interview, “the only way that we can live here on earth is to love it, love each other, and have peace in mind and share what is enough with you” (RF4).

⁹⁴ Shuming Liang (1983-1988), a leader in Rural Reconstruction Movement, was considered to be the Last Confucian.

Chapter 8 Conservation of Ifugao values

Although many Ifugao interviewees recognized the importance of their traditional values, proposals for conservation remain on the cultural practices such as the farming techniques, the religion, and the dances. However, after examining difficulties of proposed measures of education and government support, I argue that the priority should be the conservation of the Ifugao values (Figure 54).

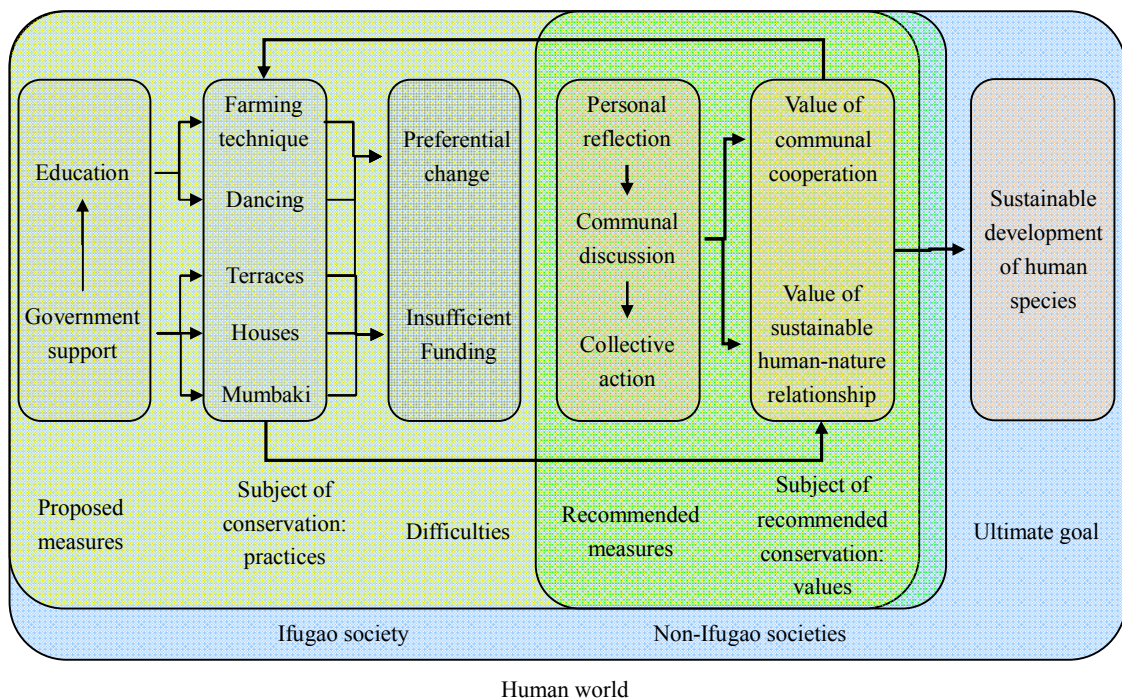


Figure 54: Conceptual map of conservation strategies and its significance

8.1 Education

Many interviewees referred to education, both in school and in family, as an important measure to develop whill will, at the same time, conserve the culture. One of them told me that “it is only through education that we can improve our life” (KE3). However, there was a complaint about the education system in the past that “in Catholic schools they are teaching the

subject of values education, but these are very Christian values...everything is about Christianity but nothing about the Ifugao. So we grew up knowing the only reason why we are Ifugaos is by our names. We know nothing about our culture and nothing about our values” (KE8). Therefore, there are efforts to include the Ifugao culture in the curriculum “so young people will eventually appreciate programs or courses related to the preservation or conservation of [the] culture, like anthropology or agriculture” (KE11). Nowadays, “they [the school teachers] are starting today to teach our children about our culture like the history of this place and the cultural dances, [and] how and when to wear native clothes” (BW16) (Figure 55).



Figure 55: Students learning traditional Ifugao dances

As is recognized, “there is really a big responsibility for us now especially [those] who have the knowledge of our culture to contribute or help” (GW2). Some who have traditional skills are

teaching, and one of them said, “I keep on teaching even teachers so that they will teach in the school to help the community, but they just teach and the students will go to college and do not apply [what they have been taught]” (BW11). Another limitation of school education was pointed out. A text in the Indigenous Peoples' Education Center in Kiangnan (2016), using the example of the curricula on the traditional chants, *hudhud*, reads, “students are taught to memorize snippets of the epic chants not for its socio-cultural significance, but rather for inter-municipality competitions.”

Other than school education, Ifugaos have been passing their traditions across generations through family education. One interviewee said, “[the education] really has to start from the family, because in school it is only the formal education. But it starts at home” (GW2). In Ifugao, “old folks like to bring kids to the rice fields. Maybe [the work at the fields] plants in their mind and even when they are big, they will go back and work in the field. That is why the old folks kept on saying that you [children] come and work in the fields, so that if you grow old, you will not forget”, said one of the interviewees (BH11).

Yet, the fundamental difficulty of family education was that “it is not just the young people who don’t like them [the traditions], even the elders are ashamed of wearing g-strings and [to] dance. Like everybody knows it is hard work to farm, but we tell the young to preserve the terraces” (RF2).

8.2 Government support

Individual efforts on conserving the culture, according to an interviewee, is “a spark in the darkness” (GW7) and therefore, almost all interviewees agreed that the government intervention

would be needed. They expected governments to support by providing funds for farmers to maintain terraces, providing affordable education and jobs, and funding cultural events. One example of the government intervention is the environmental fee visitors pay before entering heritage sites. One interviewee said “we collect [an] environmental fee⁹⁵ [which]...is used for the irrigation system” (GW7). One municipal government also “provides funds, little funds...for the farmers to have a capital [fund] to start livelihood businesses to support and to help them with the economic situation” (GW6), and likewise another municipal governments “are promoting our School of Living Traditions (SLD) and every time we are funding it,” said another interviewee (GW8).

While many Ifugaos rely on the government support, some limitations were noted. One interviewee thought that the fund from the government “still won’t be enough because the Philippine government is a poor government. They cannot give farmers pensions at all” (GW7). And even if the governments “are providing funds for the ordination of the *mumbaki*, nowadays the young people are not interested to be trained” (GW3). Moreover, another interviewee pointed out that “modernization of agriculture [and] farmers’ organizations now is already a destruction to our culture” (GW6).

At the same time, due to various limits from the political structure, the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), where many indigenous cultures other than the Ifugao reside, is trying to gain its autonomy. On the 29th Founding Anniversary of the CAR, one speech read: “we want to involve people in decision making, because development should be inclusive. But when

⁹⁵ The environmental fee was 50 pesos for Batad Rice Terraces and 350 for Nagacadan Rice Terraces.

we discussed [this] on the national level, sometimes we are prevented because of standards, national standards that we should follow.”

However in fact, the governance in Ifugao had been on an communal level in an autonomous fashion, as one interviewee pointed out, “the present situation is that we have village level government unlike in the old days [when] we talked among ourselves. Now it seems the task is given to the council” (KE9). And perhaps, like what was pointed out, whether self-governing or not, what is needed is an open discussion.

8.3 Conservation of Ifugao values

So far, proposed measures to conserve the Ifugao culture have been rather limited to the practices, like the dancing and rituals, but with little emphasis on values. With all the interviews and observations, it slowly became clear to me that all Ifugao practices not only evolved from the two core values discussed in Chapter 7, the values of communal cooperation and a sustainable relationship with nature (Figure 56) — but at the same time had been protected as people, especially the elders and those who lived in remote villages, held on to them.



Figure 56: Illustration of conceptual relationships of Ifugao values and cultural practices

Therefore, as Ifugaos changed their values and no longer view the cultural practices as preferable, many conservation measures were found costly or even as burdens, and thus require government support. The other limitation is that without emphasizing the underlying values, the practices were reduced to hollow performances for aesthetic and tourist purposes. Moreover, as the Ifugao society becomes assimilated to the non-Ifugao ones, the conservation of the Ifugao culture should be placed in the context of a more universal perspective. And therefore, it is the values from which cultural practices originated that should be the subject of conservation.

However, these values can be easy to undermine, but hard to reestablish. It requires trust and collective action. The difficulty and the irony is that the lack of these prerequisites is, at the same time, the outcome of the traditional values being undermined. Yet, it is our inaction that

maintains this cycle, and to break it, we can begin action⁹⁶ with our individual reflections on experiences and events in life. Too often it seems that most of us do not question the rightfulness of what we are used to or feel comfortable with. We seem to take for granted that gasoline is a superior form of energy to human labor without thinking about the biomass and time it takes to form crude oil; we seem to take for granted that a shirt can be thrown away when fashion trends change without thinking of the tedious tasks workers used to produce a shirt; we seem to take for granted that our life has meaning as long as we are busy without thinking what we are busy for. Is our inaction a result of our human nature to want comfort, or of our fear of losing what we privately enjoy? If our human nature is to want comfort, should there be limit at which the limited material resources can sustain us? If there is such limit, should we still connect our unlimited desire for happiness with materialistic enjoyment? If we know that our lifestyle is not sustainable, resulting directly and indirectly in sufferings somewhere in the world, should we control our desires although there are others living “more unsustainably”, or do we continue? If we feel it is immoral that opportunities for materialistic prosperity are unequal among the general people, why do we think it is acceptable to pursue them now rather than preserve for the future generations? Is it because we believe that current prosperity will not deprive other people and future generations of equal opportunities, or are we choosing to be unconvinced?

If such reflection provokes any doubt or hesitation in the things we take for granted as good, we should have the courage to try to initiate discussions with our fellow community members

⁹⁶ We may need to begin action as soon as possible because with the exponential-like development of mankind, the tipping point posed by climate change and the development of weapons of mass destruction is not far away. (Morris, 2010)

and to make small changes in our daily life. No matter how such discussions or changes in the actions in our daily life may turn out to be, uncomfortable, lonesome, or awakening, we experience the tension of the three relationships of human versus nature, human versus human, and human versus self. There will be no regret if the Ifugao values are found undersirable and should be forgotten, yet if we discover value in them and live those values in our life, we would have achieved no small thing.

Appendix A. Description of Navajo and Hopi people

Text from plaques in the Ethnology gallery of Museum of Northern Arizona (March 2016)

The Navajo Today

Navaho life is changing rapidly. Population growth, a crowded land base, and the desire for consumer goods are forcing more people to seek wage work jobs for income. Fewer people are living the traditional lifestyle.

Thus, modern Navajos no longer live exclusively from farming and sheepherding as they did a generation ago. However, these are still symbolically important activities. Because of the traditional value and prestige given to them, their importance extends far beyond their actual economic contribution⁹⁷.

Hozho

The Navajo word hozho means harmony, beauty, peace of mind, goodness and health. To the Navajo, hozho is the most desired quality in all things. The word describes the natural world, ideal family relationships and the beauty that is placed into arts and crafts. To live to an old age, to have a close family, health and to be happy is to achieve hozho.

Illness is the result of disharmony, which in turn is caused by evil introduced by the violation of taboos, witchcraft, over-indulgence or bad dreams. Navajo ceremonies, taught by the Holy People, are designed to restore the ill person to a state of hozho. This is done through song, use of herbs, drama and creations of sand paintings. The Navajo have many ceremonies lasting from one to nine nights, which attack specific causes of disharmony and thus neutralize evil.

⁹⁷ Except that the Ifugaos do not have any sheepherding, these two paragraphs can describe their situations almost exactly.

Agriculture

The Navajo are traditionally farmers as well as herders. Staples are corn, beans, squash, wheat and tobacco. Although farming today contributes only a small amount to the income of the Navajo, it is still very intervened with religious belief. Corn is the most sacred of all foods and corn pollen is the most important of rituals substances. Most families grow a few acres of corn every summer and it remains an indispensable part of the diet. The small fields are generally located near washes, the mouths of canyons and other well-water location.

“I’ve been planting ever since I was a small boy. In those days everybody helped with farming... We all worked together. We knew to start planting by the full moon in Taatsho (May). We’d all get together and start with one corn field and plant that and then move on to the next... My family never planted corn in exactly the same spot every year. The plants grew better that way... A farmer cannot be lazy and he must be strong. He must always be at his farming.”

The Hopi Today

“Ever since the white man appeared, we have been changing, adapting to new ideas and ways of bettering our condition...the white man has brought...a new order of nature...to survive one had to do things we never did before. We had to reorganize our thinking and while we were doing, we lost a firm grip on our traditions...I have always thought that the only way we can save the old traditions is to recognize the forces at work in our lives...that way we can survive and preserve a part of our mind for the old values. If you don’t survive, you don’t have anything.”

“We feel the world is good... We are grateful to be alive... We sense that we are related to other

living creatures. Life is to be valued and preserved...When you go out of your house in the morning and see the sun rising, think about it. That sun brings warmth to the things that grow in the fields. If there's a cloud in the sky, look at it and remember it brings rain to a dry land. When you take water from a spring, be aware that it is a gift from nature..."

Appendix B. Cooperative value in traditional California Agriculture

Text from plaques in the California Agricultural Museum (December 2016)

Farm life was hard and inseparable from work. Even times of relaxation were spent in useful activity such as butter-making or corn husking. Everyone in the family was expected to do their part. Because they worked together, families were close knit and could depend on each other.

Being a good neighbor was very important. Barn raising, “bees and frolics” gather nearby neighbors together to accomplish large tasks, turning often tedious work into lively social occasions. A spirit of cooperation and mutual aid existed and in this way families supported and provided for each other.

A strong cooperative spirit prevailed in these local farming communities. Threshing the wheat and oat harvest with a horse powered threshing machine required help from neighboring farms. Most farmers did not own their own threshing machines, but rather contracted with a local thresherman, who supplied the equipment. The host farmers supplied horses, labor and food for everyone involved.

Appendix C. Sample interview questions

Since the interviews are semi-structured, detailed questions varied in each interview depending on the interviewee's background, interest, time availability and so forth. The listed questions below are generally but not all asked.

- 1) What comes to your mind first when you think of Ifugao?
- 2) Is there any change in the elements of Ifugao culture?
- 3) Do you have experiences that illustrate such change?
- 4) What do you think is the reason for these changes?
- 5) How do you like these changes?
- 6) If the changes are desirable, what has been done to promote them? If not, what has been done to prevent them?
- 7) How do you think of your life now? What is your plan for the future?
- 8) What do you think of the interview?

Appendix D. New and old rice farming calendars

Table from Nitapa and Ognayon (2016)

Location	Hapao ⁹⁸ (Hungduan)		Viewpoint ² (Banaue)		Bangaan ² (Banaue)	
Month of the year	1980's	Present	1980's	Present	1980's	Present (2 cropping)
Cutting rice stubbles	9-10	10-11	9-10	12-1	9-10	11-12
Trampling stubbles in soil	10-11	11-12	10-11	12-1	10-11	10-12
Weeding and preparing seedbed	10-11	11-12	11-12	1-2	11-12	10-11
Sowing	10-11	12-2	12-1	2-3	12-1	12-2
Cleaning the field	12-1	12-2	12-1	2-3	12-1	12-2
Land preparation	12-1	12-2	12-1	3-4	12-1	1-2
Translating seedlings	1	1-2	1-2	3-4	1	1-2
Monitoring and maintenance	3-5	4-6	4-5	5-8	3-5	2-4/3-7
Harvesting	5-6	7-8	6-7	9-10	6-7	3-4/7-8
Drying and storage	6-7	7-8	7-8	9-10	7-8	4-5/8-9

⁹⁸ Hapao, Viewpoint and Bangaan are Barangays. Barangay is the lower administrative level under municipality.

Appendix E. *Substance, Shadow and Spirit* by Tao Yuanming

The translation is from Waley (1946).

High and low, wise and simple, all busily hoard up the moments of life. How greatly they err!
Therefore I have to the uttermost exposed the bitterness both of Substance and Shadow, and have
made Spirit show how, by following Nature, we may dissolve this bitterness.

Substance speaks to Shadow:

Heaven and Earth exist for ever:
Mountains and rivers never change.
But herbs and trees in perpetual rotation
Are renovated and withered by the dews and frosts:
And Man the wise, Man the divine—Shall he alone escape this law?
Fortuitously appearing for a moment in the World
He suddenly departs, never to return.
How can he know that the friends he has left
Are missing him and thinking of him?
Only the things that he used remain;
They look upon them and their tears flow.
Me no magical arts can save,
Though you may hope for a wizard's aid.
I beg you listen to this advice—When you can get wine, be sure to drink it.

Shadow replies:

There is no way to preserve life.
Drugs of Immortality are instruments of folly.
I would gladly wander in Paradise,
But it is far away and there is no road.
Since the day that I was joined to you
We have shared all our joys and pains.
While you rested in the shade, I left you a while:
But till the end we shall be together.
Our joint existence is impermanent:
Sadly together we shall slip away.
That when the body decays Fame should also go
Is a thought unendurable, burning the heart.
Let us strive and labour while yet we may
To do some deed that men will praise.
Wine may in truth dispel our sorrow,
But how compare it with lasting Fame?

Spirit expounds:

God can only set in motion:
He cannot control the things he has made.
Man, the second of the Three Orders,
Owes his precedence to Me.
Though I am different from you,
We were born involved in one another:
Nor by any means can we escape
The intimate sharing of good and ill.
The Three Emperors were saintly men,
Yet to-day—where are they?
P'ēng lived to a great age,
Yet he went at last, when he longed to stay.
And late or soon, all go:
Wise and simple have no reprieve.
Wine may bring forgetfulness,
But does it not hasten old-age?
If you set your heart on noble deeds,
How do you know that any will praise you?
By all this thinking you do Me injury:
You had better go where Fate leads—
Drift on the Stream of Infinite Flux,
Without joy, without fear:
When you must go—then go,
And make as little fuss as you can.

Appendix F. Additional photos of present Ifugao life

These additional photos are supplemented here in order to show the present Ifugao people, their lifestyle and the landscape.



Figure 57: Ifugao child interacting with her grandma



Figure 58: Children on the trail by rice terraces



Figure 59: Children playing games at playground



Figure 60: Children posing for a photo



Figure 61: Using electric shock to catch fish



Figure 62: Children playing on rice starw piles



Figure 63: Children helping feed livestock early in the morning



Figure 64: Children plaing in a river after school



Figure 65: Children going to school passing rice terraces



Figure 66: Women farmers harvesting rice



Figure 67: Joy of harvesting



Figure 68: Using a wood spade to maintain terrace edge



Figure 69: Working in the field in rain



Figure 70: Growing up learning agricultural work



Figure 71: Strengthening terrace wall before the next cropping season



Figure 72: Collective work in harvesting



Figure 73: Younger and elder farmers work together



Figure 74: Every grain of rice is valued



Figure 75: Signs of the traditional life



Figure 76: Enjoying the song relay at the engagement



Figure 77: Traditonal and modern soldiers of Ifugao



Figure 78: Package snacks being delivered to stores



Figure 79: Wood carvings at display in a souvenir store



Figure 80: Traditional lifestyle unfit for the modern one



Figure 81: Rice imported to Ifugao



Figure 82: Popular entertainments like Kaoraoke entering Ifugao



Figure 83: A typical store in Ifugao selling small packaged products



Figure 84: Researchers documenting during a ritual



Figure 85: Digital recorder as a modern tribute



Figure 86: Walking down from villages in traditional clothes



Figure 87: Participants at the tug-of-war game



Figure 88: G-strings floating in water during the tug-of-war game



Figure 89: Breath holding competition



Figure 90: Ifugao native house and surrounding rice terraces



Figure 91: A recently burned down native house



Figure 92: Rice being store in a native house



Figure 93: Making breakfast in a native house



Figure 94: Buildings on steep slope



Figure 95: Climbing on terrace walls to reach an interviewee



Figure 96 Lowland agriculture with large machines



Figure 97: Original stairs in the terrace wall



Figure 98: Little lights at night with the stary sky



Figure 99: Rice terraces under the first sunshine



Figure 100: Waiting under an umbrella by a rice terrace

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