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## **The Agta of Nothreastern Luzon, by Griffin and Griffin**

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limit severely the success of the early developmental policies. In the final section on post-independence relationships, Bonifacio Salamanca traces the twenty-year negotiations over supplementary war damage payments, 1951-72, and the final resolution in the various projects funded by the Special Fund. Richard Welch studies the nature and limits of neocolonial relationships during the Quirino regime.

Some of these topics obviously have more significance than others, and not all are equally illustrations of the directions traced by Stanley in his useful introduction. Nonetheless, the level of research and scholarship is high throughout the book, which is a major contribution to the understanding of the "Fil-American empire" in its multiple facets. There are unfortunately a number of typographical and a few other minor errors, of which these deserve note: French Indonesia should be French Indochina (p. 244) and *simpatica* should be *simpatía* (p. 383, n. 32). Needless to say, they do not affect the worth of a valuable book.

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THE AGTA OF NORTHEASTERN LUZON: RECENT STUDIES. Edited by P. Bion Griffin and Agnes Estioko-Griffin. Cebu City, Philippines: San Carlos Publications, 1985. 198 pages.

Until the 1970s the Agta of northeastern Luzon were among the remotest and least known of the various "Aeta" or "Negrito" communities. That they are now becoming among the best known is largely a product of the University of Hawaii's research program. Griffin and Estioko-Griffin have compiled an up-to-date sample of ethnographic studies by affiliates of the program. The text is supplemented by a selected bibliography and a set of photographs juxtaposing the old and new among Agta.

Apart from one article on Agta language, the papers in this volume represent "the more ecologically and materially oriented approaches" in anthropology (Griffin, p. xiii). They can be grouped into three main issues: (1) human-environment relations, (2) production and reproduction, and (3) the incorporation of Agta into wider economic and ecological systems.

Taking the first issue, Karen Mudar's research on faunal resources indicates a relation between hunting technology and the type of game that is successfully pursued. Agta, who hunt with bows and arrows and dogs, track down whatever wild pigs they encounter, but the success rate is highest for immature and elderly pigs. Her findings raise many interesting questions on the configuration of hunting technology, work patterns and social organization.

Human-environment relations take a different perspective in Navin Rai's paper on "ecology in ideology." Agta are not conscious conservationists and are known to engage in resource depleting practices. However, Agta belief in malevolent spirits residing near burial grounds keeps a substantial portion of the environment out of the group's utilization. While this belief does not operate as a system regulator — the key mechanism that maintains the ecosystem — it does "intervene" to provide a check and balance to the use of natural resources. Melinda Allen's ethnobotanical study, however, indicates shifts in the balance between resource enhancement and depletion. Sedentarization, horticulture and poor management techniques among a band of hunter-foragers turned swidden cultivators appear to be straining the floral resources of their habitat.

Contrary to the widespread notion that hunting is restricted to males, Agnes Estioko-Griffin argues that Agta women are active and capable hunters of wild pig and deer. Physiological conditions like menstruation and pregnancy are not incompatible with hunting. However, lactating mothers appear to be the most restricted in their participation. Women's hunting activities form part of a wider subsistence economy adapted to seasonality. During the rainy season hunting is a major activity for both men and women, but during the dry season, they diversify their activities. For the two sexes, survival in the forest involves hard work. Women especially seem to bear the costs of strenuous activity, evident from the high rates of stillbirths and spontaneous abortions.

A more systematic study of Agta reproductive biology is provided by Madeleine Goodman, et al. Compared to the !Kung Agta women have higher levels of completed fertility. This is indicated to be a function of shorter birth spacing and a longer childbearing span. Why this pattern exists still needs to be explained further. The findings point to additional research on (1) the correlates of Agta reproductive biology with social, cultural and nutritional variables, and (2) the similarities and differences of Agta fertility patterns with those of Filipino women in non-hunting-gathering occupations.

Agta are not isolated forest dwellers. The separate papers of Artemio Barbosa, P. Bion Griffin and Thomas Headland indicate the deleterious effects of logging and in-migration on Agta and their environment. As timber operations clear the forest, swidden farmers follow logging roads and begin cultivation, making it unlikely that forest regeneration will occur. Agta lose land to "tribal" migrants from the Central Cordilleras and to Luzon and Visayan lowlanders. Lowland appointment of Agta "leaders" shifts intra-group egalitarian relations while putting Agta more securely in the control of lowland officials. Additionally, trade with incoming patrons keeps Agta in an exploited position. Development projects that reach Agta fail mainly because they have been designed to favor implementor values rather than Agta interests. Griffin correctly points out that events in the Sierra Madre relegate Agta to the bottom of a localized social hierarchy linked to national

and ultimately, global social inequalities. Despite the complexity of structural factors, Headland maintains that Agta can benefit from well-planned local programs. The condition for success lies in putting people ahead of development.

Overall, the compilation of articles provides a useful database for longitudinal and comparative studies on floral and faunal resources, reproductive biology and the patterning of transitional economies. The various papers point to both similarities and variations in the adaptive strategies of Agta communities. While the authors adopt an ecological focus, the absence of an overarching framework fails to give direction and continuity to the articles. This constitutes a major shortcoming of the volume as a whole. Nonetheless, the individual papers should be considered for their pioneering, substantive contributions.

A final comment must be made on an ecological perspective as "the most powerful heuristic tool available" for understanding the Agta (Griffin, p. 158). The dichotomy between "materially oriented" and "mentalist" approaches is a false one. There exists an interface of ecology, ideology and power relationships in the Sierra Madre. Cognitive processes are integral in a society's relations with the material world. Additionally, research oriented to assist the Agta improve their quality of living must come to terms with Agta participation in designing and implementing their future. That, in turn, entails an interpretation of the meaning of power among the powerless, and its ecological, social and ideological ramifications.

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ON THE SULU SEA. By Supriya Singh. Kuala Lumpur: Angsana Publications, 1984. 192 pages.

Neither novel nor study, this book partakes of the characteristics of both. It is the result of the author's eight-month stay in Kampung Bokara, a village four miles from Sandakan town, and the oldest urban village in Sabah, on the north east coast of Borneo. Sabah, which has long been the object of dispute between the Philippines and Malaysia, is multi-ethnic, with the Bajaus as the largest indigenous Muslim group, most of them tracing their origin to Simunul Island, part of the Philippine Tawi-Tawi group. Sabah is also where many refugees from the Philippines have settled, and often the people the author writes about have "Philippine cousins" coming to visit or stay.

Supriya Singh, an Indian of Malaysian citizenship, was in Kampung Bokara to do fieldwork for a sociological study of the Simunul Bajaus, and *On the*