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Ethnographic Atlas of Ifugao

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out of this very modern sense of senselessness and a threat of an apocalypse in varied manifestations. This apocalyptic imagination utilizes an exploding center and a radiating surface of a centrifugal form where organic connections and image patterns become almost indiscernible, incohesive. How does one rise to the challenge of such a brilliant aesthetic?

However, the real significance of this poet's art lies in the poet's willingness to assume the pains of a solitary journey to this side of loneliness and fatigue, a journey to which the artist who cares enough not to mind the risks of true art, is perpetually consigned.

Ophelia Alcantara-Dimalanta

ETHNOGRAPHIC ATLAS OF IFUGAO: A STUDY OF ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE, AND SOCIETY IN NORTHERN LUZON. By Harold C. Conklin. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980. vii, 116 pages. 47½ x 41½ cm.

Harold C. Conklin has been student of Ifugao's land and people for some twenty years now. In that span of time he has come to know and love that land and its people to whom he dedicates this latest and superb work of scholarship.

The most outstanding recurring image in this book is that of terraced land — the result of "amazing feats of hydraulic engineering and resource management" (p. 38). The four or five centuries that it has taken to build the terraces, and its maintenance by "constant repair, extension, restructuring, and the dynamic recycling of resources" have produced "approximately 20,000 kilometers of terraced embankments . . . 7,000 of which are stone-walled" (ibid.). The land that is the subject of Conklin's opus is almost equally the product of nature and of the sculpting hand of man.

Incredible skill and ingenuity . . . are employed throughout Ifugao in the productive treatment of water, soil, rock, and stone, as well as in the use of domesticated biota, hand implements, and human labor. Almost all forms of the available earth surface are considered transformable and transportable. Stream water for irrigation is diverted and conveyed by canal for distances up to five or six kilometers. Soil and fill are transported hundreds of meters. Rock and stone are broken and carried similar distances. Valley slopes and ridges are reshaped by extensive terracing. Small ad hoc work groups, . . . construct massive diversion weirs and stone-walled embankments of many types (p. 37).

As a consequence of the type of labor needed for the construction and maintenance of the terraces, steel-bladed implements, dynamite, and cement are "universally welcomed." On the other hand, "plows, pumps, and chemical

fertilizers are not used (and are considered uneconomic) in most of the area" (ibid.). But one result of the kind of terrace-agriculture the Ifugaos created has been the very high amount of labor required for productivity.

A family of five managing an average joint holding of half a hectare of pond fields, one and a third hectare of woodlots, and a quarter hectare in swiddens must contribute or recruit a total minimum average of about 400 man-days of agricultural labor a year. In a very dry period the figures may shift dramatically from pond fields to swiddens although the total labor requirements remain almost constant (Ibid.).

The land of the Ifugaos has been both the product of the engineering skills of the Ifugaos, and the permanent school which for centuries has been teaching them almost all the engineering skills they have held as both their tradition and, as it were, birthright. It is, therefore, not surprising that in the social institutions and lore of the Ifugaos, their terraced land looms large, almost god-like — a giver and maker of laws. This land has been both the creation and the creator of the Ifugao. With his hands, his prayers, and his rituals, he supplicates this earth god to yield him its life-giving fruits. Even his household gods (plate 177, p. 35) serve to protect its yield.

Concerning the supposition that so massive a product of human labor might have required highly sophisticated social organization and planning, or that the Ifugao terraces might have been an "influence" from other peoples and cultures, Conklin says:

There is no evidence that this Ifugao (terraced land) ever required or resulted in, a complex bureaucratic organization, a widely based form of political integration, or recognition of a central authority. There are no signs of a single prime mover or of a master plan for the development of Ifugao valley, nor are there conclusive indications that the present system was imported as a cultural package from some other land or by means of a particular migration. Instead, all available cultural and environmental evidence indicates that the contemporary form of land use in Ifugao was developed in small increments by the forebears of the present inhabitants, over a period of many centuries, within this and adjacent regions of northern Luzon (p. 38).

Now, the maps. The reader can imagine himself 915 kilometers up in space over the island of Luzon, the Philippines, looking down on a cloudless day upon that land mass. Imagine, too, that he moves his position in space several times, all the while taking pictures of the land below. When he comes back to earth, he develops his numerous pictures, then pieces together his eight best photographs to form a composite likeness of Luzon. The product will be a mapmaker's delight and an atlas masterpiece. This is what Conklin has achieved in the superb "satellite view of central and northern Luzon (scale 1:1,500,

000)." To appreciate how truly this piece is a labor of great dedication, one has only to learn that the individual pictures making up this satellite view were taken at various carefully selected times over a period of 3½ years, between 18 November 1972 and 3 April 1976 (p. 40). The eight that make up the final picture of Luzon were selected from ninety-three shots.

From that distance where the satellite camera eye shows the entire Luzon terrain, the book brings the reader closer to home by presenting in the "Introductory Section" of the maps the plates which "include cartographic information designed to identify Ifugao geographically, regionally, and culturally" (pp. 42-48). This section ends with an exquisite picture of the "densely terraced slopes of Bannawol (Banaue) valley in North Central Ifugao" (p. 48).

The second section of the maps is the "Survey Area." Here are twenty plates which "provide detailed geographic and cultural information for North Central Ifugao, an ethnographically and photogrammetrically surveyed area measuring ninety-six square kilometers" (p. 49). The maps in this section are in pairs: relief on the left-hand page, and land-use on the right-hand page. Closing this section is a bird's-eye view of the central Hengyon area — a photograph that confirms how painstaking and accurate the relief and land-use maps are.

Section three presents "Regional Composition": twelve plates containing maps covering a north/central Ifugao region comprising three adjacent agricultural districts. This section presents the agricultural settings and their corresponding resources and culture, with indicators of economy, society, even family and kinship. The section closes with a picture of an Ifugao woman planting rice.

The fourth section, entitled "District Agricultural Composition," presents "the entire roster of pond-field property of one agricultural district." The district is called Bayninan (to whose people the atlas is specifically dedicated) (pp. 85ff). Indicating how close he has brought the reader to the Ifugao citizen himself, the author closes this section with the picture of the cloth that the Ifugao wears — at close range one can see the details of texture and design (but, unfortunately for those who would want to see it in color, it is in black and gray).

The most interesting maps in the fifth and last section, the "Historical Section," are those from old "manuscript sources." Although largely inaccurate by today's standards, they reveal information relevant to "the long-term development of economic, social, and political relations of Ifugao and its inhabitants with other sectors of Northern Luzon" (p. 97).

This survey of the sections on maps will not be complete without mention of the detailed legends and the wide range of cartographic colors used, both of which proved most illuminating and helpful in understanding all the plates.

Cartographer Miklos Pinther deserves much credit for his contribution to this book.

This Atlas is not merely a collection of maps in one volume, as atlases by definition are supposed to be. The first thirty-nine pages are devoted to ethnography of Ifugao in texts and pictures. Conklin's text has been drawn from his own close personal knowledge of the life, ways, and world of the Ifugao, a knowledge that has been duly enriched with very wide and discriminating reading in literature on the Ifugaos, from the earliest to the latest (see references on pp. 38-39).

The pictures (in black and white) are of an almost uniformly superior quality; even pictures taken as early as 1903 (p. 37) have come out in print with striking quality, and are so much more valuable for their age. The juxtaposed pictures of the land, taken as far apart as 1945 and 1963, or 1913 and 1963, (p. 36) suggest more than the geographic stability of Ifugao land. It appears that the Ifugaos themselves have, these past three quarters of a century, not travelled too far afield from where their ancestors three generations ago left them. There are suggestions that the land will produce less and less rice in the terraces as continued farming diminishes its fertility. The rituals to cajole the old gods for their blessing still live and continue to give the Ifugao the psychological stamina to force his land to yield him his food. But change and the invitation to change has been at the Ifugao threshold for sometime now. And when that change does take a massive step (who knows when?), the face of the Ifugao land may change, and Conklin's Atlas shall have made immortal what is there today. One wonders how much longer those exotic spear-wielding, war-like Ifugaos on the fronticepiece will continue to be the stereotyped symbol-image of this hardy people. The ominousness of the caption of this picture is difficult to restate:

Leading a ceremonial procession to funeral and vengeance rites for kinsmen killed in a dispute over boundaries of terraced land.

Just a brief word on the style of the ethnographic text: the layman and the average Ifugao would appreciate less stilted style than this:

Certain general principles underlie Ifugao interpretation of environment, culture, and society as they impinge on the everyday workings of this flexible montane tropical agricultural system (p. 36).

One can only be thankful, there is not too much of this.

Florentino H. Hornedo