

## ART IN IFUGAO SOCIETY \*

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### *Background on the Field Data:*

THE STUDY IS BASED PARTLY ON THE DATA GATHERED IN THE municipality of Banaue, Ifugao, Mountain Province in May, June, July and December of 1966 and January of 1967. The field work was undertaken as a preliminary survey of Ifugao art in order to record and appraise the types of arts and crafts that are still being practiced. Prior to the field trip, I had studied earlier accounts of Ifugao culture from various sources, primarily Barton, Vanoverbergh and Lambrecht.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the readings, I had the opportunity to study the National Museum collection in Manila and the University of the Philippines Ethnographic Museum. I am also familiar with the collection of Philippine ethnographic art of the Natural History Museum of Chicago, Illinois. These collections consist mostly of items collected before the second world war.

The field data consist of verbatim reports of interviews conducted with Ifugao artists-craftsmen and other informants including translators and guides, as well as description of craft procedures and techniques. I have also relied on information supplied by officials and leaders in the municipality of Banaue especially the municipal treasurer, councilor and other government officers.

These observations are restricted not only in time but in space.<sup>2</sup> They apply to the municipality of Banaue especially to the sitios of Hapao (Sapao in earlier texts and maps), Dalican, Dukligan, Kambulo and Batad and their surrounding barrios. Many of these barrios and sitios are within one to eight kilometers in radius from the municipality of Banaue. Some sitios such as Kambulo and Batad are

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\* Acknowledgments: The author wishes to thank the Asian Center for providing funds, equipment, facilities and secretarial services for this research project. I also wish to record my gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. William Beyer and their daughter Julie for their hospitality and invaluable help during my stay in Banaue. I am also indebted to my colleagues in the Department of Anthropology and the National Museum for many useful information and suggestions. And finally I wish to thank my numerous Ifugao friends whose confidence I had the privilege to enjoy and without whose patient understanding this research work could not have been conducted.

<sup>1</sup> See bibliography for the works consulted.

<sup>2</sup> I realize that much of the data in this paper must have been rendered obsolete since I was in the area in 1966-67. Nevertheless, I am publishing this paper in the hope that it can serve as a basis for comparison to subsequent research and to stimulate discussion on symbolic behavior as a fruitful field of social studies.

accessible from Banaue only by hiking and climbing over mountain terraces. These places were selected because they were reputed to be the most actively engaged in the arts. Short excursions to sitios further away such as Kababuyan, Kawayan and to the capital of Ifugao sub-province, Lagawe and then to Kiangan showed that there was less activity going on in these two areas although they have a much larger population and have more public facilities.

Banaue municipality has a population of about 20,000 dispersed in an area approximately 306 square kilometers. It is famous for its mountain terraces the most extensive of which are located in the barrio of Hapao about eight kilometers from the municipality itself. Banaue attracts tourists during the dry season when travel in the area is safest. Anthropologists and missionaries working in the Ifugao region make Banaue their base of operation since it is relatively more conveniently located than the other barrios.

There is no electricity, no running water and mail comes once every two weeks and must be fetched from the municipal post office. One daily bus trip is made by the Dangwa Bus Company, the only bus company operating in the region which starts its 24-hour-drive from Baguio City ending up in Kiangan about 200 kilometers away. The Dangwa Bus driver, usually an Ifugao, considers himself the master of the road. He stops and goes at no one's behest; decides who goes on or who is to be left behind by his bus. On the narrow dirt road between Baguio City-Banaue-Lagawe and Kiangan which winds precipitously around the mountain edges, the driver considers nothing insurmountable. The regular daily bus trip is the major link between the people of Banaue and the outside world. It can be said that the working day in the municipality is marked by the arrival and departure of the Dangwa bus.

There are public schools up to Grade IV in all the barrios visited but it is only at Banaue where complete elementary schooling is provided. It is also at Banaue where there is instruction up to High School offered by the Saint Mary's Academy run by the Roman Catholic Belgian missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Mary. The same religious order operates a small textile shop called St. Joseph's Textiles which employs about thirty girls mostly from the Bontoc-Lepanto region and some from the Ilocos. There are about 23 pedal looms in the shop. The only place where there is a generator and private transportation is the Baptist Mission which runs a hospital and clinic. It serves mostly other missionaries and the American residents in the area and occasionally the government officials and other leading citizens. There is a small inn and curio shop which caters to tourists where the handicrafts are bought already made. These articles only receive polishing and burnishing in the shop.

The inaccessibility and remoteness of the area is aggravated by weather conditions. Rains averaging 300 cm. annually often damage the narrow dirt roads and may sometimes wash away roads and bridges. Landslides are a common occurrence even during the dry season due to the land formation. Generally, rainy season is the time when Ifugaos devote their main efforts to the crafts and is therefore the most appropriate period to undertake this study. However, it proved difficult to reach many places since bridges and mountain paths were almost always impassable. Moreover, when I arrived, many of the craftsmen have gone elsewhere either to Bontoc or Baguio City where they work for the tourist trade. It is also during the rainy season that Ifugaos get hired as casual laborers of the Department of Public Works. Their job is to clear rocks and dirt portions of the road which bulldozers cannot reach. Employment in the city and road jobs such as those provided by the Public Works augment the livelihood of many of the Ifugaos for by this time of the year their rice supply has long been depleted. Since the Ifugaos do not grow sufficient rice for an entire year's supply, they are forced to import this cereal from the lowlands. It is mainly for this reason that they seek employment elsewhere. Some Ifugaos find jobs as far as Baguio City and Manila where they work as guards, houseboys, laborers or just beg. Greater numbers go down as seasonal laborers in the vegetable farms and lumber mills in Nueva Vizcaya and Isabela. Almost all of the men return home to their respective barrios during the planting and harvesting seasons. A number of Ifugaos in Banaue receive U.S. Veteran pensions for their services to the U.S. army during World War II. The municipal treasurer estimates that among the elderly Ifugaos 3 out of 10 are recipients of such pensions.

So far in the discussion I have stressed the remoteness and inaccessibility of Ifugao territory from large urban areas. Despite their isolation however, the Ifugaos are being subjected to changes which are perhaps more inescapable than those that had affected them before World War II. Christian missionaries, government officials, anthropologists, peace corps volunteers and lowlanders have come in ever bigger numbers. Some stay long enough and learn the language and live with the Ifugaos. The Christian missionaries in establishing their missions encroach on Ifugao territory by purchasing tracts of land. There are other forces of change that have undoubtedly stronger effect on Ifugao life. Large scale inoculations especially of infants and malaria control are some of the measures that have contributed to lowering infant mortality and in lengthening the lifespan of the Ifugaos. These in turn lead to the increase in population far beyond the ability of the region to provide sufficient food in the form of rice. Mining explorations have displaced families and sometimes whole villages. The building of the Ambuklao Dam has also

led to the relocation of villages and together with this is the necessity of posting permanently government guards on the watersheds. These watersheds are located on territories traditionally considered rightfully belonging to the Bontoc and Ifugao peoples. There are other examples of change: the rise of public schools help increase literacy and expose them to outside cultures. The collection of taxes, holding of national and local elections, the presence of municipal and provincial officials, public health officers, have led Ifugaos to participate with more periodic consistency in national life. But the most obvious innovation is the ascendancy of money economy as more and more Ifugaos become wage earners and as trade in that region increases. Products from the lowland are sold by Ilocanos, Chinese and the ubiquitous travelling salesman of a bottling company. These motorized peddlers make more frequent trips than the Dangwa bus. The products of the bottling company have penetrated every sitio and barrio that I had occasion to visit and have come to replace more often than not Ifugao-brewed beverages. I have observed that Ifugao children have learned to ask for money to buy these bottled drinks. All of these factors point to the direction of drastic changes in Ifugao life. But then this is not altogether the entire picture.

To all these changes, the Ifugaos have responded in a way that does not necessarily entail the erosion of Ifugao ethos. It could in fact be argued that the basic values have not been altered: the core of this value system, the sustenance of family and kin remains intact. Ifugaos may have widened their experience and increased contacts with the outside world and we could even say that they have adjusted to encroachments without visible opposition. But these external influences have been kept subordinate to Ifugao values. The widespread activity in the traditional Ifugao arts is one important evidence of the vitality of Ifugao society.<sup>3</sup> Their activity in the arts cannot be explained only by the necessity of augmenting the food supply, but tells a great deal more about the nature of that society and how and by what means traditional values are maintained.

All around Banaue, men and women and some children are busy carving, weaving, blacksmithing. A large corps of craftsmen are

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<sup>3</sup> There were 183 "craftsmen-artists" interviewed at length, more than half the total number were met twice in group conversations. Based on age and sex distribution, roughly 60% were male with the average age of about 30. My classification "craftsmen-artists" included only those who were proficient in a wide range of Ifugao arts which include: carving, carpentry, basketry, weaving, embroidery, blacksmithing, jewelry making, ability to make musical instruments with abilities in the performing arts taken into consideration. An arbitrary number of 5 craft skills with minimum practice of 5 years were used as criteria to make an Ifugao qualify as "craftsmen-artist." These artists turn out to possess other artistic abilities as well, such as recitation of myths and legends, or at least portions of them, ability to play music, sing and dance. During the entire period of the field work, I met over 300 Ifugaos engaged in the arts, many of them amateurs.

so engaged in a scale which to my estimation far exceeds the economic gains that could be derived from them. Certainly, the growing tourist trade generated all the way from Baguio and Manila together with the instruction in native handicrafts in the public schools plus the efforts of the National Agency for Cottage Industries, have contributed in some way to encourage handicrafts. But these external factors cannot wholly account for the intensity and the large number of artists engaged in the practice of the crafts and in the other arts such as music and dance. Such phenomenon cannot draw its inspiration from external sources alone. Their sources must be traced somewhere in Ifugao society itself where art and all such activities have more profound meanings than simply efforts directed for economic gains.

Far from being submerged by the changes in their environment, Ifugao society seems to have asserted its identity. By a happy turn of events, one of the factors of change, the presence of anthropologists and other students of culture and the tourist trade have made Ifugao art and culture attractive to the outside world. This could only have the effect of increasing their confidence. Indeed it has reinforced the Ifugao's basic attitude of respect towards his tradition and his art. The increased interest in Ifugao art shown by foreign and Filipino visitors has provided the Ifugaos a certain measure of certainty against all the onslaughts brought upon them by the outside world. Moreover, the Ifugaos, unlike some Bontoc Lepanto communities which were obliterated and replaced by copper and gold mining towns, have been fortunate in that the changes that affect them are such that they are enabled to consolidate themselves. The Ifugaos have seized upon these changes themselves as an opportunity to retrieve whatever values they have left languishing and strengthen those that they still uphold. Roads, schools, public health, tourism, agencies of the national government, etc. are pressed into the service of Ifugao survival. It is a conclusion that is thrust upon the observer by Ifugao activity in the arts — that the arts function to sustain values amidst full scale changes. Agents of the national government are welcome for they provide them health needs, give them jobs in repairing the roads and bridges. The travelling salesmen of a bottling corporation are accepted because they sell cheap gin, a passable substitute for Ifugao rice-wine which is an indispensable ritual drink and if locally produced, it is done by a laborious and expensive process. Chinese and Ilocano peddlers import much needed commodities: salt, tinned meat, dried lowland fish, raw cotton and yarns, and steel and iron implements. The exception to the ready acceptance of trade goods are those salesmen who deal with soap and other cleansing agents which have made little headway in the Ifugao market.

Some qualifications must be made at this point of the discussion. Undoubtedly, the fact that I concentrated my interviews on the Ifugaos who are craftsmen and artists and those who have direct interest in the arts might have precluded contrary threads of interpretation. Nonetheless, I tried not to rely completely on the testimony of the more "artistic" and "conventional" Ifugaos. Many hours were spent with Ifugaos who no longer claim to support Ifugao values, many of them converted Christians and quite hostile to their fellow Ifugaos. As an outsider, I found them very interesting personalities, and they were the ones most articulate and eager to supply information on the whereabouts of craftsmen and other useful information about the arts. They proved to be as knowledgeable as their fellow Ifugaos about their own traditions.<sup>4</sup>

From my observations I cannot help but be impressed by the way Ifugaos adopt to the money economy. A great number of Ifugaos who work for wages outside send regular remittances home. These remittances together with whatever surplus they have earned are invested according to the following priorities: buying of riceland, building houses and granaries, performing rites and rituals (and most important for this study which is focused on the arts), and in purchasing Chinese gongs and imported ceramics. When unable to obtain these objects since the supply of these prized heirlooms are dwindling, the Ifugaos engage in the manufacture of or commission traditional crafts. A returning Ifugao who has achieved some economic success proceeds to lay claim to his higher status by having the *pahang* (welfare)<sup>5</sup> rites performed. In these rites, an assortment of Ifugao arts and crafts are assembled from the most potent form, the *bulol*, to utensils, baskets, textiles, weapons and musical instruments and a lot of rice, rice-wine and meat. It is these circumstances

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<sup>4</sup> As a convenient term I use the word "deviant" to apply to those Ifugaos who had openly expressed their disagreement or disbelief with Ifugao social practices. I did not include Ifugaos who remained silent although there were indications that they did not practice some Ifugao beliefs. For example, one of my guides who was a Christian and worked as a clerk-janitor for the Roman Catholic missionaries never spoke a word contrary to Ifugao beliefs.

I interviewed 16 "deviant" Ifugaos, 14 males and 2 females. Only 3 of the 16 were not converts to Christianity. All of them however could identify and describe crafts and technical procedures of Ifugao arts.

<sup>5</sup> *Pahang* is a term applied to a large number of rituals whose main purpose is to seek the petitioner's welfare. It is performed during wedding preparations for the benefit of the couple and their respective families. It is also performed for the purpose of obtaining the blessings of the deities when one undertakes unusual endeavours such as a long journey. The general pattern of the rites include the invocation of the deities, recitation of *abuwag* tales followed by a feast. Ifugao handicrafts form part of the ritual paraphernalia of *pahang*.

See also: Francis Lambrecht, *The Mayawyaw Ritual: Marriage Customs*, Publication of the Catholic Anthropological Conference, Vol. IV, No. 2, (Dec. 1932), pp. 211-254, 51-52.

that led me to seek out other reasons to account for the intense artistic activity of the Ifugaos.

*Discussion of the Different Art Forms: Attitude Towards Art and Artists, and the Ifugao "Aesthetic."*

What I designate as Ifugao arts and crafts consist of a wide variety of objects, many of which are for daily use. Woodcarving, textile weaving, basketry, carpentry and blacksmithing are the most widely-practiced of the arts. The weaving of tree bark,<sup>6</sup> jewelry making, the making of betel nut and tobacco accessories survive only among the older craftsmen who live in the remoter barrios. The other crafts such as tattooing, pottery making, and the making of weapons have virtually disappeared. Of the later craft, the making of spears is popular and is now intended for the tourist trade. Among the Ifugao crafts which are being practiced, there exists a vital and lively interest as evidenced by their continued use in Ifugao daily life. Craft items are sold or exchanged in the Banaue market on Saturdays. On these market days, craftsmen display their wares with great pride and considerable interest is shown in the best crafts on display. Besides those crafts sold for local consumption, a large amount of handicrafts are sold directly or commissioned by dealers from Baguio and Manila.

A wide range of implements and ritual objects issue from the carver's hands. It is the most predominant craft of the Banaue Ifugaos while carpentry, blacksmithing and basketry are secondary crafts. The Ifugao word for a statue is *ukit* which literally means a carving and any ornament is generally called *ukit* even though it is not carved but woven in textiles and baskets. *Ukit* also means a bird-like motif carved in intaglio on the underside of the floors of houses and granaries. Carving is a man's craft and is considered by Ifugaos, both by men and women, as more important and sacred than the other crafts. The style is relatively more representational in the sense that they carve forms which have direct correspondence to nature: human figures, fauna and flora, in contradistinction to the more geometric ornamental forms of women's crafts. Utensils, wooden vessels, priests' boxes, mortar and pestle which are ornamented with animal figures, are carved for ritual use. Musical instruments of the percussion type, *pattong* or *bangibang*<sup>7</sup> and drums

<sup>6</sup> The sources of bark cloth were *kelalih* (*Boehmeria multiflora*), *kaliat* (*Gnetaceae gnetum* sp.), and *Basbasot* (*Malvaceae* fam., gen. *Sida Acuta Burm.*). These grew mostly in wild form. It was only in Kambulo and Batad that I found weaving from bark cloth still in practice and where several puny plants were desultorily cultivated, that of *Boehmeria multiflora*.

<sup>7</sup> Ifugao musical instruments were widely distributed in Ifugao. Most barrios visited had at least a pair of Chinese gongs but these were outnumbered by home-made instruments, the predominant ones were the *pattong* or *bang-*

are manufactured along with wind instruments such as jew's harp, nose and mouth flute. When animal figures are carved they form mostly the decorative relief of houses and granaries or form part of utensils and food vessels. Rarely are human and animal forms carved as free-standing figures. New forms have cropped up due to the demands of the tourist trade. Free-standing figures form the major part, with the carabao as the favorite animal represented. So far as I could tell, none of the forms made for tourist trade have come to play any significant role in Ifugao usage. Such items as book ends, ash trays, paper weights, wall reliefs are only a few samples of the variety of forms introduced via the tourist trade.

By far the most significant carving is the *bulol*, the representation of the Ifugao deity *par excellence*. The importance of the *bulol* as art form and as a symbol of Ifugao values will be the subject of subsequent discussion. Suffice it is to say at this point that the *bulol* occupies the apex in the hierarchy of Ifugao art forms, making the craft of carving a ritual act in itself.

Other carved figures that suggest human form is the *tatattgu* (sometimes called *bihang*) carved out of softer materials, from the trunk of tree fern (*Cyothea Platecerium*). The eyes and teeth are inlaid with animal bones and teeth and occasionally with broken opercula shells. The *bulol* on the other hand is carved from hardwood.<sup>8</sup> The *tatattgu* was originally carved in connection with head-hunting rites which are no longer practiced. The samples of *tatattgu* I saw were carved for the tourist market. The *hipag* is another figure which suggests a human or animal-like form suggesting either a dog or a monkey and is usually placed in relation to another structure called the *pili* shrine. The *pili* is shaped like an arch and made of the branches of bamboo with sugar cane stalks, runo reeds and leaves or the plant itself of the *cordyline terminalis*. The *hipag*

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*ibang*. Made of two lengths of polished hardwood, these were struck against each other to make the sounds.

The *pattong* or *bangibang* were earlier associated with head-hunting rituals when they were played together with gongs and drums before and after the expeditions. Today, I was informed that they were played on almost all ritual occasions which were not necessarily connected with death. Curing rites were the occasions when the *pattong* was played most often. I witnessed the performance of a *pahang* rite for a family planning the marriage of their son. In this occasion three pairs of *pattong* were played, accompanied by drums and gongs.

At Kambulo I saw several elderly men, young men and tots barely steady on their feet play music, sing and dance in the afternoons for no obvious ritual purpose. Using gongs, drums and *pattong* this music-making was a much-awaited event for the barrio people. Mostly males and children gathered in the shady portion of the square just before each of the performances. It was the most spontaneous artistic event involving a group that I had ever witnessed during my field work.

<sup>8</sup> Similar types of hardwood were used for carving the *bulol* and the *pattong*, among those identified for me were: *Ficus moracea*, *Pterocarpus indicus*<sup>1</sup> Willd. *Leguminosae* and *Curculigo recurvata* Dry. *Anaryllidaceae*.

figure is placed before the *pili* arch or shrine and together they mark the precincts prohibited to enemies, thieves and strangers. They are also used to designate rice fields specially when the grain is ripening. Entrances to granaries are also thus marked and particularly those areas of cultivated land, forest areas, and a grove of trees whose ownership are under dispute. The ones I saw were built mainly to mark property and keep off strangers from the village. Those examples I saw were in such advanced state of decay that I could not judge their original appearance.

Textile weaving is the women's craft.<sup>9</sup> Ifugaos weave the basic garments which are worn from the ages of seven or eight: G-strings for boys, skirt for the girls and for both sexes, blankets, shirts and handbags. Women's craft is considered ancillary to men's craft; one of the reasons given is that because it is the men who make the looms. However weaving is not devoid of ritual importance for death blankets are considered mandatory for proper burial. Besides, Ifugao textiles and garments are preferred over the less costly ready-made and second-hand clothing imported from the lowlands. In spite of the suitability of these imported garments to Ifugao climate, they still prefer their home-made clothes. Women used to make their own pottery but this has virtually disappeared while cooking utensils are now imported from the lowlands. Women's crafts are limited to weaving and embroidery although they occasionally aid the men in sanding, polishing and burnishing carved objects for the tourist market. The Ifugaos are quite unique in that it is the man who weaves baskets and not the woman, as is generally the case in other lowland peoples and tribal groups. Men do not only engage in a wider variety of crafts but as was pointed out earlier, it is the man's crafts that have greater ritual importance.

Ifugaos make no special category for art as a general term. They make no clear distinctions between tools, sacramental objects or ornaments. Distinctions are not only blurred—they place art as part of the continuous chain of daily experience. Although they recognize the differences between excellent artists, mediocre and poor workers, they hardly do so outside interview conditions. They seem unconcerned about the level of their artistic achievement in relation to others. This apparent undiscerning attitude towards quality of the arts might be the result of the fact that most adults participate in varying degrees of competence in the whole range of activities in their society. Even children, although they are not pressured to learn specific crafts at a designated time and place, achieve some amount of artistic proficiency by the time they are about 7 or 8 by merely

<sup>9</sup> For a detailed study of the technique of weaving see:  
Francis Lambrecht, "Ifugaw Weaving," *Folklore Studies*, Vol. 17, 1958,  
pp. 1 — 53.

imitating and assisting adults whenever the children are so inclined. The adults, on their part, have a tolerant and indulgent attitude towards the children and would not coerce them to work or study the crafts.

However, clear distinctions are made between legitimate Ifugao art which they themselves use and those objects made specifically for the tourist trade. All products that they fabricate are called *bakkutna* which literally means products not derived from agriculture. Anything that is manufactured is *bakkutna*. The term also applies to things one makes during one's leisure, and leisure is when one is not engaged in agriculture. Objects imported from China such as ceramics and gongs, and other ancient beads are also designated as *bakkutna*. They also use the word *yamada* which means something man-made as opposed to something found in nature. Man as maker and creator is *yama*, from the word for father, *ama*. Man, because he is a creator, is *yama* and it is this quality that makes him a man and differentiates him from beasts. The term most widely used for the arts and crafts is *ginako* or *ginakona* meaning belongings or property. Besides craft objects, *ginakona* includes land, houses, granaries, fruit trees, Chinese gongs and pottery, ancient imported beads, jewelry and metal accessories. These items are highly valued since they are considered kinship property and together they are called *boltan*, inheritance. The phrase "this can be inherited," is the usual reply when Ifugaos explain why they value anything. Hence those works of art that are durable because they can be passed on to their progeny are the ones most esteemed. Durability in the literal physical sense is always brought up as the main criterion of art. Art objects that are well-built and made of lasting materials are *maphod*. *Maphod* also means something appealing, attractive and in its noun form denotes moral quality such as goodness. The word is also applied to one's feeling of satisfaction after a good meal or to one's sense of achievement after the performance of *pahang* (welfare) rites. On the other hand, objects which are ugly are *nalawa* or *napate*. The latter word is used moreover in the sense of the viewer's reaction to the object, literally "that which gives me pain," or "that which causes me to fall ill." *Nalawa* on the other hand means useless or senseless and is often used to characterize some of the objects made for the tourist trade.

I have so far given only a rough indication of Ifugao preferences and taste. There is obviously much more than I could elicit from the artists and craftsmen. I found that whenever I tried to question them further on the subject, many were quick to demonstrate their boredom and even impatience. The reaction of quite a number of artists was one of amusement at my endless note-taking and they made a

joke of my persistence. The Ifugaos who took my questions seriously were those who were non-practitioners of art, the ones who have expressed their disaffection with traditional Ifugao life. They were more loquacious although somewhat critical of their fellow Ifugaos. Their comments prove invaluable as a comparative basis to conventional Ifugao answers. In addition to comparing the statements made by the different types of Ifugaos, I took another line of approach. I found out that the artists and craftsmen were interested in other art objects and it was by showing reproductions of these that I was able to draw out something more about their views on artistic principles. I showed various reproductions of art objects unfamiliar to them such as: medieval gargoyles, a Mogdiliani portrait, calendar reproductions of Amorsolo landscapes, pictures of Tolentino's Bonifacio monument and the oblation, an abstract sculpture of Abueva and paintings of Arturo Luz and Carlos Francisco. Invariably regardless of whatever art reproduction was shown, the Ifugaos considered all of them *maphod*. Their reaction varied from indifference to curiosity, to indulgent attentiveness, but many were manifestly interested and asked me questions about the subject, the techniques, who the artists were and so on and what my opinions were. Besides reproductions of works of art, I also showed them pictures of Ifugaos engaged in various activities, and of the rice terraces. These evidently fascinated them more than the art reproductions. Random scribbings, blotches and splashes of ink, black and white pictures showing textures of stone walls and wood were considered *nalawa*. Rorschah cards engrossed them but not as much as drawings of isolated ornamental designs showing the Greek fret, spirals, dart and bead motif, zigzags and all kinds of design variations. The weavers showed greater interest in the designs. But what impressed them most were wood carvings I brought with me: life-like statues of the Madonna, Madonna and Child, horse, deer, a Chinese-made *Kwan-yin* (also a product for tourists) and other bric-a-brac made of wood, ivory, and plastic. From our conversations I could gather that they were well aware of the elements of form and principles of organization — symmetry and balance were the ones most often brought out. They asked a great deal about techniques of manufacture, tools, procedures, and artist's remuneration.

When questioned about the sources of Ifugao art forms, the subject matter and techniques, their ready answer was to trace them to tradition. "That is how I learned it from my father and mother and they, in turn, from my grandparents, etc." They consistently appraised their work according to how closely it followed prescribed methods particularly on the part of carvers of ritual objects. Originality in the sense of ability to deviate from the norms was of little value to them. On the other hand, this attitude did not apply to objects

for the tourist market. Regarding these objects, they could readily trace the sources to specific woodcarvers and could date them more precisely. So and so who went to Baguio returned after such a time and taught me how to carve the carabao in this way, indicated how far they could go to specific details when it involved non-traditional art. They were shrewd enough to understand that in the tourist market "they are always looking for something different." Almost all of the Ifugaos interviewed agreed that they themselves would not use objects made for the tourist trade. By the same token, they found it exceedingly funny that the Americans for example, use Ifugao death blankets as decorative wall hangings. The *tatattgu* and *bulol* statues displayed in the houses of non-Ifugaos amused them considerably. However, I did not detect any sign of moral outrage over the misuse of Ifugao sacred objects; their strongest reaction was to laugh the whole thing off and called it "silly." The Ifugaos who felt insulted were the "deviants" I mentioned earlier, some of whom being Christians, maintained that they would be insulted if Christian sacred objects were appropriated by the Ifugaos.

A short digression is needed at this point of our discussion on Ifugao artistic principles for this gives an indication to what lengths Ifugaos go to assert their social norms. In many instances where at least one "deviant" is present during interviews conducted with an individual or a group of artists and craftsmen, the existence of an underlying tension among Ifugaos is brought out into light. Arguments, sometimes quite heated, occur between what I would term as "traditional" Ifugaos and the "deviants." What often precipitated the arguments was the usual reply of the artist when asked about his preference among the various samples of art styles shown to them. Most Ifugao artists, even those who have had experience with more complex tools, insisted that their own traditions were "the right way of doing things." To such a reply, the "deviants" expressed strong disagreement and in at least two cases, mutual recriminations were made: the "traditional" Ifugaos were called "ignorant," "hard-headed"; they in turn called the other "useless idler." These encounters only dramatize what we have noted earlier: the tenacity of Ifugao beliefs. What all these illustrate is that to those who hold such beliefs, these are self-evident truths requiring neither proof nor explanation and certainly never apology. Moreover, this fact has further ramifications on the psychology of the Ifugao artists. Even among those whom I considered quite amateurish and who produced undistinguished works, they were by and large confident to the point of self-satisfied smugness although we could be charitable and assume that their attitude reflected their strong sense of personal worth not for reasons of artistic skill but because *they were Ifugaos*.

*Art as Symbol. Theoretical Assumption on the Nature and Function of Art in General. The Function of Art in Ifugao Society.*

In order to understand more fully the role of art in Ifugao society, it is necessary to indicate here our theoretical assumptions regarding the nature and function of art in society. Art belongs to the wider scheme of symbolic representations which are crucial to the continued existence of human society. Symbols in general are patterns of thought which serve as a framework for understanding experience. They are conceptual tools that enable man to interpret, analyze, formulate and transmit experience of and about the world.<sup>10</sup> Symbols and the way they are manipulated define the extent of the society's intellectual horizons and at the same time limit its environment. Art is a symbolic system that constitutes the visual, haptic and aural tradition of society. In the same manner that socio-political symbols mold society, so artistic symbols affect the individuals in that society. Notions such as beauty, form, order, grace, arise and are made conceivable mainly by artistic forms. Art then is "a way of seeing" or "a way of feeling about the world."<sup>11</sup> And yet, art forms like all other symbols have concrete and independent structure outside the physical process of perception. As such they can outlive the flux and fleeting sensations, experiences, phenomena and events that they may represent and may even exist independently of any referent. It is this quality of possessing an independent structure that enables art to distill the relevant, the essential and the significant out of the formlessness of experience, giving them so to speak, "a habitation and a name." Clearly designed art genres such as a painting whose area of significance is delimited by its frame, a three-part lullabye, a specific sequence of dance steps have each precisely defined structures that set them apart in time and space. Notwithstanding the independent structure of artistic forms, art still partakes of the society and culture that brought it about. Art forms are saturated with past and present experiences, with associations and contrasts and with a whole complex of symbols and other art. These associative qualities of art make it highly evocative as opposed to the relatively disembodied and abstract symbols of mathematics and algebra. It is this same quality that makes art akin to religious symbols in that it is able to give credence to beliefs, norms, practices and ideals. Given the right combination of circumstances, art is even able to induce opposition to social beliefs to a greater effect. In this way art creates the essential condition for generating emotional reaction and in

<sup>10</sup> Suzanne Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*, (New York: Mentor Books, 1954), pp. 20-29, 30-40 & 108.

<sup>11</sup> Ernst Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1946), pp. 37-38 & 73.

certain cases, it is the catalyst to action itself.<sup>12</sup> In Ifugao art, it provides more than a climate for affective communication. Day-to-day existence in their society appears monotonously uneventful, filled as it is with unrelieved drudgery. Not until we look at the arts do we discover the inverse of this plodding existence. Here is the arena of social and intellectual dynamics.

Ifugao society lacks a political organization and machinery, a written language, a code of laws and law enforcement institutions. Ifugao society relies more heavily on its religious rituals, customs, oral literature and I submit, on art as a means of regulating behavior. The strategic role of art within Ifugao society is far-reaching. It fulfills a variety of functions from the most frivolous in the Veblenian sense of "conspicuous consumption" to the most profound role of sustaining fundamental Ifugao values. Under interview conditions Ifugaos would posit only the economic and material motives for creating art, these being the most discernible of the approved values of society. An artist and an art object are always placed in the service of the family's well-being. The art object is drawn into the perpetual cycle of transmittable property, to the sustenance of progeny whose duty is to invoke the deities and the ancestors who in turn assure them the perpetuity of the lineage. Similarly, when asked to appraise artists, they favor those whose economic, social and religious status is considered very high. The most highly esteemed craftsmen in the Banaue area are not always those who as an outsider, I would evaluate as the best artists. For to the Ifugaos, what is worthy of admiration is the total achievement of a man as an Ifugao and not merely his ability as an artist or craftsman. Those who have earned large wages in Baguio City as skilled carvers are known to few Ifugaos. Little is said of their skills but a great deal is said about what he does for his family, relatives, and friends. In spite of the many instances when I could tell that "sheer sensuous delight" seem to override the importance they place on the religious and economic intent of art, they nevertheless argued on the basis of socially approved reasons. The following instances are revealing: A man had himself tattooed with elaborate multicolored designs on his chest, arms and hands. His reason was that by having done so, he had increased his family's opportunity to make a profitable marriage alliance for him. He further explained that in the first place, he possessed the personal qualities that merited tattooing. A woman wove a colorful fringed skirt in imitation of Bontoc fashion. She sported her skirt in the barrio and as she walked, the fringed skirt gave her a graceful and alluring gait. She certainly succeeded in

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<sup>12</sup> Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, Lessa and Vogot, editors, (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 204-215.

attracting considerable admiration from the males. As far as I could tell, none of the elders reproached her behaviour. When I questioned her why she had this beautiful skirt, she said that it was a very sound investment against the day when she might be forced to sell the garment for future family needs.

In interviews the Ifugaos struck me as a people to whom "self-expression" or any conscious attempt at originality was considered an embarrassment. They were quite willing to inhibit themselves or modify their behavior to fit within the context of social relations. However, there were many situations which, from my observation, contradicted what they claimed. For quite apart from finding release from the tedium of daily living, such wide-ranging artistic activities could not be explained only by the need for material security. The examples mentioned above proved at least to me that Ifugaos were most susceptible to indulge in personal vanity and frivolity. There were equally many occasions when individual self-expression and personal talent were displayed. Women invariably introduced variations in the patterns and textures of the articles they wove although they required additional effort and capital. Men always selected and carefully shaped the materials for their musical instruments. So precisely and meticulously did they work that they produced clear sharp tones of the pentatonic scale without the use of any measuring tools. Among the best craftsmen and artists, especially the wood-carvers, they showed that they enjoyed the exercise of technical competence. This was particularly applicable to musical performances and the recitation of myths where it was easy to discern the display of virtuosity that could not be masked by the alleged prescriptions of ritual.

Their attitude towards the creative process however, showed that they did not hedge it with any sense of mystery or ritual prohibitions. They worked, they say, whenever they were "in the mood." But from all appearances no one seemed to agonize over it. They worked in a matter-of-fact way. There was nothing portentous or solemn about art making. The only exception to this general practice was the carving of the *bulol* which was attended with rituals and prohibitions. Even then, it appeared to me that they demanded no concentrated attention to the ritual on hand. People were allowed to move about freely or do something else while the ritual and recitations were going on. But underlying their casual attitude to art and the process of art making is something more profound, a significance that could be brought into relief if we do not rely only on what they say about art. The clue lies in seeing art and the process of art making within the context and contingencies of Ifugao life.

Art objects make up the milieu of their social symbols. They comprise the paraphernalia for the enactment of ritual and social

intercourse. At every turn they are surrounded by their own handiwork: jewelry, baskets, textiles, all kinds of implements, tools, carvings and various craft objects in various stages of completion and deterioration scattered almost willy-nilly in all households. No event is so trivial that it does not necessitate the use of some Ifugao handicrafts. For example, Ifugao etiquette demands that betel nut be exchanged before conversations. Even a casual visit is marked by a betel chew. The shape and condition of the betel nut container is one of the indications of the host's own status and his estimation of the visitor. A newly-woven skirt of rich color and texture announces to all and sundry that the weaver is at last nubile. The whispered dialogue on the jew's harp is the melody of courtship.

Art forms, therefore, are used to mark the junctions in the routine of village life. During rice-planting, harvests, and the clearing of forests, music provides the ostinato to the work in progress. It also accentuates the intensity and high pitch of communal labor. In weddings, funerals, welfare rites, and ceremonies celebrating the exhumation of ancestral bones, objects of art are indispensable items of ritual. When such objects are used outside the ritual situation, they still remain to the Ifugaos as the visible sign of the rites. For henceforth these objects are no longer simply food vessels, baskets, or garments — they bear the marks of the experiences associated with them. No matter how old these objects might be, they are not discarded but are continuously repaired and are used until they virtually disintegrate. Thus these objects lend to their most mundane chores a sense of occasion. They take on color and a wider dimension. As the environment is filled with such ritual objects, it allows the imagination to extend experience, to grasp the unity of all things and one's own relation to other members of the Ifugao society. Ifugao handiwork along with the arts of literature, music and dance, focus and direct the individual's thoughts to the larger experience of Ifugao life.<sup>13</sup>

The *bulol* is singularly the most crucial art form for it embodies to the Ifugaos their most sacred traditional values. Moreover, as we

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<sup>13</sup> What a woman from Poitan said about her baskets exemplified the attitude of many Ifugaos towards their handiwork. In this example, the woman spoke about two baskets, large, wide but shallow and tightly-woven containers for cooked rice. One is called *huup*, a wide, flat basket used as a container for cooked rice. The second is called *ulbung* which is similar to the first type but with a finer mesh and used as a container for pounded rice, the main ingredient in making rice-wine.

"These baskets are *adangianan* (wealth). They belonged to my mother who received them as *haliyu* (a kind of payment for some debt) from a family from Nuntanangan, Bocos. These baskets were used in many harvest feasts and many *baki* (ritual or sacrifice) were performed with these baskets. My parents gave them to me when I got married. These baskets were *adangianan* to my parents, to my husband and to me and to my children."

Note that in this sense she used *adangianan* to mean a lucky charm or propitious articles.

have mentioned earlier, it is the one art form that is attended by elaborate ceremonies and ritual prohibitions. *Bulol* generally means deity, specifically a granary idol. It is also considered as an effigy of deceased ancestors. All other art forms are considered subsidiary to the *bulol*. It might even be considered that the food vessels, textiles, baskets, and other items used for the rituals are sacrifices to the *bulol*.<sup>14</sup> So dominant is this symbol that the Ifugaos point to the *bulol* as the representation of any deity. And the Ifugao belief in the abiding presence of spirits or a life force in nature becomes somehow associated with this figure.

The *bulol* is carved from hardwood. In most cases, it is installed inside a rice granary where it is believed to protect the rice from pests, thieves and simply from being consumed too quickly. Furthermore, the installation of a *bulol* is believed to increase the store of rice. The *bulol* usually comes in pairs, male and female and occasionally, they are provided with children. They are dressed in Ifugao clothes and regaled with real jewels for special ceremonies or when they are kept in the granary, they are provided with earrings, bracelets and anklets made from rice grains, rice stalks, sugar cane leaves and leaves of the *cordyline terminalis*, a plant sacred to the Ifugaos. The *bulol* when installed is believed to insure not only its owners' welfare but its beneficence is believed to extend to the entire village as well. On special occasions the *bulol* is brought down from the granary to the ground floor of the house during the ceremonies celebrating the exhumation of ancestral bones. At welfare rites and curing ceremonies the *bulol* may also be present.

I did not observe any ceremony for the carving of the *bulol* but I interviewed several priests who have carved *bulol* themselves and whose families own at least one example. The accounts of the four priests agree on many points with only minor disagreements as to the number of sacrificial animals and sequences in the ritual. The first requisite is that only families known to have owned a *bulol* which has been properly installed can have a new one carved. Since Ifugaos have large families and can trace their kins as far back as eight generations, it is not too difficult to overcome this prohibition. Secondly, the family that installs a *bulol* must observe the rituals, give offerings and sacrifices in the form of chickens, pigs, carabaos, rice, rice-wine for at least three successive days. There should be at least four officiating priests who will recite myths and invocations which confer prosperity and welfare to all concerned. The priests receive

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<sup>14</sup> Lambrecht and Burton both think that the Ifugaos believe their ancestors and deities are incorporated in the effigy so that they could partake of the food sacrificed to them by smelling the aroma.

Francis Lambrecht, "Religion of the Ifugao," *Philippine Sociological Review*, Vol. 10, Nos. 1-2, pp. 33-40.

payment in kind such as rice, rice-wine, some textiles, baskets, as well as portions of the food and rice-wine which they bring home to their respective families. All the priests emphasize that there should be plentiful supply of animals, rice and rice-wine as proof of the householder's generosity. The carving itself is a simple matter done by the craftsman who finishes it in a matter of hours. But it is the "activation" or the installation of the *bulol* that requires elaborate rituals and feasts.

The reasons for carving a *bulol* are: building of a new rice granary, to avert and cure illness in the family, the exhumation and re-interment of the bones of deceased relatives,<sup>14</sup> and the building of new houses for the married children. The newly-carved *bulol* are considered the children of the older *bulol*. The figure must be activated within a few days or at least within two weeks otherwise they are not considered sacred. *Bulol* carved for the tourist market are not considered sacred and these can be freely sold. But the *bulol* which has been ceremoniously activated is never sold. It is kept in the family until it literally crumbles or is eaten up by insects.

Ritual and social associations seem to overshadow all other considerations about the nature of the *bulol* and almost all other forms associated with it. This appears to be the way Ifugaos view art — to put it crudely, they are no more than symptoms of something other than themselves. In another level of discourse, they are no more than symbolic representation of social relationships, of interdependence, and of values in their society. If such an interpretation is taken, this would negate the very necessity of making art objects in the first place. It does not explain why art objects are still needed if all the ideas, values and social relationships are already defined in the Ifugao society. My suspicion is that these notions, values, and social relationships and what-have-you may be present in the Ifugao society but they need to be articulated in many other forms, a process in which art plays a major role.

The Ifugaos fabricate a variety of distinct art forms. They are not only various types according to techniques of manufacture, materials and use, but also distinctive shapes or forms within each type as well as a whole range of ornamental designs. The repertory may be limited compared to Filipino artists schooled in the West, but the fact remains that the nature of forms themselves are seen as effective vehicles of their social and religious values. The expressiveness of

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<sup>15</sup> According to the information they gave me, the bones of the deceased were exhumed after the fleshy parts had disintegrated, usually after a year or two. Whereupon, the bones were re-interred inside a small niche carved into the side of the mountain or hill wrapped in a new death blanket. In earlier times, they recalled, bones were re-interred inside large jars but today since large jars were no longer available, the bones were merely wrapped in a blanket and interred inside a niche or kept under the house.

forms, of structure and organization of art must be one of the considerations when artists go about making a specific type of art. This explains to a great extent why Ifugaos are not content with simple enactment of social activities or the performance of rituals alone. Art, music and dance are symbolic representations and as such it is their capacity to embody the social and religious dimension that makes them a primary concern in Ifugao society. Their ability to make concrete what is vague sentiment and to give it lasting shape explains the sustained interest in artistic activity within this society. The *bulol* best illustrates the efficacy of expressive form. This is particularly true when we have the fortuitous combination of a highly competent artist when the *bulol* could be an awesome work of art even for those who may not share Ifugao beliefs.

The form of the *bulol* almost always follows the same conventional techniques. The human figure is complete but treated in a generalized fashion with total disregard for any anatomical details or transition from one part of the anatomy to another. The carving is such that the figure hardly emerges from the original block. The masses and volumes can be described as effecting in its frontality, rigid and inert massiveness. The rigidity is enhanced by the bulky and squat proportions. By maintaining large, broad surface planes which are kept rough, often showing the marks of the adze, the textural effect contributes further to its rigidity and massiveness regardless of its relatively small size. No sexual distinctions are delineated except to suggest the breasts or the penis. Similarly, there is no attempt to indicate facial expression or a psychological mood. Neither is there any deviation from the rigid frontal pose. In rare cases where the figure is made to bend at the elbows and knees, the stance only exaggerates frontality and the stiffness of the figure. The static pose and its solid masses rule out any relation with the viewer's space, suggesting that the *bulol* exists in its own self-contained space.

The best-made *bulol* gives the impression of direct simplicity, of impassive immutable power. The very fact that the forms of the human anatomy are left unarticulated renders the figure as emblematic of some archetype, perhaps of Bagan and Wigan, the Ifugao ancestors who are the main protagonists in their legends and myths. The *bulol* is the focus of spiritual forces not quite human but not too far removed from man. Its brooding, immobile countenance presides over the most significant occasions of Ifugao life. Thus it can be said to be the symbol of Ifugao society itself. To an outsider it is as inscrutable and indifferent as the powers of nature herself. And yet it has none of the protective, benign compassion of the Madonna which Christian carvers love to depict. On the other hand, it cannot be said

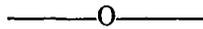
that the *bulol* suggests the totality of evil, the terrible vindictiveness and destructive forces that we can see depicted in many representations of Satan. Instead, what we have in the figure of *bulol* suggests mute power, unmoving and omnipresent, shorn of the violence that power so often implies.

The *bulol* then is the most potent symbol of Ifugao society. Deities and ancestors who protect and succor the living are believed to incorporate themselves into this effigy at times of ritual investiture. All other art forms therefore become the manifestation of the favor bestowed by the *bulol*. Textiles, food vessels, jewelry, etc., are just so many of the endowments conferred upon those who have faithfully fulfilled their ritual duties and obligations to the *bulol*. Furthermore, the artistic style of the *bulol* is precisely what makes it the most appropriate form upon which the stream of social interaction and mutual dependence could center upon: a form suggestive enough of human form but representing no specific personality nor any definite psychological mood. It is a style that begs to be interpreted in terms of the totality of social contexts. This art style allows us to draw a closer analogy between it and the relatively undifferentiated Ifugao social structure wherein the artist is at once priest, patron, farmer, etc., and whose personality is always defined in terms of his relationships to others in society. The diffusion of social roles and the inhibitory effects of social contingencies affect artistic goals and artistic procedure, for the Ifugao artist is not supposed to be motivated by "self-expression" nor by "sheer pleasure and delight" although as we said earlier that exists to some minor degree. But the artist's manifest concern is in providing the visible expression of beliefs and to create the aura of the emotionally-charged environment in which such beliefs become believable. Since in Ifugao, art discloses their highest beliefs, by the same token, the practice of art is the individual's commitment to these beliefs.

However, the stern impassiveness of the *bulol* style does not necessarily exclude other possibilities within certain limits. Intrusive cultural materials have not only been adopted such as ancient beads, Chinese pottery and gongs, but through the years they have become invested with ritual sanctions as well as status symbols. Besides the use of imported items, there are other indications of artistic flexibility and a willingness towards experimentation and change as long as these do not endanger Ifugao solidarity. Personal adornments such as tattooing, textiles and jewelry make use of many motifs and richer textures including a tendency for naturalism in the decoration of houses and food vessels. Indeed we have seen that allowances are made even for personal whimsies and in all likelihood, even for individual fantasies. Nonetheless, such lapses

are readily brought back into line by rationalization. They insist that personal adornments and such similar indulgences are, after all, for the material and social security of the family.

There is still another intrusive factor which remains to be discussed, and this is the tourist trade. Intensive participation of a great many Ifugaos in the tourist trade is again explained for the economic benefit of the family. What is more significant as far as this study is concerned is that tourist trade provides more opportunity for the Ifugao artist to experiment and widen his technical skills and extend his perception of the world at a much faster rate than if he were to keep within the traditional norms. The fact that more and more Ifugaos leave home to work outside, oftentimes in workshops that cater to the tourist trade, will evidently have far-reaching socio-cultural consequences. Surely the increase in the number of tourists and outsiders visiting and living in Ifugao territory will also effect many changes. It is a subject far beyond the intentions of this study except to say that Ifugao art and society will be transformed by such an encounter. Be that as it may, Ifugao art is still one of the most profound measures of the vitality of Ifugao traditions. It could very well be that this vitality will not be of long duration. Should such an event ever occur, it remains to be seen whether the Ifugaos will be its willing instruments.



#### Appendix 1

##### *General Background on the Ifugao Tribe:*

The Ifugao numbering to about 130,000 in the Mountain Province and in the province of Nueva Vizcaya form together with the Apayao, Kalinga, Bontoc, Kankanai, the ethnic tribes who have been least acculturated among the present day Filipinos of Northern Luzon. The Ifugaos are the most numerous single ethnic group in Northern Luzon in terms of land area with a population density of 85 persons per square mile. They inhabit the eastern side of the Cordillera Central occupying the spine of Luzon island extending westward to the Ilocos and Southwest to Isabela and Nueva Vizcaya. They subsist on rice grown on mountain terraces and irrigated extensively by water drawn by means of gravity to the lower terraces. Occasionally, water is carried across mountains to other terraces by means of bamboo sluices. To the Ifugaos are ascribed the highest development of irrigated rice terraces in this part of the world.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Roy Franklin Barton, *Ifugao Economy*, Univ. of Calif. Publications in American Anthropology, Archeology and Ethnology, Vol. 15, pp. 386-448.

Historical accounts in the 16th century already record the existence of these mountain terraces, of loosely-organized villages and trade with the Ilocos, Isabela and Nueva Vizcaya provinces. It was a trade based mainly on such items as pottery, gongs (without bosses) imported from China, beads usually made of agate and carnelian, some traceable to Indian ports as far as Bombay. These trade items still form to a large degree, Ifugao standards of wealth and status. In exchange for these imported goods, the Ifugaos bartered gold, beeswax and forest products such as rattan, runo, lumber and resins. Barter trade on these items was stopped by the Spanish government about the middle of the 17th century which apparently increased the value of these imported items when these became in time irreplaceable heirlooms. However, trade on other items such as cloth, foodstuffs and iron tools continued with the lowland peoples. While Ifugaos maintained contacts with the lowlands, they have resisted Christianity and continued their pattern of life through the centuries of two colonial rules.<sup>17</sup>

Ifugao social, economic and religious life have been studied by Barton, Vanoverbergh, Lambrecht and Conklin so that it is not necessary to discuss these aspects in any great detail except to reiterate briefly the general features of Ifugao society which have direct bearing on our discussion on art.

The family and kinship group forms the nucleus for social, economic and political activity and is the sole institution that regulates and enforces Ifugao norms. The family is bilateral with matrilineal tendencies. Affiliations are strongest within the nuclear family, decreasing in importance vertically further up or horizontally from the immediate family. Husband and wife share equal rights as to property and authority within the family. However, in case of conflicts involving each one's respective families, husband or wife may often take the side of his or her own kin. But compromises are often found and rarely is a marriage broken up due to misunderstanding among in-laws. A council of elders composed mostly of the wealthier families may preside or arbitrate over certain matters involving the interest of the whole village. Generally however, families resolve conflicts by means of mediators (*monkulnon*) and would first exhaust every help they can obtain from their kin before asking for a mediator or the elders of the village to intervene. Besides, the council of elders does not actually exist as a separate entity that convenes regularly like a court. They are more or less the elder members of the community who by custom give and are sought out for advice. A sufficiently strong kinship group or family can success-

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<sup>17</sup> Felix M. Keesing, *The Ethnohistory of Northern Luzon*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), pp. 269-270, 318-319, 338-339 & 312-314.

fully challenge the decisions of the majority of the village elders, although this is very rare.<sup>18</sup>

As political structure is almost nil, so is the social structure. Social differentiation exists based primarily on wealth from which prestige and status all accrue. The wealthy are called *Kadangyan*. They own large areas of rice lands and have large quantities of stored rice, Chinese gongs, pottery, and a whole array of Ifugao handicrafts. To legitimize one's status as a *kadangyan* he must first and henceforth periodically give communal feasts called *uyauwe* to which all his co-villagers are invited including friends and relatives from other villages. He provides plentiful supply of animals, rice, rice-wine and pays for the services of at least four priests. The *uyauwe* ceremony is performed on the occasion of a person's ascendance to the *kadangyan* class. For this ceremony, craftsmen are employed to carve a long wooden bench on which the person celebrating the rite will be ceremoniously seated. A *bulol* and other ritual objects may be commissioned for the ceremony. The *kadangyan* have no special powers of influence except in terms of prestige and from their ability to give or deny material aid to the other villagers. Nevertheless in case of disputes, a *kadangyan's* word carries more weight than that of a poor man's. The *kadangyan* must periodically give communal feasts similar to the *uyauwe* rite called *pahang*. The *pahang* rite is very similar to the *uyauwe* with the important exception that the bench is not carved for the former rite.<sup>19</sup>

Next to the *kadangyan* is the *natumók*, a kind of middle class who owns land but does not have sufficient rice to last the entire year. Below the scale is the *nowatwat* who are landless. They are employed by the richer Ifugaos either in the rice fields or as servants.<sup>20</sup>

Ifugao society appears fluid and flexible since there is no privileged, hereditary class capable of indefinite self-perpetuation. But it also happens that a family that reaches *kadangyan* status tends to perpetuate their economic advantage by acquiring more land and property. They also happen to be the families that own the *bulol* figures.

Ifugao economy is based on rice. The crop however does not last the entire year so that *camote* (sweet potato) makes up 50% of the diet of the poorer families. Over 50% of the rice of Banaue is imported from the lowlands. Some vegetables are grown but not enough for each family's consumption. Protein is derived mainly

<sup>18</sup> Barton, *op. cit.*, pp. 386-430.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

*The Religion of the Ifugaos*, American Anthropologist Association Memoir series, No. 65, *passim*.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 436.

from tiny quantities of shells and fish gathered from streams and flooded rice fields. But in the dry season protein supplies from these sources dry up. Pigs, chickens, ducks are raised by many families and a few rich families own carabaos. These animals are consumed primarily for rituals. Nature has been parsimonious in Ifugao for at elevations of 3,000 — 4,000 feet, banana and bamboo, which are the most versatile food and material resources of the lowlands, do not grow to full maturity.

Barton and Lambrecht have collected a large corpus of texts of myths and rituals. These myths still have to be analyzed in greater depths and from various angles since texts are now made available by recent anthropological studies. On the subject of religion, one has to depend on previous works such as those by Barton and Lambrecht. Barton characterized Ifugao religion as polytheistic. Among the thousands of Ifugao deities are those that represent natural phenomena and features of the environment, man's physical and psychological states, heroes and ancestors, social relations and practices, economic activities, technology which includes the arts, agriculture and myth-making itself. No area of Ifugao life is left without a deity formulated for that specific purpose. Barton believes that there is no unifying principle that relates these deities together and that these "anthropomorphic" deities are only loosely linked together in the myths where they occupy, if rather loosely, a certain role in the narrative. Deities are considered by Barton as capricious beings whose will and acts can neither be fathomed nor controlled by human effort. They are placated, cajoled, praised and given offerings in elaborate round of rituals. The functions of religion according to Barton is that it "intensifies kinship solidarity in common ancestry" and the "performance of rituals and the sharing of food in ceremonial situation bolster this mutual feeling of dependence and common lineage."<sup>21</sup>

It is further suggested that the Ifugao religion provides the integrating principle in society and maintains the validity of social values. Ifugao religion is concerned with material prosperity which is sought by making petitions to the deities through the aid of ancestors. Prayers, myth recitations and sacrifices are ways by which one seeks to ameliorate one's present condition in the world. Ethical problems and mystical experience are not the basic concern of Ifugao religious practice. It aims rather to aid the individual Ifugao to attain prosperity in the present life, to live in harmony with his fellows and fulfill his task as a member of the family. Ifugao religion therefore enables the Ifugao to maneuver in society and provides the framework and the cosmology that gives order to his universe.

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

## Appendix 2

*Observations on the Tourist Trade of Handicrafts*

There now exists a thriving tourist market in Ifugao handicrafts. It is a lucrative business that employs large numbers of full-time workers relocated in Baguio City and in Bontoc. Aside from providing regular employment, it has generated larger volume of production and has also stimulated the proliferation of a wide variety of craft items, many hitherto unknown to local usage. Ifugao carving particularly has received considerable impetus from the tourist trade. The workshops in Baguio City and Bontoc serve as the major outlets of Ifugao products with Banaue as the way station for recruiting workers and commissioning crafts. Workshops were visited in Baguio City and in Bontoc; in the latter, the ones visited were textile shops. In Baguio City more than half of the workers were Ifugao carvers, and included among them were those who claimed that were it not for the tourist trade, they would not engage in carving on their own. A number of them were recruited while unemployed in Baguio City. While we have reason to rejoice over the economic opportunities given to many jobless Ifugaos by the tourist trade, this should not however prevent us from raising the issue on its possible influences on the nature, and the direction of development of Ifugao art and of the Ifugao craftsman.

In general tourist trade thrives on those products that exhibit the unique qualities of craftsmanship. The individuality and even the idiosyncracies of a craft product is that which makes it particularly appealing. Besides those qualities that result from skillful handling are those of novelty and a certain amount of rarity that make handicrafts worthwhile to their collectors. Large-scale production and haphazard techniques applied on tourist-handicrafts hardly enable the stamp of individual craftsmanship to emerge. Unfortunately many dealers in the tourist trade are not cognizant of the artistic principles governing the marketability of handicrafts. Their attention concentrated almost exclusively on the business aspect, they are on the whole least concerned in drawing out the best that their craftsmen can produce. It often happens that the worst models become the basis for the successive imitations that will eventually end up for sale in quantity. That the buyers themselves do not know any better (as the dealers are quick to explain) is no excuse why tourist trade goods should be shoddy. The tourist trade need not be a senseless charade where the tourists pick up our cultural trivia to be quickly discarded at the airport. Except for profit, no meaningful purpose or any lasting economic gains are served by such a wasteful enterprise. For after all, tourist trade

in handicrafts involves among others, the energies of craftsmen and the material resources of the nation's forests that can be put to better use. Perhaps not all the dealers can be expected to know the intricacies of art principles and to possess good taste, not to mention knowledge of the cultural contexts of the tribal arts they sell. The other option is for dealers and managers in the tourist trade to expand and enlarge the scope and variety of their products. By adopting principles of good engineering design, they can produce objects that are both utilitarian and elegant and whose style and content need not be attached to any specific country and culture. But herein lies the dilemma of the tourist and souvenir market. Generally, tourists visit other countries because among other things, these places are different. There is also the expectation that the products of the countries visited are unique to that region. The point here simply is that the main appeal of tourism relies heavily on the distinctiveness of the people, places, goods, and art, including the souvenirs each country has to offer. A world where everyone and everything is the same hardly makes travel worth the effort.

But we are concerned in this discussion more on the effects of the tourist trade on Ifugao art and on the Ifugao craftsmen. Ifugao artists who are employed in the workshops are suddenly made to work on a complex array of forms and techniques which he has not fully mastered. While perfectly capable of excellent work given traditional themes and tools, even the best Ifugao carvers lose control when confronted with the demands of the workshop, where they turn out ridiculous versions of the Madonna and Child, the twin masks of Greek tragedy and comedy, and Michelangelo's *David* (which Ifugaos are told is the Headhunter, a subject not found in traditional Ifugao repertory). When they work on traditional crafts they are expected to produce larger numbers in a short period of time. This is particularly true to weaving where technical short cuts replace the meticulous handling that each product received under traditional craft procedures. Besides the drawbacks Ifugaos encounter as far as unfamiliar subjects and techniques are concerned, there is still the intangible aspects to take into account. For one thing, the psychological consequence must be unnerving. Art forms that fit into Ifugao society for their practical and ritual purposes are reduced as mere curiosities or sources of amusement in the tourist trade. One can only imagine how they feel when they are asked to carve subjects which make them the objects of ridicule in total disregard of Ifugao sensibilities. The numerous examples need not be recounted here except a few glaring ones. Some Ifugaos through years of mountain climbing have come to

possess feet with an over-sized toe distended in a sharp outward curve. Even among these mountain-dwelling people, this phenomenon is unusual although it is never treated as a laughing-matter. In the tourist market, carvings of such feet are made in the form of ashtrays on which buyers are encouraged to crush down cigarette butts. Moreover, the Ifugaos are asked to carve blatantly vulgar and obscene subjects which need not be described here.

Undoubtedly, the Ifugao has been given the chance to participate in the mainstream of national life as a wage earner, but his services have become highly vulnerable to the vagaries of this particular market. At the same time it cannot be denied that his participation constitutes something of a moral degradation. Perhaps dealers, exporters and managers of workshops will not turn away from their responsibilities lightly if only they realize that in the long run they are bound to cripple their business if their acquiescent craftsmen continue to work without conviction and take on the same cynical attitude that prevails in the business.

There should be a sequel to this report on the tourist trade so that we can follow-up what has become of the Ifugao craftsmen working in the tourist trade. The dim view taken in these observations on Ifugao crafts and craftsmen need not apply to all Philippine handicrafts. There are avenues for good taste, ingenuity and even wit to exert an influence on the craft industries. As this is being written, there is every indication that these beneficial influences will become more effective. But this is a subject for another study.

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