

### Compelling Memories and Telling Archival Documents and Photographs: The Search for the Baguio Japanese Community

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#### Abstract

Research on the early 20th century Japanese community of Baguio focused on reconstructing its social, institutional, and symbolic foundations, a goal that was hampered by the destruction of the community in World War II and the fading memories of elderly descendants. In the face of intense prejudice from other Filipinos, much of an early Japanese heritage was suppressed if not deliberately destroyed in Baguio, as Japanese Filipinos embraced their Filipino roots in the post-independence years. In this paper, I focus on the interaction of oral history, ethnographic research, personal and official photographs, and archival documents of Baguio's creation as an American colonial "hill station," and discuss how they were deployed in the search for the Japanese community. By covering many aspects of Baguio's early history and economy, the documentary materials afforded a chronology of Japanese settlement in the Baguio-Benguet region, while also lending support to descendants' fading memories. In bringing together memories with textual and photographic records, we learn of how important space and locality were in remembering childhoods in Baguio. This interplay of resources allowed me to chart

the Japanese migrant community's occupational specializations and its social and cultural adaptations. Finally, it clarified the transformative role played by this vibrant community of pioneering builders, entrepreneurs, and farmers in the development of the city in the early 20th century.

"My task is piecing together a puzzle...I hope to reconstitute the existence of a person whose memory has been abolished...I want to recreate him, to give him a second chance—in the short run a reasonably substantial chance - to become part of the memory of his century.

(Alain Corbin. *The Life of an Unknown: The Rediscovered World of a Clog Maker in Nineteenth-Century France.* Columbia University Press, 1991, p. viii).

This paper focuses primarily on the relationship among different source materials and on some research findings in the production of the book Japanese Pioneers in the Northern Philippine Highlands, A Centennial Tribute, 1903-2003 (Afable 2004, JPNPH) and the derivative photographic exhibition, Haponés: The Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Japanese Community of Baguio (in the UP Vargas Museum, November 20, 2007-January 15, 2008)<sup>1</sup>. In the beginning stages of research on early Japanese migrants to the Cordillera region, what became the biggest challenge to the research team was to find the Japanese community and to reconstitute it from the memories of Japanese-Filipino descendants. As an anthropologist making use of historical materials, I took it as a primary goal to reconstruct the social, institutional, and cultural foundations of this group of Japanese settlers and their families and to describe their place in the 20<sup>th</sup> century history of the Cordillera region.

My own background, as a third-generation descendant of a marriage in the 1910s between a Japanese carpenter-contractor from Hiroshima and an Ibaloy farmer-trader from Baguio, meant that, over many years, I had heard my family's and other limited versions of this society and this history. However, as a child growing up in the ruins of Baguio after the Second World War, I learned quickly that storytelling about life as Japanese descendants provoked so much grief and anger about the War that it was easier to drop the subject and not to remind anyone about it. The deep emotional reactions to memories of loss and humiliation during and after the War had led to a profound collective silence among Japanese-Filipino descendants in my parents' and my generation. Recognizing this and assessing its consequences for this research was the first hurdle in this project.

Seeking manuscripts, poring through family albums, and coaxing memories from elderly descendants were basic to this quest. However, because the community was destroyed in the Second World War, metaphors of digging into the past, dredging up memories, and mining the archives and libraries were often more appropriate for describing this search. From the start, the whole project begged the question of what "community" meant, for it existed primarily in the memories of a few seventy- and eighty-year old second generation Japanese Filipinos, most of them women.

How their personal stories could be tapped for this study, bearing in mind their gender, their tragic losses in the War, their perceptions of the present, and the long lapse of time since the experiences that they described and interpreted—this question demanded review continually. In the end, bringing the data from oral histories into interaction with documents and photographs proved to be the most balanced research strategy, for it pointed to what the descendants valued in their history. In particular, it clarified the role that landscape and place played in memory recall and for contextualizing personal stories. My own larger interest in the history of Baguio's creation and settlement depended on this interplay of various sources, as I sought to describe the multicultural base of its society and the transformations to its environment in the American period.<sup>2</sup>

### The beginning and the end

The beginning of this story takes us back to 1903, over a hundred years ago, to the arrival of Japanese workers for the construction of the Benguet Road (later to be named Kennon Road, after the military engineer who completed it). Built to connect the planned town of Baguio to the end of the Manila Railroad at Dagupan, this highway was the first access route built by Americans to the Cordillera climate and mineral resources that Spanish sources<sup>3</sup> described in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Japanese migrant laborers, mostly brought by Japanese employment agencies with the blessing of the American and Japanese foreign ministries (Yu-Jose 1997), numbered about 1500 on this highway construction. They made up 22 percent of the total work force, which drew men from 46 nations and involved over two thousand Filipinos (Afable 2004, p.17-18).

The first Japanese settlers in Baguio came from this cohort of construction workers. Others moved from U.S. military construction sites elsewhere, especially Fort Stotsenburg (later Clark Field) and Fort William McKinley (later Fort Bonifacio). Within the decade after the Kennon Road completion in 1905, several dozens of the new arrivals found employment as carpenters, masons, gardeners, and sawmill workers during the first phase of the building of Baguio (see Forbes 1904-1913; Thomas 1906). A few men opened general stores in the city center by the 1910s. With more arrivals from Japan over the next twenty years, the migrants constructed government buildings and the first western-style residences. They found lucrative employment in the lumber industry, as sawmills were established in wooded areas circling the city. Invited by their successful relatives in Baguio, migrants from Fukushima, Fukuoka, Hiroshima, Kagoshima, Kumamoto, and Yamanashi augmented the core of the fledgling Japanese community.

The expansion of transportation facilities, including the building of a second highway to Baguio by 1914, gave new scope for entrepreneurship; and Japanese started up vegetable farms, cooperatives, contracting

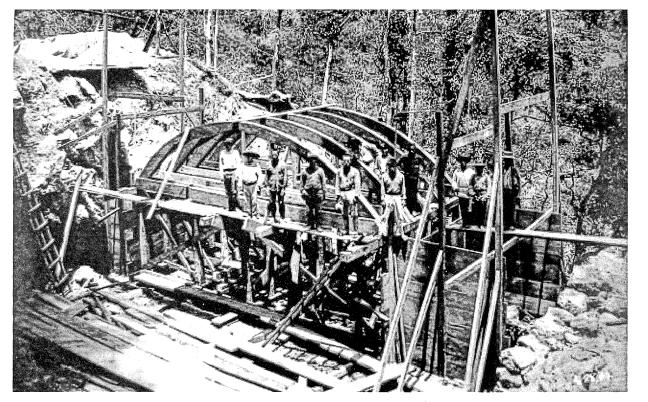


Figure 1. Building a culvert on the Benguet Road in 1904. Employment in the construction of access routes to Baguio led to technological exchange between Japanese workers and American military engineers that was crucial to the building of the city's foundations. (U.S. NARA)

companies, groceries, and department stores. In the 1920s, they formed a Japanese Association, established a school, and organized farming cooperatives to streamline the shipment of crops to the Manila markets. Until the beginning of World War II, Japanese retail businesses as well as agricultural, construction, and trucking enterprises flourished as Baguio evolved into a favorite tourist destination and the so-called "Salad Bowl of the Philippines." In the mid-1930s, when Baguio's mines made Benguet the highest gold-producing region in Asia, the most successful of the Japanese contractors went into lumber transport to the mines and mill construction work.

The multicultural workplaces that evolved in this new town involved many "Igorots," people from the surrounding highlands, primarily from Ibaloy-, Kankanaey-, and Bontoc-speaking regions. Arriving in the new city (some said it took five days to walk to Baguio from their homes) in search of wage work, they usually found it on road construction crews (which often included women), the sawmills, or on the new farms. Few lowlanders who came to the highlands ventured into these kinds of heavy manual labor in the beginning, although many were employed in the gold mines in the 1930s. The role of this ethnically diverse labor force in helping to establish *pax Americana* in the Cordillera has been little considered, while government records and the media attribute this primarily to schools, missions, and the police.

Thus, in 1945, when there were over a thousand Japanese civilians in Baguio, the oldest of these migrants had lived there thirty years or more. They had known no other home for two generations, and many of their children with Filipino wives had started families. The length of that continuous residence and the survival of descendants in the Philippines and in Japan provided us with what the project team thought was a strong beginning for an oral history study. In the end, however, the biggest difficulty for this undertaking was the destruction of the Japanese community in the Second World War.



Figure 2. Friends and families of Sanji Nagatomi (at left), a Fukuoka building contractor and founder of the Mountain Studio and Hideo Hayakawa (wearing bow tie at right), founder of the Japanese Bazaar, picnic under the pines about 1920. They were leading lights in the establishment of the Baguio Japanese Association and the Japanese School. (Syunichi Abe collection)

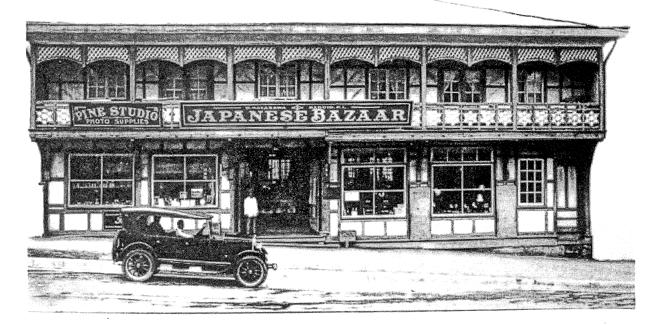


Figure 3. The Japanese Bazaar was founded in the mid-1910s by Hideo Hayakawa, who had been an itinerant merchant supplying food, alcohol, and traditional Japanese foods to various work camps during the Benguet Road construction. This most upscale of the Baguio department stores until the 1930s was the flagship of a set of enterprising ventures in transport, building contracts, and farms. (Furuya collection)

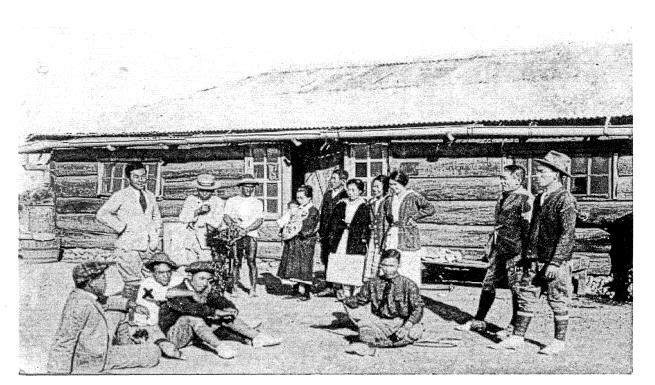


Figure 4. Fukushima workers and wives with an unidentified Filipino in front of a Heald Lumber Company workers' lodging house on Mount Santo Tomas, 1919. Most of these early arrivals built careers in the lumber industry over the next two decades. "X" was Tomoichi Kato, who helped establish the Elizalde family's silk production enterprise in Benguet in the 1930s. (Kato-Pengosro collection)



**Figure 5.** The families of sawmill technicians, Minoru and Isamu Ohta, who were brothers from Yamanashi, at the Heald Lumber mill near the Kilometer 70 mark on the "Mountain Trail" north of Baguio. (Furuya collection)

ASIAN STUDIES





Figure 6. Members of the recently-founded Baguio Japanese Association gathered on the Mansion House lawn in 1921. This was at the U.S. Governor-General's residence (built in 1909), which had great symbolic value to the community, for it was an early work site for Japanese construction workers. (Furuya collection).



Figure 7. A 1912 view of Session Road from the north, showing early American, Chinese, and Japanese provision stores and lodging houses. The beginnings of the Catholic mission are at left, and Hotel Pines, Baguio's first tourist hotel, is on the hill at far right. The two buildings in the foreground were called the "Igorot market." (U.S. NARA).

34

Afable



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**Figure 8.** A 1930s view of Session Road from the north, showing the expansion of the city center in Baguio's first two decades. The Roman Catholic Cathedral is at top left. Japanese builders found lucrative work in the construction of general stores, offices, mission buildings, and government and private housing as well as in landscaping and horticultural work. (Syunichi Abe collection).

#### World War II and its aftermath

During the Japanese occupation of Baguio, Japanese and Japanese-Filipino adults were, in general, allowed to continue work in their usual occupations. However, all were drafted for lengths of time into police work as interpreters and translators, and the younger men were conscripted into the Japanese armed forces. They were highly valued for their knowledge of local communities and of English, Ilocano, Spanish, and highland languages. Inevitably, through this period and in the years following World War II, the loyalties of all persons of Japanese descent in Baguio came under suspicion from both sides in the conflict, and Japanese "mestizos" bore the brunt of accusations of collaboration with the enemy.

As the Allied bombing of Baguio intensified in early 1945, the Japanese army that occupied the city moved out and began to make their way north towards the Cagayan coast. On orders of the Japanese military and also for their own protection, most of the civilian Japanese population went along with the troops. This retreat ended in the southern river valleys of Ifugao, with the surrender in Kiangan of General Yamashita and his staff in September of that year. Fully two-thirds of the Baguio Japanese, most of them children, perished in this retreat. They died of starvation and illness in the vicinities of Tinek, Tukukan, Ahin, Hungduan, Holiap and Kiangan between March and September of 1945. Those who survived became prisoners-of-war, were interned in U.S. military camps in southern Luzon, and were repatriated to Japan at the end of that year.

During the retreat from Baguio, a few of the older Japanese men who had Filipino wives stayed behind. They were protected by their in-laws and neighbors, at great risk to everyone involved, in the hills around Baguio and Trinidad. However, in April and May, 1945, when Allied forces reoccupied Baguio, these Japanese fathers and many adult mestizo children gave themselves up to the U.S. military as well. Classified as "enemy aliens," they were interned for several months in the Bilibid, Tres Cruces, and Canlubang internment camps. All the first generation Japanese were repatriated to Japan from these camps. A few children of mixed marriages



Figure 9. The family of the prominent building contractor and entrepreneur, Charles Muneo Teraoka (1900-1941; center in dark suit) and his sister's family outside of their home in Guisad, Baguio, in 1941. Teraoka had arrived in Manila as a young apprentice carpenter from Yamaguchi in 1916 and married Antonina Bautista of Tarlac in 1924. In this photograph, the only survivors of the Second World War were a nephew, Hironobu Kawamoto (8 years old, on his father's lap at left), and two children: M. Dolores Teraoka Escaño (second child from left, 11 years) and Carlos Teraoka (14 years, behind Dolores,) who is the present Honorary Consul-General of Japan at Baguio. The orphans, all born in Baguio, were sent to Japan from the U.S. military internment camp at Laguna. (Teraoka family collection).

went to Japan at that time, mainly in the company of their fathers, and so did a couple of Filipino wives. For the vast majority of the Japanese Filipinos who remained in Baguio or other Cordillera towns, the separations were final: only a few families ever saw their Japanese fathers or husbands again.<sup>4</sup>

The destruction of life and property in the war, the remembered cruelties of the occupation army, the enforced break-ups of families, and perhaps most traumatically, the deep anti-Japanese feelings that pervaded their communities—all these ensured the end of the Baguio Japanese community, physically, as well as in the minds of its descendants and its neighbors. In the face of this stigma, many mestizos changed their identities and embraced their Filipino roots, while concealing or at least undercommunicating their Japanese heritage. The stoic silence of their elders meant that the stories of Japanese Filipino lives would be suppressed for more than a generation. To make matters worse, Japanese Filipinos from indigenous communities in the Cordillera were doubly stigmatized because of the prejudice against "Igorots" and "non-Christians." Also, few family photographs remained after the war; many descendants said they lost them in the evacuation, or they had burned anything that identified them as Japanese. Often, the last photograph we were shown by a family had been folded so many times, in the attempt, it seemed, to render it invisible.

### Connections with Japan after World War II

The silence was slowly broken. Individual attempts to seek out Japanese relatives occurred through the 1950s, often with the help from the Red Cross and English-speaking Japanese School alumni in Japan, and they were supported through small informal networks.<sup>5</sup> In the 1960s and 1970s, Japanese began visiting the Philippines, seeking remains of kinsmen who had died in the war. Meetings began to take place among Japanese veterans, survivors of the war on both sides, and descendants of the early Japanese communities. At this time, a few former residents of Baguio arrived to look into business opportunities in their old hometown. Japanese Catholics started coming too, finding special bonds with Filipinos, and they soon moved into raising scholarships for young descendants. These generous commitments continue until today.

It was in the late 1960s and the 1970s that the plight of Philippine descendants of pioneering Japanese settlers started to gain intense attention in the Japanese media. During that period, the first Filipino Japanese friendship societies were formed in major Philippine cities that had welcomed Japanese migrants in the early 1900s. The one in Baguio started out in 1972 with 12 families. The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II in the Pacific and Asia, in 1995, was a turning point in the renewal of ties between Japanese descendants in both countries. Behind the scenes, all these have been part of Japanese diplomatic efforts to affirm a post-War image in Southeast Asia as well as to seek inexpensive sources of foreign labor.<sup>6</sup>

### The documentary materials: Baguio's written history

The bulk of documentary materials for the project consisted of archival manuscripts, photographic collections, and maps. The link between Japanese migrant labor and early American colonial projects in the northern Philippines (Afable 2004, Hayase 1989, Kennon 1906, Yu-Jose 1997) pointed to U.S. government records to provide the economic and administrative background to these activities. Baguio's success as a tourist destination and as a source of highland vegetables, beginning in the 1920s, and its growth into a premier mining center in the 1930s, made for a prosperous city with a truly special identity. However, the American documentation of this development was written primarily from a tourist promotional vantage or by officials reporting on their achievements and fiscal responsibilities to the central government. Not surprisingly, few details could be found about the society and history of the migrant labor force that converged on Baguio in the early 1900s. One problem is that, as in most societies, carpenters, farmers, and sawmill workers are rarely the subjects of government reports or of biographical accounts. To start with, these men had little honor in their own country, for most of them had originally come from poor farming and fishing villages in Japan.

The Annual Reports of the U.S. War Department and/or the U.S. Philippine Commission, including their manuscript drafts, contained reports from a wide array of officials concerned with the building of Baguio, including the construction of access routes, the establishment of civil government and its infrastructure, and the indigenous peoples' economy. These materials, including photographs, form part of Record Group 350 (Bureau of Insular Affairs records) in the United States National Archives and Records Administration (College Park, Maryland). The publications that best cover the American period in Baguio, by the geographer Robert W. Reed (1999 [1976]) and the historian and former foreign service officer James J. Halsema (1991), were based on this extensive archive. The *Baguio Bulletin*, a weekly supplement to the Manila Bulletin that was supported by American mining interests, furnished confirmation for the chronology of the city's development in the 1930s.

The American officials who saw to the building of Baguio were hard-driving, charismatic men who took their tours of duty seriously. They rose quickly in the colonial government and because they traveled with government photographers and journalists, the founding of this colonial hill station was well documented on paper and in archival photographs. In addition, these officials were prolific writers about their travels and their political decisions. Their documentation was intensive, profuse, and self-conscious, and projected the exhilaration of pioneering administrators as they created, in the style of other colonials in Asia, their very own mountain retreat in the tropics. This ample textual and photographic coverage of Baguio's early development offered crucial leads for this study, once oral histories made it clear that employment in the city's construction led to the first Japanese decisions to settle there.

Members of the United States Philippine Commission embarked on the first official American exploration of the Baguio region in mid-1900. At the end of that year, this body, which was tasked with establishing civil government in the Philippines, made the first steps toward a highway for Benguet with an appropriation for its survey. William Howard Taft, who became Governor-General in 1902 and later was elected President

ASIAN STUDIES

of the United States; Dean C. Worcester, who became Secretary of the Interior of the Philippines; and General Luke Wright, and William Cameron Forbes, who both also became Governors-General, were the most prominent Philippine Commission members interested in the building of Baguio. Thus, from its creation, Baguio and the fortunes of its American community were very much in the minds of officials in the highest positions in the Manila government.

In 1901, the founding of civil government in Benguet opened up the area's mineral and forest resources for exploitation. The U.S. Philippine census of 1903 classified Filipinos into "tribes" and foreshadowed the policies for governing mountain peoples and other "non-Christians" and their territories. Americans, Chinese, Japanese, as well as lowland Filipinos arrived in this new frontier in search of gold, trade, and wage work. Ilocanos and Tagalogs educated in the late Spanish period took up clerical and teaching positions in the fledgling city. American veterans of the Philippine-American War stayed on to prospect for gold, go into business, or staff the civil service. Meanwhile, Ibaloy cattle-owners, for whom the Baguio plateau had been an extensive pastureland, had to move their cattle herds out of the town center to make way for the building of the city. Soon, the region's traditional small-scale mining activities would also be marginalized by large corporate interests.

William Cameron Forbes, in the plum position of Secretary of Commerce and Police, was in charge of public works and had the responsibility of building a summer capital at Baguio. A wealthy bachelor from a family that had extensive business interests in the Far East in the late 1880s, he invested a great amount of energy and his own money in Baguio's development. It was Forbes who arranged for the renowned architect Daniel H. Burnham, a friend of a Harvard University classmate, to draw up a plan for the city.

Within the decade of his arrival, Forbes built his Baguio residence, a polo field and the executive mansion ("Mansion House"), founded the Country Club, and spearheaded the sale of Baguio lands to finance its development. Also, the execution of Burnham's plan became his responsibility. He presided over the start of the building boom to provide Baguio with the office buildings, public structures, and hotel and other types of accommodations needed to fulfill its functions as the country's official summer capital. The building complexes Forbes was responsible for were the most photographed in the early history of the city; their images appeared in numerous publications, including post cards, in succeeding years. At this time, perceptions in the media of Baguio being a rich man's playground for Westerners and elite Filipinos were not uncommon.

In these initiatives, William Cameron Forbes as well as the American contractors in the sawmill and mining industries who had seen Japanese building skills at first hand became the most consistent employers of Japanese construction workers. Among the prominent projects in which Japanese participation was actually documented, Forbes's own residence, "Topside," initially involved eight Japanese masons (Forbes 1904-1913, Afable 2004:39-42). Another was the expansion of the Baguio Sanitarium in 1905, in anticipation of a large jump in population with the opening of the Kennon Road. Some 50 Japanese workmen (Thomas 1906, Afable 2004:39) were reported to be already in residence there. Initially built by Chinese carpenters in 1902 and then later renovated by Japanese workers, this fine building became Baguio's first tourist hotel, the Hotel Pines. In 1907, it published the earliest commercial notices about Baguio as "The Simla of the Philippines" in the *Far Eastern Review*, a newsmagazine with circulation in Manila, Shanghai, and Yokohama (Jenkins 1907).

Thus, through the first infrastructural projects in Baguio, including the lumber industry, Japanese carpenters and masons gained the stable employment that led to their settlement. They went on to establish a reputation for efficient, high quality construction work not only in government buildings all over the Cordillera but also in the setting up of the earliest Catholic and Episcopalian missions and schools. These backgrounds and the recommendations of their bosses assured the Japanese builders of a stable occupational niche that they maintained until the onset of World War II.

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Figure 10. The work record of Naojiro Aihara (1887-1966), who was a building contractor in the old Mountain Province before repatriation to Kanagawa in 1945. He was a 17-year-old apprentice-carpenter in the Fort McKinley barracks in 1904 and rose to become foreman on government and mission projects in Bontoc. This rare document details his wage history and languages, schooling, and employers. (Aihara-Challongen collection).

# The Furuya photographic collection and the Nihei maps of Japanese settlement

Among the important personal contributions of documentation to the book production, I would single out two that, because of the amount of information they covered, expanded the breadth of the research project immensely. A former Baguio resident now residing in Yokohama named Einosuke Furuya (古屋英之助) arrived in Baguio in the late 1990s with several hundred photographs that had been taken in Baguio and Trinidad in the 1920s and 1930s. Born in Baguio in 1933, E. Furuya was a primary school child at Baguio's Japanese School during the Japanese Occupation. Today he is a retired commercial photographer and has frequently returned to Baguio, to visit former schoolmates, to volunteer his services to the Northern Luzon Filipino Japanese Foundation, and to exhibit his photography of his old "hometown." E. Furuya's parents and brother survived the Second World War and surrendered to U.S. troops in southern Ifugao in 1945, when he was just 12 years old. His post-retirement activities in the Philippines exemplify the continuities between the pre-World War II Japanese community and its descendants in both countries.

The photographic collection was originally compiled by Einosuke's late father, Shonosuke Furuya (古屋正之助), who had run the Pine Studio on Session Road in the 1920s to early 1930s and later the Balatoc Golden Light Studio from 1933 until the onset of World War II. Furuya had arrived in Manila about 1916 and became an apprentice with the Sun Studio in central Manila. He also attended the University of the Philippines Fine Arts program about 1921.

Shonosuke Furuya's Pine Studio, which was a part of the Hayakawa family's Japanese Bazaar, was as well equipped as any major Manila studio of the 1920s. Numerous photographs from this studio of Baguio landscapes and scenic spots were sold as post cards from its counters until World War II. In addition to landscapes, Furuya documented celebrations of the Japanese community, including weddings, school activities, and visits by Japanese as well as eminent outsiders. He also designed several prizewinning Japanese community floats for the annual July Fourth and Rizal Day festivities (Afable 2004c, p. 240-249)

The other information windfall came in the form of hand-drawn maps drawn by Toshiko Nihei (二瓶敏子), formerly Toshiko Sato (佐藤敏子), now 83 years old and living in Hokkaido. She graduated from the Baguio Japanese School and attended St. Louis Girls High School before World War II. Her mother, Magdalena Sato, came from Kadaklan, eastern Mountain Province, and her father, Tasaku Sato, came from Fukushima. They were farmers in the vicinity of Kilometer 4, in Trinidad. Magdalena died during World War II, but the rest of the family was sent to Fukushima from the U.S. prisoner-of-war camp at Canlubang.

Nihei's maps (Afable 2004a, p. 194-201) of the old Japanese neighborhoods in Guisad, Lucban, Trinidad, and central Baguio were drawn from the memory of her teenage years. In the 1990s, she corresponded with former Baguio residents in Japan to arrive at these meticulously composed guides that pinpointed Japanese families and their places of residence in the 1930s. Bright, outgoing, and multilingual in Ilocano, English, and Japanese, Toshiko Nihei also possesses a phenomenal memory, and she was instrumental in helping identify individuals, both adults and children, in numerous photographs.

# Bringing textual, photographic, and oral historical materials together

Parts of the puzzle of what constituted the Japanese community began to fall into place as photographs, maps, and other documents stimulated expanded conversations with informants. Reminiscing about their parents' work and workplaces, friends, drinking partners, and work mates yielded more specific detail when they were connected to building sites, farms, sawmills, and trading places that appeared or were at least implied in photographs. People spoke knowledgeably about the seasonal rounds of crops, construction jobs, school activities, and celebrations. Narratives of making a living centered on the collective efforts of families,



Figure 11. The family of Shonosuke and Hideko Furuya of Yamanashi, with sons, Einosuke (in front) and Masao. Shonosuke managed the Pine Studio attached to the Japanese Bazaar and in the 1930s, the Golden Light Studio in the Balatoc mines. He attended the University of the Philippines art program in the early 1920s. Ca. 1940. (Furuya collection)

46

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neighborhoods, school groups, and cooperatives. Immersion in familyby-family history and in place-by-place history was necessary for recreating, as closely as possible, the settings in which events took place, and in gaining some understanding of the circumstances and issues that most easily escape the researcher in structured interviews.

Photographs of old Baguio and nearby places were immediately useful for connecting life stories with various individuals, families, and their activities in space and time. Their importance was underlined by the fact that much of central Baguio was destroyed in the Allied bombing of early 1945. "We walked along this trail;" "I accompanied my mother to bring my father's lunch to that building;" "We went to have our picture taken there;" "That was our cabbage harvest waiting to be cut," and "That is where my father and his friends went to drink after work" —these kinds of statements were volunteered while pointing to faces, objects, and buildings in photographs and associating them with routes, daily and seasonal routines, and employment histories.

Photographs from the 1930s showing cabbage farms along the straight road connecting south and north Trinidad valley reminded Julieta Locano, daughter of Shosaburo Higashiji, of his habit of transporting his small children in a wheelbarrow while visiting fellow Wakayama farmers who lived near this dusty highway. Considering this same landscape, Rosalia Hano, a daughter of Fukuoka-born Jinpei Hano, reminisced about the times her older sister, Elena, and she vied for rides in the family horse carriage when their mother drove it to deliver vegetables to the Baguio market. Jean Francisco, a granddaughter of the cabbage farmer, Tadahiko Sugimoto, described the long walk home from the Japanese School in Lucban to the Kilometer 6 mark in Trinidad and how her friends and she sang school songs and chanted their arithmetic lessons to make the time pass more quickly. This way, photographs of a well-traveled road and its associated farms, while evoking nostalgic scenes of family and childhood, could be put to service in reconstructing economic and social connectivities of various kinds.

The school photographs from the Furuya collection showing class groups, parent-teacher groups, and school activities, were a great boon,

for reminiscing about school was pleasant and brought descendants in Japan and in Baguio together. Identifying school friends, neighbors, and friends' parents was one of the most profitable activities for the project. When small groups of descendants gathered, they prodded and checked each other to reveal many details that would never surface in one-to-one interviews with individuals. As it turned out, childhood, long before the War, was a truly memorable time, and school was a large part of the fun. An especially valuable set of photographs of the Meiji Emperor's Birthday sports competitions and performances (Afable 2004b) elicited spirited retellings of these annual events.

Bringing back fragments of Japanese school songs, dances, and theatrical presentations, playground expressions, and even multiplication tables taught us much about the importance of song, mime, and performance in memory. To everyone's amusement, Einosuke Furuya, for example, recited for us rhymes and taunts in Ilocano that were common in the school playground when he was in first grade over 60 years ago. Talk about individual friendships and other relationships at school (in answer to questions like, Whom did you walk home from school with?), and gatherings on festive occasions (Which families did you join in making *mochi* rice cakes for the New Year?) made it possible to begin accounting for the membership of neighborhoods, work and friendship groups, prefectural factions, and other aspects of the community's social organization.

Throughout the conversations with descendants, especially those who were of school age during Baguio's most prosperous years before World War II, they expressed great longing for the special time and place of their childhoods. The accounts also discussed the authority of parents and their push for distinction through persistent hard work at home and at school. The emotional and sentimental reactions to the school photographs pointed to the overwhelming importance of the Japanese School in shaping the identity of many young people of Japanese-Filipino descent in Baguio in the 1930s. This had been the center of the community's civic activities and major celebrations, and descendants spoke of ideals of discipline and excellence as something that school had given them. At another level, however, descendants' recollections of their childhoods must be understood against the profound dislocation that they experienced during and after the Second World War. They also present a personal aspect to the presentday economic and political contexts that have engendered claims of "Japaneseness" (see Ohno 2007).

To the descendants, the images of familiar worksites, of schoolmates, and of the city of their childhoods offered overwhelming proof of a life that their families had chosen to banish from their conversations. In 2003, I brought back to Baguio a small number of U.S. National Archives documents attesting to the presence of Baguio Japanese and Japanese-Filipinos in U.S. internment camps in late 1945. The fact of having documents in the United States, in Washington D.C. especially, that spoke of their fathers' lives, *even if only indirectly*, took on special meaning. The references to occupations, to places, and people in official reports gave authenticity to their experiences and their heritage. I had hoped that, minimally, U.S. National Archives documents and photographs would stimulate some remembering. Serendipitously, in the interaction among textual and visual documents and narratives, descendants came to look upon the documents themselves as affirming the identities that they had waited so long to express.

Outside of the authenticating function of textual and photographic materials, the search for ancestors' lives resonated with descendants in another culturally significant way. This had to do with the ritual importance of names and of naming in the southern Cordillera and their symbolic connection to emergent qualities of "community." At traditional prestige feasts, including curing rituals, the naming of ancestors and the recitation of genealogies occur within the most sacred moments of communicating with spirits of ancestors. In the calling out of names, celebrants summon their dead to return to their former houseyards and to dance and feast with their living kinsmen. The parallels between this practice and participating in this research were not difficult to see: by naming them and recalling their childhoods, people were bringing ancestors "back to their houseyards" to celebrate with their descendants. Especially because this also meant an end to the avoidance of their ancestors' names, a reconstruction of "community" at a ritual level flowed from the research process in an unexpected way. There is little doubt that symbolic convergences of this kind have immediate importance for memory as well as for remembering.

# Work, cultural convergences, and social adaptations in a multicultural Baguio

Japanese migrant workers seized opportunities within the American colonial sphere in the Baguio-Benguet hinterland as it began to fully participate in a national and global economy. Descendants' narratives, while focusing on the collective efforts of families and solidarity networks, also clarified the close link of identities to the realm of work. At the same time, they highlighted the challenges and the drive to succeed in the Baguio frontier of the early 1900s. Thus, they mirrored a similar enthusiasm for the life-changing experiences that were projected by American government reports in the early 1900s.

A number of cultural, social, and historical factors were relevant to Japanese success in the Baguio frontier, and I will describe a few here. The woodworkers initially benefited from a merging of American and Japanese carpentry traditions that came from collaboration in the earliest building sites. From Japan, they were familiar with pine lumber and its requirements; this was an advantage over lowland carpenters, whose skills and numbers were in any case not sufficient for the intensive construction of the first two decades. A prior technological background and the ability to "read" American architectural blueprints even without being literate in English, gave these small groups of competitively organized, well-motivated Japanese migrants a starting edge.

Similarly, most of the Japanese men had come from farming backgrounds and the move into an upland ecology of pine forests, seasonal rains, rice in flooded fields, and temperate vegetable cultivation presented no difficult adaptations. Studies of mid-latitude vegetable crops had been conducted by the Spanish and American governments in nearby botanical gardens and experimental stations, and the Japanese were able to take advantage of this technological knowledge upon their arrival. The first Japanese vegetable gardens appeared before 1910 on lands leased from Ibaloy residents in northern Baguio. Slightly lower in elevation from the central Baguio district, the Ibaloy areas of Guisad and Lucban were sites of the first sawmills and the first school (Easter School) established by the Episcopalians for native children.<sup>7</sup> Here, a neighborhood formed around a small group of Kagoshima and Hiroshima men who worked in the sawmill and the school construction, the American missionaries at Easter School, and recent converts among the local Ibaloy landowners and lessors. Within a few years, these small farms expanded beyond the kitchen garden level as the arrival of steamer trucks in Baguio allowed for the transport of small loads of cabbages and potatoes to the lowlands.

Hundreds of rural mountain people arrived in Baguio and Benguet to work on these farms and the first Japanese settlers found wives among the Ibaloy, Kankanaey, and Bontoc farm workers, small traders, and landowners. (The stories tell of how bringing newly harvested rice, fruits and other farm produce, and especially rice wine to sell around the worksites was an excellent way for a young woman to meet a prospective Japanese husband). Farming became a family industry as Japanese builders found the winning formula of combining vegetable farming with construction contracts. Often, families ran small stores from the farms and wives recruited laborers (usually from her extensive kindred) and managed them while the men took on contract work away from the farm during lulls in the cropping cycle. It was common for the laborers on a farm to come from the same region or language group. Again, farming was a sphere in which cross-cultural relations appeared to present few problems. The technological knowledge gained on highland vegetable farms was the most enduring legacy of Japanese interaction with southern Cordilleran peoples in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Cognition of the landscape

Views of the changing Baguio landscape that emerged from the narratives showed other convergences with indigenous environmental

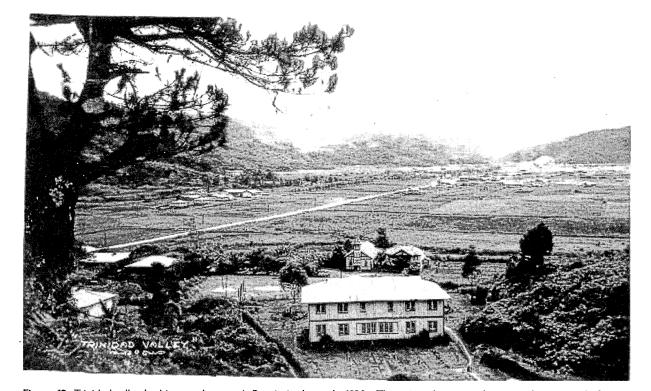


Figure 12. Trinidad valley looking south towards Baguio in the early 1930s. This primarily rice- and taro-producing area before 1920 was transformed into commercial vegetable farms in the 1920s and 1930s by Ibaloy, Kankanaey, and Bontoc farm workers under Japanese supervision. The Catholic mission is in the foreground and the Trinidad Farm School (now Benguet State University) is at left. (Syunichi Abe collection).

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interests. One example was the strong focus on water resources: bodies of water and watercourses, their locations, their origins, and the ways of channeling them and exploiting them were among the things that mattered in this frontier. Not surprisingly, in the first discussions of the American exploring party to Baguio in 1900, water resources for the creation of a city also dominated. The large springs in the hills surrounding the "Minak" swamp of today's Burnham Lake explain why an important Ibaloy settlement was located near today's City Hall and why the American arrivals made this piece of real estate the centerpiece of the mountain resort town.

In 2004, one Japanese-Filipino descendant showed me the connection between her cognition of the landscape with the evidence in Baguio's written history. The late Yoshi Otsuji, who was then about 80 years old, was the daughter of Rinzo Otsuji, a farmer from Kagoshima. Her mother was an Ibaloy-Kankanaey native of Atok. They lived on farms in lower Guisad, near Badihoy and the Easter School area, where her father also kept a blacksmithing forge and produced farming tools for sale. Both parents and Otsuji's own child died during the long northern retreat into Ifugao in 1945.

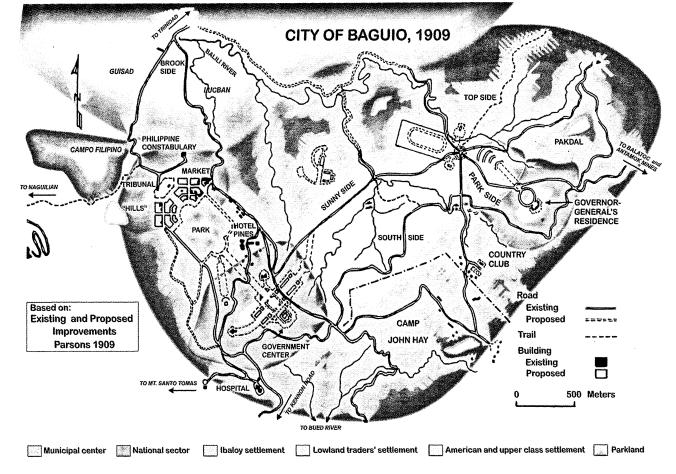
Along with some friends, Otsuji and I took a slow jeepney ride together through the old Japanese neighborhoods in northern Baguio, armed with the detailed maps that her age-mate, Toshiko Nihei, had drawn from memory some years before. As we cruised along Ferguson Road into Guisad valley, Otsuji pointed out to me each of the streams that drained it from the west and south. As if transported to another time, she confidently described the locations of Ibaloy farms and Japanese houses, farms, and poultry yards, naming all the former occupants as we passed, all in relation to each stream that flowed into the Guisad River. This flows past Easter School and the Bureau of Plant Industry, sites of the earliest sawmills and Japanese farms, and joins other tributaries of the Balili River at Lucban. At the bridge near Easter School, she pointed to the bend in the river where they baited eels, and then traced her route to the Japanese School site on Trinidad Road. On our way there, she noted that, 70 years ago, schoolchildren gathered clay for their pottery projects along this stretch of the river. As we wound our way through Lucban and Trancoville, Otsuji pointed upriver to the sources of the Balili River in Teachers Camp and further east in Bekkel. The sumo wrestling ring, the bathing and fishing places, the burial grounds, and the cabbage gardens near the old Ibaloy and Japanese neighborhoods were located on a bend of the Lucban River that is now much diminished in size and function. On this journey, as she recounted the sequence of moves of Kagoshima and Fukushima farmers out of the Guisad valley into Sanitary Camp, Kilometer 4, and into Pico in Trinidad, Otsuji laid out for me the panorama of Japanese settlement against the background of the Balili River, its watershed, and the springs that provided them with irrigation and potable water.

## Settlement patterns in the American period and the Japanese move into agriculture

Baguio's settlement history after 1900 is most profitably viewed in the exploitation of the region's environmental and relation to geographical resources. The stratification in the early 1900s of its multicultural society comes through clearly in the records, but, as we shall see, the picture is necessarily simplified (see Fig. 13). After mapping out the city center to accommodate an international business district and the municipal and national offices and other public places, the first American officials zoned off the higher rolling portions of eastern Baguio for their own use. This section of the Baguio plateau, which once formed part of extensive Ibaloy cattle grazing grounds, is close to the gold mines and also has the grandest views of Mount Santo Tomas. It was divided into large lots for military reservations and for sale to corporations and wealthy Filipino and American investors. This area of Camp John Hay, Mansion House, Navy Base, and the Country Club is where the Agno River's heaviest gold-bearing tributaries begin before they flow into Antamok and Balatoc Mines. The springs that feed the Bued River in the south and the Balili or Naguilian River in the north also arise here.

The "Filipinos" (at that time, people called "Igorots" were not classed as "Filipinos"), the Christian lowlanders who came primarily to trade,

ASIAN STUDIES



Volume 44

Number

1

2008

Figure 13. Map of City of Baguio, 1909

55

started settling in a cramped area in the west, at the upper end of Naguilian Road, in what came to be called Campo Filipino. They were here for wage work in the city and the mines, and for the clerical and teaching positions in the American government. In the 1930s, a flood-prone area next to the city quarry, called City Camp, took up the overflow of population from Campo Filipino.

The old Ibaloy-speaking population of Baguio and Trinidad occupied the lower valleys outside of Baguio's central plateau, especially in the north. While some Ibaloys had relocated to higher areas on the plateau to raise cattle, they lost these ranges to the American government after 1900, and retreated to the lower, rice-growing lands in Guisad, Lucban, and Trinidad. It was in these well-watered valleys of the Balili River that the first land-lease arrangements were negotiated between Ibaloy and the earliest Japanese migrants. Meanwhile, the areas to the south of Baguio were taken up by the forest concessions and sawmills that supplied the lumber for the building of the city.

Having been locked out of the lands reserved for the American elite and their Filipino associates, Japanese migrants turned to find an accommodation with the indigenous landowners. In effect, the exploitation of the Balili River tributaries also became a Japanese specialty, for neither the Ilocanos nor the Americans were interested in commercial agriculture. Cordillerans provided mutually sustaining alliances with the Japanese community; through them, Japanese farmers were assured of farm labor and were drawn into the ritual and solidarity networks that served them well into the darkest days of the Second World War.

The expansion of vegetable crops into Trinidad became possible only in the early 1920s, with the draining of the central Trinidad swamp. Baguio's Mayor Halsema, who was concurrently the Benguet provincial engineer, hired 200 Japanese workmen to build an irrigation system there (Halsema 1991). These momentous changes in the local landscape and economy are remembered in interesting social and ritual terms that celebrate the coming together of Ibaloys and Japanese in Trinidad. Descendants on both sides say that Clemente Laoyan, the mayor of

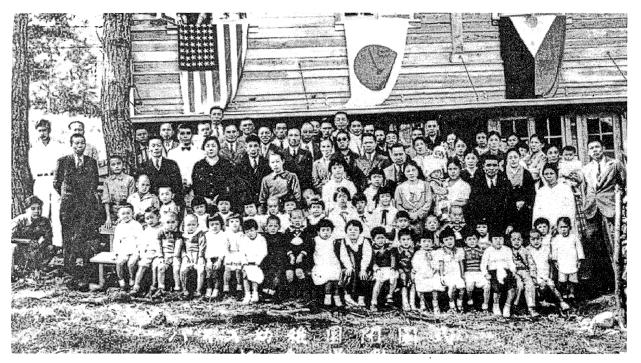


Figure 14. Beneath the flags of three nations, parents, teachers, and pupils inaugurate the Japanese School kindergarten annex, 1937. Charles Teraoka, its builder, stands at left in dark suit. The few surviving members of this class identified everyone in this photograph. (Furuya collection)

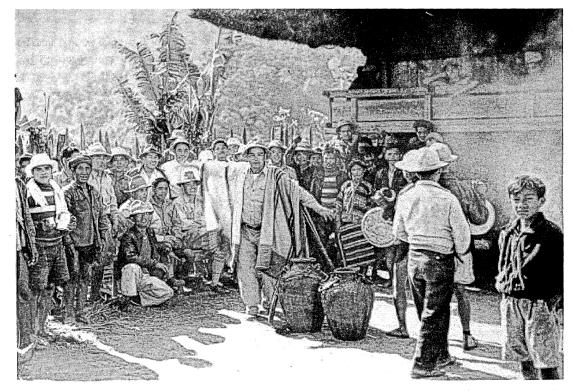


Figure 15. At an Ibaloy-Kankanaey feast near a Heald Lumber Co. sawmill, technician Minoru Ohta dances around two large stoneware jars containing rice wine offerings, while other Japanese employees join in celebration. Many Japanese men were drawn into the traditional highland rituals sponsored by their wives, co-workers, and neighbors. 1930s. (Furuya collection)

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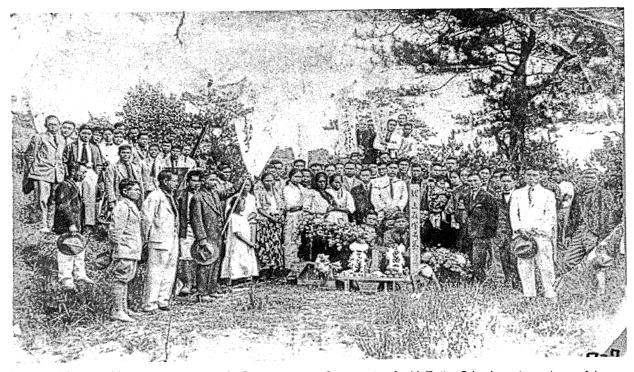
Trinidad and a wealthy Ibaloy landowner there, invited Tadahiko Sugimoto, a farmer who had settled in Guisad after the Kennon Road construction, to come to farm in the Betag area of central Trinidad. Laoyan had seen the lush and productive Sugimoto gardens and decided that his Ibaloy relatives should learn these new agricultural techniques. Within a decade, Laoyan's son married Sugimoto's eldest daughter. This was a celebration that, in retrospect, gave the thumbs-up to Japanese expansion into central Trinidad. From the Japanese angle, Sugimoto's success guaranteed that the largest regional group of Japanese farmers in Trinidad came from Kumamoto, his home prefecture.

The analogous landscape change in Baguio, the drainage of the "Baguio Plain" into the Balili River, followed that of Trinidad. This, too, stands out in the memory of descendants because of the excavation project's sheer size and the way in which it altered the central city landscape. (The culverts buried under the bottom of Session Road were said to be 14 feet in diameter.) The Nagatomi family construction firm began by a Fukuoka man, who arrived on the Kennon Road project, won the bid for this large contract in 1927.

# Summary: Japanese occupational niches in relation to colonial and native peoples

In the early 1900s, construction work (including lumber production), and vegetable farming were the two work domains most closely associated with Japanese settlers in Baguio. In these activities, they formed their longest-lasting social and economic relations with Americans on the one hand (as builders, sawmill workers, and contractors) and with local indigenous peoples on the other (as farmers). Putting to work the technological advantages that they came with and drawing from the financial support and mediation of their own community's entrepreneurs, Japanese artisans participated in the transformation of Baguio into the country's foremost tourism and mining center.

In the north, with their Ibaloy, Kankanaey, and Bontoc farm workers and wives, Japanese settlers harnessed the Balili tributaries for irrigation all the



**Figure 16.** Filipino and Japanese mourners at the Baguio cemetery funerary rites for N. Tsuji, a Fukuoka-native and one of the earliest Japanese pioneers in Baguio. The Tsuji family were ironmongers and in the photography business up to the onset of World War II. (Furuya family).

60



Figure 17. Clemente Laoyan (center, seated), Trinidad landowner and town mayor, with members of his family in a Mountain Studio photograph in the 1930s. He encouraged his family to attend American schools and, in the 1920s, he invited Japanese farmers to introduce commercial vegetable farming methods to his kinsmen and neighbors in Trinidad valley. (Laoyan family collection).

way into the Trinidad plain. Together, they laid the foundations of what is now a multi-million peso industry in Baguio, Benguet, and nearby provinces in the production of mid-latitude vegetable crops. A farmers' association imported seed and other supplies and efficiently organized the marketing of crops in the Manila market. In 1932, the *Baguio Bulletin* reported that Trinidad's Japanese farmers were averaging P200,000 in profits annually.

While it is true that the differential access to water, land, forest materials, and minerals in this region was set in early American policies and commercial priorities, the Japanese managed to overcome the most serious of the colonial limitations on the distribution of environmental resources. This was achieved, first, through occupational niches that became indispensable to American interests. Crucial to the development of these work specializations was the early sponsorship of new migrants from among relatives and prefecture-mates as job opportunities in the construction and lumber industries became available in the Baguio building boom. The influx before 1920 of young men and their families into lucrative jobs in these work domains resulted in a pool by 1930, not only of capital, but also of technically proficient entrepreneurs. Mostly from Fukuoka, Fukushima, Hiroshima, and Yamanashi, these experienced settlers were able to move into contractual arrangements with the American businesses that capitalized and operated the tourism, transportation, and mining industries in the last decade before the onset of the Pacific War. Another equally important initiative, focused mainly on the commercial production of highland vegetables, brought Japanese into trade, marriage, and other ritual contracts with indigenous peoples and their lands. Between 1905 and 1940, these strategies evolved, for this small but vibrant migrant community, a remarkably diverse and well-coordinated range of social, technological, and organizational responses to the opportunities of the Baguio frontier.

#### Notes

1 I thank the Filipino Japanese Foundation of Northern Luzon, Inc. and its numerous supporters in the Philippines and Japan, for sponsoring the publication Japanese Pioneers in the Northern Philippine Highlands: A Centennial Tribute, 1903-2003 (JPNPH). The original team of researchers for the project consisted of Geraldine Fiagoy, Irene B. Hamada, Kathleen T. Okubo, and Ann Loreto Tamayo. In its final phase, the research was expanded by Patricia O. Afable, Erlyn R. Alcantara, the late Marie D. Teraoka Escaño, Einosuke Furuya, Toshiko Nihei, and Yoshi Otsuji. For this publication, my thanks also go to the anonymous reviewers for their comments.

The derivative photographic exhibition, Haponés: The Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Japanese Community of Baguio opened at the Jorge B. Vargas Museum and Filipiniana Research Center, University of the Philippines, on November 20, 2007. I wish to thank Ompong Tan (Colorworld, Baguio) and Erlyn R. Alcantara for the technical production of the exhibition and Michiyo Y. Reyes for coordination and logistical work. It was a great pleasure to work with the highly professional staff of the Jorge B. Vargas Museum. Loans of photographs for the show came from Syunichi Abe (for the Suda photographs from Fukushima), E.R. Alcantara, Einosuke Furuya, Tommy Hafalla, and Ompong Tan. Without the generous sponsorship of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, The Japan Foundation, the Filipino Japanese Foundation of Northern Luzon, Inc., and the U.P. Asian Center, the Haponés exhibition would not have been possible.

- 2 In this essay, the primary data and conclusions, unless otherwise stated, are elaborated in Afable 2004 (*JPNPH*).
- 3 Manuel Scheidnagel's 1878 report as a governor of the Benguet politico-military district (established in 1846) gave the first geographical description of Baguio and its climatic and mineral resources that became the basis for the Spanish plan for a sanitarium at this location. The further Spanish surveys for this project are summarised in U.S. War Department 1900 (Vol. 2:330-333) and 1901 (Vol. 1:162-221) and quoted extensively in Reed 1999, Chapter 2.
- 4 In this section, the approximations of conscription, mortality, and repatriation rates were arrived at by comparing the list of Baguio residents compiled by Akira Kodera (in [PNPH] against the oral reports of who died in the retreat to southern Ifugao, who returned to Japan before the onset of World War II, and the available archival records of military internment. Since none of these sources are complete and since much less is known in Baguio of the families that did not leave descendants there, only relative estimates are presented here. Furthermore, I do not discuss here the enlistment of some Japanese descendants in the Philippine-U.S. armed forces or their recruitment into the Philippine guerilla forces, an even less known subject. Kodera was a Japanese School teacher during the Japanese Occupation who continued, after World War II ended, to maintain interest in the pre-War Baguio Japanese community. I thank him for providing updates on this membership listing and also for offering (in personal communication) information and insights into the fortunes of the Baguio Japanese. My thanks also go to the late Marie D. Teraoka Escaño for her role of translator and interpreter in these unfortunately brief contacts with Japanese families who were former residents of Baguio.
- 5 An extended discussion of such activities, networks, and their results is found in Sugii 2007.
- 6 Ohno's (2007) study covers the history of Japanese Filipino descendants' claims for Japanese citizenship and "Japaneseness" in more recent years, in response to the opening up in Japan of employment possibilities for foreign nationals of Japanese descent.
- 7 The Episcopalian school for American children was in the "American," eastern part of town and was called The Baguio School. This is today's Brent International School.

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