

Surmounting Calamities in the Philippine GIAHS Site

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Abstract: The Province of Ifugao, which is the focus of this study is the only declared Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS) site in the Philippines and one of the first listed group of GIAHS in the world, with the inclusion of Ifugao as UNESCO inscribed World Heritage Site. Notwithstanding, the province is also under constant threat of natural calamities owing to its mountainous terrain. During heavy rains and strong winds, it is very normal to experience the wrath of floods and landslides that normally cause havoc on life and property. The constant suffering from natural calamities and disasters coupled by their limited capacity and technological advancement taught the Ifugao people to rely on each other's support and assistance in surmounting catastrophes, from building houses after typhoons or calamities to tending their farms during planting and harvesting seasons. This practice is called "Bayanihan" from the Filipino term Bayani+han meaning heroism or doing heroic acts in times of somebody else needs. As anthropologist stressed, Bayahnihan is a practical response to both individual & community needs which, under certain circumstances would be difficult to achieve if people with meager means did not organize themselves and pull together their resource. The Ifugao people also have their versions of "bayanihan" displayed in everyday life and practiced throughout the ages. These bayanihan practices/behavior comes out in various situations of need, surface in different terms and practiced in different ways, but all are geared towards helping one another surmount a certain calamity or challenge in life.

Keywords: Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS), Ifugao.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Philippines, being an archipelago, is one of the countries of the world that is frequently tormented by typhoons, earthquakes and other natural calamities. On the average, the Philippines is crossed by typhoons every year. Last November 8, 2013, the Philippines was devastated by the typhoon "Haiyan", perhaps the strongest typhoon ever recorded in history with sustained winds up to 315km/hr (195mph) killing 6,300 people. A country crisscrossed by a lot of fault lines, earthquake is also a constant experience and threat. With climatic conditions severely altered, calamities such as flooding, landslides, storm surge, tsunamis can be experienced anytime anyplace.

The ageless Ifugao Rice Terraces spanning 5 municipalities of Ifugao is a concrete product of the Ifugao bayanihan system. Today, the Rice Terraces is an internationally recognized engineering marvel that endlessly astound modern scholars and continuously attracts tourist in increasing numbers. Faced with the rugged terrain of the place, the ancient Ifugao people, instead of giving up to the harshness of the environment, helped each other in carving the steep mountainsides and built the stupendous terraced fields. That these mountain fields have withstood the test and tempests of hundreds of years is a tribute to the indigenous knowledge that were developed and applied by their long-ago builders. In the Ifugao of old, just like most of the other Filipino ethnic groups in the distant past, possessed a well-developed culture. This is attested by several proofs which are evident even today.

In Ifugao, there are different kinds of bayanihan which has been initiated since the creation of Bugan and Wigan as the Maknongan's descendants. It is a practice to extend help in the neighborhood during their needs without any monetary compensation. In engaging in this practice one feels the belongingness, self-worth and respect in the community which also promotes goodness or improves human quality of life. Baddang, ubbuh, dang-ah are some examples of bayanihan

practices where everybody can witness up to now in the Ifugao province which is most usually done during agricultural cycle activity with their corresponding ritual towards rice culture called *hongan di page*.

The province is predominantly characterized by steep mountainous and high elevation terrain it being a part of the Cordillera Mountain Ranges. Almost three fourths (67%) of the province's land area has slopes 30 percent and above. Many of the Ifugao's traditions, are found in their socio-religious rites and functions. Hence, the Ifugao culture to help each other is also a value that we should be proud of. It has firm institutional foundations in the forms of Baddang, ob-obbo, Dang-a, Changat & others

Finally, the Ifugao Rice Terraces symbolizes not only the Ifugao industry and engineering skills but also their love of freedom & respect of nature notwithstanding that the rice terraces has been managed traditionally by their ancestor for survival and existence. The national recognition to protect the Ifugao Rice Terraces started way back 1973 when the late Pres. Ferdinand E. Marcos signed into law Presidential Decree No. 260 recognizing the IRT as national landmark having a high value from the viewpoint of the world culture and considered an "irreplaceable treasure of the country", thus this study.

II. BAYANIHAN PRACTICES IN IFUGAO

Hadang/Badang/Bachang:

It is rendered in the form of labor or material help. For instance, family is sponsoring a big feast, say, the performance of a dead ritual. The villagers help the family by assuming the role of humadang or helpers by providing rice wine, cooked rice, and or voluntary labor. Other occasions that the practice is done are during the performance of exhumation rituals. During such events the neighbors render similar baddang or help items to the affected family. For these rituals, humadang in the form of live animals maybe given upon request but these are paid back on demand when the occasion for their reciprocation will arise.



Figure 1. The live animal given by the relative to the members of the family in need

Baddang(Hungduan):

During the *baddang*, the "takin" is provided by the opposite of who are inheritance is given. The *takin* is composed of two pigs also consummated during the *baddang* harvest of the rice grains as viand for the harvesters and haulers. When a rice field is given by the parents of the man, the woman's party provides the *takin* and vice versa.

Prior to the *baddang*, after marriage of the couple at the female's residence, if the husband's parents has something to give/inherit to their son especially if it is rice field, *bangabangad* is to be done by transferring to the male's residence to butcher a pig, and a year after, the bride will do the *baddang* procedure. By the next cropping period the newly married couple takes over the care and cultivation of the rice fields and all other obligation over other properties given with the major heirloom called 'unnod di payo'. Social status of the parents will also inherit especially if his/her family is the one who sponsors prestige feast or *imbayah* or *dinupdup* will continue the practice. (*cover the baddang of nagasat an nunpabanga-bangad*).



Figure 2. The relatives of the bride came to perform the baddang to the newly wed couples

Dad-ah:

Dad-a is a term that refers to the collective free labor in the plantation of the rice fields also known as bayanihan system in Filipino. For an instance, when the parents now give the rice field as inheritance to their child, they will go first to their child's parent's in-law and said, "eyu bongbongon di guhing". Then that is now the sign that they are now giving the inheritance. In the whole agricultural work, the dang-a is now perform from clearing or removal of weeds in the dike upto the ricewall (riprap). After cleaning, when the seedbed is ready to plant, neighbors and relatives are now invited to: munwahwah, and muntunod (rice transplanting), while the gentlemen are fixing dike (munbanong) and flattening the rice paddies (haw-ang) at the same time. The host will now then provide meals and rice wine in the afternoon when it is finished.



Figure 3 & 4. The munbanong (fig.3) and the menwahwah/mentunod(fig.4)

Dang-a:

It is a community free labor extended by the people to help a person in putting up his house or granary, or in doing field work in his terraces. In the absence of a munbatawil, a hired man to do the work, the rice field owner engages the assistance of the men in the village or villages to carry the palay to the granary. The men go to the field early in the morning after the harvest and bring in the palay. They are not paid but are served food and drink. This practice is also employed in the construction of a house or granary like getting the wood from the mountain to roadside.

Dang-a di Pague:

During baddang, dang-a di pague usually applies, where gentleman starts to gather the bundled rice in the rice field and directly upon reaching the house they start to arrange on the ground.

Other people especially those who are far from the road, they announce to their neighbors in the afternoon for a dang-a to the following day usually early in the morning and during lunch the one who called for a dang-a will feed them.



Figure 5 and Fig.6 the *munbatwil*

Dang-a di Abung:

Before transferring a native house the *mumbaki* (high priest) perform the *tinup-i*. These rituals are asking the help of the goddess of the underworld to give them a safety journey in going and coming. The high priest led the group holding the *buyako* (canes fruits) and *kuhis*. Upon reaching the place, the *mumbaki* advice the group to carry the heavy parts first then followed by the lighter one. The high priest then gives the signal by shouting and expressing the *dimidim*. Before starting the way, the first on the line will say, “*yumap-o ka ta bumuyako ka*” meaning let the parts of the native house be lighten usually the *mumbaki* will do it. There he leads the group going home with different parts of the house.



Figure 7. Transfer of the *baleh*

Ubbu/ ubfu:

This is the most important cooperative farming practice as it is employed during of the most of the work phases of the almost year-long agricultural year. It is an institutionalized system of labor. A group or field owners band themselves together and they go to work on a turn by turn basis in each members rice field during the various phases of the working season of the year.

Ubbu can be applied during: *kahigabut* (general field cleaning), *Kahihaw-ang*, (spading work), *Kahitunod/kahibuge* (transplanting), and *kahi-ani* (harvesting). Men and women organize themselves into work groups, *mun-uubbu*, each numbering from four to twenty members and they go to work in each member’s rice field daily on a turn-by-turn arrangement. After the last member’s turn they may resume all over again, extending the group working to the next work phase. After several working days, the group may declare a *bottan*, an off day.



Figure 8. *Kahigabut*



Figure 9. *Kahihaw-ang*



Figure 10. *Kahitunod*



Figure 11. *Kahi-ani*

Moma/Engagement:

The moma is the first step community-acknowledged engagement prior to marriage. In this stage relatives of both parties are formally informed of the intentions. A pig or in the case of poorer families, chickens and other necessary requirements are sent to the brides residence, and accepted by her relatives. But nowadays, a pig is really asked. In Kiangnan and some part of Asipulo has number of pig to be brought depending on the agreement of both parties.

In this event, bayanihan is also implied, which starts from carrying the pig, in butchering and cooking even in serving the food. During meals the bride does not eat the meat of the animal butchered during her moma instead, there are chicken as donation brought by their relatives who came to witness the event.

Tanig/Pahang/Wedding Ceremony:

After the moma, when the spouses-to-be have been in good terms with each other, the marriage proper ceremony can be done.

During preparation:

Manga-iv- before the wedding, males are gathered to cut trees in the muyung where an elder will head in preparation for the wedding. In this event, bayanihan practices are seen from the preparation until ha-ang di ulu (cooking the head after the ceremony).

Mangiha- when the cut trees was already brought in the house, volunteers or the relatives of the lady will come and cut into pieces while women and children collects and let it dry on the ground that sometimes children formed like a box used to hide and seek at night. (Judy Dulnuan)

Atop- roofing the ground and making benches where the activity of the wedding held. This include cleaning the backyard and the path where the way starts especially when there are many paths(east and west) for the visitors may not loose on the way.

During the preparation of wedding, hadang is applied for the relatives especially when they notice that the family sponsoring the wedding belong to the poor family or they have a hadang to pay back. Aside from hadang, tungul is also applicable where visitors donate money as help to the wedded couple. Most especially to those who were married before and they know that the one who sponsors the wedding helped them when they got married.

The night before the wedding proper where most of the neighbor bring their own knives and bolo to help in chopping the meat and other ingredients used the following day in cooking where they sacrifice overnight while others are dancing.

Bodang:

Another bayanihan system like the bodang where a sick person has to run into nearest hospital but transportation is not accessible by a wheel, they have to carry him/her in a blanket tied in a bamboo log before transporting to the hospital.



Figure 12. bodang

Kateh/minatayan:

The Hungduan people believed that the soul after death continue in existence and joins the world of its ancestor's spirits called *aammodannunpunkate*. During the wake period the number of days usually depends on the age, social status and number of children. At this time, it depends upon the wish of the children or the bereaved.

When the neighbor heard that a person passed away, automatically that they will go the house of the bereaved family to render free service like gathering wood for fuel, bamboos for roofing and, some neighborhood shares tolda for shed, owners of a chainsaw led the cutting of trees to make the coffin, while ladies go and clean grains in preparation for the *bohwat* and the children starts making of flowers. On the other hand, when the dead body is arrived, elders start the washing of body then followed by a *mundahidah* (*the one who will do the embalming*) that sometimes it is given by free service especially when they are related. Before meals, children were gathered to get a banana stalk then cut to make plates (*todak*) for the visitors who came.

While the families are mourning, relatives and other volunteers go and carry cements from the roadside, lend some materials in building the grave ready for the burial. During the last day of the mourning, when they carry the coffin to his last destination, the family member will lift first then the concerned people will take over in carrying especially when the grave is far from the house.

Dangli:

It is performed everyday which is the sacrificing of pigs who brought by some relatives or the sons and daughters of the bereaved. Food and drinks are served in the house of the dead. Relatives/*humadang* who usually gives donation most often are rice or animal and if it is in cash called *tungul*. Pigs brought by closer relatives as help called *ukat*. This has to be butchered to see if the dead accepts help.

Bogwah:

As the Ifugaos or the people of Hungduan believe in life after death, the dead individuals are treated as an extended family. It is believed that there is a place allotted to them and that; they can still help or look after the living. So the exhumation is done to denote respect for the dead.

During the *bogwah* the living family members/relatives has to prepare the garments (*gagaom*), the pigs for the *bohwat*, pigs butchered for the three days vigil, and the pig for the *hapaton* the third day. It is a requirement that if a carabao was butchered during the death wakes of the person, it has to be duplicated during the *bogwah*. Relatives on their will, may help in the expenses. The maximum number of days for the vigil is three days.

In case of illness found out to be caused by the deceased children the exhumation procedure is called *konong*. The *konong* is only a ritual performance for the exhumed person. Pigs are not necessarily provided. Chickens are sufficient for the ritual rites.

Before/during the *bogwa*, when the relatives heard that a family member planned that they will bring out the remains of their parents, they will automatically donate animal or a sack of rice, or sometimes we called it *humadang* because expectedly if they will do the same with their parents or ancestors, where they have to pay back. During *binogwa*, *bayanihan* system can be seen in this practice where neighbors, relatives are here to extend their help in: cleaning the bones mostly an elder will do the cleaning, carrying of animals up to cooking, relatives will come with their own share like an animal or in cash. Neighborhood will help in gathering fuel upon hearing that they will bring out their ancestor.

III. CONCLUSION

The documented various *bayanihan* practices in the study proves that the Ifugao people practice the inherited the value system of helping one another in times of in need. These cultural value system became part of the Ifugao heritage that sustains the life of the Ifugao people in the community amidst the challenge of natural adversities and disasters.

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