

FOREWORD

This volume on the *Hiligaynons: An Ethnography of Family and Community Life in Western Bisayas Region* by Prof. F. Landa Jocano is the second publication by the Asian Center in a series of ethnographic descriptions of family and village life among the different lowland ethnolinguistic groups in the country. Other volumes in the series include the Ilocanos, Pangasinenses, Kapampangans, Tagalogs, Bicolanos, Warays, Cebuanos, Aklanons, Tausugs, Maguindanaons, and Maranaos.

This series aims to provide students, educators, policymakers and development planners, as well as laymen with basic first hand materials about the recurring patterns and commonalities in Filipino lifeways, particularly in the rural areas. Ultimately, it is hoped, that we may deepen our understanding of one another as one people.

The entire country is currently undergoing rapid social, cultural, and technological changes. Superhighways and bridges are increasingly linking the rural villages and towns with urban centers. The network of communication has also improved, specially television, radio and newspapers. In a matter of hours, rural villages are informed about major events and developments taking place anywhere in the country, in fact, in the world. The Philippines, indeed, finds itself inextricably a part of the modern global village.

The impact of these changes upon Filipino traditional institutions and values is very significant. Through television, radio and newspapers, urban values have penetrated rural world views. Many of our traditional institutions, beliefs and practices, which constitute the base of our cultural identity as a people, are threatened with extinction. In fact, many of them, have already been lost.

Fortunately, some of the most persistent and pervasive ones have been recorded in this ethnographic series which can be

used as future baseline data for the study of culture change in the country. Gathered from twelve selected major lowland ethnic groups, the data from each of them could be compared for similarities and dissimilarities existing among them. Hopefully, these substantive materials can contribute to theory-building about the evolution of Filipino society and culture and assist policy-makers engaged in national development programs on the central and regional levels of administration.

If the presentation of ethnographic data on Philippine lowland ethnic groups can assist in charting the course of Philippine scholarship toward establishing a common bond among us, thereby strengthening national cohesion, then something worthwhile will have been accomplished. This is part of the mission of Asian Center and the main objective for undertaking the study and publication of this ethnographic series.

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PREFACE

This volume is one of the series of ethnographic reports on the traditional culture and social organization of the different lowland Filipino ethnic groups. It is about the Hiligaynons of Western Bisayas. Other ethnic groups included in the series are Ilocanos, Pangasinenses, Kapampangans, Tagalogs, Bicolanos, Warays, Cebuanos, Tausugs, Maguindanaons and Maranaos.

The series is designed to highlight, holistically, the basic features of the commonly shared patterns of culture and institutions among the different groups that constitute Philippine society. It is hoped that through these materials students of Philippine society and culture, as well as planners of change, may gain added insights into the real world of Filipinos as it is lived in different ways and in different communities. It is further hoped that from these raw data scholars can build theoretical models and formulate hypotheses which when verified and validated could advance our knowledge and understanding of Filipino social system.

The Hiligaynons constitute one of the larger ethnic groups in Western Bisayas. The choice of this ethnic label is arbitrary. It is guided by the fact that most historical records, legal documents, and literary works in Western Bisayas are written in *Hiligaynon*. Sometimes, the term *Ilongo* or *Hilongo* (meaning, speakers from the province of Iloilo) is used, although majority of the people live in Antique, Capiz, and Negros. Moreover, not all people in the Region speak Ilongo — the people in the interior towns of Iloilo, Antique, and parts of Negros Occidental speak *Kiniray-a*. In Capiz, the people speak *Capizeño*; in Aklan, *Aklanon*. These languages belong to the same family called the Central Philippine languages. They are mutually understandable except for some minor difference in intonation, pronunciation, and in few basic vocabularies.

The term ethnic needs comment. As used in this volume, ethnic refers to a culture-bearing population which occupies a contiguous territory, shares the same basic values and historical tradition, speaks a common language and has membership identity and is identified by others as constituting a social group. It is on the basis of this definition that Philippine ethnic groups, of which the Hiligaynon is one, are described and distinguished from each other. Other writers prefer to use the term *ethnolinguistic* rather than ethnic, emphasizing the dominance of language in the classification system. We have accepted the latter.

Described in this volume are some aspects of the dominant Hiligaynon cultural traits and social institutions. Considerable details in the description have been omitted due to some exigencies. Anyway, the materials included in this report are described in terms of how these function to achieve Hiligaynon community goals. The data for this purpose were gathered through the standard anthropological method of participant-observation and case study. Actual fieldwork was carried out on several occasions and covering a period of ten years — starting in 1969 and ending in 1979. Whenever necessary archival materials have been used to supplement or elaborate the ethnographic description.

Many people and institutions were instrumental in accomplishing this work. Special mention goes to Ms. Portia de Luna-Vergara, who took charge of the management of the fieldwork in Western Bisayas, Ms. Alice Magos who did the initial work in Antique, Ms. Susan Montipeo who assisted in gathering data in Negros Occidental, Ms. Irene Ramos who gathered data in Capiz. Messrs. Joseph Fortin, Manuel Convozar, Joey Sabalvarro, and Calixto L. Barrato Jr. took the photographs and did the illustration for this book. Ms. Belva P. Mirto and Elvie Aquino did most of the draft and final typing. Ms. Malou Doronila and Susan Montipeo did the editing of the drafts of the manuscript. Ms. Lilia Marquez and Mamerta Caguimbal did the library research, proofreading and presswork. Whatever merit this book has is the result of the patient and dedicated work of these people; the shortcomings are purely mine.

Special acknowledgment goes to Dean Josefa M. Saniel without whose most valuable support, this work could not have seen publication nor could the research project have taken off the ground.

Lastly, acknowledgment is due to members of my family for sharing patiently the burden of my absence as I carry out the arduous task of research and the preparation of this volume.

F. Landa Jocano