

FOREWORD

One of the major problems confronting students of Philippine society and culture is lack of comparable data on various aspects of regional and ethnic lifeways. The anomaly effectively denies them a holistic picture of the Filipino social system. Over the years, generalizations about our national traits have been based on sketchy field materials coming from one rural village; often, on impressions which undoubtedly have been responsible for much of the misinterpretations about Filipino behavior and institutions. There has been no systematic research on the existing patterns and variations in Filipino community life that shall form the basis of generalizations about the larger social organization.

Recognizing this problem, Prof. F. Landa Jocano embarked, ten years ago, on a nationwide ethnographic research among the lowland ethnic groups. The focus of the study has been on community and family life. The groups included in this study are Ilocanos, Pangasinenses, Kapampangans, Tagalogs, Bicol, Warays, Cebuanos, Hiligaynons, Aklanons, Tausugs, Maguindanaos, and Maranaos. Prof. Jocano and his team of researchers patiently put together the highlights of the various aspects of Filipino traditional social organization at the community level of ethnographic description.

The present volume, the first to be published, is on the Ilocano. This will be followed by the volumes on the Tagalog and Hiligaynon. We hope that, through these publications, the Asian Center can contribute to the acquisition of broader knowledge and deeper understanding of the nuances of our traditional ways of life.

The entire Philippines is undergoing rapid social and technological changes. Highways are increasingly linking the rural villages and towns with urban centers. The technology of communication has improved tremendously. The introduction of electricity into the rural areas has had a dramatic impact on rural institutions and values. Through radio and

television, urban values and aspirations 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 more persistent and pervasive ones have been recorded in this ethnographic series which can be used as baseline data in the future 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 Philippine 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 the 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 a series of ethnographic reports on the traditional culture and social organization of the different lowland Philippine ethnic groups. The series is designed to highlight, holistically, the basic features of the commonly shared patterns of culture and social 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.

The present volume is about the Ilocanos, one of the larger and highly mobile lowland ethnic groups. Also included in the series are the Pangasinenses, Kapampangans, Tagalogs, Bicolanos, Warays, Cebuanos, Hiligaynons, Tausugs, Maguin-danaonons and Maranaos.

The term *ethnic* is used here heuristically to refer to a culture-bearing population which occupies a continuous 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 these criteria that Philippine ethnic groups, of which the Ilocano is one, are described and distinguished from each other. Other writers prefer to use the term *ethno-linguistic* rather than *ethnic*, emphasizing the dominance of language in the classification system.

As an ethnic group, the Ilocanos occupy the entire narrow strip of coastal land that stretches along the western side of northern Luzon from Lingayen Gulf in the south to Cape Bojeador in the north. Topographically, the area is rugged and the land is less fertile than in other parts of the country. Nevertheless, the Ilocanos are able to carve a living out of this precarious environment, build thriving communities, develop social institutions, and evolve cultural traits which enable them to adapt efficiently to their surrounding world.

How these institutions and traits function to achieve community goals is the major concern of this volume. The data for this study have been 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 available archival materials have been used to supplement or elaborate the ethnographic description. Considerable details in the description of some institutions and traits have been omitted due to some exigencies.

Many people and institutions were instrumental in accomplishing this work. Special mention goes to the research team which assisted in the data-gathering. Ernesto Cadiz took charge of gathering data on economic and life-cycle; Arnora Edrozo took charge of partly gathering economic data, especially on garlic trade, kinship system, value orientation and parts of the belief system. Thelma Beltran assisted in gathering data on leadership and parts of the belief system. Milagros Dum-lao acted as guide, interpreter, and informant on child-rearing and marriage. Joseph Fortin and Manuel Convocar took the photographs and did the illustration for this book. Belva Mirto and Elvie Aquino did most of the draft and final typing. Lilia Marquez and Mamerta Caguimbal did the proofreading and presswork. Malou Doronila, Carolyn Sobritchea Edgardo Dag-dag, and Renato Correa assisted in the editing of the drafts and the final manuscript. 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