

THE BUKIDNONS OF BARANGAY CODCOD

**JOSEPH PERIDO LALO AND
CARMEN ANGELA T. TRINIDAD**

Introduction

The Bukidnon of Negros are classified under Aeta and forest/hill peoples. According to Sildap-Sidlakan, "the Bukidnon of Negros and Iloilo are distinctly Malay hill tribes in the Visayas. They are generally kaingin farmers and dry rice cultivators. They subsist mainly through farming and supplement their diet by hunting and fishing and by gathering rattan for the market. However, much of the ancestral lands of the tribespeople have been occupied by logging and mining companies and by lowland settlers for the past fifty years. This has forced many to become landless and to serve as farm laborers in both rice lands and sugar plantations. Others have become tenants in the landholdings of big and small landlords. Today, most of them cannot be differentiated from the rest of the Ilonggo and Cebuano populations. Only a few folk songs, a few musical instruments and planting rituals remind the tribespeople of their immediate past as independent and traditional communities.

The Office of Southern Cultural Communities (OSCC) estimates the Bukidnons' population at 5,000 as of 1990, spread out in the areas of Upper Murcia, the municipality of La Castelana, and the cities of Kanlaon and San Carlos.

In 1997, an ethnographic study was undertaken in Bukidnon territory, particularly in the sitios of Cabagtasan,

Nagalaw and Igmamatay in Barangay Codcod, San Carlos City through the auspices of the Multi-Sectoral Alliance for Development-Negros (MUAD-Negros), the host Non-Government Organization (HNGO) of the Conservation of Priority Protected Areas Project (CPPAP) of Mount Kanlaon Natural Park (MKNP).

The purpose of the ethnographic study was primarily to provide valuable data in determining the appropriate tenurial instruments for the Bukidnons in the protected area and the nature of the projects suitable for the Bukidnons.

Data gathering primarily employed the methods of participant observation, key informant interviews and focused group discussions. Information derived from fieldwork was complemented by available surveys conducted separately by the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) and Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO), MUAD-Negros, the Iliranan "Tribal" council and the Health Center. These surveys provided baseline data on Bukidnon population, occupied land, literacy, among others.

There is no published material available on the Bukidnons of San Carlos City. Oracion's studies as well as those of Espiritu and Hunt all referred to the Bukidnons residing in the Southeastern portion of Negros Island, specifically in Negros Oriental. This area includes the municipalities of Siaton, Santa Catalina, Bayawan, Pamplona and Balayong.

This paper focuses on the Bukidnon economy, that which is chiefly dependent on the resources of the Mount Kanlaon Natural Park (MNKP) area. While migration patterns indicate that the Bukidnon transferred to Barangay Codcod only in the early part of this century, Bukidnon history provides evidence

that the present community and their ancestors had been utilizing MKNP and its environs for agriculture, hunting and peripheral economic activities. Their present means of livelihood, thus, is considered a major variable in determining the most appropriate tenurial arrangement in consonance to pertinent government laws.

This paper, therefore, shall describe the economy of the Bukidnons of San Carlos City, within the MKNP area, with emphasis on agriculture, their major source of livelihood. This paper shall likewise discuss briefly the possible options and considerations for tenure given the Bukidnon's migration patterns and economic profile, government laws and the fact that Mount Kanlaon is a protected area

The Setting of the Study

The research area, Barangay Codcod, is situated within MKNP and is geographically part of San Carlos City in the province of Negros Occidental.

Barangay Codcod in San Carlos City has a total land area of 12,634.5 hectares and its terrain is generally hilly with a 65-80 slope. Barangay Codcod is made up of thirteen sitios, with ten of them located within MKNP. These ten sitios are: Nagalaw, Bidio, Apog-Apog, Balambang, Igmamatay, Napaturan, Katwang, Cabagtasan, Natuyay and Iliranan. The three other sitios outside MKNP are Kansay-an, Initihan and Codcod proper.

Barangay Codcod is more accessible to Kanlaon City than to the city proper of San Carlos. For instance, the nearest highschool, college, communication facilities and hospitals are

situated in Kanlaon City, only nine kilometers away from Barangay Codcod as compared to those located in San Carlos City proper which is approximately fifty-two kilometers away.

The most convenient way to get to Barangay Codcod is via Bacolod City. By air, Bacolod is approximately fifty-five minutes from Manila and thirty minutes from Cebu City. The Philippine AirLines (PAL) has four daily flights to and from Cebu City. Cebu Pacific and Air Philippines likewise service the air route to and from Manila. By sea, Bacolod is normally a twenty-hour cruise to or from Manila aboard world-class vessels; fifty-five minutes to or from Iloilo on fast sea crafts and seven hours by land and sea travel to or from Cebu City.

From Bacolod, one can take the Ceres Bus to Kanlaon City for P 46.00. The bus traverses South to North, reaching Negros Oriental via the San Carlos Highway. Upon reaching Kanlaon City, one can take the "habal-habal," a motorcycle that seats up to five passengers on a single trip, or a maximum of ten sacks of vegetables. Fare per head or sack is P 30.00. The term habal means "in heat." Passengers sit on the motorcycle for a long period of time and are supposedly sexually stimulated.

The other route is from Bacolod City to San Carlos City by bus. From there, jeepneys can take one to Barangay Codcod daily at 8:00 A.M. During Fridays, however, there are two trips to accommodate elementary school teachers who go home to the city for the weekend.

Site Characteristics

The area's climate is classified as Type III which, according to the Corona System, refers to a long wet season with a

pronounced maximum rain production and a shorter dry season which lasts from March to May. The least rainfall is expected during the month of March while rainfall peaks during the months of September and November.

The MNKP is a protected area with funding assistance from the Global Environment Facility. It is located in the central part of Negros Island and is the highest peak in Central Philippines with a height of 2,439 meters above sea level. It covers nearly 25,000 hectares of lush tropical jungle, serving as watershed for Bago City, and is home to rare flora and fauna, as well as migratory birds from Asia. Rare indigenous species such as the Bleeding Heart Pigeon and the Negros Fruit Dove are protected in this area. Mount Kanlaon is one of the thirteen most active volcanoes in the country. It last erupted in August 10, 1990. Mount Kanlaon is considered as sacred by Bukidnons and Visayans alike.

Negros Occidental is located in the Western side of Negros Island, the fourth largest island in the Philippines. Negros Occidental is part of Region VI and the Visayas group of islands. It has a total land area of 792,607 hectares and is approximately 375 kilometers long from North to South. Negros Occidental is bounded by the Visayan Sea on the North, the Panay Gulf on the West, the province of Negros Oriental and the Tanon Strait on the East, and Sulu Sea on the South. Its soil is basically volcanic. This is ideal for agriculture; hence, eighty percent of all arable land is cultivated.

Given the area's river and creek systems, Barangay Codcod teems in resources for livelihood and recreation. There are six rivers traversing the area: Initihan, Nagalaw, Iliranan, Ajacket, Sangay and Saray. From these rivers branch off the following creeks: Igbubul-ang, Katwang, Nagakay, Magun-on, Apog-apog, Panglukanan, Igmamatay, Codcod, Cuyad-cuyad

and Mang-it.

Springs and falls likewise abound in the area. Among Barangay Codcod's springs are Lower Apog-apog, Nagalaw, Pa-ayon-Natuyay, Cabagtasán and Codcod. Lower Apog-apog is a watershed, too. The falls are Upper Iliranan, Magasu, Sangay, Magon-on and Ajacket.

The total land area of Barangay Codcod is severally utilized and may be described in the following manner:

No. of Hectares	Particulars	Percentage
5,450	idle/cogonal	43.18
2,250	forest land	17.81
2,000.3	slope	15.83
1,389.2	rice	10.99
979	corn	7.75
460	vegetables	3.64
100	coconut	.79

The total agricultural area is 7,399.2 hectares. The CARPable area, or the area subject to conversion to agricultural use and eventual distribution to qualified tenant-farmers, is 850.6802 hectares, according to the Office of the City Planning and Development Coordinator.

There are two nurseries located in Barangay Codcod: the 61st IB which has an area of .15 hectares; and, the Katwang Nursery which is all of .18 hectares. The few trees left in the settlement area are mostly secondary growth. The remaining thickly forested area is located in the Restricted Zone of MKNP.

The People

Genealogical histories point to at least five generations of Bukidnons who have resided in the vicinity of Mount Kanlaon which they refer to exclusively as Gintahos, or sacred land. The family of Teofila Amban, for instance, despite her entering into marriage with an Ilonggo (Gregorio Sueno), traces her roots to Kayugmay who lived at least a hundred years ago.

According to the indigenous informants, Bukidnons have been in the vicinity of Mount Kanlaon ever since they could remember. They used to dwell specifically in Nilutangan up until the Spaniard Peping de la Cruz arrived. Frightened by the Spaniards' weapons, the Bukidnons left for higher areas including the Kasiron Family which later moved to Gibawan, Negros Oriental; the Owakilo Family which moved West to Barangay Pula, Masulag; and, the Kayugmay Family which traveled North.

The Visayans, on the other hand, were known to have migrated to the area also during the Spanish Period. The Bukidnons were the ones who started cutting trees for commercial purposes and then continued to move up the mountains, or bungsod. They transferred their homes each time a Visayan would build their own next to the Bukidnons.

After the Reservation area, or reserva, was granted by then Governor-General Frank Murphy, some Bukidnons started selling portions of their land in the 1940s. But the reserva was revoked in 1955 and yet the Bukidnons continued to sell land to the Visayans up until the 1970s. The Bukidnons then settled in the MKNP area where they are at present.

The earliest recorded settlement date was that of Carlos Amban, who was born in Cabagtasán, in 1936. The latest recorded entry to the area was in 1987, the occupying group comprising of several families of the following: Jose Matanda, Eduardo Piyal, Bagorio Amban, Basilio Mahinay, Leodegario Olvido and Marcos Amban.

The estimated population for Barangay Codcod in 1989 was 711 with 164 households. There were 357 males and 354 females. The average size of each household is 4.33. The oldest inhabitants were the following with their respective ages: among the males, Emilio Amban (92), Juan Amban (90), Joaquin Hagocoy (88) and Juan Patagatay (85); among the females, Leonora Sugdon (85), Auria Patagatay (83) and Catalina Amban (80). Generally, the life expectancy of males were found to be higher than that of females.

Common illnesses, according to Health Center files, included cough, colds, influenza and measles. Other ailments listed were stomach aches and vomiting but the causes for these were not indicated. From last year's data, the bulk of illnesses were experienced during the months of July to September and November to March.

In terms of land area occupied, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) recorded farm lot, house lot and total land areas for most of the households in Barangay Codcod. The smallest farm lot belongs to Justiana Cainap, measuring 0.1 hectare. The biggest farm lot is claimed by Francisco Amban at 49 hectares. Francisco Amban likewise has claimed the largest total area of land estimated at 49.005 hectares. The smallest house lot, 0.001 hectare, belongs to Agapito Cainap while the biggest house lot, 1 hectare, is claimed by Daniel Villanueva. Ponciano Arda, lastly, claims the smallest total land area at 0.02520 hectares.

As recorded by Ruby Sueno in June, 1997, the Bukidnons in Barangay Codcod are estimated to number 489, 259 of which are male and 230 of which are female. Households total 93. The average size of each is 5.26. The oldest Bukidnons in the area are as follows: among the males, Emilio Amban (92), Julian Matanda (78), Ponciano Arda (69) and Jesus Estriba (71); among the females, Leonora Sugdon (85), Rosita Estriba (70) and Genoviva Arda (68).

Among the Bukidnons, many older adults did not undergo any formal schooling. Most adults, in fact, only finished intermediate grades. Among the much younger adults, one finished tertiary studies and another one is presently pursuing a collegiate degree.

Political System

The traditional Bukidnon concept of leadership rested on the *delegado*. The main task of the *delegado* was to hear and then render judgement on disputes. He represented the community and came from first Bukidnon families that stayed in the reserva and later on moved inside the park (*kasib-an*) of Mount Kanlaon.

The first Bukidnon families who settled there included the Sugdons, Impils, Ambans, Catitos, Patagatays and the Matandas. From these families came the Bukidnon leaders sometime between 1930-36: Tribu Amban headed Sitio Iliranan, Ka Iroy Catito and Ka Gabling Amban headed Sitio Nagalaw, and Tribu Placido Impil led Sitio Napaturan. Placido Impil likewise used to head the Reservation Zone.

The community elders, called *baba*, have an equally

important role among the Bukidnons. They ensure that the traditional practices are carried out. The elders, for one, arrange the marriages of the children. Elders would meet the bride and groom at the bride's house to formalize betrothal. The elders likewise call the village meetings.

The *baba* are both respected for their knowledge of customary laws and histories, and feared by their constituents. The elders' advice are usually followed because community members fear *gaba* (retribution) in the form of illnesses, death, calamity, etc. Among the elders, few remain familiar with the Bukidnon language as they have lived with and married Visayan migrants for generations now.

The present state of the political structure can largely be attributed to the "mixing" of the Bukidnons and the Visayans in the settlement area. The delegado is now the "tribal" chieftain in a formal, elective, organized structure of leadership under the barangay captain.

Barangay Codcod is headed by Kapitan Bonifacio Baylon who has been serving for thirty-seven years straight now. All six barangay councilors are non-indigenous peoples. They are Pascual Gabotiro, Carlitio Lastimoso, Felixberto Alfahora, Eddie Espinosa, Catlina Caballero, Edgar Magdayao and Rodrigo Esquirida.

The first "tribal" chieftain of the Bukidnons was Digidig Amban. The creation of this "tribal" council based in Sitio Cabagtasán was endorsed by the OSCC Regional Office. The leadership of Amban, however, was cut short by the holding of another set of elections. Vilma Amban emerged as the new "tribal" chieftain.

Vilma Amban, 24 years old, is a Commerce graduate.

She is presently working in one of the newest and biggest stores in Codcod proper. Her council members are mostly young Visayans, too. Leonisa Impil, also a graduate, heads the Cabagtasán Cooperative.

The second "tribal" council was established only last July 20, 1997 with the assistance of the OSCC Provincial Office, particularly its Director Frank Aguirre. This council is based in Iliranan and headed by Chieftain Gregorio Sueno, a Bukidnon mestizo.

The Iliranan "Tribal" Council is composed mostly of elders and all its members are Bukidnons. The officers were elected solely among the Bukidnons.

Comparatively speaking, the Iliranan "Tribal" Council meets more regularly than the Cabagtasán "Tribal" Council. As recorded, the former last met in August, 1997. They are likewise pushing for their Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim (CADC) application as the Cabagtasán "Tribal" Council is not amenable to such claims. However, as far as the OSCC is concerned, it is the Cabagtasán "Tribal" Council that is registered with their office. The Iliranan "Tribal" Council has yet to be recognized formally.

The Economy

The Bukidnons, as well as the other inhabitants of Barangay Codcod, derive their livelihood from agriculture, particularly through the employment of the kaingin or *tambi* (slash-and-burn) method of farming. Majority of the *uma* (farm areas) is cogonal. More than 93% of farm lots are devoted to corn solely, or in combination with *humay* (rice) or vegetables

or of both. Some farmers concentrate on planting *lumok* (trees) such as coffee, mahogany, ipil-ipil, gemelina, narra, coconut, mango and jackfruit. Roughly over 61% have farming animals or raise stock for commercial purposes. Among the animals raised are carabaos, pigs, chickens, cows, goats and horses. The other major sources of livelihood include fishing, hunting and private employment.

Bukidnons refer to land as *duta* and to fertile soil as *kanadnga*. Their planting season begins during the months of April and September and it is during these periods that agricultural labor is at its peak. Harvest season commences during the months of January and August. The Bukidnons' workplace is generally the farm lot so homes are built around the fields. This is very convenient for the kaingin farmers as they practically work the whole year round. Beside their houses are gardens or nurseries for vegetables before they are transplanted in the fields.

Through the years, the use of fertilizers and pesticides has increased. According to Health Center records, this has given rise to the enlargement of the goiters of some residents after continually being exposed to or eating crops laden with pesticides.

Irrigation comes from the extensive river and creek systems in the area, and from abundant rainfall. The use of terraces in farming, explained Gregorio Sueno, was introduced by the Visayans.

After kaingin farming, an area is abandoned temporarily and left to fallow. After four or five years, the area is referred to as *la-te*. This means it can be utilized for farming again. The farmers can tell if an area is ready for farming simply by checking whether the new trees have grown taller than the *simsim*

(cogon grass). *Mura* grass (Vetiver) is a local grass that grows abundantly in Sitio Cabagtasán. This helps prevent soil erosion due in part to the denudation of the forests. The *mura* grass can survive in extreme weather conditions and is at the same time used as animal fodder.

The Bukidnon agricultural cycle begins with clearing the fields. *Dayos* and *daob* refer to the burning of cogon and fallen trees, respectively. *Panggas* means planting and Bukidnons sing Magaroroy during this time. Fertilizers and pesticides are then utilized on the soil and plants. The farmers regularly remove weeds, or *maggapo*, and other unnecessary growths. Thereafter, if they have planted rice, they check the *tanok* which is the stem of the *humay* to determine if harvest can begin.

Before harvesting, the *pabuyal* (prayer) is said. A feast is prepared and shared during sunset to ensure a good harvest. The food served is called *duyot*. *Tabangay* is the Bukidnon's concept of sharing and helping in the *ubda* (work). This is most evident in the division of harvest shares between owners and farm workers. All the produce gathered during the first three days goes to the owner. Thereafter, all the produce gathered on the fourth day goes to the farm workers. During harvest time, the Bukidnons recite another prayer called *Daga*.

Ug-ug is the term used to refer to the separation of grain from the rice stalks after the first threshing. The poorer Bukidnons usually engage in this. In the event of harvest failure, or *daot*, the Bukidnons always attribute this as a form of retribution from the gods and spirits.

Land is acquired simply by *kaingin* farming. The land one farms is essentially part of his territory. According to Bukidnon Julian Matanda, a *kaingero*, he was able to acquire land but portions of this were eventually claimed by Visayans against

his will. Roman Cainap, also a Bukidnon, did not employ *kaingin* so he is landless. Some Ilonggos and Cebuanos likewise had large *kaingin* farms so they were able to claim tracts of land. To delineate areas claimed, boundaries were set. Tree trunks, stones and *tangdoy* (long pieces of wood) are used as markers because these are mostly very easy to move.

While some of the Bukidnons' land had been purchased by Visayans, most of their land is still passed on to the next generation. Land is inherited by the men in the family, whether from an endogamous or exogamous marriage. The partitioning of land is called *bakyaw*. And, if someone, even from outside the family, wishes to farm in one's land, the Bukidnons readily allow this. The borrowed land is then referred to as *taba*.

Corn, or *mais*, is the staple food of the Bukidnon as rice is primarily produced for sale. Corn is harvested twice a year and the average yield per hectare is 60 cavans. Fertilizers and chemicals such as *Cymbush* are used extensively.

Bukidnons, as well as some Visayans in the area, use a *galingan* (corn mill) to grind their corn. A number of informants believe that the technology and design required to fabricate and utilize the *galingan* was introduced by Visayans generations ago. The metamorphic rock (*igang*) used for the *galingan*, however, came from the MKNP area. Prior to the use of the *galingan*, the Bukidnons would pound the corn kernels with a stone until it becomes powder in form. Today, there are at least five of these mills in the Cabagtasán and Iliranán sitios.

The *galingan* is utilized in this manner. Corn kernels are separated from the cob and placed on the mouth, or *baba*, of the *galingan*. The latter act is referred to as *abod*. Each *abod* amounts to a handful of kernels. The *hawiran* (handle) of the

ground corn, called ginaling, then falls on a woven mat. The ground corn still has to be separated from other particles not required. The ig-ig or tahip (Cebuano) refers to the act of separating the particles.

Barangay Codcod is sometimes called the "rice bowl" of San Carlos City as a substantial amount is produced here and marketed elsewhere. Rice is also harvested twice a year and the average yield per hectare is 100 sacks. Each sack of rice weighs approximately forty kilograms. The stem of the rice is also edible and eaten by the Bukidnons after it is cooked.

Rice planted in the area are of fourteen varieties. These, together with their descriptions, are:

1. Malaguya - round, small white grains. When ground, this variety can be used to heal stomachaches arising from flatulence, for instance.
2. Kaong - white grains larger than the malaguya
3. Kinabog - gold, white and brown-colored grains
4. Azucena - has bad odor, similar in size to the himaya-hari
5. Himaya-hari - also has bad odor, is sticky but good for those who are ill
6. Kabatingan - dark grains
7. Kinuto - similar in size to a kuto (flea), also has dark color
8. Mayuro - white grains with yellow husks
9. Apostol - round, large white grains -
10. Lubang - round, large white grains
11. Kutsiyam - yellow and white varieties, for propagation
12. Kabad-as - red grains with dark husks
13. Kalkag - belongs to the flowering rice stalk variety

14. Dawa - round, yellowish grains, similar in size to mustard seeds

Vegetables, or *otan*, are planted when there is no *buyan* (moon). Examples of these include cabbage, pechay, carrots, baguio beans, sayote, radish, eggplants, squash, tomatoes, onions, potatoes, *besol*, *gabi* or *bisoy*, *bitsuelas*, *katumbal*, *royroy* (cassava), labanos, among others. Tobacco is also available in the area. Rolled newspapers hold the tobacco in place just like in a cigarette. The Bukidnons call them *likit*.

Each Saturday, the scheduled market day, the vegetables are loaded and then hauled from the upland sitios to Barangay Codcod proper. Haulers charge P 5.00 per kilo, hauling at least two sacks weighing forty to fifty kilos each at a given time. Middlemen from the cities of San Carlos, Kanlaon and Bacolod then arrive to purchase, or *bakay*, the vegetables.

Bukidnon farmers complain that these merchants pay very low prices for the produce. Cabbages, for instance, are purchased anywhere from P 2 - 3.00 per kilo.

The Bukidnons call this type of activity as *mamunit*. Fishing is done in the rivers using the *paumon*, an elongated basket with relatively small holes. Sili (fish) and crabs are also caught using another type of basket referred to as *taun*. The *taun* is used to catch larger fish, one at a time. Twelve-inch *bais* (eel) can be caught using the *taun*.

The *pangajam* (hunting) has already been prohibited in the settlement area by the local government. This practice used to be a very important activity of the Bukidnon males. According to an informant, Emilio "Mangmang" Amban, the Bukidnons used to have exceptional hunting skills so they were able to

saturate their hunting ground, Kanlaon, with the exception of the crater area.

Groups of four to five men, armed with their *bangkaw* (spear), set off regularly for the forests with their dogs. The group was usually divided into two in order to trap *lagsaw* (wild deer) and *bakten* (wild pigs). Traps were called *balatik*. The catch was always divided, or *paghilas*, among members of the hunting group in equal portions. This sense of fairness is called *urong*.

There are only two *bangkaw* remaining in the possession of the Bukidnons. In the past, all men had at least one each for hunting. The *bangkaw* was never used for fighting, war or *ambak* (revenge). The *bangkaw* was specially made by the skilled *panday* (metal craftsman) in the area.

In place of the *bangkaw*, most homes have seven to eight feet long sharpened bamboo poles for protection against rabid animals or spiritual entities such as the *aswang*. These long pieces of wood are called *tagad*. The *tagad* becomes a *tagad panggas* when used for preparing the field. The act of digging the soil with the *tagad* is called *tara-tara*. Those who keep knives at home use them for gardening or household purposes. This type of knife is referred to as the *binangon*.

The other sources of livelihood and/or household requirements include basket-making, mat-weaving, the preparation of rice wine, logging and private employment.

Apart from the *taun* and *paumon*, other baskets are fabricated by the Bukidnons. The *labog*, for instance, is a rice basket that can carry up to three gantas of rice. Mat weaving is engaged in mainly to produce the *banig* where people sleep on

and/or put ground rice and corn, and bags to hold utensils, accessories and produce. A *sabakan* is a bag used to hold grains during planting. The native material used is called *tikog*. Rice wine, on the other hand, is prepared by pounding (*bayo*) rice, cooking it with tobacco leaves and allowing the mixture to ferment in a sealed jar for a month.

Some Bukidnons have opted to work as domestic helpers in the city proper or as far as Manila and other urban areas to augment their families' incomes. Until recently, logging was carried out in the forested areas with the use of the *wasay* (ax). In fact, lumberjacks would even hold a feast called *dagjao* to celebrate before going off to the forests.

Owing to agriculture, the income of the Bukidnon is basically proportionate to the availability of food. Both income and food availability are relatively higher from the months of September till December.

Tenurial Arrangements

On the basis of initial studies, the Bukidnons of San Carlos City may not qualify for a CADC owing to their migration patterns, the composition of Barangay Codcod's population and the fact that Mount Kanlaon was declared a National Park.

As mentioned earlier, the Bukidnons presently residing at Barangay Codcod generally came from a neighboring area now known as "reserva." A reservation, subject to private rights, was signed into law and granted to "non-Christians" by then Governor-General Frank Murphy. The same was later revoked by then President Ramon Magsaysay.

The earliest Bukidnon settlers came to their present settlement area in 1936. This is clearly opposed to the set definitions of ancestral domain and land which in part read "lands and natural resources occupied or possessed by indigenous cultural communities...in accordance with their customs and traditions since time immemorial..." and "land occupied, possessed and utilized by the individuals, families or clans who are members of the indigenous cultural communities since time immemorial," respectively.

Furthermore, the Bukidnons are not only the ethnolinguistic grouping inhabiting or utilizing the land within Barangay Codcod. Almost half the population is currently non-Bukidnon. Their households are also interspersed with those of Bukidnons so much that there is no single sitio that is either homogeneously Bukidnon or non-Bukidnon.

Last but not least, considering that Mount Kanlaon is a natural park, the area is to be protected. As mandated by law, through the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act, permissible or prohibited human activities can be prescribed; land-use schemes and zoning plans can be enforced; the construction, operation and maintenance of roads, waterworks and other utilities can be controlled; among others.

Both Mount Kanlaon and the Bukidnon settlement areas are faced with impending environmental and population pressures. These shall definitely effect numerous changes through time, particularly in the community's social, economic and political systems.

In determining and evaluating the most appropriate tenurial arrangement for the Bukidnons, therefore, the following must be considered:

a. The Bukidnons are indigenous to the MKNP area in the widest sense because they have always lived in its environs and relied chiefly on its resources. The fertile soil, the forested hunting grounds, and the river and creek systems have always amply provided the Bukidnons with their sources of livelihood in terms of agriculture, hunting, fishing and other peripheral economic activities, not to mention medicines derived from the area.

Considering that the Bukidnon's economy is primarily dependent on the richness of the Kanlaon area, the determination of the most appropriate tenurial arrangement for the group must take into account the acquired skills and access to resources necessary to sustain agriculture as the prime source of income.

b. Only a handful of Bukidnon families moved into the MKNP area before the Visayan migrants did. The majority of the Bukidnons settled there almost at the same period the Cebuanos and Ilonggos did. This was due mainly, collectively to the sale of reservation land, its eventual revocation, the subsequent increase in population, resource demand and consumption, and the continued intermarriages between the Bukidnons and Visayan migrants.

c. On the bases of the established patterns and periods of settlement, and the current populations of both Bukidnons and non-Bukidnons, to apply for a CADC for the Bukidnons in the area will most probably create strife among the ethnolinguistic groupings.

d. The population of Barangay Codcod will progressively increase year after year yet this area is situated within MKNP. In the long term, MKNP will be subject to population pressures,

resource depletion and a tremendous amount of waste.

e. The existence of two "tribal" councils in the area is indicative of political conflict not only within Barangay Codcod but among the government agencies tasked to coordinate with the Bukidnons as well.

Conclusion

The Bukidnons of San Carlos City, as all indigenous peoples, are entitled to a just, long-term, economically viable and ecologically sustainable way of life. The Bukidnons must be given land as it is their chief, almost singular source of livelihood. They are not simply attached to their lands in a cultural sense; more importantly, the Bukidnons are skilled farmers.

If the government foresees the need to resettle the Bukidnons outside MKNP, a permanent settlement area will benefit both the Bukidnons and MKNP. The indigenous people will be protected, having legal rights to the land they are tilling, and MKNP will be spared from the dire consequences of population and development pressures expected given the demographic and economic trends already effecting changes in Barangay Codcod.

In determining and evaluating the most appropriate tenurial arrangement, the Bukidnons must be assured of the following:

1. The identification of the most appropriate, proximate settlement area if the Bukidnons approve of resettlement efforts;

2. Access to basic services such as education, health care and market facilities;
3. The creation of a shift in economic activities - providing mechanisms for livelihood activities that embody stewardship and sustainable development replacing resource-extractive and other damaging practices;
4. The promotion of participatory management of the Bukidnon community and its resources in order to ascertain the viability and acceptability of development projects and programs in the most expedient, practicable manner and timeframe.

The future of the Bukidnons remains unclear at this point in time. For one, the government has yet to hold truly participatory, consultative meetings with both Bukidnons and Non-Bukidnons inhabiting the MKNP area. Furthermore, the continuance of Bukidnon economic activities depends largely on their ability to organize themselves and participate in the determination of the most appropriate tenurial arrangement for themselves within the bounds of law and with the coordination of government agencies as well as non-government organizations tasked to promote their rights and well-being.



Farmers planting rice in a kaingin area



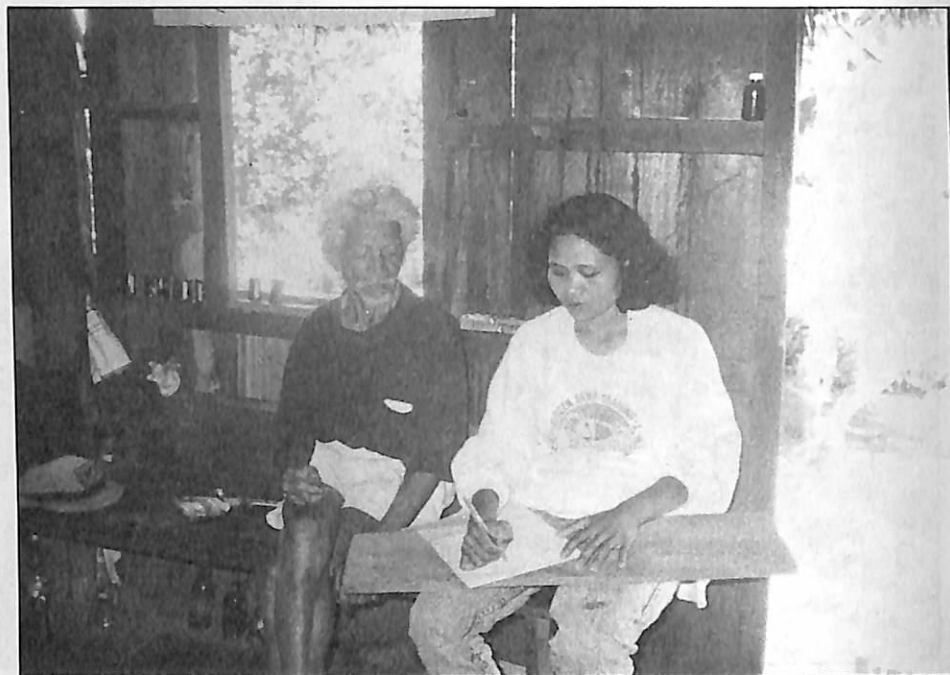
Tikog, native material used for mats and baskets



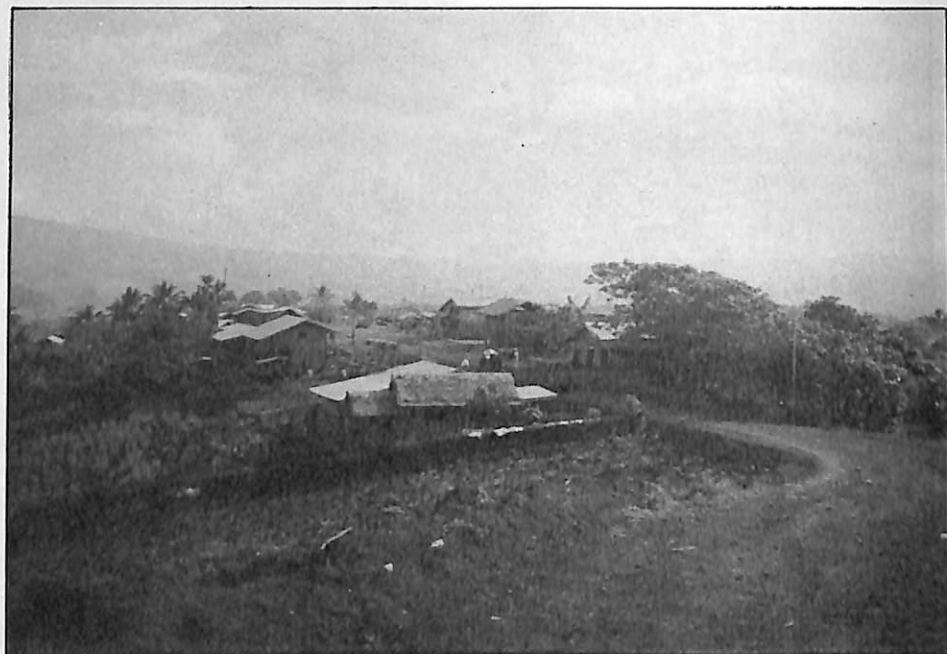
Market scene at Codcod Proper



An irrigation canal that derives its waters from one of six rivers traversing Barangay Codcod



Bukidnons Ruby Sueno (right) and Julio Matanda (left) at the latter's home



Barangay road leading to Sitio Cabagtasan

ATENEO GOLDEN JUBILEE LECTURE SERIES

FR. ROBERT C. HOGAN, S.J.

The Ateneo de Davao University is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. As part of the activities for this celebration, the Ateneo de Davao University - College Unit has launched the Golden Jubilee Lectures Series. This covers a total of eight lectures that focus on topics relevant to the development in Mindanao and the Philippines as a whole. The lecture series started on July 21, 1997 with the Most Rev. Fernando Capalla, DD, Archbishop of Davao, who talked on "Interreligious Dialogue: Essential to Peace and Development in Mindanao". The second lecture entitled "Christianity in Mindanao (1597-1997)" was given by Rev. Miguel A. Bernad, S.J., a historian, on August 18, 1997. The third lecture entitled "Science and Technology Education: Challenges to the Catholic Universities and Colleges in the Philippines in the 21st Century", was given by Rev. Bienvenido F. Nebres, S.J., President of Ateneo de Manila University and a scientist, on September 22, 1997. The fourth lecture was given by Rev. Michael D. Moga, S.J., a faculty member of the Philosophy Division of the Ateneo de Davao University, who talked on "Education for Humanness", on December 1, 1997. The fifth lecture entitled "Lumad Spirituality and Environment" shared by Datu Tomas Ito and Dr. Mel Elio of PASAKA Confederation of Lumad Organizations on February 18, 1998. The sixth lecture, entitled "The Asian Economic Crisis" was delivered by Mr. Alfredo Montecillo of the SGV & Co. accounting firm with Dr. Conrado Gempesaw II of the University of Delaware as reactor.

On August 17, 1998, the Rev. Raul J. Bonoan, S.J., President of Ateneo de Naga, whose doctoral dissertation studied the correspondence between Dr. Jose Rizal and Father Pablo Pastells, delivered the seventh Golden Jubilee lecture entitled: "Jose Rizal and the Founding of the Filipino Nation."