1987

The White Apos: American Governors on the Cordillera Central

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Disciplines
History | Other History | United States History

Publisher
New Day Publishers

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ISBN
971100318X

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THE WHITE APÖS
AMERICAN GOVERNORS ON THE CORDILLERA CENTRAL
FRANK L. JENISTA
New Day Publishers
Quezon City
1987
For at least the last five centuries of recorded history, Southeast Asians have been conspicuously divided into peoples of the hills and of the plains. Highlanders have tended to be independent animists living in small communities isolated by war or terrain, without developed systems of either kinship or peonage and ordering their lives according to custom and oral tradition. Their lowland neighbors, exposed to the greater traditions of Buddhism, Islam or Christianity, lived in more complex worlds with courts and chronicles, plazas and cathedrals. They made obeisance and paid tribute to devarajahs, sultans or governors-general. Southeast Asians of the plains stereotyped the mountain people as primitive, hostile and naive. Hill tribesmen considered lowlanders arrogant, weak and deceitful. Though trade patterns produced varying degrees of economic symbiosis, mutual antipathy between highlander and lowlander was the norm.

Western colonial authority intruded into this Southeast Asian world and virtually without exception (and, indeed, virtually without regard for geographical, cultural or temporal limits) developed relations with highland peoples that were largely congenial, in contrast to the inimical colonial relationships with lowland cultures. Lowland, national heroes in Southeast Asia are those of the resistance to colonial authority—the Bonifacios, Sukarnos and Ho Chi Minh. The highland minorities treasure positive communal recollections of this same foreign presence. Westerners have been admitted to the popular pantheon of folk heroes among such disparate groups as the Ifugao of Luzon, the Kachin of Burma, the Rhade of Vietnam and the Semang of Malaysia. Around the evening fires old men of Kalinga tell tales of the courageous warrior and great judge Sapao (Walter F. Hale). The Shan spin similar stories of Shway Yoe (Sir James George Scott).
The purpose of this study is to examine the Philippine experience, the fascinating but hitherto untold story of interaction between the American colonial authorities and the independent, headhunting, terrace-building people of Luzon's Gran Cordillera Central. The picture which emerges is drawn as much as possible from accounts of the participants themselves, a "people's eye view" of history. It focuses primarily on the province of Ifugao, for the American presence there was longest and best-remembered. Despite the great cultural differences between turn-of-the-century Ifugao and Americans, the oral accounts which make up this story portray for us an intriguing relationship—a mutually satisfactory symbiosis due in large measure to an unexpected congruence of important cultural values.

Both the Ifugao and the American apos held personal courage and fighting ability in the highest regard. Battles between them often ended with the words "We had a good fight." The American concept of "playing fair and square" resulted in a simple, common sense system of justice comprehensible to the Ifugao. The white apos made deliberate use of Ifugao magical/spiritual elements to reinforce their authority. On feast days, Ifugao warriors were challenged to publicly demonstrate the protective powers of their hiwang (talisman). When a rifle slug shattered the charm, the superior spiritual power of the apo was effectively demonstrated for all to see. Even the relationships which developed between the American apos and Ifugao women mirrored traditional Ifugao behavioral patterns and proved to be agreeable to both parties.

Where American policy decreed change in Ifugao customs, the white apos attempted to utilize existing indigenous systems to deflect Ifugao opposition. In prohibiting headhunting, for example, the apo recognized the Ifugao demand for vengeance and made himself the agent, saying, "I'll be the one to get your revenge." In matters of justice, Ifugao headmen were routinely consulted during investigation and settlement. In many cases the American merely placed his imprimatur on a decision reached by Ifugao leaders. On occasion the white apos deliberately violated American government regulations in order to achieve a resolution acceptable to the Ifugao.

New trails encouraged communication and helped to create a sense of Ifugao identity. Schools were opened, literate Ifugao soon were employed in government service and by independence were participating fully in the Philippine political system. In Ifugao
modernization brought no severe dislocations. Changes occurred gradually, their impact ameliorated by the care American apos took to develop a sympathetic understanding of Ifugao ways and act whenever possible in consonance with Ifugao custom. They were in turn liked and respected by the Ifugao because the actions of the apo mericano were explainable in Ifugao terms.

The indigenous sources for this research are primarily oral. Over one hundred interviews were conducted during the period 1971-1974 with a broad range of participants in the American government of the Cordillera and the province of Ifugao in particular. Respondents included government officials (former governors, village headmen, clerks, constabulary soldiers, teachers), non-officials in close contact with the white apos (wives, children, servants, relatives, friends) and non-officials with limited contact (barrio dwellers, merchants, participants in trail-building, legal cases and cañaos). While a significant number of the best-informed respondents spoke English, a majority of the interviews were conducted in local dialects through interpreters.

The most valuable information regarding the apos' perceptions comes from hitherto unknown or unused records of the American participants themselves. Autobiographical manuscripts, important documents and personal papers of all three American governors of Ifugao (Jefferson Davis Gallman, Owen A. Tomlinson and William E. Dosser) have been uncovered, along with similar sources left by American officials stationed in other areas of the Cordillera (John C. Early—teacher in Kalinga and Bontoc, lieutenant governor of Amburayan and Bontoc, governor of Mountain Province; John Evans—lieutenant governor of Amburayan and Bontoc; Charles W. Olson—Thomasite teacher and treasurer of Mountain Province from 1909-1916).

Archival collections of significance for this study include documents and papers of David P. Barrows, H. Otley Beyer, Charles Henry Brent, William Cameron Forbes, Francis Burton Harrison, Joseph R. Hayden and Dean C. Worcester. The holdings of the Bureau of Insular Affairs of the National Archives contain personnel files, manuscript reports of provincial governors and other documents of importance. Finally, a few first-hand accounts of American-Ifugao interaction have been published, with those of Roy F. Barton having particular value for this study.
Chapter I

SETTING THE STAGE

Geographical Features

The Gran Cordillera Central, the most prominent geographical feature of northern Luzon, rises abruptly from the fertile central plain of Luzon some 200 kilometers above Manila and continues northward for another 250 kilometers before falling away to the sea. The Cordillera’s average elevation varies from 1000 to 1500 meters while its highest peaks stretch upward some 3000 meters. The mountain chain forms a rugged barrier between the narrow coastal plain of Ilocos on the west and the broad valley of the Cagayan River on the east, and provides a homeland for six major highland groups known collectively as Igorots but separately and more properly as the Ibaloi, Kankanay, Ifugao, Bontoc, Kalinga and Apayao (or Isneg).

The Ifugao culture-area is located in an eastern and southern region of the Gran Cordillera Central. To the west the Mt. Data range separates the Ifugao from the Kankanays of Benguet and on the north and west the province is bounded by Mt. Polis, Mt. Amuyao and the Bontoc people. On the south and southeast Ifugao is insulated from the plains of Nueva Vizcaya and Isabela by a sparsely populated, malaria-ridden zone of grass-covered, rolling hills. With the exception of the 200-hectare Lagawe plateau the terrain consists of precipitous mountains cut by short, swift tributaries of the Cagayan River. The mountain slopes are covered with dense tropical forest or, particularly in the drier eastern regions, by thick, knife-edged cogon grass.

Cultural Background

The most populous of the six culture-groups inhabiting the Cordillera, the Ifugaoos (from Ipuugao, meaning mortals or “people on earth”) are particularly noted for extensive, well-irrigated rice
terrace systems which often extend up the mountainsides for 500 meters or more. Lengthy irrigation canals are frequently cut into the steep slopes to bring water to the terraces from mountain springs several kilometers away, en route crossing vertical cliffs or deep canyons in troughs made from hollowed tree trunks. The nearly perpendicular walls of the terraces are constructed of stones fitted together without mortar and commonly exceed five meters in height. The terrain on which the terraces are built is so precipitous that the height of the wall often exceeds the width of the rice field produced by building it.

Unlike other mountain peoples, who often plant two crops of rice each year, the Ifugaos traditionally plant only one. The rice produced is large-grained and of excellent quality, but the limitation of one planting per year means that only the wealthiest Ifugaos are able to eat rice (the preferred food) year round. The staple for most Ifugaos is the camote (sweet potato) grown in catngins (swiddens) slashed and burned onto the slopes surrounding every Ifugao settlement. The diet is supplemented by products of hunting (chiefly wild boar and deer) and gathering in nearby forests. Chickens, pigs and occasionally carabaos are domesticated and raised by the Ifugaos but these animals are kept for sacrifice to the anitos (ancestral spirits) and are rarely, if ever, killed just for food.

The Ifugaos, like the other highland groups of northern Luzon, are by tradition animists and believe that all matter has both corporeal and incorporeal existence. The complex Ifugao cosmology includes a bewildering variety of spirit-beings, good and evil, who are assumed to be involved to varying degrees in the affairs of human beings. As a means of propitiating the anitos animals are sacrificed at canaos (spirit-feasts). The spirit-beings devour the soul of the animal and leave the flesh for the human celebrants, a circumstance which often provides the poorer Ifugaos with their only opportunity to eat meat.

Providing such opportunities was one method by which the most influential Ifugaos maintained their status in traditional Ifugao society. Among the Ifugaos there existed an upper class of notables (kadangyan), a rank most often based on wealth, but one which was also accessible through demonstration of valor in battle or oratorical ability and wise counsel. Kadangyan status provided its holders with the right of consultation on matters of community concern and varying degrees of moral authority over those of lower social standing, but a kadangyan's influence had limitations. Friar Juan
Villaverde, the best Spanish chronicler of the Ifugaos, noted in the late 1800's that:

... the Ifugaos have no king, nor ruler. They pay tribute to no one. Each is the absolute monarch of his house and person, and although this individual liberty is one of the principal causes of their miserable and almost anarchical state, it is certain that it is one of their most dominant passions.3

These independent Ifugaos customarily lived in hundreds of small settlements (called rancherias by Spaniards and Americans) which typically consisted, not of compact villages, but of scattered hamlets (sitios) of a few houses each. There were no public buildings, and a settlement of fewer than 1000 people might well be spread across 500 or 600 vertical meters of terrace system and extend along a river valley for several kilometers. Traditional garb for the men was the wanoh, a loin-cloth popularly referred to as a g-string, and women wore the tapis, a short skirt which ended above the knees. Both garments were made by women, originally from pounded sheets of tree bark. By the 1800's they were commonly made of cloth woven on Ifugao back-loom using thread obtained by trade with the lowlands. The men did basketry and woodcarving while certain rancherias, especially Hapao, were known for expert metalworkers who produced tools and accessories of war such as spearheads and double-edged fighting bolos.

The Ifugaos, like the other mountain tribes, were inveterate headhunters. Valor, more than oratorical ability or even wealth, was the badge of leadership among the Ifugaos, and Ifugaos enthusiastically sought the honor which accrued to the taker of human heads. Raiding was the norm. Small bands of six or eight men stealthily slipped into enemy territory, waited in ambush for passers-by or workers in the fields, speared and beheaded their victims, and then raced for the safety of home territory before the alarm could be given.

With head-taking the ideal and blood-vengeance for such losses a requirement, a perpetual state of feud existed in Ifugao until the American imposition of an external order in the first decade of the twentieth century. Though ad hoc alliances were occasionally formed, Ifugao rancherias were independent and recognized no suzerain. Friendly relations might exist between settlements in close proximity to one another, but in most cases to leave the immediate
vicinity of one’s rancheria was to court decapitation. The danger of travel, the difficulty of the terrain and the essential self-sufficiency of each community resulted, as years passed, in a pattern of introversion characterized by a parochial identification with the home village (perceived as an extended kin-group), a general suspicion of non-kin, significant dialect differences and political independence. 4

The Spanish Experience

The Ifugao way of life continued undisturbed by Spanish incursions for almost two centuries after Miguel Lopez de Legaspi began the conquest of the Philippines for Spain. It was not until the 1750’s that Spanish troops first fought their way into the Kiangan region of southern Ifugao in response to headhunting raids against Spain’s Filipino subjects living in the Cagayan Valley. Continued Ifugao sorties of this nature made it impossible for Spanish authorities to ignore the Ifugaos and punitive expeditions were ordered into the mountains. For the next century and a half both church and state gave varying degrees of attention to the difficult task of catechizing and controlling these independent pagans in what proved to be an unsuccessful effort to bring the Ifugaos into a state of Christian subjection similar to that imposed upon their lowland brothers.

Spanish policies to attain these ends vacillated between persuasion and punishment throughout the history of Spanish-Ifugao contact, but from the number of priests killed and military expeditions launched it was clear that neither method was very effective in convincing the Ifugaos to accept either taxation or baptism. Several expeditions were launched against southern Ifugao beginning in the 1750’s. They met with strong resistance and one sent in 1793 was soundly beaten and forced to retreat to the lowlands.

In 1801 Friar Juan Molano entered Kiangan alone, the first missionary to reach that place without the company of a military force. He was impressed by the industry evident in the terraced fields and excellent houses, and was permitted to wander about observing daily life. Molano broached the possibility of staying permanently in Kiangan but the idea was firmly rejected. The Ifugaos told him that they were willing to be friends and have him visit for a few days at a time, but that a full-time priest would not be permitted. Nevertheless, Molano apparently felt encouraged by the Ifugaos’ lack of animosity and wrote to a co-worker expressing
his opinion that it might not be very difficult to begin mission work in Kiangan.6

Such beginnings were still half a century away, for the following year Spanish expeditions were again fighting the Ifugao. In 1802 troops were sent against Mayoyao and in 1810 Kiangan was fiercely opposing more Spanish expeditions. Guillermo Galvey, named Comandante General de Igorrote, made repeated efforts to conquer Igorots living in various regions of the Cordillera, and in 1832 fought his way into Kiangan. He spent two days destroying 18 sitios and their neighboring fields and in his report on the expedition explained Spanish intentions and the steps he felt would be necessary to achieve them:

I am persuaded that if two or three expeditions like this are made every year in May [i.e. just before harvest] to destroy their crops, the Igorots will have to give way, pay tribute and, above all, leave the Christian towns in peace, who don’t dare go 100 steps from their homes for fear of losing their heads ... 7

Whether such tactics would have had the effect Galvey anticipated was problematical for other Igorots had abandoned their terraces and moved farther into the mountains in the face of such devastation, preferring camotes and independence to rice and subjugation. In any event the question remains speculative since the Spanish government, whether for economic or policy reasons, did not field the forces necessary to carry out Galvey’s proposed conquest. Ifugao raids on the lowlands continued, at least partly because, in the absence of Ifugao overlords with wide-ranging authority, the burning of Kiangan’s houses and fields had no effect on other rancherias’ participation in Christian head-taking. Ten years after Galvey’s destruction of Kiangan, Sinibaldo de Mas’ Informe sobre el estado de las Islas Filipinas en 1842 (Report on the State of the Philippine Islands in 1842) described the Ifugao primarily in terms of their ferocious attacks in the Cagayan Valley:

[The Ifugao] are the pagans who live east of the missions of Cagayan along the left [west] bank of the Magat . . . they threaten to have the said missions completely at their mercy despite the expenses and sacrifices the government has made to sustain them.
They have immense fields of rice, but despite the fact that they live comfortably off the fruits of their labor, they take a horrible pleasure in lying in wait to murder travellers and, without robbing them, cut off their heads, sip their brains, and adorn the interior of their houses with human skulls, considering those who possess these dreadful trophies the most important. . . . Because of these barbarians, travellers passing from Nueva Vizcaya to Cagayan have to join in groups of 60 to 80 and take an escort. . . .

In 1847, principally because of continued Ifugao depredations in the lowlands, Military Governor Mariano Oscaríz of Nueva Vizcaya marched for Mayoyao with a large, well-armed force, destroying everything in his path—houses, crops, terraces and irrigation systems. Six days later he planted his flag in Mayoyao and offered the Ifugaos a choice between capitulation and total destruction. The Mayoyaos gave in to Oscaríz and agreed to pay tribute in rice as a token of their surrender to Spanish rule. Forty hostages were taken to the lowlands to ensure continued compliance and in 1849 a delegation of prominent Mayoyaos was taken to Malacañang where they offered personal submission to the Governor-General. In Mayoyao itself the Ifugaos offered their assistance to the Spanish on raids against other independent rancherias and also requested that a priest be sent to live with them. Spanish officials and clergy were delighted with this apparent pagan interest in Christ’s teachings and in 1851 a church, ironically named Nuestra Señora de los Dolores del Mayoyao (Our Lady of Sorrows of Mayoyao), was founded amidst much pomp and pageantry.

It should be noted, however, that such requests were typical of the period. Friars saw themselves as protectors of the Igorrotos and in this role often accompanied military expeditions, hoping to curb abuses by the soldiers. The Ifugaos seem to have recognized this and valued the presence of priests as long as detachments of soldiers were stationed in their rancherias. The priests were welcome in Mayoyao as long as the Mayoyaos continued to feel the weight of Spanish arms. However, in a pattern representative of the ebb and flow of Spanish influence on the Cordillera, Governor Oscaríz was sent to battle the Muslims in 1852, Ifugao disenchantment with the priests increased as Spanish military strength on their borders declined, the church was burned in 1854 and the Mayoyaos were soon back in control of their territory.
Though the Mayoyaos were able to reassert their independence, the frequency of Spanish expeditions into other Ifugao regions picked up sharply at mid-century. Kiangan was invaded in 1849, Cambulo in 1853, Hapao and Bunhian in 1854, Ahin and Hapao eight times between 1861 and 1871, and in 1868 a large force armed with all-weather, breech-loading rifles staged an immense 40-day expedition across Ifugao. The Spaniards penetrated as far as Banaue in central Ifugao and at every rancheria visited they received prompt, pragmatic pledges of fealty to Spain. A fort was built in Kiangan and a garrison of Spanish officers and Filipino soldiers was assigned to maintain a permanent presence in Ifugao. Two years later, however, Friar Victorino Garcia and several soldiers of the Kiangan detachment lost their lives to Ifugao warriors, and even the courageous pioneer missionary Juan Villaverde made a hasty, if temporary, departure from Kiangan when, following mass, an Ifugao spear passed through his vestments and stuck quivering in the door behind him.10

For the next two decades the Kiangan garrison and mission continued to be the focus of the Spanish presence in Ifugao for it was not until 1889 that the final intensification of Spanish authority in Ifugao began. In that year Gov.-Gen. Valeriano Weyler established the Comandancia Politico-Militar de Quiangan (Kiangan Politico-Military Command) and by 1892 civil guard posts had been built in the Ifugao rancherias of Hapao, Banaue, Ayangan (between Banaue and Mayoyao) and Alimit (between Ayangan and Isabela). The precise number of troops assigned to these stations undoubtedly varied from time to time but in 1892 the Spanish forces in Ifugao totalled 160—more than had been posted on the entire Cordillera three years earlier.11

Though the individual detachments at these posts were not large, by utilizing the warriors of the garrison towns they were able to exert considerable pressure against rancherias which refused to stop head-hunting or to pay tribute. Accounts of these punitive expeditions make clear that not only considerable destruction accompanied them, but also that Ifugao were willing to risk such devastation if circumstances were appropriate. Many of the more isolated rancherias, for example, continued their way of life as if the Spanish were not in Ifugao, for the intermittent raids they experienced had little long-term effect. Ngidulu of Bitu recounted his experience:
Our region is far from any of these posts and the only time we felt the hand of the Spaniards was when our enemies were able to enlist their aid against us in retaliation for our head-hunting and slave-catching. Then a detachment of Spaniards, accompanied by warriors from the offended village or region, would come down on us suddenly and burn houses and catch pigs and perhaps kill a few people who were slow in taking to the forest. The Ifugaos accompanying the expedition would behead the slain and cut off their hands and feet as well. They never burned our villages in Bitu, but they burned villages in the neighboring region of Hingyon, and our kin there took refuge with us until they could rebuild their houses.12

While some rancherias were thus shielded by distance, others were placed in dire straits when their neighbors became hosts of a Spanish garrison. The Spanish tended to pay little or no attention to the complaints of other districts against the Ifugaos of Kiangan and as a result many debts went uncollected as the Kiangans took advantage of Spanish protection to evade payment. Nagacaran was located only five kilometers from Kiangan and was linked to it through ties of marriage and blood but developed bitter hatred for the Spanish and for the Kiangans whom the Nagacarans accused of inviting them. When the Kiangans refused to honor their debts the Nagacarans began to take heads in retaliation. The Kiangans complained to the Spanish commander about their vicious neighbors, presumably without explaining the true genesis of the acts, and he agreed that the Nagacarans should be punished. The first Spanish force sent to retaliate was ambushed and annihilated by the Nagacarans, only five of 40 soldiers reportedly making it back to Kiangan. A larger expedition followed, burned Nagacaran to the ground, killed a number of people, and sparked one of the longest-lasting enmities in Ifugao.13

Ifugaos of the garrison towns also appear to have enlisted Spanish assistance in raids against their own enemies and this alliance seems to have persuaded at least one victimized region to band together for the purpose of retaliation against both the Spanish troops and the Ifugao rancheria which persuaded the soldiers to fight their battles. In escalation of an older Central Ifugao rivalry, Banaue and its civil guard post was attacked by an allied force from downstream rancherias headed by Kababuyan. Bugan of Hingyon
related the following story of that fight:

At about this time there was a great expedition of all the regions along our tributary against Benawol. My brother Adunglay went along. The expedition ended disastrously because the men disregarded bad omens along the way. About a hundred people were killed by the Benawol folk.

After that the Spaniards came with the Benawol people and burned villages in Kababuyan, Mampolya and Hingyon. They went first to Mampolya; the folk there fled to the mountains, but didn’t have time to take nearly all their pigs and chickens with them. The Spaniards and their Benawol allies burned the villages, sparing only the one where they stayed overnight. That night, Pangel and some companions slipped into the outskirts of the village and killed a Spaniard and took his head... The Spaniards went back to Benawol, but they came back and made a surprise attack on Hingyon. My brother Adunglay and other Hingyon men killed two Benawol men. The Spaniards carried away many pigs, chickens, valuable gongs and jars, and burned many villages...¹⁴

Even the garrison towns which pragmatically allied themselves with the Spanish did not escape Spanish occupation unscathed. Though they gained security from the soldiers’ presence and increased their chances of success in head-raiding by having Spanish allies, they were subject to payment of tribute. In addition, memories survive throughout Ifugao of the maltreatment of Ifugaoos by Spanish and lowland soldiers, and this type of oppression seems to have been at least as common in garrison towns as in outlying rancherias. A strongly worded protest sent by the Kiangan priest Juan Villaverde to the Kiangan troop commander Juan de la Plaza in 1896 supports the Ifugao recollections. The troops, Villaverde complains in his letter, are:

daily in one village or another, demanding or taking palay [rice], pigs or chickens as they wish, and carrying these things off whether their owners like it or not, throwing them a half-peso piece, for example, for something worth two or more pesos; and if any of them try to defend their property rights, they run the immediate risk of being shot.
and killed, as seems to have happened not so long ago in the village of Anao where they killed an Igorot for a matter of one hen he tried to prevent their taking... And this taking palay or whatever by these means and by force sometimes causes us casualties as happened in Hapao not along ago when an Igorot apparently lost his head during an argument over palay and killed a soldier.\[15\]

These abuses, recorded in Villaverde's letter and in oral accounts by Ifugaos, highlight the contrast between Spanish practices on the Cordillera and the more sympathetic statements of colonial policy issued in Manila. The documents provided the Igorots with considerably more humanitarian treatment than they actually received. In one instance, even the fact of Ifugao independence and the likelihood of opposition to Spanish subjugation was viewed with remarkable tolerance by Governor-General Weyler in his 1889 letter of instructions to the commandant in Kiangan:

The Politico-Military Commandant must remember that he will be exercising his authority over pagans who do not know the benefits of good government and who, even when they do know it, may in many cases prefer the savage independence in which they have lived and have seen their ancestors live.\[16\]

Weyler's further injunctions presaged in several ways the policies which would be adopted by the Americans on the Cordillera. The Kiangan commander was advised to impose his authority lightly, not rigorously, and to establish schools and open roads since Weyler believed that, aside from religion, nothing subdued savages faster than open communications. Labor, though forced and unpaid, was to be used in the seasons most convenient for the Ifugaos, the dignity of their leaders was to be demonstrated by deference and rewards, inter-village disputes were to be settled with complete justice and good morals, and the highlanders were to be protected against abuses by lowlanders or even Christian officials. As the Americans were to discover, such ameliorative measures did help to win Ifugao cooperation. Unfortunately, the Spanish not only failed to carry them out, but also included among these beneficial proposals unpopular policies of taxation, relocation and Christianization which undid any good will which might otherwise have
accrued to the government. Weyler enjoined the Kiangan com-
mander to “cooperate fully with the missionary fathers; regroup
[the Ifugaos] into settlements little by little... [and] collect
some token of vassalage or dependence.”17

From the beginning of the Spanish effort to conquer the Ifu-
gaos these three policies had provoked the greatest resistance, but
after 140 years of failure Weyler was still advocating them. They
continued to be unpalatable to the Ifugaos and contributed to the
enthusiasm with which the Ifugaos expelled the last Spanish forces
in 1897.

When the Philippine Revolution broke out in 1896 a number of
troops assigned to Ifugao and other places on the Cordillera were
withdrawn in order to assist in the battles against Filipino revolu-
tionaries in the provinces surrounding Manila. Licayu, a headman
of Banaue, recalled the soldiers’ departure from the post in Banaue
because of an event illustrative of the relations between the civil
guards stationed there and the Banaue people. The garrison slaugh-
tered its cattle in order to take the meat along. They left only the
heads and legs, but when the Banaue people approached intending
to salvage even these few remains, the soldiers threw rocks at them,
driving them away. The detachment withdrew to Kiangan without
being attacked, but the Banaue Ifugaos were happy to see them
leave.18

The soldiers who did remain in Ifugao after the withdrawal of
the outlying garrisons were soon in peril as word spread that other
people were also fighting the Spanish. For the garrisons remaining
in Kiangan and Payawan (on the Nueva Vizcaya border) the end
came on a Sunday. While the troops were kneeling at mass the
Ifugaos fell on them and massacred them all.19 Padre Villaverde
was not killed and was permitted to leave safely. His convento
(mission house) and rifle Villaverde entrusted to one of his Ifugao
communicants, Carmelo Saquing,20 before departing for Nueva
Vizcaya escorted by Kiangan headman Rafael Bulayungan.

Rafael Bulayungan’s personal history is interesting for it reveals
a little-known aspect of Ifugao participation in the Spanish govern-
ment of Kiangan. He was baptized at the age of 15 by Juan Villa-
verde, who also gave him the Christian name of Rafael. Villaverde
had established a mission school in Kiangan (complete with a Singer
sewing machine brought in by Villaverde’s associate Father Malum-
bres) and Bulayungan, along with 35 or more Ifugaos, learned to
read, write and converse in Spanish. According to American records
Bulayungan was fluent in Spanish and at the turn of the century was the best-educated Ifugao in the province. He held the positions of government clerk and road foreman from 1893-1895, and during the last two years of Spanish rule was appointed Justice of the Peace, Acting Judge of the Court of First Instance and Cabeza de Barangay (village headman). During the latter part of 1899 Bulayungan was formally recognized as the presidente (mayor) of Kiangan by the independent Filipino government of Nueva Vizcaya and, as later chapters will show, he continued to hold positions of influence under the American authorities.

In addition to establishing a school, the Spanish must be credited with the baptism (if not conversion) of several hundred Ifugao and with the construction of foot trails (with forced Ifugao labor) which extended from Isabela to Mayoyao and from Bontoc through Hapao to Banaue and Kiangan. The multi-talented priest Juan Villaverde supervised Ifugao construction of an excellently graded horse trail which connected Kiangan to the lowlands of Nueva Vizcaya. Also during the Spanish period a substantial body of information about Ifugao had been accumulated in the form of maps, official reports and friar-authored accounts of Ifugao life and customs. Much of this material proved valuable to Americans formulating a different colonial policy toward the people of the Cordillera.

In general, however, the 150-year effort to bring the Ifugao under Spanish dominion has to be considered a failure. After much effort the province had been penetrated militarily but Ifugao resistance to Spanish sovereignty was never overcome. With the help of the Ifugao warriors in garrison towns the Spanish were able to exert pressure on nearby rancherias and obtain irregular payments of tribute or Ifugao services for trail construction, but the Spanish presence in Ifugao was never more than a tenuous military occupation of the highlands by lowland-based soldiers. Dark memories of the cruelty and oppression of the period remain strong 80 years or more after the events transpired. In the long run, however, the most damaging heritage of this era was Ifugao bitterness toward lowland Filipinos. While some of this feeling is doubtless attributable to a common Southeast Asian, and perhaps worldwide, antipathy between mountaineer and plainsman, the abuses perpetrated against the Ifugao by Filipino troops of the Spanish garrisons created an enmity which is strong even today.

With the elimination of the Spanish garrisons head-hunting
flared up across Ifugao since old scores could once more be settled without the interference of outside forces. Banaue was again attacked by a war party from several Kababuyan rancherias in what was probably the biggest single battle in Ifugao before World War II. Though Banaue won, losses on both sides were sobering. Most reliable reports estimate 200 heads were lost. In another chapter of the Kiangan-Nagacaran feud, the Nagacarans attacked Kiangan vowing to take Kiangan heads and burn the deserted (but presumably symbolic) convento. Rafael Bulayungan led the Kiangan defense and won himself a great reputation for bravery by inflicting heavy casualties and driving off the Nagacarans with the aid of rifles captured from the Spanish.22

In fact, the period between the defeat of the Spanish and the imposition of American authority involved some of the most intense warfare in Ifugao history. Dr. David Barrows, an early American explorer of Ifugao, described graphically the tumultuous conditions which confronted the first Americans to visit the Ifugaos. He reported from Kiangan that “feud is raging everywhere since the withdrawal of the Spanish garrisons. People do not dare go beyond their immediate circle of towns and work in the fields with their spears.”23

In the mountains of Ifugao both the Spanish and the Americans faced the difficult task of imposing their authority upon independent and defiant Ifugao warriors. The Ifugaos in each case were confronted with white-skinned outsiders who arrogated to themselves the right to redirect Ifugao behavior and alter centuries-old patterns of existence. Yet Ifugao perceptions of the Americans are as positive as their memories of the Spanish are negative. This study examines the development of this remarkable Ifugao esteem for the American apos by looking at the Ifugao-American relationship through the eyes of the participants themselves.