

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

Man, Agriculture and the Tropical Forest, edited by Fujisaka, Sajise and del Castillo

Review Author: Hector Mauri, S.J.

Philippine Studies vol. 37, no. 2 (1989) 246–247

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at philstudies@admu.edu.ph.

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>
Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

Given the recent debate over the drug industry, many will want to read the section on Pharmaceuticals. Readers will learn how a certain British company charges prices that are eight to fourteen times higher than the prices they charge for the same drugs in Britain. You will also learn that there are 162 brands of cough suppressant on sale in the Philippines, of which less than a dozen are based on codeine. According to the World Health Organization the only required cough suppressant is codeine. The implication is that Filipino consumers are wasting a lot of their pesos on medicines that may not be of much use, except to the foreign drug companies who sell them.

Of crucial importance to a text like this one is a good index. And this book has one. You can simply turn to the back of the book and look up the particular company you are interested in and then turn to the appropriate pages in the text. There are also six valuable tables at the end of the book summarizing European investment in the Philippines. These tables show that the British have by far the largest number of direct investments in the Philippines. They have 102 compared to the next largest country, Germany, with 29. Although the British might have the largest number of investments, it is the Dutch who show almost the exact same level of sales with only 24 direct investments. The reason is that the Dutch, along with the British, own a big proportion of the various Shell related companies. For example, one of these companies, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., is the fourth largest corporation in the Philippines.

The major drawback of this book is obvious. It only covers European companies. The difficulty is that the overwhelming bulk of foreign investment in the Philippines is from either North America or other Asian countries such as Japan and Taiwan. Let us hope that in the future we will see editions following the same format entitled "American Companies in the Philippines" and "Asian Companies in the Philippines." Anyone looking for a masters thesis to do, you have your topic as well as a guide.

Henry M. Schwalbenberg
Economics Department
Fordham University

MAN, AGRICULTURE AND THE TROPICAL FOREST. Edited by S. Fujisaka, P. Sajise and R. del Castillo. Bangkok, Thailand: Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development, 1986.

The continued destruction of the Philippine forest has been causing an unstoppable flow of lowlanders toward the uplands. These lowlanders know only plow-agriculture and they do plow even the steepest slopes with the tragic consequences of soil erosion and torrential floods, which destroy the fertility of upland soils and silt river, lake, dams and coral reefs.

Man, Agriculture and the Tropical Forest is a well coordinated effort of ten prominent social scientists, ecologists and anthropologists to tackle this basic

problem which threatens our national ecology and the future of Philippine agriculture and marine life.

The introductory study on the basic geophysical data by Sam Fujisaka is followed by two more readable chapters on the nature and functions of the tropical forests by Percy Saije and on the ethnographic sociocultural description of various Filipino tribes. This latter chapter is very enlightening and particularly encouraging as it stands squarely against the common assumptions of development planners, who regard the cultural beliefs either as obstacles to overcome or cultural remnants that will disappear once confronted by the market forces. Chapter 4, by Ms. Concepcion J. Cruz, is a well-documented study of the patterns of migration of the lowlanders and government attempts at resettlement. In Chapter 5 Benjamin K. Samson tackles the all-important issue of how a viable and sustainable upland agro-ecosystem can be brought about by the adoption of appropriate technologies. Mariane Segura de los Angeles in Chapter 6 reviews studies on the socioeconomic impact of various approaches to upland development. Similarly eight case studies of social forestry projects are examined by F.V. Aguilar, and two detailed studies of upland projects in Calminae and in Tabago follow in Chapters 8 and 9. Owen J. Lynch, Jr. calls the attention of the legislature on the need to correct the confusion and contradictions of the legal framework regarding forest conservation and upland agriculture. Nine more upland projects are analyzed in Chapter 11.

As a whole the study carries a critical, but optimistic attitude which is not fully shared by the reviewer, who believes that greater emphasis should be given to the restoration of the tropical forests and the creation of a forest-based economy, rather than to a mere non-erosion agriculture.

The last chapter—an overall view of various programs of reforestation in the Asia-Pacific region—does somehow supplement the above deficiency by emphasizing the need for a community-based reforestation program to take the place of the afforestation programs originated by pulp and paper companies, such as PICOP in the Philippines, “which although it was successful, from the PICOP’s perspective—did little to increase employment or to improve the living standards for those most in need in the community.”

As a whole, this collection offers a welcome and necessary reading to any person who seriously intends to contribute to the survival of the forests, as well as of the cultural communities.

Foreign aid, possibly in large scale, is soon to be made available to the Philippine reforestation in the form of industrial tree plantations (ITP). Will these ITP be granted to the upland communities to build up the much-hoped-for community-based agro-forest economy, or will they simply be granted to big-time companies of the PICOP type? In this latter case the foreign aid would only validate a stronger NPA-Tribes alliance against the present uplanders’ exploitation.

Hector Mauri, S.J.
EDIS Foundation