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Gold Mining in Benguet to 1898

Olivia M. Habana

The mining and trade of gold were among the most vital economic activities of the Ibaloy and Kankanay Igorots of Benguet province. Early Spanish chroniclers recorded a flourishing inter-Cordillera and lowland trade based on Igorot gold and Ilocano cloth and livestock. However, the inaccessibility of the region and the spirited resistance of the Igorots made the gold mines an elusive target. Throughout the Spanish period, numerous attempts were made to locate and exploit the Igorot gold mines but none of these succeeded.

Benguet Igorot society was thus basically left to develop on its own. One of the most important consequences of this was the development of a native elite, the *baknang*, whose wealth and prestige were largely based on the ownership and control of the gold mines. The *baknang* would play important economic, political, social and even spiritual roles in Benguet Igorot society up to the time of the American period.

The Regional Setting

The highland country of Northern Luzon, known as the Gran Cordillera Central or the Mountain Province is the largest single block of mountainous country in the Philippines. The Cordillera Central is the biggest and highest mountain chain in the Philippines, running down the center of Northern Luzon 320 kilometers from north to south and fifty-eight to eighty-six kilometers from east to west (Kohnen et al. 1986, 19). It is actually a massive mountain block made up of three hardly discernible ranges with no intervening lowlands. These are the Malayan Range in the northern and western sections of the Cordillera, the Central Range, and the Polis Range in the east (Cleto, Dehn and Padilla 1986). Despite its predominantly mountainous character, there

are variations in elevation and structure. The Malayan range is the roughest and most abrupt while the Central Range has massive rounded blocks rather than individual peaks. The Polis Range has the highest elevations, including Luzon's highest peak: the 2,920 meter (9,610.40 foot) Mt. Pulog in Kabayan, Benguet. These extreme heights, however, descend gradually towards the Cagayan Valley (Wernstedt and Spencer 1967, 342).

Most of the major river systems of Luzon have their origins in the Cordillera. Mt. Data, in the province of Benguet has the headwaters of four of them within a few kilometers of each other—the Suyoc on the West flows into the Abra, the Chico on the northeast flows into the Cagayan, the Asin on the east flows into the Magat and the gold-rich Agno on the south flows into the Lingayen gulf (Scott 1974, 1). In addition to these main river systems are numerous smaller tributaries and short streams which have scoured the land resulting in terrain that is characterized by deep valleys, towering peaks and narrow basins.

The climate on the Gran Cordillera Central is vastly different from the rest of Luzon. Because of its elevation, the area enjoys average annual temperatures of 17.9 degrees Celsius, ten to fifteen degrees lower than the average temperatures in the rest of Luzon. This makes the climate pleasantly cool during the day and sometimes cold at night. The region has two seasons: the dry season from November to April and the wet season from May to October. Average annual rainfall is one of the highest in the world at 4,489 mm (Cleto et al. 1986). Rain falls in the Cordillera on an average of 177 days a year. This heavy rainfall contributes to the frequency of landslides and soil erosion in the area.

Looking up at the Cordillera Central from the lowlands, the early Spanish *conquistadores* were faced with formidable peaks surrounded by unyielding forests and dangerous rivers. The sight must have discouraged the early chroniclers and missionaries, prompting one of them to warn, "A land truly rugged and even inhospitable. This is the picture one should have of the highlands of the Igorots, and not seek plains or fields there" (Antolin 1988, 13). Even the battle-hardened veteran Alonso Martin Quirante found the Cordillera highlands destitute and he wrote, "Very many mountains are to be found there, so rugged, steep and near together that it seems impossible for men or any other living thing to exist on them" (1903–1908, 20:262–99).

Although the early Spaniards and even lowland Filipinos looked up at the Cordillera in awe and saw a rough, barren land with no means

of livelihood, the native inhabitants of the area—the *Ygolotes* or *Igorrotes* saw a haven (Scott 1993, 41–70). Although the soil was thin and subject to erosion, there were large enough patches of arable land in the foothills of the Polis Range, the northern end of the main highland in Apayao and intermittent valleys such as the 2.5 by 5 kilometer La Trinidad Valley in Benguet. Far from being an uninhabited highland area of forest cover and wild vegetation, as was expected, the Cordillera region showed signs of human occupation of long duration. These included evidences of shifting agriculture, settlement sites, and terracing agriculture where artificial irrigation could only have been achieved with intensive and advanced human labor.

The Province of Benguet

Modern-day Benguet is the southernmost province in the Cordillera region. It is bounded on the north by Bontoc, on the west by La Union and Ilocos Sur, on the east by Ifugao and Nueva Vizcaya and on the south by Pangasinan. Benguet is basically a plateau dotted by high peaks, numerous valleys, and mighty rivers which drain into the South China Sea. Mountains such as Pulog, (or Pulag), Tabayoc, Panutoan, Osdung Paoay, Sto. Tomas, Data and Ugu; are thousands of feet above sea level. The valleys of La Trinidad, Sablan, Galliano, Bued, Agno, Amburayan and Tuboy are arable land and are drained by their corresponding rivers (*Benguet Profile* 1970, 5–6). Benguet province is currently composed of thirteen municipalities: Kabayan, Bokod, Itogon, Tuba, Sablan, La Trinidad, Tublay, Kapangan, Atok, Bakun, Kibungan, Mankayan, Buguias and the City of Baguio.

However, a history of the province of Benguet cannot be confined to the present day boundaries of the province. Oral histories of the native inhabitants were tied to the river systems of the Agno, Bued, Aringay-Galliano, Naguilian and Amburayan rivers (Bagamaspad and Hamada-Pawid 1985, 21). Spanish chronicles reinforced these oral histories by noting that portions of the western coast of northern Luzon from the southern Lingayen Gulf to the outlet of the Amburayan River in the town of Tagudin, were part of the Benguet culture area by reason of commercial and kinship ties. As such, the study will take this important fact into consideration and limit itself to the gold-mining and trading areas of the province.

Benguet shares the same climatic seasonal conditions as the rest of the Mountain Province. The vegetation of the province is as varied as its terrain. The foothills near the coast of the Lingayen gulf abound in lowland vegetation and crops. From approximately 3,000 feet above sea level there is highland vegetation cover and more recently, imported crops such as lettuce, strawberries and the like. At the 3,000 to 7,000 foot level, there extends a pine belt which has given Benguet its distinctive character. From 7,000 feet and above, a mossy forest of scrub oak and stunted bamboo is the home of the headwaters of the great rivers of northern Luzon (*Benguet Profile* 1970, 7).

Aside from the agricultural potential stemming from its fertile valleys and cool climate, the province of Benguet also has one of the highest levels of mineral reserves in the Philippines. These are concentrated in the so-called Baguio Gold District which tops the rest of the Philippines in terms of reserves and output (*Gold and Silver* 1975, 3). Geologically, Benguet may be described as having predominantly andesitic rock characterized by "true fissure veins, with subordinate contact deposits between andesite and diorite" (Pratt 1912); conditions which indicate the presence of gold in lode or placer deposits. This is supported by the fact that gold was freely mined in tunnels or panned along the rivers of the province. These physical and geological characteristics of Benguet shaped and influenced the socio-economic life and development of its inhabitants.

The People of Benguet

The inhabitants of the Cordillera Central may be divided into 6 ethno-linguistic groups: the *Isneg*, (*Apayao*), *Kalinga*, *Bontoc*, *Ifugao*, *Kankanay* and *Ibaloy*. These independent tribes refused to assimilate into the Spanish system and continued to live in the remote mountain fastness of the Cordillera. Here, native culture flourished and survived the aggressive Hispanization that was taking place in the lowlands. Thus, they remained the largest single block of peoples remaining *infeles*; to the chagrin of both the Church and Spanish officialdom.

The people of Benguet belong to two ethno-linguistic groups: the Kankanay who occupy the northern highlands and the Ibaloy who occupy the southeastern two-thirds of the province. Traditionally, the Kankanay were found in the northern mountains near modern-day Kapangan and Mankayan, while the Ibaloy occupied what is now Tuba, Itogon, and the areas around Baguio City.

Although this division may have been true in Pre-Hispanic and Hispanic times, it may hardly be rigidly observed in the twentieth century due to the high level of intermarriage between the two groups as well as the influx of Ilocano and other migrants. In addition, there has been little observed difference between the Kankanay and Ibaloy groups except for their languages. Their personal appearances, traits, material culture, customs and laws are identical to each other. In fact, certain sociocultural traits of the Benguet Kankanay are closer to the Ibaloy than to their Kankanay cousins in Lepanto and other provinces. Foremost among these was the important place given to the *kadangyan* or wealthy class (See Moss 1920; Fernando 1994).

In early Spanish accounts, the name Ygolot, and later, Igorrote was first applied to the inhabitants of Benguet (De la Vega 1609, 301-7). Henceforth, the term "Igorot" will be used to designate both the Kankanay and Ibaloy inhabitants of the province of Benguet. In general, the Igorots were animistic ancestor-worshippers who viewed the world as full of spirits who had to be appeased through numerous specific rituals specified by the *mambunong* or priests. Although their material culture was regarded as crude and primitive by western observers, their agricultural and commercial systems supported them quite well into the American period.

In comparison to the lowland *indios* they were familiar with, the early Spanish chroniclers invariably described the Igorots as "light-complexioned, well-disposed and intelligent" and "bold, well-built and active" (De la Vega 1609; Quirante 1903-1908, 20:44-75). As late as 1892, the Comandante of Benguet described the Igorots as similar to the *mestizo chino*. "*El igorrote de este distrito es sana y fuerte, bien formado, de buena musculatura. La mujer, aunque, sana y robusta*" (Memoria 1892). This perception of the Igorots as strong, brave, muscular and physically and racially different from the lowland indio persists even today. However, this is disproven by both Igorot and Western sources.

According to oral history accounts, the original settlements in Benguet (ca. 1500) resulted from a west-to-east migration from the Ilocos coast to the hinterlands of the southern Cordillera range, specifically to the twin settlements of Darew-Palaypay in Tublay and Chuyo-Tonglo in Tuba. A north to south movement from Bontoc and Banao also took place because of head-hunting activities and an epidemic. From the survivors of this epidemic can be traced the present day leading families of Mankayan. By 1600, the earlier west-to-east movement was reversed to an east-to-west movement from around the

southern Cordillera range to the valleys along the Agno River, further evidence that there was social and ethnic continuity between highland and lowland people. In choosing sites for their villages, the original settlers of Benguet preferred fertile valleys, watered tablelands or mining sites. Other factors were village enmity, alliances and natural fortification. By 1700, all present day Ibaloy-speaking municipalities were settled (Bagamaspad and Hamada-Pawid 1985, 27–31).

Traditional Economy of the Benguet Igorots

The Ibaloy Igorots were concentrated in the area where the greatest agricultural potential in the region existed. This was not much by lowland standards but the Ibaloy maximized their limited arable land by cultivating hillsides, plateaus and mountain slopes through bench terracing and advanced irrigation techniques. The Ibaloy exhibited the highest skill in ditch construction, often building large dams for irrigation. Mountain streams and rivers were diverted by a system of dams, ditches, wooden troughs, and bamboo towards the uppermost terraces where the water is passed towards the lower portions. Here the fragrant and nutritious upland rice is grown.

Their Kankanay counterparts relied more on swidden farming to raise root crops such as *gabi*, *camote*, and *ube* on the steep mountainsides. In addition, the Igorots foraged for *gallod*, *gakad* and *kallayan*, root crops resorted to during times of famine or crop failure (67). The deep Cordillera forests provided them with deer, fowl and wild pig; as well as other forest products such as fruit, honey, beeswax, cane and bark for baskets and clothing.

Most Igorot homes also had their share of livestock such as chickens, pigs and sometimes cattle or carabaos. The latter were used mainly for ceremonial purposes, but also for food, trade, and as an indicator of wealth. There were also some industries such as basket making, bark and cloth weaving, copper smithing and the like. All in all, the traditional economy of the Benguet Igorots may be described as one of small-scale, household oriented production characterized by reciprocal labor among neighbors and kinsmen (*aduyon*, *ug-ugbo* or *gamal*) (Boquiren 1989, 12)

All of these contributed to the economic self-sufficiency of the Igorots in Benguet. With their inhospitable homeland and their fierce,

"head-hunting" character, it is easy to conjure up an image of the Igorots living in splendid isolation in their remote mountains. This, however, would prove to be a fanciful image. Early Spanish chronicles as well as the oral history of the Igorots show strong evidence of a flourishing trade with the lowlands. The basis of this lucrative trade was a shining, pliable metal found in the rocky outcrops and streams of Benguet: gold.

Gold Mining and the Igorot Economy

Aside from rice-growing, swidden farming of root crops, livestock-raising, hunting and foraging, an integral part of the Igorot economy was the mining and trade of gold. It was in fact this industry which was the basis for the social organization of the Benguet Igorots and which differentiated them from other Cordillerans. It was through such trade with the Ilocos lowlands that early Spanish conquistadores came to know of the Igorot gold mines, as did Juan de Medina, writing in 1630.

A great quantity of gold has been and is obtained from the province, not that the province yields it but the Igorotes bring it down from the mountains. . . . When peaceful, they bring down gold which they extract there from their mines; and they exchange it for cattle, which those along the coast own. They trade also for abnormally large and completely white swine—never have I seen them of such size in España. They also take away blankets, which the people in Ilocos make of excellent quality. (119–297)

Further proof of the prevalence of lowland-highland trade was the fact that certain Cordillera dialects have more similarity to lowland dialects than to other upland dialects. Specifically, Ibaloy is closer to Pangasinense than to Kankaney while Pangasinense is closer to Ibaloy than it is to Ilokano (De Los Reyes 1987, 2). This suggests a higher level of interaction between the groups which traded with each other than with the groups living in proximity to each other.

The main Igorot mining districts were the areas of Suyoc, Tabio, Acupan and Antamok. Gold was panned along the Agno River from Kabayan to Pangasinan, the Bued River, the Suyoc River and the Amburayan River from Atok to Kapangan. Extraction from lode veins

was long confined to the tributaries of the Agno from Kabayan to the downstream town of Itogon (Bagamaspad and Hamada-Pawid 1985, 24). The Antamok, Acupan and Balatoc streams were also found in Itogon. The predominantly Kankanay area around Mankayan was rich in copper with gold as a by-product.

Rituals were as important to gold mining as they were to the rest of Benguet Igorot life. *Cañaos* were performed before opening gold tunnels to appease the *anitos* to whom the gold belonged. A blood offering must be made and only pigs were killed in *cañaos* relating to gold mining. To find out the condition of a vein, a chicken must be sacrificed and its bile sac consulted. If dark, it is favorable but if pale it is unfavorable.

The most common mining method was through *pansejew* or gold panning. This was practiced as early and probably even earlier than 1545, as evident from the casual mention made of it in oral histories of the period. "Here they had another child, a daughter named Damya. Damya used to wash gold at Labang" (49). The method of gold panning is similar to modern day panning and was described by Quirante:

In the rainy season, that wretched race, most of who are miners, unite with their wives and children to wash the sand of the streamlets that flow from the mountains where, with less work than in their mines, by avoiding the digging and crushing of metal, they get some gold, although very little. With what all of them get . . . they go down peacefully to the villages nearest to them, to trade for certain animals or cattle. (276-77)

Sand taken directly from the rivers was placed in a rectangular pan called a *sadjewan*. The pan was then shaken, allowing water to seep through, leaving the gold dust to settle at the bottom. The gold was then cleaned, wrapped in cloth and placed on a pan over hot flames or charcoal. It was then molded into a coin and sold to gold dealers or used for barter.

A second and complementary method was the mining of lode deposits either through *labon* (open pit) or tunnel mining. This required more organized labor than placer mining since it necessitated the building of tunnels, removal and processing of ore and the disposal of debris. Tunnels were started by making excavations along the lines of the gold-bearing veins. The rocks were broken down by building fires and then dashing them with cold water. The ore could then be carried out and milled. That this process was accomplished with only the most

primitive of tools surprised the Spaniards and early American miners, such as Laurence Wilson (1932) who wrote,

Many tunnels are necessarily small and tortuous—following the ore on the hard rock; but some creditable shafts, raises, winzes, stopes and fills are seen. The best Igorot methods of timbering, stoping and back filling are admired even by American miners. The Igorot worked in and down as far as feasible; driving tunnels many meters long and putting in raises or shafts until stopped by very hard rock or waterflow. They endured the foul air until their smoky torches refused to burn. All the modern mines are developments of old, partly abandoned Igorot workings.

The most characteristic manner of gold mining by the Igorots was a combination of lode and placer mining. They usually started working the gold near the tops of the mountains where there were outcrops. In addition to the diggings and tunnels, a long ditch was dug to catch water during the rainy season. The ditch usually led to a storage reservoir or stream. When enough water is present, it is “boomed out—exposing the vein for the next season’s work. In this way big cuts and slides are made” such as the half kilometer wide Palidan slide at Suyoc (Wilson 1932). The panning of gold usually takes place below these streams and rivers. The best sections are usually owned by certain individuals and there are certain permanent sluice boxes which catch the descending gold during the rainy season. The sluice boxes are carefully cleaned out by the men and the bottoms carefully panned again by the women.

The Igorot women played an important part in the gold recovery process as they were the usual gold panners and were experts at gold milling. The ore was milled by crushing and grinding it to a slime by means of the *alintog* (crusher) and *alidan* (rub rock). The ore was then washed and separated, often set away in a tunnel with salt for years from which they periodically obtained what gold they needed. This was then traded to certain trusted lowlanders who finalized the processing of the gold and acted as the business agents of the Igorots.

Although they do not refine the gold completely nor bring it to perfection, they take it down to certain places in Ylocos, where they trade it for rice, pigs, carabaos, blankets and other things which they lack. The people of Ylocos complete their refining preparation and through them, it is distributed throughout the land. (Morga 1971, 261)

The Development of the Baknang Class

By the sixteenth century, the gold mining industry had fostered a certain degree of specialization among the Benguet Igorots. Certain sectors of society began to rely mostly on gold for their livelihood. Fray Francisco Antolin, O.P. (1988, 31), lamented this preference for gold mining over agriculture:

Those who live by working the gold, copper and iron in the manner stated care little about making fields. And why should they wear themselves out in agriculture when the gold, knives and pots they make suffice for everything? This is not to deny that other Igorots, who do not work so much with metals, plant and cultivate some valleys and remote pieces of good soil for rice, camotes, beans, onion, sugarcane, tobacco, squash and other vegetables. They plant all of these and sell and trade them from one village to another.

As gold mining became more prevalent in the Benguet area, it inevitably resulted in a reorientation of society. The few who had access to and ownership of the mines composed the rich baknang class, while those who worked the mines or placers were generally the poorer components of Benguet society (*abiteg*), who were employed on a share basis or for a daily wage. To supplement this, the rich mine owners used the *bagaen*, an alien slave class, which worked only for food and lodgings.

Whereas forests, rivers, swidden farms and streams were considered communal property, rice fields and gold mines were regarded as kinship property (De los Reyes 1987). The recognized owner of the mine hole or placer stream was the first individual to put improvements such as tunnels, sluice boxes, and stopes on the property. A family in a certain mining area may have owned a combination of lode and placer mines in a portion of the mountain with the gold bearing gravel of the stream flowing therefrom. As kinship property rights were inherited, these leading families were able to consolidate their wealth based on their ownership of mining areas.

The lucrative gold industry inspired other Igorots to search for their own gold holes or streams. This spread the settlements to other areas as new mines and placers were found. These discoveries often began as individual property of an intrepid individual which was inherited equally by all of his offspring. As time goes on, the ownership group grows larger and the gold mine therefore passes from an individual to a kinship group. As observed by Charles B. Drucker (1977):

The nature of ownership of a given piece of land therefore changes over time: land is held first by an individual, then by a set of families related through sibling ties, and then by a larger group of individuals, all of whom can trace descent from an apical ancestor. Up to a certain point, the descent group is small enough to act corporately with regard to land ownership. However, beyond five or six generations . . . the size of the group has increased enormously and the limit of genealogical memory has been reached. Precise reckoning of group membership is rendered impossible by failing recollection. . . . Finally, no attempt is made to exercise exclusive privileges and the land is declared "communal property."

This cycle spurred individuals to continually search for new gold-rich areas so that the discovery, recovery and processing of gold and copper caused movements within, into and outside of Benguet settlements. The mining and trade of gold and copper became the foundation of a society and the engine for its growth and changes that occurred in it.

Because of the inheritance customs and the rituals required for mining, the *baknang* class of the Ibalays and the *kadangyan* of the Kankanays were placed in a position of importance. The Kankanays "distinguish clearly an aristocracy, the *kadangyan* class, nowadays often referred to by the Ilocano term, *baknang*" (Keesing 1968, 29). Like their Ibaloy kinsmen, the wealthy class developed because of hereditary principles and was reinforced by the possession of wealth and the conduct of ritual activities. Most importantly, the Benguet Igorots had access to a resource that was ideally suited to increase their wealth and position. The gold mines provided a high-value, low-bulk commodity that was much faster and easier to translate into wealth than the products of rice fields and swidden gardens which comprised the land owned by the mountain elite outside of Benguet.

The *baknang* of Benguet reached such high status as compared to the rest of the Cordillera because they were in a position to make the most of the extraordinary wealth of the area. With their income from and monopoly over the mines, they were able to consolidate even more wealth in the form of Chinese jars, beads, Ilocano blankets, pigs and most importantly, cattle. The importance of cattle as an indicator of wealth lay in its function during ritual feasts which redistributed benefits in the form of food and reinforced the wealth of the feastgiver. An indicator of the extent of their wealth was the fact that the Ambuklao pastures were blanketed with the hundreds of heads of cattle of the rich owners of the gold mines. As late as the mid-1800s

Mayengmeng, a baknang of Buguias was so wealthy that the line of his cattle being driven home stretched out for four kilometers (Bagamaspad and Hamada-Pawid 1985, 80). The wealth of the Igorot elite was also evident in the numerous prestige feasts or *cañas* that were the subjects of scandalized observation of the Spanish missionaries. These feasts usually went on for days at a time with no end to the rice wine, food, gorging and drunken boasting.

Wealth was also amassed by the baknang gold traders such as those in Tonglo, in the present day municipality of Tuba in Baguio. This settlement served as a distinct highland-lowland trading post between the Igorot merchants and those of the Ilocos coast. The gold trade was so lucrative that in 1755, a certain trader known as Balasiao had a personal fortune which included 5,000 pesos in cash (Scheerer 1924, 11). In addition to their economic predominance, the baknang also monopolized the village councils which made the important political, religious and administrative decisions for their specific communities. This was mainly because the prerequisite for membership in the council was an individual's wealth.

With flourishing wealth and added responsibilities, the rich families increasingly employed the poorer classes and bought slaves to work the gold mines and care for their cattle while they concentrated on managing their lands and trading gold. These slaves were often captives of war and are one of the few examples of a true chattel slavery in the country. Slaves could not marry outside their class and their children were born slaves.

The baknang came to be centrally important in Benguet Igorot society since they fulfilled roles as commercial managers, village headmen, spiritual leaders, and creditors. This prompted Felix Keesing to state that the baknang or *kadangyan* were "probably the outstanding *dramatis personae* in (Igorot) life" (Keesing 1968, 31). While the poor were not true vassals of the rich, they were looked after and in times of need given loans of food (although often at interest) which they returned in labor. The giving of numerous prestige *cañas* provided the poor with many feasts that lessened the sense of inequality (Wilson 1953, 89). These were thus perceived as a form of taxation or a way of redistributing wealth in Igorot society.

Sixteenth century Benguet Igorot society was thus dichotomized into the wealthy baknang class and the poor *abiteg* class resulting in the "concomitant social stratification very characteristic of Ibaloy society" (Bagamaspad and Hamada-Pawid 1985, 48). The entrenchment of

the baknang class inspired further movements of people prompted by discoveries of new gold sites, uninhabited valleys and rich hunting grounds. Legends also recount individual attempts to "seek fortunes away from population centers characterized by an exploitative social order of a few mine-working and trading families" (48). The early Spanish expeditions therefore came upon a relatively prosperous society, dominated by a wealthy class whose riches were based on the mining and trade of gold. The wealth of this class was such that they could hold week-long feasts in which dozens of animals were slaughtered for meat and their fat burned for fuel. More significant to the Spaniards were the tales of Igorots descending the mountains laden with fine gold which they obtained simply by gathering it in (*Acupan*) with their hands. The early Spanish conquistadores, felt that they would at last find the fabulous El Dorado in the mountains of Northern Luzon.

Early Spanish Expeditions to Benguet, 1572–1599

Lured by rumors of rich gold mines, the early Spanish conquistadores in the Philippines headed up to Northern Luzon. In May 1572, Juan de Salcedo, grandson of the Adelantado Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, trekked north in search of a fabulous land teeming with gold. He left most of his men to man a fort in Vigan, explored the northern coast by boat, and "marched into Manila three months later with fifty pounds [twenty-five kilograms] of gold" (Scott 1974, 10). Never mind that this was not entirely voluntary on the part of the natives. Fray Francisco de Ortega (1903–1908, 34: 256–72) denounced the manner in which this gold tribute was collected from the inhabitants of the Ilocos coast:

by forcing them to give as tributes the necklaces which they wear about their necks and the bracelets which they and their women wear on their arms. . . . Some of them refuse to give the tribute. . . . Others flee to the *tingues* and mountains. When the Spaniards see this they follow them, discharging their *arquebuses* and mercilessly killing as many of them as they can. Then they go back to the village and kill all the fowls and swine and carry off all the rice. . . . After this and after they rob them of everything they have in their miserable houses, they set fire to them. In this way they burned and destroyed more than four thousand houses in this expedition to Ylocos and killed more than five hundred Indians, they themselves confessing that they committed that exploit.

Although Fray Ortega felt that the lives of five hundred natives was too high a price to pay for twenty-five kilos of gold, the Spanish colonial officials apparently did not. Dreams of fabulous golden cities may have danced before their eyes, despite the fact that the gold was actually much less than what had been obtained in the Spanish colonies in Latin America. Hernan Cortez' initial campaign against Montezuma produced 680 kilograms of gold while in 1533, Pedro de Heredia obtained 420 kilograms of gold from one tomb alone in Cartagena (Tegengren 1963). Far from discouraging the conquistadores, Salcedo's measly take further aroused their desire for gold. Official reports such as those of the Royal Treasurer Guido de Lavezaris (3:260-71), no doubt contributed to this.

There are some chiefs on this island who have on their persons ten or twelve thousand *ducats* worth of gold. . . . There are so many of these chiefs that they are innumerable. Likewise, the individual subjects of these chiefs have a great quantity of the said jewels of gold which they wear on their persons—bracelets, chains, and earrings of solid gold, daggers of gold and other very rich trinkets. . . . And not only the rich chiefs and freemen have plenty of these jewels but even the slaves possess and wear golden trinkets upon their persons, openly and freely.

The early Spanish officials did not realize that what they had seen and seized were golden articles already in existence and often the result of generations of accumulation. As such, when this initial spring had dried up, the only way to secure a steady supply of the gold was to find the actual source of the precious metal and somehow induce production. The colonial government then thought that a sure way to coax the gold out of the hands of the reluctant natives was to require tribute payment in gold and payment of the King's Royal fifth on all gold produced from the mines. This sparked off a round of expeditions bent not so much on relieving the natives of their gold but in searching for their gold mines.

In 1576, Francisco de Sande reported his discovery of the gold mines. These were not located in the Ilocos, as was popularly believed, but in mountainous country further north: "very rough country, twenty leagues inland; the way thither is obstructed by great forests; and the country is very cold, and has great pine forests" (1903-1908, 4:21-98). The area was peopled by naked outlaws who "in addition to other cruelties, cut the heads off those they encounter to sip their brains" (Antolin 1988, 121). The bleakness of the region and the hostility of its inhabitants put a temporary stop to any further expeditions.

It fell to Juan Pacheco Maldonado, described as "a man of little diligence and intelligence" to renew the search for the Igorot mines in 1580 (De la Vega 1609, 305). This, however, was a dismal failure since no gold or gold mines were found, no Indians (except two women) were captured and no ore was recovered by a supposedly expert Spanish assayer. Moreover, the expedition took away so many farmers from Pampanga that the province suffered a famine that year. Decades later, Juan Manuel de la Vega would still be of the opinion that there were riches in gold available in the Cordilleras, notwithstanding the negative assays obtained by the Spanish assayer. He gives the reason for this:

A charlatan—who had been brought from España, at a salary of one thousand *ducados* as an assayer—having made the test, found no gold in this earth. They say that the reason was that he threw salt into the mass that he was about to smelt; and that salt should not be thrown into gold as is done in smelting silver. . . . The test was accordingly worth nothing since the experience of so many centuries and of that of the present prove that those mines contain quantities of gold, most of it of twenty-two carats; for almost daily those Ygolotes go to a village of the province of Pangasinan, as to an emporium, to buy provisions in exchange. Of this one cannot doubt in the least. (35)

The hardships encountered in treks to the Cordillera country may have been sufficient to halt other expeditions to the north until 1591, when a flurry of expeditions were undertaken. Luis Perez Dasmariñas (son of the Governor), Francisco de Mendoza and Pedro Sid made trips across the Caraballo range and through the Cagayan River valley where they further confirmed that the gold of the natives had been obtained through trade with the Igorots. However, this gold became harder and harder to find and the location of the gold mines more and more vague.

Reactions to Official Policies

The Igorots responded to the rabid search for gold with a vigorous defense of their territory, purposeful curtailment of production, and secretiveness about the location of any mining areas.

Although an effort has been made with these Ygolotes to discover their mines and how they work them...nothing definite has been learned, for the Ygolotes fear that the Spaniards will go to seek them for their gold,

and say that they keep the gold better in the earth than in their houses.
(Morga 1971, 261)

In this secretiveness, they were aided by missionaries such as the Dominicans who did not want a repetition of the depredations which accompanied the conquest of the South American gold and silver mines.

Spanish policies of payment of tribute in gold and a 20 percent tax on gold production did nothing to encourage the mining and trade of gold, mainly because there was no accurate way of knowing just how much gold was actually obtained. The inflow of Mexican silver further reduced the need to find gold to pay the annual tribute. The whole tribute of "two *fanegas* of unwinnowed rice, a piece of cloth two *varas* in length and one vara in breadth, and in default of this, three *maes* of gold" was equivalent to six *reales* of silver (Lavezares 1903-1908). This was much more easily obtainable than digging up, washing and refining ore which could be traded for more useful and valuable goods. All these factors resulted in a curtailment and decline of gold production of the Benguet mines well up to the first decade of the seventeenth century.

However, this decline may have been only in official figures. In the year 1587, the English pirate Thomas Cavendish captured the galleon *Santa Ana* and confiscated three thousand *taels* worth of gold from the shipment of a single Ilocano *encomendero* (Antolin 1988, 273). With one tael equal to around ten reales, this shipment was worth 30,000 reales; at a time when the annual tribute was six reales. This was proof that although the colonial government was having difficulty collecting gold as tribute, it was still readily available to others for legitimate trade. Igorot commerce with the lowlands was apparently continuing, albeit away from the eyes of Spanish officialdom. The same conclusion may be arrived at from the oral histories of the Benguet baknang. Although official Spanish records show a curtailment in production and minimal collection of tribute in gold, the baknang were becoming wealthier from the gold trade.

Laws and Justification, 1600-1619

Deliberate curtailment of gold production by the Igorots resulted in a lull in the number of Spaniards trooping to the Cordilleras. During this time, the Dominican and Augustinian missionaries to Pangasinan and the Ilocos area were the only Spaniards to have contact with the Igorots who traded with their lowland towns. Igorot response to the

religious can only be described as mixed. Some of them, such as Fray Jose Marin, were allowed to walk around the Cordillera alone and unarmed; while others such as Fray Agustin Niño, were beheaded.

Despite this, the religious were as secretive as the Igorots themselves about the location of the mines and the ongoing gold trade. Typical of these was Fray Jacinto Palao, vicar of Vinalatonga (Binalatongan) who entertained visiting Igorots in his house and showed rich samples of their ore to his bishop. "But he enjoined the Bishop to secrecy, because he himself had heard it in the same manner" (Coronel 1903-1908, 19; 189-297).

The missionary presence and the establishment of missions near the Igorots brought another aspect of the mountaineers to the attention of the Spaniards. This was their propensity for swooping down on the pacified towns to "carry off lowland heads or even whole lowlanders to be held for ransom or enslaved to work in the mines." They also disrupted lines of communication between Ilocos and the capital (14). Worse, disgruntled lowlanders who wanted to escape the onerous demands that came with colonial status, often sought refuge with the mountain tribes. As a consequence, it was not rare for Spanish and Tagalog curses, along with Igorot spears, to rain down on the heads of the colonial troops. Because of this reality, Spanish officialdom sought to subjugate the Igorots. This, however, was not an easy task given limited colonial manpower and the inaccessibility of the region.

Spanish soldiers had been ambushed by forces sometimes 3,000 strong. The colonial government soon realized that it would be better if the Filipinos who were bearing the brunt of the raids would take up arms and subdue these mountaineers. Thus on 23 December 1606, contrary to the Hapsburg policy prohibiting slavery, the Royal Audiencia in Manila issued an edict to the effect,

That the natives of Pampanga and other towns which suffer injuries . . . may proceed in pursuit of them with men and arms of whatever caliber they may wish, and that those they capture alive can serve them as slaves (Antolin 1988).

About 1616, the procurator general of Manila, Hernando de los Rios Coronel had become interested in the mountain gold. He made inquiries from Dominicans in Pangasinan and wrote glowingly of the riches of the Igorot mountains. His being an ordained priest may have helped him to convince Dominican Provincial Fray Bernardo de Santa Catalina, Nueva Segovia Bishop Fray Diego de Soria and Manila Arch-

bishop Fray Miguel Garcia Serrano that opening the Igorot gold mines would be beneficial to the native since it would open the area to missions and the civilizing influence of Spain. To preclude hardships for the natives, he proposed the use of Chinese labor for the mines.

Coronel's proposals were brought to the Spanish King who then decided that the time had come to expedite the search for the fabulous Igorot gold. He wrote both Alonso Fajardo, the Governor of Manila and the Archbishop of Manila on the 19th of December, 1618 that "it is deemed the only and principal remedy must be to exploit those mines of the Igorots" (129). This was seen as a solution to both the secular problem of the depleted colonial treasury and the religious problem of the deserted missions.

Governor General Fajardo wanted to proceed with a clear conscience and thus asked the leading theologians of the religious orders whether it was possible to wage a just war on the Igorots. The answers were unanimous. Yes: because of the injuries done to Christian Filipinos, defiance of the authority of the Church and government, and because the gold mines were put there by God to benefit not only the Igorots but all the people of the country. It was only the Jesuits who objected that although a "war with fire and sword" was justified, "this nonetheless should not be done to them but only that their mines be occupied in the name of his Majesty" (131-43).

The Jesuits further reminded the government that the Laws of the Indies provide that all the gold and minerals found in the colonies belong to the King under the Regalian doctrine. As such, the Spanish crown actually owned the gold mines of the Igorots and was thus entitled to profit by them. The exploitation of the gold mines was also seen as one sure way to attract Spanish settlers to the Philippines: "for with gold as bait—which is a magnet to men's hearts—they will be well-populated, as the mountain ranges of Peru and Nueva España have been populated—and even Hell itself" (137-51).

The Jesuit opinion so impressed the Archbishop of Manila, Miguel Garcia Serrano, that he completely reversed his earlier policy of secrecy and took the Jesuit position as the official stand of the Church. He endorsed the occupation and exploitation of the mines not through war but through peaceful persuasion and conversion of the Igorots. The gold was precisely in this inaccessible area in order to bring the word of God to the remotest reaches of the country. Armed with the twofold blessing of the Church and the colonial government, the stage was set for a resolute search for the elusive Igorot gold mines.

The Fajardo Expeditions, 1620–1624

Governor Alonso Fajardo was in charge of the project to seek out the gold mines, determine their true worth, and pacify the Igorots. He sent the first expedition in 1620 under Captain Garcia Aldana y Cabrera, Governor of Pangasinan. The route taken by Aldana became the pattern for all subsequent Spanish expeditions. From Aringay, Pangasinan, they headed north and crossed the Naguilian River to Duplas (La Union). They followed the Bornotan (Santo Rosario) River and three days later, crested the Cordillera somewhere between Takdian and Acop's Place. They had arrived at the mining community of Bua (Scott 1974, 28). However, instead of the bustling, gold-laden town they expected, the expedition arrived at a recently burned and abandoned village. Apparently, the inhabitants had gotten wind of them and had fled deeper into the mountains, leaving nothing for them to plunder.

Aldana built a fort, had a few encounters with the Igorots, and was able to examine the Antamok mines. The force could not remain indefinitely because of a lack of supplies and reinforcements. They left when the rainy season set in, bringing with them some good quality gold obtained as ransom for some captives. Although the gold country had hardly been penetrated, the expedition whetted the appetites of the Spanish officials so much that a second expedition was sent in 1623.

Under the command of Sergeant Major Antonio Carreño de Valdes, the expedition reached the Cordillera from Aringay in eight days. Carreño built Fort Santiago overlooking the present Sto. Niño mines and Fort del Rosario in the Antamoc-Itogon area. He had successfully repelled some Igorot attacks and reported, somewhat prematurely, the successful occupation of the Cordillera to Governor Fajardo.

Displaced from their ambush sites and faced with superior technology, the Igorots submitted to formal Spanish ceremonies of peace and then bided their time as the provisions of the forts were used up and the onset of the rainy season made it impossible to send up new supplies and manpower. Then, in November, "when the heavy rains rendered the matchlocks on Spanish arquebuses inoperative, the Igorots struck" (31). The Spanish forces retreated and abandoned their forts, having suffered extensive losses in manpower and having incurred enormous expenses.

In 1624, Governor Alonso Fajardo gave the task of finding the Igorot gold mines to the best man for the job, Captain Alonso Martin

Quirante, a master of strategy, logistics and tactics. In contrast to the desultory expeditions of his predecessors, Quirante's, was swift, efficient and determined. In February 1624, he started off with a huge, well-provisioned expedition of 1,903 soldiers, carpenters, miners, smiths, slaves, clerks and the requisite clergy: Fray Raymundo Beger and Licentiate Agustin Tabuyo Baldecañas.

Instead of going up to the Cordillera in one unwieldy body, Quirante divided his large force into three. The first was made up of light, quick troops who were to clear the road and open up camping places. The second troop would follow and finally, the third troop with the rations, arms, and tools. These three were never to unite but head up to Benguet in a moving convoy. He had also had the foresight to send for replacements as soon as the expedition started to ensure that they would not be delayed in relieving his men (Quirante 1903-1908, 20: 262-99). In this way, the expedition reached the mining area, after clearing out an Igorot fortification on a narrow pass.

Quirante reached the mine areas and rebuilt Fort Santiago. From here, he was able to examine and test five mines. Four of them were testimony to the deliberate curtailment of mining activity since they showed signs of having been abandoned by the Igorots: Arisey-Bugayona, Baranaban, Antamog, and Conog. The fifth mine called Galan was currently being worked (*ibid.*). The expedition had in fact come upon around two hundred deserted houses devoid of any thing of use or value, the inhabitants having fled as the Spaniards neared.

Quirante wasted no time pursuing Igorots or answering challenges hurled down from the ambush-riddled heights. He briskly ordered baskets of ore collected from each mine, labeled and readied for assaying. The assaying was done systematically with a scribe recording the procedure and results of each one. By the end of May, all samples had been tested and by June, Quirante was making his official report. The results were disappointing. There were evidently no deposits rich enough to yield attractive profit in the scale envisioned by the Spaniards. Quirante therefore left a force to man the fort and returned to Manila with 400 baskets of ore to be sent to Mexico for further assaying.

In the meantime, the Royal Audiencia had become alarmed at the enormous expense of the project which had thus far cost 33,982 pesos. Fajardo, in the meantime, was in no position to defend his project as he was suffering psychological trauma from the effects of murdering his wife. Don Geronimo Silva took over the government and convened the council to decide the issue once and for all. The Royal Audiencia

decided to pull out the garrison and abandon the project because of mounting expenses, loss of life and the continued hostility of the Igorots and their land (Scott 1974, 37). The Quirante expedition was the last attempt ever made by the Spaniards to occupy the Baguio gold mines.

This, however, did not mean that they were forgotten since they were still mentioned in the correspondence of both secular and clerical officials. The missions, now confined to the foothills, were still in constant touch with the highlanders. Apparently, lowland-highland trade still continued to such an extent that in 1695, Governor-General Fausto Cruzat issued Ordinance 37 forbidding all lowland commerce with the Igorots on pain of two years in prison and 100 lashes. In practice, this ordinance, together with the demand for the King's Royal Fifth (which eventually went down to a twentieth) was blithely ignored by Igorots and Christian Filipinos alike.

In 1765, Viana mentioned the region as the chief gold producer of the islands. There were also some individual attempts to reach the gold areas as seen in the efforts of Fray Francisco Antolin to send some Christian Cordillerans up to find the route to the mines. But the Benguet Igorots had learned enough from their experiences with the Spaniards not to allow these converts to proceed further into the gold country of Acupan. It is therefore quite safe to say that for the next two centuries after the Quirante expedition, the Benguet Igorots continued their monopoly of gold mining and trade.

Consolidation of the *Baknang*

During this same period, the oral histories of Benguet showed gold's continuing relevance, at least in the lives of the baknang such as Amkidit and Chamdya, reputed founders of Benguet's nobility. Amkidit lived roughly from 1565 to the early 1600s. He went to Acupan to buy gold and there met Chamdya, a Kankanay maiden who had become rich panning gold in Acupan. She agreed to sell her gold to him and, in mute testimony of the prevalence of the highland-lowland trade; even weighed out her gold with Spanish silver. From then on, Amkidit became sole buyer for Chamdya's gold. Their partnership was so successful that the two married and settled in Inkelchis where "they traded in gold and became very rich" (Bagamaspad and Hamada-Pawid 1985, 52).

Their eldest son Baruy, took charge of his parents' land in Kafagway (modern-day Baguio) and discovered a gold deposit near the area. Apparently, he was rich enough to hire workers and have slaves to do the tedious panning, washing and rock-breaking for him; as he amassed a fortune and became well-known as an inter-Cordillera trader. Gold was therefore the basis of the wealth and prestige of most of the baknang families despite the encroachment of Spanish officialdom in the province.

Aside from economic and social predominance, the baknang were also becoming entrenched as political leaders. Amkidit had sought to unite and organize his people, while ensuring peaceful relations with their neighbors. His primary reason for doing this was that *i-fasdung* (waterway) tribes from around the Agno River conducting raids on the Christian lowlanders usually passed through the territory of the *i-runtog* (mountain) Igorots. The Spaniards, to whom all Igorots probably looked alike, punished the Benguet highlanders for the misdeeds of their neighbors (*ibid.*). It is testimony to Amkidit's power that he was able to designate and enforce a boundary line beyond which the Agno dwellers could not pass.

However, since these waterway communities depended on the Benguet gold traders for Ilocano cloth, rice and livestock, a mutually beneficial agreement was reached between Amkidit and Maxay, a headman of the Agno dwellers. Henceforth, the *i-fasdung* would be allowed to come up to Benguet provided they announced their arrival by shouting their names. This contributed to making the Benguet area more settled and peaceful than the rest of the Cordillera, as only those with legitimate business were allowed into the area. No doubt, the astute gold miners and traders realized that much more business was to be done in peace than in the upheavals of inter-village wars.

Amkidit's son, Baruy also introduced some changes to Benguet society by making travel to the south faster and easier. When some Igorots were accused of theft and imprisoned in Pangasinan, their relatives sought help from Baruy, known to be a rich and well traveled gold trader. Baruy paid a fine of six hundred pesos for the release of the Igorots who, in gratitude or payment, gave him forty carabaos. This presented Baruy with a problem because he had to drive them up to his home in Loakan. There being no road, he ordered twenty of his men to cut out a passage wide enough to accommodate the huge animals, including one with an uncommonly wide spread of the horns (54). This road eventually became an alternate trade route to Pangasinan.

The religious had apparently not given up all hope of converting the Igorots, for in 1755, Fray Pedro de Vivar, an Augustinian, opened a mission in Tonglo [Tongdo], just outside Baguio, and only a few days from the mission towns and the Spanish garrison on the coast. Padre Vivar describes it as follows:

Tongdo is the largest of the *rancherias* known to me and it consists of 220 souls of good, friendly people of the most sincere nature encountered by me in this country. . . . Among the Ibalays, this town enjoys a reputation for the wealth of its inhabitants who are therefore respected and considered as notables by the other communities whom they order like servants. Hither is brought all the gold that comes dirty from the mines; they refine it somewhat and take it down to Ilocos for sale, bringing up in return so many buffaloes and cattle that to this day I do not know where they are consumed! (Sheerer 1924, 11)

This thriving community was home to several baknang families included the wealthy Balasiao, Daongan, Baban and his son Kidit, whom Padre Vivar regarded as having the "genius of a mandarin."

Kidit had helped build the mission house and had even enjoined his people to convert and live near it. This was because he felt that "a good understanding with the Padre would prevent invasions of the mountains by lowland soldiers" (Bagamaspad and Hamada-Pawid 1985, 56). It may also have been his belief that a more settled life for the commoners would benefit the baknang class, who would then have a steady supply of labor at their disposal. But in 1756, Padre Vivar attempted to destroy the people's "idol" (a pig's carcass) once too often. Shortly thereafter, he was threatened and driven out. In 1759, the government sent a military force to reclaim the mission but the people of Tonglo had prepared for this. Commanding the Tonglo forces was the same Kidit who had welcomed Padre Vivar years before.

After a brief skirmish, Kidit came down to talk. The Spanish captain accepted his "surrender" and headed down to Pangasinan, whereupon Kidit promptly turned around, raced ahead of the column and ambushed them. This attack was so fierce that thirty years later, remnants of the Ilocano forces recalled that they had run all the way back to Bauang in their flight. In retaliation, Governor-General Don Pedro Manuel de Arandia ordered the *alcalde mayor* of Pangasinan, Don Manuel Arza de Urrutia to send a punitive expedition against Tonglo. Arza and 3,000 troops attacked Tonglo, subjected it to five hours of artillery fire and burned it to the ground so completely no trace of its

location can be found today (Scott 1993, 16). Moreover, the Igorots alleged that the Arza expedition also robbed them of gold which exceeded 4,000 pesos, which had to be returned before the natives of Tonglo would consider returning (Scheerer 1924, 25). However, restitution was not forthcoming and, with no source of supplies and the reluctance of soldiers and miners to push on, the expedition was forced to withdraw. The natives of Tonglo retreated further into the mountains and Kidit's exploits raised his status as a military and political leader, and helped to entrench his family's standing.

For the next two hundred years, the baknang continued to prosper. They consolidated their wealth by discovering new mine sites, trading gold in Lingayen and buying cattle. Padre Vivar was mystified as to the ultimate fate of the droves of livestock but this was no secret to the Igorots. Cattle had become the measure of wealth in the Cordillera because of their importance for the *peshit* or rich man's feast that was given periodically in order to show wealth and share it with the less advantaged. The position of the wealthy class was appreciated and respected by the abiteg, as seen from this statement made by an anonymous Igorot:

The fiestas of the Christians aren't worth anything because it's all just a matter of the noise of bells, drums and musketry, and then everybody goes to his own house and eats what little he has. But not so the fiestas of our chieftains, because without making such a racket and all the rest, they kill animals to eat by the dozens and everybody drinks till he's stupefied and this goes on for days. Among you, anybody is mayor and anybody chief, but our chieftains are always the same, and no matter how much they spend, they always have more. (Antolin 1988, 283)

Two centuries of autonomy had reinforced the importance of the gold industry and its integral place in Igorot society. As such, when Fray Antolin launched his search for the gold mines in 1788, his converts reported that gold was commonplace in the towns around the mines of Acupan, Apaiao, and Locjo. In the 1750s when Governor Francisco Jose Obando asked the *mestizos* of Pangasinan if they could find him 18,000 pesos worth of Igorot gold, they answered casually that it would take three months (Scott 1974, 151). Furthermore, Fray Baltazar of Asingan, Pangasinan estimated that his town panned 5,000 pesos worth of gold from the Agno annually. Likewise, Igorot purchases of pigs, cattle and carabaos at the mission were reckoned at 1,800 pesos annually, all financed by gold. The baknang, who owned the gold mines and monopolized trade had become more prosperous.

Igorot society was making further adjustments to the gold industry. In actual mines like Acupan, the industry became specialized enough to show divisions of labor. Slaves did the heavy work of mucking and excavating, often becoming hunchbacked and misshapen in the process. Women, children and old men milled and washed the orebearing soil. The owners supervised their workers and slaves and disposed of their produce through middlemen such as Balasiao of Tonglo who had a fortune of 5,000 pesos from the refining and trade of gold to Ilocos. In addition, there were hundreds of individual gold panners along the length of the Agno and Amburayan rivers.

Aside from the lowland-highland trade, there was also a vigorous intra-Cordillera trade. The mining communities, with their manpower eaten up by the demands of their trade, bartered for food and slaves. Tinok traders regularly dealt in copper, cattle and human beings across a trans-Cordillera trade route which ran from Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya to Bangar, Ilocos through Ipituy, Tinok, Buguias, Bakin, Kayan, Tanulong and Tagudin (Scott 1974, 120–21).

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, a new product was added to the roster of Igorot trade items: tobacco. Inaccessibility of the area and their unsubjugated state made it easy for the Igorots to grow tobacco in such areas as La Trinidad. Traditional trade routes enabled them to obtain tobacco grown in the interior of the Cordillera for barter with the lowlands, in defiance of the Spanish Tobacco Monopoly. As a result, revenues from the Monopoly declined from 1788 to about 1793. This was a crippling blow to the Spanish administration. It was bad enough that the gold mines were still monopolized by the Igorots, and that their commerce with the lowlands continued. But for the Igorots to muscle in on the only lucrative financial enterprise of the colonial government was too much.

The Galvey Expeditions: 1829–1839

Tobacco brought the Spaniards back into the Cordillera. Whereas earlier expeditions were directed towards the Baguio gold mines, now they were meant to destroy all illegal fields and cut off trade in contraband tobacco. Regular patrols of the Monopoly's *resguardo* (revenue agents) only succeeded in driving the tobacco fields to more inaccessible places.

It was not until 1829 that Spanish authority made its presence felt in Benguet. That year, Comandante Guillermo Galvey, who was later

called *Comandante General de Igorrotes*, first entered what is now La Trinidad Valley near Baguio. After much armed resistance from the inhabitants, he came upon their prosperous community:

The soil was very well cultivated with camote, gabi, sugar cane, but I did not see rice. It was well taken care of and watered. The borders of the fields were like those in Spain with wells in the center. The houses, about five hundred in all, were built with large pieces of pinewood, but very dirty. I am determined to make this place the capital of the *Corregimiento*. (*Unitas* 1962)

He renamed the valley La Trinidad in honor of his wife; and then proceeded to destroy crops, burn houses, sack granaries, and decimate the population by "sword and smallpox." When Galvey was through with it, the once-thriving La Trinidad was reduced to a charred plain with less than a hundred houses left of the five hundred he first observed. Up to his death in 1839, Galvey would make a total of forty-five expeditions to the mountains that would earn for him the title of "the greatest despoiler of the Igorots Spain ever sent into the Cordillera" (Scott 1974, 213).

With a leader such as this, the colonial government now felt that it was opportune to implement a policy of conquest and occupation of the Cordillera. Galvey was hailed as a hero in the mold of the conquistadores of old. Even his enemies came to respect him as a warrior. But from the standpoint of the local economies, Galvey's punitive expeditions had much more far-reaching and destructive effects. A generation later, in 1861, Dr. Carl Semper, a German scientist traveling through Benguet observed:

You can find traces of a more numerous population and a higher agriculture than that of the Igorots of the upper Agno and the valley of Benguet, and its side valleys everywhere. In the valleys you find traces of destroyed rancherías and the stone walls which they used to build around their houses; on the slopes you can see fields arranged in terraces supported by stone walls now covered with high grass; here and there you can still see remnants of former irrigation systems and earthen walls and ditches, indicating the division of the mountains and valleys into farmland. . . . Today, most villages bear the stamp of misery and depravity, the fields are badly maintained, the stone walls around the houses are dilapidated, and the great rancherías which still existed in Galvey's time have been deserted; instead you find single houses deep in the canyons or on top of a hill. (Semper 1861, 10)

Thus, Igorot society had reverted to a state of privation and poverty similar to that which occurred in the first generation of the conquest. The prosperity and free commerce of the past two hundred years was seriously disrupted and Igorot society had to rebuild its material culture. Nonetheless, not all sectors of society were affected in the same way.

The Spanish occupation of the province covered only La Trinidad and Mankayan, where the *Comandancias* of Benguet and Lepanto were established in 1846. Effectively, Spanish authority was limited to these two points in Benguet. At this time, it was evident that the baknang class was quick to recognize a situation and take advantage of it. Galvey had befriended Bigung, a son of Kidit of Tonglo's cousin, a man familiar with life in the lowlands because of his frequent trade there. Bigung met Galvey in Agoo and accompanied him to Benguet. When he was later offered the post of *capitan* of Benguet, he refused because he feared that his acceptance of the post would lead to his death since his village mates believed that "but for his making friends with Galvey, the latter would not have come up to Benguet" (Bagamaspad and Hamada-Pawid 1985, 58). However, he recommended a close relative of his for the post. As in other areas, Spanish policy was to appoint members of the native elite as *capitanes*.

Life as *capitan*, however, was not always rosy. Around the 1860s, Ampaguey became *capitan* under Governor Blas de Baños and was repeatedly flogged for the lack of Christian converts. His two successors were able to stay the Governor's hand with presents of gold and cattle but were still burdened by difficult duties. Among these was providing carriers for official trips and workers to build roads and bridges. They also had the unenviable task of carrying out *reducciones* and convincing their people to be baptized. As such, it was said that Apsan Karantes, *capitan* during Juan Oraa's time, had died under the weight of his office.

The main effect of the Spanish occupation of Benguet was therefore a change in the people's settlement patterns. Those who did not want to be subject to Spanish authority retreated further and further upland, rebuilt homes and fields and often put up with a harsher life. Previously settled areas became empty and family members were scattered. Some areas, such as La Trinidad were partially resettled after the Spaniards had left. Others, like Tonglo, had been the sites of so much suffering that they were never resettled and were eventually forgotten.

Despite this, it was in Benguet where the nineteenth century Spanish policy of conquest and occupation of the Cordillera was most eas-

ily implemented and Benguet was already considered pacified by 1880. Long before this, the Benguet Igorots had already given up headhunting in favor of the *bendian* dance in which a tree trunk took the place of the usual hapless victim (Benguet 1952). They no longer made armed resistance to the state and had adapted well to such economic innovations as the planting of coffee and cabbages which appeared in the Manila markets soon after their introduction in Benguet.

Manuel Scheidnager attributed the peaceful character of the Igorots precisely to the conquest. However, scholars such as W.H. Scott aver that "the economic advantages of the peaceful commerce must have been so obvious for centuries to those who engaged in it that the pacific Spanish occupation of Benguet may well have been the result rather than the cause of such acculturation" (1974, 213). Indeed a great part of this may have been due to the influence of the *baknang* class among the Benguet Igorots. Being traders and businessmen foremost, they realized the advantages of peaceful commerce over rampant warfare since the late 1500s when Amkidit drew a boundary line across a mountain ridge.

The people were still secretive of their gold mines, although by now, the Igorot gold seemed like a myth to the Spaniards. The Spanish attempt to mine gold commercially from the Cordilleras had been largely abandoned and the *Inspeccion General de Minas*, the colonial agency charged with the administration and disposition of mineral lands was abolished in 1886. Even Dr. Carl Semper felt that the legendary reputation of the Acupan mines was unmerited. However, he still came up against Igorot secrecy when he tried to locate them.

I intended to visit them, but did not know that I had literally lived on the mines for five days until I had arrived in Benguet and learned with great anger that the place where the rich mines are located, which in fact the Igorots never intended to show me, is situated on the north-western slope of the crest on top of which I had stayed for five days without making any of my entomological excursions in that direction. Similar inexplicable suspicion misled me on other occasions. (1861, 4)

This secretiveness may have stemmed from the fact that the gold mines were still being worked by the Igorots for their own needs.

The thin veneer of Hispanization barely disguised the fact that the people still had their own religion and followed their own customary laws and rituals. Society was still dominated by a class of such wealth, power and prestige that it was unique in the Cordillera. It was this

society which would now come face-to-face with a new power: the United States of America.

The Philippine Revolution in Benguet

The official Spanish occupation of Benguet began in 1846 and ended in 1898 when revolutionary forces overran the Spanish government in Manila and other areas. Although the years of the Revolution had left little impact on the gold mining industry in Benguet, the *baknang* who were central to Igorot society participated in revolutionary activities. Long before this, they had already become disgruntled with Spanish authority.

In 1885, under capitan Dvos Badyating, several *baknang* families decided to bring their grievances against the Spanish military Commandant, Enrique Villena to Manila. These included abusive tax collection, forced labor, reduction and the disparaging treatment of the *capitanes*. Four members of the *baknang* class made up this grievance mission: Kustacio Carantes of Loakan, Bilit of Atok, Banigwas of Tublay and Katarino of Benguet. However, before they reached Manila, the plan was discovered by Villena who revenged himself on the remaining *baknang*. Thus, the aging and rheumatic Pablo Cariño was jailed in Benguet while Enrique Ortega (Dangvis), Penang and Madtini were exiled to Jolo. It was only through the efforts and money of the other *baknang* that the old man was released and the others returned from Jolo. This incident may have helped consolidate *baknang* resolve to resist the Spanish government.

In 1896, Kustacio Carantes of Loakan was the "grand old man" of Baguio while Pablo's son Mateo Cariño (b. 1854) was in his prime and acknowledged as the richest of the *baknang*. Mateo had married Bayosa, the only daughter of Enrique Ortega and granddaughter of Apulog Minse, well-known *baknangs* and *capitanes* of their towns. Bayosa brought vast tracts of land in Kafagway and the immense wealth of her forebears from trading in gold and cattle to her marriage. Mateo, in turn, expanded the gold trade, and introduced rice cultivation and livestock trading on a large scale in Kafagway. In the process, the couple greatly expanded their wealth and raised a large family who are the forebears of the current Cariños of Baguio (Cariño 1984, 62-63). Carantes, likewise, was a rich trader whose lands bordered those of Mateo. These two leaders would be in the forefront of

the Benguet struggle against the Spaniards and in dealing with the new colonizers, the Americans.

Their commercial activities brought them into close contact with the resistance sweeping the peripheries of the trading areas. Oral tradition reports that these two received mysterious Ilocano visitors in their houses every Saturday (Boquiren 1994, 124–25). One offshoot of these meetings may have been the planned attack on the seat of the *Comandancia Politico-Militar* at La Trinidad. However, the foray led by Mateo's older brother, Juan Oraa Cariño (b. 1849), Kustacio Carantes and Magastino Laruan with 500 warriors was unsuccessful and the leaders dispersed their men and retreated into the mountains. Oral tradition further records that "in cooperation with the government at Malolos, they gave some cows, coffee, pieces of gold and many other things. This patriotic aid was sent to Malolos, Bulacan for immediate use" (Kamora 1951). In addition, as the revolutionary forces marched through the mountains, informants recalled that every village willingly gave them food and aid. This was probably at the direction of Juan Cariño, who had been appointed governor of the Benguet district by the government of President Emilio Aguinaldo.

Once again, the Spaniards demonstrated that although their forces could conquer the Cordillera, they could not stay there permanently. Without logistical and tactical support from beleaguered Manila and faced with renewed hostilities from the mountain tribes, the Comandancia of Benguet withdrew, only to be swiftly replaced by a new and more formidable threat to the old Igorot way of life: the Americans.

Conclusion

The gold industry was an integral part of the indigenous Igorot economy of Benguet. Although primitive and backbreaking by today's standards, Igorot mining methods were surprisingly productive and efficient. This enabled them to produce enough gold to trade for Ilokano blankets, Pangasinan salt, cattle and other livestock, as well as certain prestige items such as Chinese porcelain jars. The fame of Igorot gold was so widespread that it could not escape the notice of Spanish colonial officials. Although numerous attempts were made to conquer the gold mines and convert the Igorots, they were doomed to failure due to the inhospitable terrain and the vigorous defense of the Igorots. Consequently, whereas their lowland neighbors had to adapt

to the Spanish colonial system, the Igorots were largely left to themselves.

The gold trade became such an important part of Igorot society in the mine areas that it spawned a degree of specialization. Leading families acquired ownership rights over gold mines by virtue of their being the first to work them. Later on, these families concentrated on the trade with the lowlands and the management of their mines, leaving the hard labor to poorer dependents and slaves. By the 1700s, Benguet Igorot society was so anchored on the gold trade that the lead families had developed into an elite class which was nowhere to be found in the rest of the Cordillera: the *baknang*.

The prestige and power of the *baknang* was founded on its wealth, which was in turn founded on ownership and control of gold mines. This set the Benguet elite economically far above their counterparts in the rest of the Cordillera. The gold mines yielded a product that was light, highly valuable and easy to transport: qualities that made it ideal for trade in the rugged highlands. The relative ease of obtaining the ore and the lucrative trade it engendered enabled the *baknang* to accumulate herds of cattle and large plots of fertile rice land which were the tangible measures of wealth in Ibaloy society. Holding periodic feasts helped reinforce their primacy in the community. By the time that the first Spanish Comandancia Politico-Militar was founded in La Trinidad in 1846, the *baknang* were so wealthy and prominent that they formed the backbone of Igorot society.

As it had done in other regions, the Spanish colonial administration made use of the native elite to govern for them. Members of *baknang* families became the new *capitanes* and other petty officials, further consolidating their predominant positions. They continued to amass wealth by trading in gold, purchasing cattle, and giving redistributive feasts to their people. Despite its misgivings, the colonial government put up with the clandestine trade and week-long feasting since the *baknang* effectively managed their communities. The colonial government had neither the political will nor the resources to maintain troops for long periods of time in the inhospitable Cordillera.

By the time of the 1896 Revolution, the *baknang* had become disgruntled with the onerous demands for tribute, converts and labor that the Spanish government had imposed on them. In touch with other regional elites because of trade ties, they helped the Philippine revolutionary forces by providing soldiers, food, guides, and other forms of aid. Up to this point, the Igorot *baknang* still maintained their pre-

dominance in native society. However, this preeminent position would be challenged by newcomers into the Cordillera: the Americans, who came with their pack mules and pickaxes, set on finding the fabled Igorot gold.

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