HISTORY OF THE BAGUIO CHINESE: Integration into the Baguio Community*

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Integration is the framework of this study on the Baguio Chinese. First, the historical context within which the process of integration occurred is presented; secondly, the key factors for integration or mal-integration are identified.

The family history method is used in gathering data for the research. Thus, the terms family histories, generations, and genealogical charts are frequently used in the discussion.

The historical periods are divided into early period of Spanish occupation of the Cordillera, the American regime, the War Years and the Post War Period up to 1982.

Early Relations with the Sangley

The early relations of the Cordillera peoples with the Sangley are evidenced to this day by the preponderance of porcelain jars all over the area. Trade was conducted among the Chinese, lowlanders and the uplanders in the coasts of Lingayen in Pangasinan and Agoo in La Union. Besides por-

celain jars, pig iron and copper gongs were known Chinese merchandise. In exchange, forest products such as venison, honey and the famed gold were brought down to the coast by the natives.

Under effective Spanish occupation in certain areas in the Cordillera which began in the mid 1800's, Chinese were employed as miners in Lepanto in Mankayan. They also served as househelpers, bakers, shoemakers, and metal workers. Chinese coolie labor was essential because many natives chose to live as remontados (runaways) in the hinterlands. Besides Mankayan in the north of Benguet, the Chinese were located in the town of La Trinidad, cabecera of the Spanish government in the comandancia politico-militar de Benguet.

American Period: From Coolie to Commerce

Baguio came to being when the military government was set up in Benguet by the Americans in 1900. Baguio was conceived as an administrative and rest and recuperative station. Chinese migration to Baguio City was linked with the process of induced and planned development. The Chinese, known for their carpentry, masonry, and culinary skills, filled up the human vacuum, together with the Japanese and lowland Filipinos.

The Manila Railroad Company hired some of the 700 Chinese coolie laborers recruited from Hong Kong by the British for the construction of the Benguet Road. Baguio was thus opened from the south with the construction of the Benguet Road later known as Kennon Road. Naguilian Road opened Baguio from the west and served as an alternate route when Kennon Road closed. Mountain Trail to the north was also constructed linking Baguio and Benguet to the sub-province of Bontok. Kennon Road served as the avenue for the entry of lowland peoples while the Mountain Trail became the point of entry of the Northern Cordillera ethnic groups into the area. The resultant multi-ethnic character of the Baguio population is important in the consideration of the integration process of the Chinese with the Baguio-Benguet community.

As Baguio developed into a rest and recuperative station, Chinese culinary expertise was employed in places such as Pines Hotel and Camp John Hay. Chinese businesses flourished in the forms of grocery stores,

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bazaars, hardware stores, sairi-sari stores and dried fish stalls. The Chinese gradually expanded operations in interior towns such as Kapangan, primarily because of transportation provided by Dangwa Bus Co., and other areas with logging and mining operations. Logging was a very important industry during this period because of the need for lumber in construction.

The 1930s saw a commercial explosion in Benguet primarily because of the mining boom during the period. The Fukienese began to trek to Baguio during this era to establish themselves in business.

The Chinese also engaged themselves in vegetable farming. The growth of the vegetable industry spurred by the restaurant business and American penchant for "tossed salad" also saw the rise of agribusiness. The Chinese pioneered in agribusiness because they had the capital and the networks connections with the agribusiness industry in Manila.

Certain factors worked for or against the integration of the Chinese in Baguio during the American occupation. The factors for integration were:

- Mixed Marriages. Ibaloy women from La Trinidad or Kankana-ey women from Kapangan and Kibungan were the usual connubial partners in common law marriages. Mostly, these families represent the marriage of Chinese capital and expertise with the ownership of land.
- Chinese husbands desiring to educate their children the "Chinese" way usually sent their first-born males to China to stay for several years with their families. The Ibaloy-Chinese mestizos recount how they experienced discrimination and were referred to as fan kuei, foreigner. Not a few of the Chinese men had their own families in China and often sent for their children to live with their step families in Baguio.
- Children of mixed marriages often felt discriminated against by the pure Chinese. Their marginal status was important in the integration into the native society which regarded them as accepted members of the community.
- American culture and colonial policy had a levelling effect on the inhabitants of Baguio. The different ethnic groups, Chinese and other aliens included, all participated in the activities like ballroom dancing, carnival queens, Rizal Day muses, and love for sports in the colonial era of coats and ties. The multi-ethnic, multi-racial composition of the city facilitated integration on the part of the Chi-

nese immigrant.

- The particular historical experiences and circumstances that made the Baguio Chinese unique in the Philippines. In terms of composition, Baguio began as all-Cantonese. Baguio became Fukienesedominated only after the war. Unlike other places in the Philippines, the use of English among the Baguio Chinese was common. Employment under the Americans and English classes helped in learning the language.
- In spite of laws the Americans implemented such as the Chinese Exclusion Law, the nationalization of the economy under the National Economic Protectionism Association in 1934, the provisions of the 1935 constitution restricting non-Filipinos from exploiting natural resources, owning agricultural lands, and operating public utilities, Chinese in Baguio considered local colonial policy as non-discriminatory. As far as Baguio is concerned, the national legislations were not effective locally.

The factors that tended to isolate the Chinese include the following:

- The Chinese Family. Family histories show that by shuttling back and forth to China, the economically well-off Chinese were able to bring their families to Baguio. To these family members were added Baguio-born children. These families tended to maintain distinctly Chinese characteristics.
- Family obligations pressured the migrants to achieve economically to ensure remittances to families in China which in turn perpetuated their emotional ties with them.
- Commuter immigrants also kept emotional ties with family and cultural source active.
- Arranged marriages awaited returning bachelors and ensured continued remittances and close ties at home.

Filipino-Chinese Cooperation during the War Years

Prior to the outbreak of the Pacific War, the overseas Chinese had been a source of assistance in China's war against Japanese aggression. The Kuomintang party in Baguio, organized mainly for civic functions, became politically active and raised funds for the war effort.

Being an important administrative center, the war reached Baguio quite early. Shared experiences during the war forged friendships and greater integration of the Chinese with the community. Almost all informant families evacuated to Kapangan and lived with the natives for five to

six months. Under the Kempeitai, some Chinese changed their names to native names to avoid harassment. A few Chinese men joined the resistance movement, well known was one Joaquin Yu who was later interred in a concentration camp in Manila and subsequently executed.

The war was a double-edged sword in terms of the Chinese' basic loyalties to his adopted home and his mother country. Dictated by his patriotism, he fought the Japanese. In defense of his home, he joined the resistance movement as exemplified by the heroic acts of individual Chinese. In so doing, both his sense of loyalty to China and the reality of his existence as a Philippine Chinese were impressed on him.

This period is important in the development of a Philippine Chinese attitude in contrast to the earlier overseas-Chinese or China-centered orientation. The Philippine Chinese orientation is characterized by a regard for the Philippines as an adopted country.

Another effect of the war on the Chinese was the enhancement of their business monopoly in the city. Pre-war Japanese, many of whom were businessmen and farmers, were repatriated to Japan together with the soldiers of the Japanese Imperial Army, leaving more room for Chinese expansion in business and farming.

The years following the liberation was a time of hectic rehabilitation for Baguio. On the part of the Chinese, numerous opportunities were present to rebuild fortunes lost during the war. However the climate had changed for Chinese participation in the economic life of the city in particular and of the Philippines in general. The succeeding Filipino government restrained alien participation in the economy.

Effects of Nationalization Policies on Integration

Among the nationalization laws affecting the Baguio Chinese was the Market Stalls Nationalization Law which took effect in 1947. In Baguio, there were 22 alien owned stalls in the city market. However, due to the absence of a city ordinance barring vendors from leasing market booths, they were unable to eject the alien owners. In addition, the city government realized that an early eviction of aliens was untimely and premature and may result in the lessening of the city market's collection. The lessees were receiving 100 to 300 percent more than what they actually paid the

city by subleasing their stalls. The city council finally put a stop to the practice of subleasing in 1953 and 56 lessees in the market were affected.

The nationalization of the rice and corn industry limited participation only to citizens of the Philippines. The buy and sell of rice and corn was a thriving business in Baguio City. The change in the dietary habits of the natives from rootcrops to rice and the increasing lowland population in the city increased the need for rice supply which could only be met by the import of rice from neighboring provinces. The Chinese actively engaged in this business. The common law wife registered the business and could continue to operate but only upon the execution of an affidavit that the alien husband did not have any interest whatsoever in the business. This was also true in the retail business which was nationalized in 1954.

The nationalization of the vegetable industry was a serious concern of the government officials of the city and the province. They were well aware that eviction of the Chinese farmers would seriously aggravate the unemployment problem of the province. At this point, the Chinese farmers had successfully established themselves in Lucban in Baguio City, in La Trinidad and along the Mountain Trail in such places as Paoay in Atok and Loo in Buguias, and they employ native help in their farms. The Chinese farmers in Atok were united under the Chinese Farmers Federation.

In the years 1950-1960 when the vegetable industry was at its peak, it was the Chinese who had an almost complete hand in the farming technology—use of fertilizers, pesticides, and new plant varieties which were available through the marketing channels handled by the Chinese themselves. There was a virtual monopoly of marketing of farm implements and other farm inputs. There was also a monopoly in the marketing of farm products which found their way to Manila via the Divisoria connection.

In 1969, a House Bill was introduced in Congress "An Act Limiting to Citizens of the Philippines the Right to Engage in the Vegetable Industry." As a result, many Chinese were evicted from their farms. Participation, however, continued effectively through relationships between the Chinese and native farmers in practices such as character loans and the system of post-dated checks. Deprived of land ownership, participation

shifted to capitalization and marketing.

The Anti-Dummy Law was stringent in its prohibition of aliens participating in nationalized industries. Since its implementation meant a loss not only to the Chinese but to the Filipinos as well, it could not be effectively implemented.

The government, on one hand, legislated to nationalize the economy, but on the other hand, made the naturalization laws, extremely restrictive. Not only were the standards so rigid that only a few can become citizens, it was also a long and tedious process. In spite of this, many Chinese opted for naturalization. A series of legal notices on the petition for Philippine citizenship ran in the local paper, *Baguio Midland Courier*, in the 1960s.

It is clear that nationalization policies negatively affected the integration of the Chinese in the Baguio community. One effect of illegal conduct in economic activities was the development of impressions and attitudes which categorized the Chinese as transgressors of the law. The government's attitude of blaming the Chinese for the economic ills of the country caused discriminatory attitudes against the Chinese. Analysis of each piece of legislation showed the negative intent of the legislations to remove economic power from Chinese hands.

Integration to the Community: Analysis and Conclusions

In assessing the level of integration, the genealogical charts and corresponding family histories of informants provided useful data. In the genealogies of families using a thirty year span per generation, three generations are usually represented. The following classifications depict the evolution and degree of integration of the Chinese:

- Overseas Chinese
- Philippine Chinese
- Filipino-Chinese

The first generation Chinese (those born between 1880 to 1918), displayed an overseas Chinese orientation which means that they regard China as their point of reference, as their cultural source, and the home they

would return to in old age. The second generation Chinese (those born between 1920 to 1949), who arrived in Baguio from China and other parts of the Philippines or who were born in Baguio, possess a Philippine Chinese orientation characterized by a regard of the Philippines as an adopted country. The third generation Chinese (those born between 1950 to 1979), who were mostly born in Baguio or other parts of the Philippines, adopt a Filipino orientation characterized by a regard of the Philippines as their homeland. The integration level is not confined to the generations. It may be regarded as a continuum, one end of which is the overseas Chinese orientation and the other end, a Filipino Chinese orientation depending on the circumstances of the person concerned.

The integration of the Baguio Chinese into the Baguio-Benguet community can be assessed in the cultural, political, and socio-economic aspects.

Cultural integration. Language is a central cultural trait. Mandarin became the Chinese community language because of the relative importance of Cantonese and Fukienese groups. Fukienese or Amoy became the commonly spoken dialect with the dominance of the Fukienese later on. The Chinese learned English through the American public educational system. Even those who did not go to school learned English because of its common usage by the people. English served to integrate the different language groups, foreign or local, in the city.

The second generation Chinese had the benefit of Chinese education in Mandarin through the Baguio Patriotic School. Many of them were Baguio-born, they also became conversant in Ilokano, the *lingua franca* of the city.

The third generation Chinese are the most integrated in terms of language. They usually learned Filipino as a first language. Primarily the result of legislation, the integration process not only affected the Chinese in Baguio, but also the other ethnolinguistic groupings in the city. Aside from formal education, mass culture disseminated by the media made learning the language fast paced.

There is no locally published Chinese newspaper. Chinese newspapers come from Manila and there are about 170 subscribers who are mostly elderly Chinese. News from Baguio are sent to Manila for publication.

These mostly concern organizational activities of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, the Association for Philippine-China Understanding (APCU), and school activities of the Baguio Patriotic School. Chinese media transmit the same popular culture that Philippine media transmit and thus are integrative in the over-all function of cultural adaptation.

Cultural traits like the work ethic have different values for the different generations. The first generation Chinese, pressed by the expectations to achieve and to send remittances home, had to work hard. The second generation Chinese had an experience of expansion of the family enterprise and still maintain the work ethic of their father although in a relatively easier setting. The easy life of the third generation Chinese make them place lesser value to work ethic as their fathers did. Moreover, opportunities have attracted Chinese youth to opt for a professions instead of business.

Socio-economic integration. There is a discernible pattern of socio-economic adaptation among the Baguio Chinese as could be seen from the types of economic involvement of the Chinese from period to period. The first generation Chinese, although notably culturally least integrated, were highly adaptable socio-economically. The economic opportunities were numerous and non-competitive with the natives and lowland immigrants. Primary relations such as marriage and friendships resulted. However, the economic relations were potentially divisive because the natives occupied mostly the lowest types of jobs in the city. The division became more pronounced during the period of the Republic. This was the most malintegrative period in terms of economic integration.

In the area of discriminatory behavior, the different generational periods manifested varying discriminatory behavior displayed by the Filipinos towards the Chinese and vice versa. Among the first generation Chinese, discriminatory behavior was apparent. However, this was true not only between Chinese and Filipinos. Discrimination was present among Chinese themselves, between lowlanders and uplanders, colored and whites, Chinese and Japanese. The impact of discrimination was cushioned by the common exposure to the administrative structure and culture of the Americans. The presence of the multi-ethnic, multi-racial, population encouraged an atmosphere of tolerance. The levelling effect of the Ameri-

can culture provided a basis for social interaction among the Baguio populace.

The second generation Chinese were the subject of discriminatory behavior more than any other generations. This generation experienced the effects of nationalization laws meant to eliminate the Chinese in vital economic sectors.

Due to the increased participation of the third generation Chinese in the social system, and the corresponding decrease of Chinese influence, e.g. the absence of effective kinship ties with China, and the abandonment of ostensibly Chinese practices, the third generation experienced minimal discriminatory behavior from the Filipinos. Naturalization was an important factor in the formation of attitudes of acceptance among Filipinos. Naturalization epitomizes a major break in the Chinese orientation and identities of those who were naturalized. Whether this is true or not, the Filipino's perception of the matter greatly reduced discrimination. An editorial in the *Baguio Midland Courier* in July 1975 entitled "Assurance for the local Chinese" expresses the attitude of acceptance for the local Chinese as a result of naturalization.

Political integration. Gains in political integration were enormous during the war. A sense of peoplehood based on the Filipino society was developed. Unfortunately, gains were lost to a large extent because of the ethno-centrism of nationalization laws during the post war Republic Relaxation of the naturalization laws in 1975 under President Marcos, and the subsequent legal status enjoyed by the Chinese, afforded them greater avenues in political participation.

Overall it could be said that in spite of reverses in the integration continuum, there is an increasing atmosphere of favorable attitudes on the part of the Chinese in relation to their integration into the Baguio community.