

ARTIFACTS SPEAK: DIVERSIONS OF BENGUET MATERIAL CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

The paper is part of the bigger endeavor to validate appellations, meanings, and histories of artifacts displayed at the Benguet State University museum. There were 70 distinct artifacts “brought back” in digital form to four communities in Benguet; Kabayan, Atok, Kibungan, and Bakun. This paper reflects on the current state of Benguet material culture from a perspective of social history of things, borrowing ArjunAppadurai’s concept of divergence and to a certain extent, Igor Kopytoff’s commoditization.

Diversions in the value of Benguet’s material culture were preceded by the transformed meaning of the materials brought about by a combination of trade, commercial vegetable farming, and other forces of modernity such as education and transportation developments. The alteration in the value and meaning of things has also changed the manner in which Benguet people themselves use these materials. Aside from non-use, some of these implements are now being displayed in private homes or used in other ways. Diversions of things, therefore, are not always manifested outside and only by other people but also within and from the people themselves.

Antique collection is a most common medium of artifact diversion in Benguet. It is in this practice that many of the Benguet implements were commodified, that is, developing a different value from its original value. As a commodified object, these implements extend their history from actual tools in the place of origin to an object of art and exoticism in another culture and country.

A more recent trend in the commoditization of these material cultures is in the context of cultural tourism and its accompanying craving for souvenirs. This shift demanded cultural symbols as souvenirs for tourists, which induced business minded persons to produce replica of traditional implements for souvenir seeking tourists.

Museums have also defined diversion in the history of things. It is another context where the value and meaning of things also change because they are transformed simply as displays for people to view. This way, their decontextualization alters the value of the tools into artifacts. The transfer of objects from origin to the museum translates the tool/implement/instrument into artifacts, the latter use being closely associated to objects of display, antiquity, and the museum.

Key words: *Benguet material culture, diversion, artifacts, museum, antique, tourism*

INTRODUCTION

The BSU historical museum has collected considerable volume of ethnological artifacts over time. Like other museums around the region, it includes, among others, farm implements, cooking and eating implements, and some ritual- related Igorot materials. Like other museums, too, these artifacts are labelled according to source, description, and use. However, it is observed that important information on the significance of these artifacts are lacking. There are also inconsistencies in the descriptions. Thus, there should be efforts to come

up with standard labels and information that accompany these artifacts.

It is with this defined limitation that the need to validate the labels, values, and meanings of the artifacts in several communities of Benguet was conceptualized. The research also included tracing the history of the materials. The first part of the research contains the validation part which includes data on community labels, uses, and meanings of the various materials. The second part of the research is

a discussion of how Benguet artifacts were diverted in the contemporary period and this paper describes the second part of the research.

Conceptual Framework

This analysis of material culture is largely informed by the perspective of material culture studies, most particularly the work of Arjun Appadurai in his “The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective”, which was a result of an attempt towards an anthropology of things. In essence, it detached itself from the conventional treatment of things as a simple by-product of human ingenuity and shifted towards giving the things independent life and value.

Materials can then have their own voice and social history as they negotiate states of commoditization and regulation. From the lens of social history of things, manufactured goods may follow certain paths of which meanings and value may change in each stage of the path. When objects become candidates for commoditization, such object enters into a commodity situation. Commodity situation places objects to contexts of exchanges but also recognizes that at one time or another some things move in and out of the commodity status. In a commodity state, its value and exchangeability varies depending on the situation and the object itself (Appadurai, 1986).

Of particular interest in Appadurai’s work is the concept of diversion, which involves the alteration of the use and meaning of things as well as their commodity status, thus the changing of the culturally defined paths of the things. Diversion also entails placing or removal of objects in the commodity context as well as forcing non commodity objects into the more liberal venue of exchange. This last point is conceptually useful in this paper as it touches on a class of objects that are formerly beyond the reach of commoditization but now are drawn into a commodity situation.

These “enclaved” objects are culturally protected from commoditization because they are sacred or supposed to be exclusive for a class or group. There are some of this type in Benguet materials but the most number of the objects covered by this paper are materials that may not be sacred but were produced for very local functions and value. In time they were transformed from their paths into diversions.

Two very specific forms of diversion in Appadurai that importantly guide this paper are the “tourist art” and the art of collection and display. Tourist art as context of diversion covers the transformation of materials produced in small communities by larger economies into their own “tastes, markets, and ideologies.” This type also covers the interest in art collection where the material cultures of other cultures are given another form of interest by collectors being a thing of an exotic other (Appadurai, 1986). Collection and display in the field of art is another form of diversion in that it alters the meaning and value of everyday objects into an aestheticized state. This means that objects are brought into another context and are displayed for aesthetic functions. These forms of diversion are closely related because they both involve the changing of the predetermined paths of these objects. They both involve decontextualization of objects from their original source into unlikely venues and by doing so changes and enhances the commodity status of these objects.

It is from the decontextualization of objects that this framework recognizes the fact that along the process of transfer (journey) of the artifacts, descriptions and meanings may change. This paper also recognizes the fact that the context of a museum in itself is transformative in terms of significance. To display things creates a frozen distant image of objects that are otherwise alive and useful, consequently projecting a different value to the tools and instruments. The journey of things from origin to a museum does not, however, absolutely destroy the meanings already attached to them. No matter how long and distant the travel of an object, there will always be an element of its original meaning that goes with it, either by way of itself or by stories that get passed from one possessor to another. Thus, from its source to its accumulation of new meaning, the importance attached to the object in their original cultural source remains a significant source of meaning making in the object’s journey to the certain destinations.

Objectives

It is an attempt of this paper to locate the ideas of commoditization and diversion in the case of Benguet traditional material culture. Forces of modernity in the contexts of changing agricultural practices, tourism, festivals, and arts have changed the values and meanings of everyday objects in Benguet, and to

forward a form of analysis on these transformations is timely.

As a repository of some Benguet material culture, this endeavour shall enhance BSU Museum's treatment and presentation of its collection of artifacts. It is intended that the museum would be able to provide a venue of expression for the materials of Benguet. This way, as objects are uprooted and disappear from their various sources in Benguet the museum shall not only be a place of artifacts but of stories of these materials.

METHODOLOGY

Four communities in Benguet were visited for these validation. Two of these communities, Saddle, Atok and Kabayan Barrio, are Ibaloi while the others, Tacadang, Kibungan and Poblacion Bakun, are Kankanaey communities. These were selected based on their proximity to rivers and their adherence to rice farming. This is because most of the museum artifacts are related to rice agriculture and fishing activities.

During the validation in Atok and Kabayan, digitalized images of artifacts were presented through Power point. In Tacadang and Bakun, printed pictures were shown collated in a clear book since there is no electric power in Tacadang that would facilitate a Power point presentation.

Old people were targeted as informants because of the presumption that they have a wider knowledge on the objects. In the group interviews conducted, though, younger persons were allowed to sit in and are surprisingly familiar on the matter. Key Informant Interview were done on selected persons, chosen by recommendations of barangay officials. In some cases, the barangay officials themselves were the informants. Casual conversations with house owners and some other residents were also helpful especially in the visits to houses where traditional implements are found. Members of a senior organization of Caliking, Atok also made a visit to BSU Museum where further conversations, clarifications, and demonstrations were conducted.

Some important data and insights were also derived from visits to the exhibits at the Adivay Festival of

2013 as some material cultures were displayed for the event. In February 2014, the Ibaloi day was attended at Burnham park and some interviews were made. The Ibaloi day was a month-long celebration with activities scheduled on the weekends. The celebration covered various activities such as tutorials on Ibaloi dances and bamboo weaving as well as performances of certain Ibaloi ceremonies and rituals.

Libraries at UP Baguio, Benguet Capitol and BSU were visited for published secondary data. SLU Museum for Culture and the Arts was also visited for additional confirmation of data. The antique shops at Maharlika were likewise visited to check on materials available for sale. More information was also gathered during a seminar on Material culture at UP Baguio, Baguio City.

Personal communication with some individuals also enriched this work. There were opportunities to interact informally with Isickias Picpican, who is the curator of Saint Louis Museum, Thomas Ngalawen, a long time antique dealer at Maharlika Center, Joeffrey Amlos and Tecah Sagandoy, who are colleagues in the department and whose Benguet roots and experience are teeming with material culture.

RESULTS AND

DISCUSSION *Causes of Diversion*

Diversion in the Benguet material culture occurred within the social changes that exposed the various communities of Benguet. Trade, commercial vegetable farming, and other forces of modernity such as education and transportation development forced changes in the communities, which in turn transformed the value and meaning of material culture among the community members.

The involvement of Benguet to internal and external trade is believed to have started as early as the 1600s (Bagamaspad and Hamada-Pawid, 1985). Bakun and Kibungan were connected by trade to the lowland communities of Tagudin, Bangar, Alilem, Sudipen, and Balaoan. Mankayan and Buguias were commercially related to Cervantes. Buguias, particularly being in between Cervantes and Ahin as well as Kabayan became an important trade route in northern Benguet. In this exchanges, salt,

blankets, and marine products from the lowlands were exchanged for animals, tobacco, clay pipes, and copper pipes from around Buguias. Potteries and iron tools were mostly imported from the lowlands before the development of roads. Some informants in Bakun and Kibungan can still remember joining trading parties in the 1950's for bolos, salt, and hogs.

The southern part of Benguet was also tied to trade partners in the lowlands of Pangasinan and La Union. Gold and other forest products were brought down for salt, clothing, gongs, jars, iron, and blankets (Bagamaspad and Hamada-Pawid, 1985). Trade brought in new implements such as metal spoons and plates to many parts of Benguet. Moss, for example, claims that some metal utensils were used and on sale during his long stay in Kabayan (Moss, 1920).

These trade relations were maintained in some parts of Benguet during the American rule, like those in Bakun and Tacadang areas and their lowland neighbors. The building of roads from Tagudin to Cervantes during this period reinforced the existing trade relations between Buguias, Mankayan, and Ahin to Cervantes and Tagudin. In the Ibaloi areas, the creation of a market in Baguio virtually stopped the old trading relations. After the completion of the mountain trail in 1909, even northern Benguet was pulled into the Baguio market. Through Baguio and other Igorot Exchange stores established by Americans came new agricultural implements, clothing, tools, dining objects, and new crops.

Education in the region during the American rule focused on local industries aside from the ABCs. School kids were taught weaving, carpentry, pottery, wood carving, lace making, and the like, all of these trainings introduced new tools and new products for the people. To ensure the continuity of students relative to their school trainings, dormitories were designed to keep the students in the school to simulate lessons of "modern" and western housekeeping (RPC 1906 part 1).

Road building in the region during the American rule significantly supported occurring changes in economy, education, and governance. Roads connected many parts of Benguet to centers of trade and education. Baguio became the center for Benguet so that all roads around Benguet led to Baguio City (RPC 1905 part

1). Thus, it redirected historical relations, especially trade relations among people of Benguet. Roads and its connection brought goods closer to many parts of Benguet hastening the entry of new materials. Road building itself introduced new digging and working tools to the province. Road construction brought in money for paid workers providing a means by which formerly poor people could purchase new goods (RPC 1904 part 1). Road also buttressed the important shift to commercial vegetable farming.

Boquiren (n.d.) said that commercial vegetable farming, especially of the temperate vegetables, was commenced during the American rule in an effort to sustain American diet and to alter the local taste (Figure 1). The deeper involvement of Benguet people in this industry occurred after the 2nd world war as gardeners for Chinese operators. The banning of Chinese vegetable operation in the 1950's opened this field to local Benguet people. The quick returns out of the vegetable farming inspired more people to engage in the same direction. In the late 1990's fields at Kabayan Barrio were planted with rice. Fifteen years later vegetables have taken the place of rice.

A large part of Atok had always been cultivated to vegetables. Paoay and its nearby barangays are known for their semi- temperate vegetables pioneered by Guy Haight in the early American rule. Today, Atok emerged as a commercial vegetable production area except for low lying places like Naguey and Pasdong that maintain rice production. Vegetable gardening in Bakun started in Gambang accordingly in the 1950's.

When roads penetrated the inner parts of the municipality, vegetable farming came with it. Among the sites of the study, it is only in Tacadang, Kibungan that commercial vegetable farming is not practiced, due importantly to the absence of roads that make the transportation of products. The demands of vegetable farming in terms of tools and other implements are different from the demands of rice production, so that implements associated with rice farming are no longer useful in the new farming set-up.

This explains why the kayabang, a carrying implement for Ibaloi women, in some parts of Kabayan are most of the time good for display. Traditionally "kayabang" were used to carry camote, rice, and other fruits on the backs of females. Today this is no longer



Figure 1. Expanding gardens in Bakun. The reality of changing landscape from rice farms to vegetable gardens.

fully functional to contain heavy loads of vegetables.

Instead, the ‘tiklis’ or thick-laced bamboo baskets are used as containers for vegetables since these are larger and sturdier.

Since most of the materials are agriculture-based, the shift from rice farming to commercial vegetable production relegated a substantial number of Benguet tools into non-use.

The new social realities changed the manner in which Benguet people themselves use these materials. A very clear effect is the non-use of these objects. Many of these materials are simply kept at home. In other instances, these are also used in other ways. Basket trays are now used as containers of goods in sari-sari stores and also used as waste bins in other communities. These changes created an alteration in the value and meaning of many Benguet objects, and thus placed many of the traditional materials open to diversion.

Vanishing tools

An interesting indicator of changing value and meaning of material things in Benguet is the fact that many of these artifacts are already disappearing. Several materials are already out of use or used differently from its original purpose during the field study. By disappearance, means three things:

first the materials are not being utilized in the place according to its original use; second, the materials are no longer being reproduced for its original function; and third, the materials have already gone out of sight in the community. An example is the material called *tedek* or *ledang*, which poses an interesting gauge to the dying industry of local basket weaving (Figure 2). The *tedek* is exclusively a weaver’s tool. Used with a knife or a bolo, it is an important tool of a rattan or bamboo weaver to create an opening into or in between weaves so that it makes it easier to work through a rattan or thinned bamboo into the whole thing. It is made up of thin and pointed iron and with a wooden handle. In the survey there is a unanimous judgment by respondents that skilled weavers are a dying occupation because there is no longer a demand for their products. As the demand for bamboo woven materials decreased in the recent years, the skill and the tools associated with it also vanished.



Figure 2. *Tedek* or *ledang*

In the area of basket weaving, most of the vanishing objects cited are bamboo-based types like the *takoro*, *adawin*, *sakob* and different kinds of *sakupit*, including the *pasiking*. The small *sakupit* for example, which was known as tobacco container has been disposed for cellophane bags or that tobacco users have resorted to packs of commercial cigarettes.

Even the *pasiking*, which used to be a travelling back pack, became simple decorations in the houses as farmers and travellers prefer the modern cloth back packs for everyday use. *Takoro* and *adawin* are small containers traditionally used as containers of snails or coffee. Today, coffee has been replaced, especially in Kabayan, in favor of commercial vegetable farming. Rice field snails have already disappeared with vegetable farming.

Fishing has also been reduced as a pastime for most, and sometimes nourished by seasonal increase of fishes. It should be noted that commercial fishes have become very accessible to many parts of the province. As a result, river fishing in these areas became insignificant that consequently discouraged continuous production of traditional bamboo basket fish traps.

In the case of the *yoyo*-catching *gobo*, its disappearance is a result of the extinction of the *yoyo* fishes in the rice fields and rivers. However one or two fishing implements like *gobo*, *salawsaw* and *apejaw* could still be seen in some nooks of houses, a

remnant of fishing days in the past, but seldom used for their intended functions today.

Eating implements like the ritual bowls called *doyo* or *shapey*, the ladle (*sakdong*) and spatula (*akdo*), as well as the wooden spoons (*idos*), and the bamboo serving trays like the *seded* or *linpet* were also out of use. In two ceremonies attended, no *shapey* or *doyo* were used when these are supposed to be associated to *canao* celebrations. One of the *canaos* was part of Ibaloi festival conducted in Baguio city. The ceremony closely followed some traditions like the manner of piercing the pigs, the prayers and performances of the female priest, the dancing, and the use of wine and recitation of prayers.

During the consumption of food, though, what were used are the modern plastic plates and metal spoons. The other ceremony, observed in the remote area of Tacadang, is a type of thanksgiving celebration for a couple who acquired new properties and built a new house. Like the first ceremony, tradition dictated most of the process from preparation to butchering and dancing.

Such tradition does not, however, guard the replacement of traditional wooden and woven eating implements into modern plastic, metal, and ceramic plates and related utensils. Like other old objects, some woven serving trays are still found in houses around Benguet but are no longer as serving trays for food. In one case in Kabayan, these are being used as containers of goods in a sari-sari store (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Candy containers, Kabayan

Salt and sugar are no longer stored inside bamboo container called *tobong* nor is utilized as *patanggay* or *lopet* for cattle raisers. Plastic containers replaced the *tobong*. The *patanggay* has disappeared with the collapse of Benguet cattle industry.

The traditional Benguet woman's musical device called *pakkong* or *piwpiw* which was associated with the *kayabang* and farming has been adopted to blend with other modern musical instruments. This way, it is no longer an exclusive female instrument and is also removed from traditional farm performance.

Clearly, although many of these objects survived the changing times and are still seen and even used today, the value and meaning even to the Benguet people have changed (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Old implements kept in the porch, Kabayan

Antique and Diversions

With a transformed view of the values and meanings of these materials as an offshoot of social changes, diversion for these objects became more liberal and acceptable for Benguet people.

The first and visible agents of diversion as experienced by Benguet people were with the antique agents. Antique agents amassed significant number of materials for local and foreign clients who had interests for “exotic” materials (Figure 5).

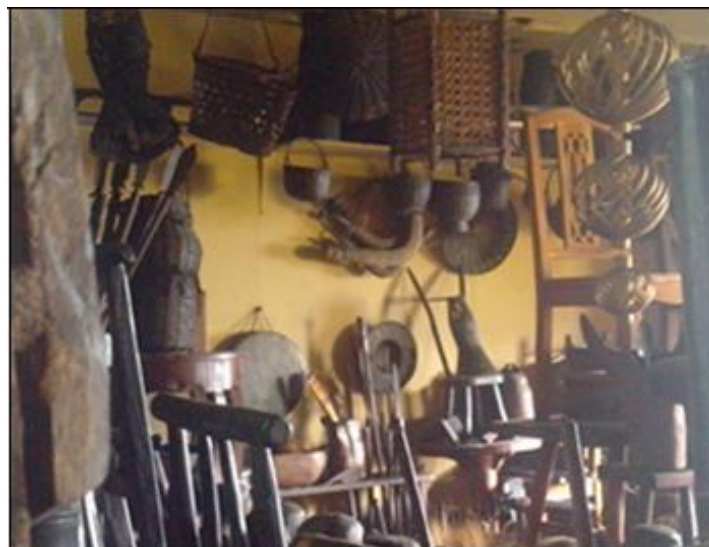


Figure 5. Antique shop, Baguio City

The view of other non-western cultures as exotic is an outcome of an ethnocentric outlook of Western people that became explicit in the period of colonization. From that period, things from the exotic culture became a subject of interest not only of scholars but by collectors and museum curators. It is from this type of collection that a distinct class of the antique is defined.

Antique collection created a radical view of traditional objects because it put monetary value to the artifacts (Figure 6.) The entry of antique dealers in many parts of Benguet approximates a situation that Kopytoff calls optimum commoditization, the extension of the idea of exchange to as many types of objects (Kopytoff, 1986). Several times in the past, antique dealers invaded the communities for all types of traditional objects, paid money for these,



Figure 6. Materials at 100-200 a piece, Baguio city

and hauled significant number of these. As far as the informants can remember, several times in the past, local people have surrendered old tools for newer tools or money offered by antique dealers. In Bakun, the people initially gave their old implements for free during the initial contact with antique agents. When they later learned that these were resold at expensive prices, the people also peg a price to their antiques.

Although the informants in Benguet could not remember definite monetary value of their materials, antique dealers in Baguio city admitted that the most expensive are the potteries which they purchased at prices ranging from PhP 1,000 to 5,000 depending on the type of jar and its condition. Woven bamboo baskets also varied with the *takba* and *pasiking* commanding higher prices than other baskets.

Antique business was never regulated and dealers accordingly filled elf trucks each trip so that the respondents lament of the disappearance of the Bakun implements. “Na antik” is usually the response when looking for some samples of traditional objects. In the visits to antique shops at Maharlika building in Baguio city, an extensive collection of Cordillera artifacts from the simplest bamboo trays (linpet/ seded) to expensive jars and life size *tinagtago* was observed.

According to Mr. Ngalawen (Personal Communication), a veteran antique dealer, the whole second floor of the Maharlika used to house many antique stalls in the 1980’s. Antique business was so lucrative that many of the business owners hired agents who went into the different parts of the Cordillera to collect artifacts. Aside from agents positioned in the entrances of Maharlika, some were posted in bus stations to lure potential antique sellers from the provinces of the region.

The demand for Cordillera antique was so high during this period that some resorted to manufacturing overnight antiques to be shipped to unsuspecting clients abroad. It is in the experience of antique collection that a large class of the Benguet implements were exchanged for monetary value.

Consequently, the antique dealers’ appreciation of objects as antique influenced how people value their tools and other objects. Objects developed monetary

values and at the time that tools and implements were being replaced with modern types in many parts of the province, local people were willing to sell these materials. These collected materials are brought to antique stores in Baguio city, sold to collectors here and abroad and becoming part of a new context of diversion. As commoditized object, these materials end their “biography” as actual tools in the place of origin into an object of art and exoticism in another culture and country.

Museum and Diversions

Museums have most often become the repository of antique collections. After all, museum has always been associated with antiquity. It is in this context that the meaning of material culture is seemingly preserved but actually changed. At BSU museum, like other museums, objects are labelled and especially described according to their original nature. Despite this, the materials are still different from those in the original source and in actual use.

Material culture in museum becomes different because they are transformed as displays for people to view. A museum experience varies from person to person but viewed from our students, many of whom have encountered these objects in their actual setting, the materials in museum become objects of display. They became “immobile” and “objectified” (Rodriguez 2010). For a museum visitor from Benguet, these types of display create a paradoxical combination of the sense of ownership and feeling of distance.

One who had an active interaction with a *kopa* because he had been using it back home in Tacadang can also feel a sense of alienation to it when encountered in the museum. A *kayabang* takes a different function in the museum compared to its actual origin as the value in these two contexts is different (Fig. 7). It appears as an object of display in the museum but a functional tool in Kabayan rice harvest.

In a sense, the travel of the *kayabang* and other materials from the field to the museum reaches an “autonomy” (Mendoza, 2007) that frees it from its original context, and in the process earns new meanings and value. Meanings may change in the museum setting because the thing is not projected in its original usage and also because the viewers’



Figure 7. Kayabang encased. (Kabayan national museum)

perspective is deprived of a sense experience of the object. This is because many of these objects are still actively used in some parts of the Benguet where one can still experience them in their real context. The museum can not provide this experience. Sometimes, and especially to strangers to the Benguet culture, the emotions that museum displays evoke from viewers may be overly romanticized imagination of historic times or provincial life. This is particularly true when labels on displays and curator aid are limited to communicate the nature of the things in

their original setting. The diversion of materials in the context of museum follows a process where the transfer of objects from origin to the museum translates these tools/implements/instruments into artifacts, the latter use being closely associated to objects of display, antiquity, and the museum.

Tourism, Symbols and Diversions

A more recent trend in the commoditization of these material cultures is in the context of tourism and its accompanying craving for souvenirs. Baguio, which is located in Benguet, is a known tourist destination for many and it receives countless visitors all throughout the year. The capital of Benguet, La Trinidad, is historically an extension of Baguio tourism for its vegetables and fruits. Recently, the shift in tourism is toward cultural tourism, which highlighted ethnic dances and music. The shift gave birth to cultural festivals all over the Philippines, including the Panagbenga in Baguio, Adivay in Benguet, Strawberry of La Trinidad, *Bendiyan* in Kabayan, *Tallak* in Bakun and various many others observed in other municipalities (Figure. 8).

This shift demanded cultural objects as symbols not only for the festival but for the culture being exhibited. One can see this in the costumes used in street dancing and other performances. The *kayabang*, for example, has become part of the Panagbenga identity together with the sunflower. Many of the ethnic performances in these contexts are choreographed and designed for competitive shows and an attempt to please the tourists, a form



Figure 8. Small replicas of *kayabang* and *solibao* for sale, (Adivay festival booth, 2013)

of decontextualized performance. This allowed modifications in many parts of the dances and the costumes. Modification along this course is a process of diversion. Cultural tourism also required “ethnic” souvenirs for tourists, which induced business minded persons to produce replica of traditional implements for souvenir seeking tourists. Being the more popular in the province, Baguio’s Panagbenga and Benguet’s Adivay provided a venue where commercial replicas of Benguet objects are sold to patronizing tourists. This also provides opportunities for local traditional objects to be sold like it is done in booths during Adivay festival. Tourists have the chance to wear ethnic attire, hold ethnic objects, and pose for a picture at Burnham park and at the Botanical garden. Ethnic souvenirs, when brought home by tourists, become representations of the festival and tourist experience and less of what the objects originally were produced for. Like in the museum, the meanings attached to a cultural object changes as it travels away from its place of birth, basically because of the gap between the maker and the consumer (Spooner, 1986).

On the other hand, cultural tourism nourished existing efforts at cultural “preservation” and the encouraging pride in culture. This development in turn extended to a different valuing of material cultures. In some instances, material culture became a source of symbols of identity that could be matched with street dances and performances. The *kayabang*, for example, is repeatedly exhibited in festivals and fairs, and recognized as a symbol of the province of

Benguet. In general, the re-valuing of local culture cascaded into all other things local and traditional, including the cultural objects. This would explain the re-production of these implements not for their original function but as signs of re-valuing and also for entrepreneurial reasons. In the Ibaloi festival of 2014, part of the activities is the teaching and making of traditional bamboo baskets and other bamboo implements (Figure 8).

This is done by a group that is based in Loakan, Baguio city and is actively sustaining Ibaloi ways by supporting the skill of Ibaloi weaving. During the 2013 Adivay festival, several stalls exhibited and were selling jars, bamboo baskets, traditional Benguet musical instruments, and replicas of other local implements. On the occasion of the *Tallak* festival in Bakun, the local government made a display of some material cultures from eating implements like the *bakkung*, of which the name was accordingly originated, to woven baskets.

Occasional fairs sponsored by local governments almost always have stalls where small versions of local products and materials are sold to tourists. Although there is an obvious business interest for makers of replicas, the display of these material cultures in festivals are meant to emphasize a certain cultural identity for these types of festivals. This is explicit in the yearly Adivay booths where each Benguet municipality erected its own and stuffed



Figure 8. Ibaloi festival, 2014



Figure 9. Private collections, Kabayan i

it with displays of items representative of the municipality. In this instance, Benguet people have also reinterpreted the festivals as an expression of who they are.

Objects as identities may well be related to the idea of the “antique”. Several houses and establishments, usually of the rich and educated, in Benguet and Baguio display objects classed as antique. This is probably an influence of the western practice of antique personal collection and the development in interior designs. The Cating family did not only name their restaurants in Baguio with Ibaloi musical instruments as *ganza* and *solibao* but their Solibao restaurant at Session road is accented with a real *solibao* and other Benguet material cultures.

The former Kabayan mayor, Florentino Merino, started Ibaloi material displays in his house which grew into a considerable collection he later designated a separate room for such artifacts. One can see here the appropriation of “antique collection” different from the motives of antique agents (Fig.9). But because it takes the nature of “antique collection” it becomes another expression of diversion.

This is, however, special since it combines the idea of antique and the representation of identity through cultural objects. The transformation of the objects into antique display is also an alteration into symbols of their roots, culture, history, and ethnic identities.



Figure 10. Solibao Restaurant, Session Road, Baguio City

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The value and meaning of materials in many parts of Benguet have changed, courtesy of introduction and availability of new implements, spread of vegetable commercial farming, and entry of roads in parts of Benguet.

Becoming collectible antiques is the common diversion of Benguet material culture, while some were converted and reproduced as tourist souvenirs.

Museums and private collections are the common destination of material cultures in their categories as antiques.

Meanings and values of material culture go through a history of changes. While some materials disappeared in the course of their social history, others were rooted out of their contexts into the antique shops, private collectors, and public and private museums.

The field of materiality provided an opportunity for some Benguet people to assert identity as tools and instruments now represent ethnic association and distinctiveness.

Knowledge on Benguet material culture is a shrinking field as the original users of these tools are dying out.

The social history of Benguet material culture reflects a mixed direction to meaning making. While many are displayed as exotic things, some are being reproduced for tourist consumption, and yet some are being reproduced and reclaimed as symbols of identity.

To mediate the possible dangers of cultural tourism, local museums should be established, instead of exporting artifacts to other museums far away from the context. Kabayan is ahead in this direction, apparently spawned by the existence of the National Museum branch in the area. There is now a museum at the Kamora National High School as well as private collections of certain families at Poblacion, Kabayan.

In the changing curricular directions of Philippine education (i.e. K-12), the place of material culture

has been recognized by curriculum developers when it included, as elective course, studies on indigenous crafts and materials.

There is a need for more researches on these in various areas of indigenous peoples to be able to establish a credible pool of references in this course.

Although diversion is a natural course in the social history of materials, the original meaning can still be attached to the material when there is loyalty to such meaning. This is possible when souvenir shops and antique shops become aware of the story of each material being sold. An effort at material education may be considered by these sectors.

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