

FOREWORD

The Tinguian inhabit the mountainous areas of the province of Abra in northern Philippines.

For several centuries, this ethnic group has lived in relative isolation from other cultural groups. Their lifeways have not varied much from its indigenous beginnings. Rituals, social functions and celebrations have retained their distinct Tinguian stamp.

Harsh environmental conditions highlight the precarious situation of the Tinguian. How they survive in the face of such conditions is a tribute to their ingenuity. This ingenuity is evidence by their creative adaptation to the ecological environment.

Largely farmers, the Tinguian were never fully Christianized. Their social and political organization have not developed beyond the village level. Belief in supernatural beings, a recurrent feature of Tinguian society, has largely influenced their perception of their surrounding world. It underlies much of the way the Tinguian behave and think.

Over the years, however, contacts with other cultural groups have somehow enabled the Tinguian to assimilate some external cultural influences. Their acculturative tendency is indicative of the capacity of the Tinguian to accept innovations in terms of their own social and cultural life.

Granted with proper direction and assistance, the Tinguian could be an important partner in the nobler task of achieving national unity. Willingness on their part to cooperate in the various facets of social life warrants a conscious effort on the part of other sectors to aid in the betterment of Tinguian life.

In this Field Report, as in others in this series, a brief overview of Tinguian lifeways is presented. The PCAS Museum staffers who revisited the Tinguian country in 1976 present here their observations. The main purpose of this initial report is to acquaint students, colleagues and laymen about the current conditions and life among the Tinguian before a detailed monograph is written. In this way, we may be able to stimulate discussions, disseminate information and foster deeper understanding among ourselves as a people.

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INTRODUCTION

Much of the materials used in this Field Report comes from direct contact in 1976 with hundreds of Tinguian who continue to inhabit the hinterlands of Abra. The authors feel that the best way to learn about the Tinguian is to conduct first hand research among them. Thus, they spent some time among these people. Interviews were conducted at almost every instance to shed light on the significant aspects of Tinguian culture.

Furthermore, direct observation of rituals and ceremonies proved to be an important method in documenting and analyzing such practices. These encounters and many more were of principal import to the general objectives of this Report.

Throughout the length of the field research, the authors were able to travel through the vast expanse of Tinguian land without benefit of modern transportation. In the process, they were able to experience the travails of Tinguian life just as their interaction with the people provided valuable lessons in cultural understanding.

The authors feel that a certain degree of library research is indispensable in writing this Report. Thus, Faye Cooper Cole's *The Tinguian* was examined for older data against which new observations can be compared. This provided the researchers with points of reference in understanding the process of change.

Necessarily therefore, this Field Report must either revise, supplement or accept existing data on the Tinguian. Furthermore, it must also bear witness to the blending or rejection of so many influences which may have intruded into the body of the people's indigenous lifeways. Thus, there is the fond hope that it fulfils such a distinctive role, one that is both self-imposed and demanded by the discipline.

Despite the arduous nature of the fieldwork, the experience was nevertheless rewarding. It may be said with enough reason that this Field Report embodies the collective effort of the authors and their Tinguian informants.

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