Hill Tribes of the Philippines and Northeast India: A Comparative Essay

Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf

Comparisons between populations widely separated in space are at a discount in modern anthropology. The distrust of diffusionist theories based partly on conjecture has set up a prejudice against considerations of cultural similarities relating to regions which are not geographically contiguous. Yet, some cultural parallels spanning great distances are so striking that it would be unjustified to dismiss them offhand as meaningless or fortuitous. An example of such parallels are the similarities between certain hill tribes of Northeast India and the mountain peoples of Luzon in the Philippines. Although these parallels have frequently been commented upon, there has as yet been no comparative study resulting from fieldwork in both areas. The extensive published material on the hill peoples of Northeast India and the Philippines would undoubtedly make it possible to undertake such a study even without visiting the two regions, but firsthand experience of the social and economic systems to be compared has the advantage of bringing out both similarities and dissimilarities much more forcefully than a comparison based on the study of literary sources could ever do.

My own acquaintance with Nagas and other hill tribes of the borderlands of Assam extends as far back as 1936, and when I recently visited the mountain tracts of Northern Luzon, I took the opportunity to collect data which would enable me to contrast the cultural pattern and social atmosphere of the two areas. The comparison presented in the following pages is at least partly impressionistic. I have deliberately confined it mainly to my own observations, however limited, and have not attempted to enter into the discussion of controversial details of Philippine ethnography. It is obvious that during a stay of barely four months I could not materially add to the information contained in the works of such scholars as Barton, Conklin, Eggan, and Dozier. It seems, however, that my findings do not conflict with their views, and I had the advantage of a very detailed knowledge of the Northeast Indian societies with which I propose to compare one of the mountain peoples of Luzon.

Cultural Parallels

Ecology

Before one engages even in an impressionistic comparison between two populations or cultures, it is necessary to consider whether there are sufficient common factors which make such a comparison meaningful. In the case of the peoples of the hill regions of Northeast India and the mountain tracts of Luzon, there are several such common factors. The physical environment and the climate of both regions are similar, the level of material development is basically the same, and in neither area has the influence of colonial administrations been such as to transform either the ecology or the traditional socio-political system out of all recognition. Both the hill tribes of Northeast India and those of the Philippines belong to the palaeo-mongoloid racial group, and though this fact is perhaps not very relevant for a comparison focused on ecology and social structure, the physical resemblance adds to the impression of striking similarity in general appearance. In this context I cannot consider in detail the place of either the hill tribes of Northeast India or those of Luzon in the complex cultural pattern of Southeast Asia. In very general terms it may be suggested, however, that both groups seem representative of an archaic civilization whose ecology conformed to a style first established in neolithic times. Although the subsequent acquisition and use of iron implements must have increased the efficiency of agriculture and facilitated the development of various crafts, it failed to bring about a major deviation from the pattern of a neolithic economy. Agriculture remained dependent on manual labor, domestic animals were never used for traction, and local communities were economically largely self-sufficient. While most of the lowlands of Southeast Asia were subsequently occupied by relatively advanced civilizations based on an economy dependent on plow cultivation, populations persisting on more primitive levels of material development continued to inhabit hill regions and other areas relatively difficult of access. Typical of such populations are the hill tribes of Assam, many of the mountain peoples of Burma, Thailand, and Vietnam, the Dayaks and other tribes of Borneo, the hill peoples of Northern Luzon, and the aboriginal tribes of Taiwan. The ecology and many aspects of the material culture of these populations are of striking similarity, but at the present state of our knowledge it would be rash to explain these parallels by postulating direct historical connections between any two of these ethnic groups. However, it is tempting to assume that in neolithic times, the greater part of Southeast Asia was populated by peoples of the palaeo-mongoloid race whose ecological development was of considerable uniformity. Similarities between present-day populations may be due to their links with this common substratum rather than to migrations or cultural diffusion in more recent times.

In considering parallels between such Indian hill tribes as Nagas and Apa Tanis and the mountain peoples of the Philippines, we may thus discount direct connections without excluding, however, the possibility that the similarities between the two ethnic groups are due to the former existence of a cultural substratum throughout an area which extended as far as Assam in the northwest and Luzon in the east.

Material culture

After those general remarks we may now turn to a more detailed consideration of some of the cultural parallels between the hill peoples of Northeast India and the Philippines. The most striking parallel in the sphere of ecology is undoubtedly the construction of elaborate irrigated terrace fields by the Ifugaos, southern Kalingas and Bontoc Igorots and in very similar form by the Angamis of Nagaland. The outward appearance of the great flights of terraces, covering whole hill slopes, is similar in both cases, though the engineering feats of the Ifugaos surpass those of the Angami Nagas in boldness and magnitude. Another tribal society in Northeast India which excels in the cultivation of rice on irrigated terraces are the Apa Tanis, and I was struck to find among the Ifugaos wooden tray-shaped sledges used for moving earth along the muddy surface of rice fields such as exist in identical form among the Apa Tanis, whereas they are unknown in other parts of India.

All these rice cultivators expend great economic effort on the construction and maintenance of terrace fields, and in all cases terraced land is privately owned and subject to sale and purchase, and the supply of water is safeguarded by rules and conventions governing its distribution. Of course, the terracing of hill slopes and the construction of irrigated rice fields occur also in other parts of the world, but not in conjunction with as primitive a technology as that of Nagas, Apa Tanis, and Ifugaos, all of whom depend for the cultivation of their land on manual labor. Only very recently have some Ifugaos started using buffalos and plows, but their as well as the Nagas' and Apa Tanis' traditional economy conforms entirely to a neolithic pattern.

The age and development of the Ifugao terraces has long been a subject of controversy. Otley Beyer assumed that the technique of constructing rice terraces was brought to the Philippines between 1500 and 500 B.C., but so far no archeological evidence has been discovered to support this hypothesis. Harold Conklin, the most distinguished expert on Ifugao agriculture, is of the opinion that the rice terraces cannot be dated with any degree of accuracy, and that the age of the present system of terraces might have to be measured in centuries rather than in milleniums.

Neither in the Philippines nor in Northeast India is terrace cultivation the only form of agriculture. The Ifugaos as well as the Angami Nagas practise also slash-and-burn cultivation, and other tribes, such as the Konyak Nagas

and the northern Kalingas subsist entirely by this type of shifting cultivation. Thus the alternatives to the cultivation of wet rice on terraces are the same in Northeast India and in Luzon. Today sweet potatoes, introduced in post-Hispanic times, are next to rice the main crop of the Ifugaos, but before their introduction taro and yams were planted on the swiddens. Similarly the Konyak Nagas eke out their supply of rice with taro, which in some localities constitutes an important element of their diet.

Animal husbandry occupies a similar place in the economy of Nagas, Apa Tanis, and Ifugaos. Pigs are the universal domestic animals and furnish sacrificial victims for many rites. Similarly chickens are bred and sacrificed on many occasions. Buffalos are kept and used for sacrifices and a source of meat, but neither Ifugaos nor Nagas and Apa Tanis are accustomed to the milking of buffalos, or indeed of any other animal. In precolonial days the use of buffalos for traction was unknown in both areas. The most prestigious bovine animal of the Nagas and Apa Tanis, the mithan (*Bos frontalis*), does not occur in the Philippines, but the role it plays in Northeast India is not very different from that played by the buffalo among the mountain peoples of the Philippines.[1]

Similarities in the treatment and utilization of domestic animals extends to the method of slaughter. Both Nagas and Ifugaos kill pigs exclusively by piercing the heart with a bamboo spike, while iron instruments may be used in dispatching buffalos.

Similarities in the material equipment and economy of the tribes of Northeast India and Luzon extend also to some of the crafts. For the manufacture of textiles they all use the so-called "Indonesian" loom, and some produce cloth from bark fiber as well as from cotton. Among Ifugaos as among Konyak Nagas the use of bark fiber as a raw material for textiles antedates, no doubt, the utilization of cotton. The pliant bark of a small shrub is peeled off and torn into strips. From these fibrous strips a coarse yarn is spun, and this in turn is used for the weaving of cloth on small, very narrow looms. Cotton cloth, woven on broader looms, is made of thread of various colors, and among Ifugaos it is used for women's skirts, men's G strings, scarfs, and baldrics. The colors and patterns of some Naga cotton cloths are very similar. This is not the place for a detailed comparison of individual items of material culture, but anyone familiar with Nagas and other hill tribes of the Assam-Burma borderlands must be struck by the similarity of their dress and ornaments and those traditional among the Ifugaos.[2]

Parallels between the two regions extend also to the sphere of visual art. Both Ifugaos and such Naga tribes as the Konyak Nagas are gifted woodcarvers, and the squatting figures of spirits and minor gods kept in Ifugao granaries and brought out at certain rites resemble stylistically the carvings of squatting figures found in the men's houses of the Konyak Nagas. R. von

Heine-Geldern (1966) has associated this "monumental" art style with a megalithic complex widespread in Southeast Asia, and megalithic elements occur not only among the Nagas, but also among the mountain peoples of Northern Luzon. Stone platforms and upright stones are erected by the Ifugaos, and the Bontoc Igorots build stone assembly places in front of their men's houses.

Among the Nagas the erection of stone monuments is usually associated with the performance of feasts of merit, but some Naga tribes carve wooden monuments, such as forked posts, in connection with similar celebrations. A very close parallel to these Naga feasts of merit occurs among the Ifugaos. Wealthy men of upper-class (*kadangyan*) status enhance their prestige by giving feasts in the course of which pigs and buffalos are sacrificed. As among the Nagas such feasts are arranged in a sequence and a man may proceed to the higher and more lavish grades of feasts only after he has completed the series of preliminary and minor celebrations. In the region of Kiangan a ceremony called *hagabi* is the climax of the sequence of feasts of merit, and men who perform this rite are entitled to have a huge wooden bench carved. Such a bench is placed in the space between the poles on which the house rests. Its form suggests vaguely the shape of a pig, and it is a prestige symbol similar in function and connotation to the wooden pillars and forked posts which Naga donors of feasts of merit erect in front of their houses.

Cultural Contrasts

Ecology, material culture, and social structure

These brief indications of the occurrence of a similar ecology and comparable aspects of material culture among the mountain peoples of Luzon and Northeast India must suffice to demonstrate that the physical background and the man-made environment of both populations have much in common. Those who believe that a causal relation exists between ecology and social structure might well assume that peoples whose material equipment is so similar are likely to evince corresponding parallels in their social and political systems. However, my observations in the two regions do not justify such an assumption. No two populations of roughly similar economic development could differ more fundamentally in the organization of their social life than do such tribes as Nagas and Apa Tanis on the one hand and Ifugaos and Kalingas on the other. The root of this difference is the contrast between the unilineal descent system of all the tribes of Northeast India and the bilateral kinship system of the Ifugaos and other mountain tribes of Luzon. Without firsthand experience of both systems, it is difficult to visualize the extreme difference in the social atmosphere engendered by the two systems, and for an anthropologist accustomed to societies with unilineal descent systems it is difficult to avoid a sense of disorientation when confronted by a bilateral system.

Kinship

Let us consider the position of a man living in one of the large villages of Nagaland or the Apa Tani Valley. He was born into a patrilineal clan and remains a clan member all his life. The entire clan, consisting of up to 50 households, is imbued with a sense of solidarity and cohesion. Clan members are responsible for each other's actions and provide each other with protection and support. Three or four such clans occupy a village quarter or ward, which usually has a social and ritual center such as a men's house, a shrine or a public-sitting platform. The members of a ward share the responsibility of guarding it against external enemies and of maintaining the paths leading to the cultivated land and the nearby forest. A Naga village, consisting of several wards, occupies usually a strategically favorable position, and in the days of head-hunting it was fortified by palisades, ditches, and fences. At that time ward and village provided the inhabitants with security as long as they were within its fortifications; and when people cultivated distant fields, young warriors of their own clan and ward guarded them against attack by marauding enemies. To enjoy this relative security provided by the community of clan, ward, and village, a man had to conform to the rules which demanded the regular cooperation of the members of these units, and a system of age groups trained him from boyhood on for such joint action.

Relations among Naga villages varied between alliances and hereditary enmities, and when head-hunting still played an important role in Naga ritual and social life, it was taken for granted that outside the group of villages tied to each other by a network of alliances there would be hostile villages whose inhabitants were legitimate victims of head-hunting raids. But although warfare and even casual travel outside the village boundaries involved risks, inside his village, and even when cultivating his land within sight of other villagers, a man could feel secure. The reactions of his clan mates and covillagers were entirely predictable, and he could count on their immediate aid in the case of an attack on his person or property.

The loyalty of a man to the descent group into which he was born is never in question, and a conflict of loyalties can hardly occur, because although a man owes certain obligations to his affines, he is not called upon to avenge or defend them, and he cannot be made responsible for their actions. The position of every man and woman within the system of clans and wards is beyond all doubt and not subject to fluctuation. As the most important vengeance group, the clan is a stable unit whose limits are clearly known to members and outsiders alike. Similarly the position of a man within his men's house and village ward is unequivocal, and there is no overlapping and no confusion of loyalties.

The social system of the Ifugaos, as that of other tribes of Luzon, presents a totally different picture. There are no named unilineal descent groups comparable to the Naga or Apa Tani clans, and no one is born into a fixed, well-defined social unit. Kinship is reckoned bilaterally, and male and female lines are of exactly equal weight. The only effective social unit is an ego-centered kin-group comprising all of a person's kin on both the father's and the mother's side up to third cousins. It is in the nature of such ego-centered kin groups that with the exception of siblings no two persons are members of identical kin groups, for even those of first cousins do not overlap, While an individual is obviously aware of the configuration of the kin group of which he is the center, outsiders may have no knowledge of its exact size and ramifications. An ego-centered kin group may be confined to a fairly compact area or it may be scattered over a large region. There is no firm correlation between kin groups and localities, nor is there a village community consisting of a number of named descent groups. The Ifugao settlement pattern is characterized by scattered hamlets, each comprising a small number of households. These households do not cooperate for their mutual defense, and their members combine only rarely and on a casual basis for joint activities.

For support and cooperation the Ifugao does not look to his neighbors but to his kinsmen. Unlike the Naga or Apa Tani, who is secure within his fortified village or in the company of his clan-fellows, the Ifugao can never have a sense of complete security. If he is attacked, his neighbors, with whom he may not have any close kin ties, feel no obligation to protect him, and his closest kinsmen though compelled to avenge his death, may not live in the same locality. Moreover, no man can ever be sure of being out of danger of attack. Though he himself may not be involved in a feud, unknown to him a first cousin living in another hamlet may have killed a man in a quarrel, and the victim's kinsmen may take immediate revenge by spearing the unsuspecting cousin of the killer. A murdered man's brothers and, failing brothers, his first cousins have the inescapable duty to avenge his death, although the urgency of this obligation decreases with distance in terms of kinship ties and does not extend beyond the range of third cousins. The obligation of revenge does not require the death of the actual murderer but can be discharged by slaying a close kinsman of his. The Ifugao code of honor does not allow the acceptance of an indemnity. Blood can only be avenged by blood. Feuds may be dormant for many years; for a weak kin group, unable to take revenge immediately, may have to wait for a long time before an opportunity of balancing the score arises. The insecurity of men even remotely involved in a feud may hence extend over decades.

There is no headman or tribal council empowered to administer justice. Every household is a law to itself, and no one has authority over his fellow villagers or even over his kinsmen. Thus the Ifugao, who may be killed on

account of an act of violence on the part of one of his kinsmen, is in the awkward position of bearing responsibility without being able to exert control over those whose actions may endanger his security.

The principle of self-help within the kin group applies not only to cases of blood vengeance. In the absence of a tribal authority, encroachments on property remain unpunished unless the men of the aggrieved party take the law into their own hands. In the case of theft or burglary, there is no appeal to a village council or any other authority. If the party whose property has been stolen is aware of the identity of the thief and feels strong enough to take action, a mediator is sent to demand the return of the stolen goods and the payment of a fine. The offender may admit his guilt but bargain over the amount of the fine. He may also be defiant and refuse any payment. In that event he risks being killed by the aggrieved party. Before such an extreme course is taken, the person avenging the encroachment on his property may consult with his closest kinsmen, but no other villagers are drawn into the quarrel and there is no appeal to any independent authority.

In this respect, too, the contrast in the procedure following a property deliot in a Naga village is striking. There, fines are imposed by the village council, which punishes the offenders and awards compensation to the aggrieved party. The latter is definitely not supposed to resort to self-help and to use violence against a fellow villager.

Ifugaos are sensitive about a family's honor and reputation, and will resort even to killings to avenge what in many other societies would not be considered an insult. If a man seduces his wife's unmarried sister and she becomes pregnant, his wife's kinsmen will demand a fine. If he refuses to pay the fine, the former are likely to avenge the offense. But as they are related to the offender through his wife and even through the child of the girl whom he seduced, they will not take his life, but kill one of his kinsmen, his father or brother, for example. A similar reaction to a man's love affair with his wife's sister would be unthinkable among Nagas, and the idea of killing a man's brother because of the real offender's affinal links with the potential avengers would run completely counter to Naga concepts of justice.

The contrast between Ifugaos and Nagas extends also to the laws of inheritance. Among all those Nagas who recognize individual property rights in land this is always passed on in the male line, and daughters receive no share of their father's holding. The inheritance rules of the Ifugaos, on the other hand, do not discriminate between men and women. Both inherit and own land, and the holdings of spouses are not amalgamated. The eldest child irrespective of sex can choose the property of either father or mother, whichever is the larger. The son or daughter next in age will inherit the property of the other parent, but all younger children have no right to a share in the parental

property. However, they may come into an inheritance if there are childless siblings of either father or mother. From such relatives they inherit in strict order of seniority.

Property thus does not pass from one generation to the other either in the male or in the female line, but is inherited according to a system which emphasizes birth order and disregards sex.

Social order

Another sphere in which there are striking differences between Ifugaos and the tribes of Northeast India is that of rank and status. Among the latter there are some tribes, such as the Angami and Ao Nagas, whose social order is basically egalitarian, and others, such as the Konyak Nagas and the Apa Tanis who are characterized by a rigid distinction between two hereditary classes.

The Ifugaos too recognize class distinctions, but their hierarchic system is far less rigid than that of the Konyaks and Apa Tanis, and there is considerable mobility between the classes. Status is determined by a combination of descent and wealth. There is a class of aristocrats, known as kadangyan, who at first sight might be taken for a hereditary nobility comparable to the chiefly families of the Konyak Nagas. Closer scrutiny, however, reveals that descent from kadangyan parents is not sufficient qualification for membership of the class of Ifugao aristocrats. Only those who have inherited sufficient irrigated land to enable them to live on a diet of rice throughout the year and in addition have the means to perform certain rites reserved for kadangyan qualify for recognition as nobles. Thus the son of a kadangyan, who by misfortune, bad management, or gambling has lost most of his land does not rank as kadangyan. Similarly a kadangyan's younger sons who have not inherited any land are not regarded as kadangyan whereas their elder brother or sister may have inherited the father's land and have hence succeeded to his status.

Conversely self-acquired wealth alone does not enable a man born as a commoner to rise to kadangyan status. To count as a qualification for kadangyan rank land must be inherited and not purchased. By the same criterion, a man inheriting a substantial holding of irrigated land from his *nouveau riche* father qualifies for the status of a kadangyan. Today men can acquire wealth through trade or by engaging in wage labor outside the Ifugao province, but until recently a poor man without inherited land had very little chance to become rich rapidly, and upward mobility was hence very restricted. Myths and legends reflect a society in which wealthy kadangyan families were living in centrally situated hamlets in midst of their irrigated rice land while poor families of lower status dwelt on the periphery of the village land, owned little rice land, and engaged mainly in shifting cultivation on hill slopes. Yet, even such families could gradually build up some wealth by the breeding and

sale of pigs and fowls and could then acquire the rice land of a man who had fallen on bad times.

Ifugaos of kadangyan status have a number of privileges. They are entitled to wear clothes of colors and patterns different from those appropriate to the textiles worn by commoners. Certain types of ornaments, such as gold beads, as well as barbed ceremonial spears are also reserved for the use of kadangyan, and only kadangyan are entitled to play gongs at their marriage feasts.

Several of the more elaborate and expensive rites, such as a curing rite known as *ubaya*, may only be performed by persons of kadangyan status, while commoners perform for the same purpose simpler and less prestigious rites. The performance of feasts of merit, known as *baybaya* or *uya-ui*, which involve the sacrifice of numerous pigs and buffalos, and the performance of rites extending over several days, are also one of the prerogatives of kadangyan, and their expense would indeed overstrain the resources of most commoners.

The status of kadangyan involves also obligations. Thus a kadangyan who marries again after his first spouse's death has to pay his wife's kinsmen a much heavier indemnity than that paid by a commoner in the same position.

Compared to the flexible status system of the Ifugaos that of a Naga tribe such as the Konyaks is far more rigid. No economic adversity can affect the exalted status of a man of pure chiefly blood, and the rank of a chief's son does not depend on the wealth he inherits but solely on the status of both his parents. All the children of a chief of the highest rank from a wife of equally noble blood succeed to their father's status, whereas the issue from a chief's union with a commoner rank lower than the former. The rules of ranking within the hierarchy of the different classes are absolutely inflexible, and neither economic vicissitudes nor political fortunes can bring about changes in a person's standing within the system. In this sphere too the rigidity and clarity of the Naga system contrasts sharply with the flexibility and impermanence of the status distinctions among Ifugaos.

Similarly Apa Tani society is divided into patricians and commoners, and there is no mobility between the two classes. They are strictly endogamous and members of the lower class cannot rise to patrician status however much property they may acquire. Thus the position of an Apa Tani within the class system is immutable and totally unambiguous, and no personal inadequacy or misfortune can cause a patrician to lose his superior status. His legitimate descendants rank without exception as patricians, however poor and insignificant they may be. Thus the upper class of the Apa Tanis is a social stratum with clearly recognizable limits whereas the kadangyan class of the Ifugaos is a fluid aggregate of individuals, some of whom enjoy a status superior to that accorded to their parents.

The discussion of the position of the kadangyan in Ifugao society leads us to the problem of the apparent lack of any institutionalized leadership.

Although wealthy kadangyan have certainly economic influence on their area, they have no authority over other people of the locality by virtue of their status as kadangyan or indeed as wealthy landowners. While Ifugao society is certainly not egalitarian, status distinctions being emphasized in many ways, it is decidedly acephalous. But how does an acephalous society operate, if there are no unilineal descent groups, such as the Naga clans, which provide a framework for the interrelations of individual households? There is no easy answer to this question. Whereas every Naga nuclear family has a definite and clearly recognizable position within a system of patrilineal lineages and clans, units with a built-in sense of solidarity, the Ifugao family operates within a diffuse and fluid network of rights and obligations, the configuration of which differs even between husband and wife. Disputes involve individuals and the kinsmen owing them support, but there is no independent authority to adjudicate in disputes, redress grievances, or punish offenders against accepted custom. If the individual who has suffered loss or injury is in too weak a position to assert his claim, no one else will impose sanctions and see to it that justice is done.

Though the social structure of most of the Naga tribes is also acephalous, there is nevertheless a system by which the clans constituting a village community cooperate to insure internal security and protect individuals and families against the highhandedness of more powerful persons or lineages. Similarly there is in every Apa Tani village a council of clan representatives chosen for their personal qualities of leadership, and this council has authority to discipline individuals who deviate from the accepted standards of conduct and violate the legitimate interests of other villagers.

Discussion

The basic differences between the social systems of Apa Tanis and Nagas on the one hand, and Ifugaos on the other, could be illustrated in much greater detail, but in this context it must suffice to demonstrate that the Ifugao's attitude toward the people living in the same locality is totally different from a Naga's or an Apa Tani's normal relations with his covillagers. An Apa Tani or Naga dwelling in a large, compact village spends most of his time among clansmen, affines, and covillagers bound to him by many ties of cooperation, and his expectations in interpersonal relations are thus attitudes of friendliness or, at the worst, indifference. Hostility is to be expected only in encounters with members of rival village communities opposed to his own village as the result of hereditary feuds or more recent disputes. The distinction between friend and foe is clear, and the individual enjoys a high degree of security as long as he does not venture too far away from his village.

The Ifugao, on the other hand, lives in a fluid atmosphere within which friendly neighbors turn overnight into bitter enemies seeking vengeance for the death of a kinsman perhaps hardly known to the victim who shall have to atone for a deed he has no part in.

Despite the fact that both Nagas and Ifugaos are head-hunters who give public recognition to martial exploits, the individual's position in the two societies is still quite different, and so is the entire basis of the social order.

Yet, we have seen that not only environment and ecology are very similar in both regions but that there are also numerous striking parallels in the material culture of the hill tribes of Northeast India and those of Northern Luzon. We must thus conclude that there is no inherent causal connection between the ecology and the social system of a people, but that two populations with virtually identical economies and material equipment can have diametrically opposed social systems. This realization throws serious doubt on the validity of the theory of material determinism, for in the two examples analyzed, the material foundation of life neither determines the social superstructure nor the individual's position in society. However, the assembled data from India and the Philippines do not invalidate the assumption that there is a correlation between geographic environment and the type of ecology suitable for the exploitation of given natural resources. Rice cultivation on irrigated terrace fields, as it is practiced by both Angami Nagas and Ifugaos, presupposes geographical and climatic conditions such as exist both in Nagaland and in Luzon. Though the environmental factors need not be necessarily causative, they are certainly permissive of the economic activities pursued in both regions.

On the other hand, there is no apparent correlation between these economic activities and the social order they support, for similar economies are associated with two totally different social systems, namely, that of the Nagas and Apa Tanis and that of the Ifugaos. This fact discredits the "holistic" doctrine according to which all aspects of a culture, ecological as well as social, and interdependent and integrated. As similar environmental and ecological conditions have permitted the development of two entirely different social superstructures, we certainly cannot assume that either of these social systems is necessarily or logically associated with the economic base. Within certain limits, the same economic base might be found in combination with yet another social order, different from both the Naga and the Ifugao types. Once we abandon the functionalistic view of culture as an integrated whole whose elements are necessarily interdependent, we must concede the possibility of a variety of combinations between distinct ecologies and social systems. Nagas and Ifugaos provide only one example for the possibility of different social patterns being associated with the identical type of economy and

material culture, but further comparative studies of populations of similar environment and ecological development are likely to corroborate the view that neither geographical background nor economic development determine the formulation and patterning of social relationships and the ideology underlying the social system.

An explanation of the cultural similarities between some of the hill tribes of Northeast India and the Ifugaos of Luzon concerns us here only marginally. If all these ethnic groups are descended from populations associated with an archaic, probably late neolithic civilization formerly extending over large parts of Southeast Asia, the many close parallels in the sphere of economy and material culture may be due to an extreme conservatism that has resulted in the persistence of an ancient pattern of living long after the rise of more advanced civilizations. The spread of such civilizations throughout the fertile lowlands must have resulted in the fragmentation of an earlier and more primitive ethnic stratum, the remnants of which yet retained some of its cultural characteristics. In the Philippines, which had remained basically outside the sphere of influence of the historic civilizations of Southeast Asia, the gap between lowlanders and mountain people was probably not as great as elsewhere, and Felix M. Keesing has suggested (1962) that some of the latter may have moved into the mountains only when the lowlands came under Spanish pressure. While the bilateral kinship system is common to lowlanders and mountain tribes, four centuries of acculturation to the Christian tradition brought to the Philippines by the Spanish cannot have remained without effect on the social order of the population of the plains. In the highlands many aspects of an older style of life have persisted much longer, but there is no reason to assume that there were no local developments and time had stood still for the tribesmen. Indeed Fred Eggan may well be right in suggesting that social systems such as that of the Ifugaos should "be considered as specialized variants rather than basic or early types" (Eggan 1967: 200).

While in some parts of Southeast Asia bilateral and unilineal kinship systems occur in close proximity, all known societies of the Philippines are organized on the basis of bilaterality, and it is my contention that the peculiar social order prevailing among such tribes as Ifugaos and Kalingas could hardly exist in conjunction with a system of unilineal descent groups. The example of Nagas and Apa Tanis has shown that the solidarity of such descent groups tends to lead to the development of well defined and stable political units which are in marked contrast to the amorphous society resulting from the principle of bilaterality. A comparison of some of the tribal societies of Northeast India with those of Luzon is much too limited a basis for a general consideration of the relations between the unilineal and the bilateral systems

of Southeast Asia, and the possible change-over from one to the other. In this context I have confined myself to demonstrating that societies evincing very considerable similarities in their economy and material culture, and even in regard to such cultural phenomena as feasts of merit, can yet be poles apart in the sphere of kinship and the principles of the social order.

Notes

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Dr. Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf is professor of Asian anthropology at the University of London.

1. Cf. my article, "Zur Frage der Kerkunft der Büffelhaltung auf den Philippinen," (Fürer-Haimendorf 1932).

2. The photograph of an Ifugao warrior on page 803 of my article, "Tribal Tradition in a Civilized World," (Fürer-Haimendorf 1969b) exemplifies this similarity. Many items of the warrior's dress can be matched by items from the Assam–Burma region.

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