

# April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1 PM in SSB 107

## Rice, Feasts, and Rituals Resisting conquest and colonialism in northern highland Philippines

The Ifugao of the northern Philippines constructed their monumental terraced rice fields about 350 years ago and as a response to the pressures exerted by the Spanish conquest of the lowland Philippines. Previously thought to be at least 2,000 years old, archaeological, ethnographic, and ethnohistoric information suggest that the shift to wet-rice cultivation was more recent and was a structuring mechanism to defend against conquest. Indeed, the production and consumption of rice is central to Ifugao culture, where every aspect of the rice cycle requires a particular ritual.



However, ethnographic investigations suggest that wet-rice is reserved for the elite. This is supported by spatial analysis that indicate that rice produced in the terraced fields are less than 10% of the required carbohydrate intake of Ifugao communities. This presentation highlights the varied responses of indigenous groups to colonialism, particularly, the Ifugao, who appear to have resisted and/or endured Spanish cooptation. The archaeological record suggests that economic intensification and political consolidation occurred in Ifugao soon after the appearance of the Spanish in the northern Philippines. The foremost indication of this shift is the adoption of wet-rice agriculture in the highlands. Excavations at the Old Kiyangan Village (Kiangang, Ifugao) also imply that the settlement had continuous contact/interaction with lowland groups and other highland groups between ca. AD 1600 and late AD 1800, refuting the idea of isolation. This work on pericolonial archaeology shows that the effects of colonialism extended far beyond the areas actually colonized



Stephen Acabado received his PhD and MA in Anthropology from the University of Hawai'i-Mānoa and his BA in Anthropology from the University of the Philippines-Diliman. His archaeological investigations in Ifugao, northern Philippines, have established the recent origins of the Cordillera Rice Terraces, which were once known to be at least 2,000 years old. Dr. Acabado directs the Ifugao Archaeological Project, a collaborative research program between the University of the Philippines-Archaeological Studies Program, the National Museum of the Philippines, the University of California-Los Angeles, and the Save the Ifugao Terraces Movement, Inc (SITMo). Dr. Acabado's work revolves around agricultural systems, indigenous responses to colonialism, subsistence shifts, landscape archaeology, and heritage conservation. He is a strong advocate of an engaged archaeology where descendant communities are involved in the research process.

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