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Ti Similla

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Merry Christmas

MESSAGE

Since early November, despite occasional torrential rains in the afternoons, some of our utility personnel have been busy putting up strings of Christmas lights and other ornaments, best to mark the coming of a much awaited holiday celebration at UP Baguio. This yearly ritual of lighting up and sprucing up the campus has become a cherished tradition, a welcome break from our everyday tasks in the university, and we are thankful to UP Baguio's "manongs" for their efforts, clambering up ladders and roofs, to ensure that the campus is well-lit and adorned for the community's celebration of the Christmas season.

And so once again, we celebrate Christmas, as we also mark the end of another year in our life as a university. Christmas is a special time for everyone. It is a time to reunite as families and communities — to share blessings, to celebrate life and its gifts, to renew friendships and alliances, to reconcile with those from whom we may have been briefly estranged. For us in UP Baguio, the year that is about to close has been an eventful one. From all indications, and through many activities throughout the year, UP Baguio has kept its avowed commitment to further improve teaching, research and service to the community according to the UP tenet of excellence. This year, the colleges continued to work on curricular review and development, and in some instances, programs were further revised, to respond to new developments and opportunities in the field. Research activities continued, as did infrastructure development, the most visible new structure being the Student-Alumni services building completed and inaugurated this month. UP Baguio continues to show the way, in implementing infrastructure projects with relatively low levels of funding.



This year, we lost colleagues in the staff, including retired personnel, to ill health and an unfortunate road mishap. Their passing jolted and saddened us, but their record of service and commitment to the university, as well as their friendship, will be a source of comfort and inspiration to us all. Elsewhere in the country and the world, a number of calamities - natural and otherwise - continue to bring untold misery to victims. The stories that reach us cause anxiety, even despair, and yet other stories of generosity and heroism make us realize that the worst of times can bring out the best in people and communities. As we remember to share what we have with those who now have very little in this season of renewed

hope, let us recall that the very first Christmas was about Mary and Joseph who traveled far and had no room at the inn, and about Jesus who was born in a stable.

I believe Christmas is a time for gratitude and reflection, a time to seek renewal, and healing. I thank all who have helped UP Baguio in 2010. Truly, what we are now, and what we are trying to be, is the sum of all the efforts of everyone in the community — student, teacher, administrative staff, REPS personnel, alumnus.

Finally, may I say again that the story of Christmas is the story of one beginning, the birth of an infant savior in a difficult time. It is the story of wise men who kept the faith, and followed a star. In that light, the message of this Christmas season for us is one of hope, faith, sharing and sacrifice.

Merry Christmas to all in UP Baguio. Let us welcome the new year with joy, hope, fortitude and faith that together, we will achieve great things for our community and our world.

Priscilla Supnet Macansantos
CHANCELLOR

Global Lecture Series on Indigenous Peoples

The “Indigenous” Beyond Borders

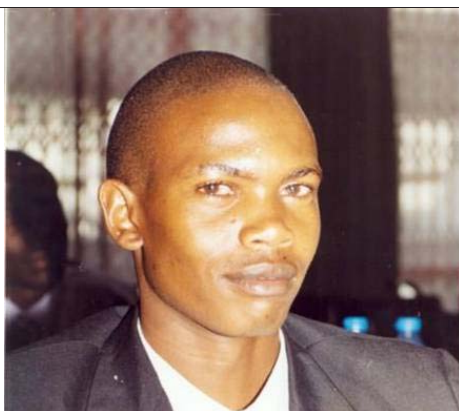
■ By Raymundo Rovillos

The College of Social Sciences (CSS), UP Baguio is raising its efforts on pursuing Cordillera, Ethnicity and Indigenous Peoples’ Studies to greater heights. This is indicated, among others, by the launching of the “Global Lecture Series on Indigenous Peoples’ Studies” or GLS on September 8, 2010 with a lecture entitled “Customary Law on Natural Resource Management in Tanzania,” by Prof. Elifuraha Isaya Ole Laltaika from Tumaini University in Tanzania. This was followed by another lecture on “Women Defending the Environment” by Ms. Jean La Rose, program administrator of the Amerindian Peoples Association (APA) from Guyana on November 16, 2010. These lectures were co-sponsored by Tebtebba Foundation, Inc., a Baguio-based Indigenous Peoples’ International Centre for Policy Research and Education.

The GLS Concept

The Global Lecture Series will be a regular (monthly or bi-monthly) lecture on indigenous peoples’ studies. There will be ten lectures from November 2010 to May 2012. The GLS will serve as a forum for the dissemination of recent research findings by scholars from all over the world. A wide range of topics related to indigenous peoples will be featured in the series which shall serve as a venue for intellectual engagements among faculty and students, scholars and public intellectuals. These lectures shall also serve as channels for possible comparative approaches and perspectives to studies on indigenous peoples. Moreover, the GLS is envisioned as an approach to reinforce our pursuit of excellence in research, focusing on Cordillera/Northern Luzon studies. It is indeed time to look beyond the Cordillera borders without losing our focus and anchor.

The CSS shall invite resource persons/lecturers who are scholars/researchers from universities and research institutes



Prof. Elifuraha Isaya Ole Laltaika

and public intellectuals from international NGOs and social movements. As argued by the Latin American post-colonial scholar Arturo Escobar (2010), in recent years, civil society organizations and social movements have become the loci for knowledge production, proposing emergent epistemologies and ontological issues in the social sciences. The academe should engage these so-called alternative sources of knowledge production in order to learn from them, in dialogue and discourse with them. It is also good to note that non-academic-based intellectuals are now increasingly opening up spaces for dialogues with the academe. This is certainly a most welcome development.

Maasai Tribe in Tanzania

The “soft” launching activity last September featured the issues and challenges in customary resource management of the Maasai people in Tanzania (Africa). It was attended by students of CSS, faculty of the Political Science Discipline, CSS Dean Rovillos, CAC Dean Delima, CSC Director Prof. Delfin Tolentino and the former Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples’ Concerns, Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz.

Laltaika’s lecture surfaced the tensions among state-led protected area management, community participation in forest conservation, traditional occupations and poverty reduction in Tanzania. He stated



Ms. Jean La Rose

the case of the Ngorongoro Conservation Authority Area (NCAA) which was created through the government ordinance of 1959. This legislation recognized the legal right of the Maasai and their herd of livestock to co-exist with wildlife. This co-existence has led to the area’s recognition as a model for good practice of multiple land use. The Maasai have lived in the area for generations. The law prohibits agricultural cultivation and so they were only allowed to raise cattle (pastoralism). However recently, there have been ecological changes in Tanzania. The Maasai pastoralists have lost over 60 per cent of the herd of cattle due to drought and “denial of important pasture lands.” To be able to feed their starving children, they expressed their plight to the Prime Minister of Tanzania Hon. John Samuel Malecele who temporarily lifted the ban on cultivation. Laltaika says that the “the lifting of the ban was done out of humanitarianism and was never translated into law. The law as it stands today prohibits cultivation while poor pastoralists are starving.” Laltaika is advocating for a new law that balances between rights of the pastoralists on one hand and sustainable wildlife conservation on the other.

Laltaika added that there are potential spaces for increased community participation in conservation-related activities. The constitution of the United Re-

public of Tanzania of 1977 is one such space. He cites article 25 of the constitution that stipulates that the local communities have the right to participate in different development activities. Another political space is decentralization. Currently, the Tanzania government has embarked on reforming the local government that in turn decentralizes development activities. He argued that “wild-life management cannot be an exception to this.” Laltaika also described the Village Land Act No. 5 of 1999 as being a fertile ground for invoking the right to be involved in conservation. The socially engaged intellectual however cautioned that the Ngorongoro ordinance has to be amended to be in line with the land act.

As expected, the activity triggered a vibrant interaction among the speaker, faculty and students, as the case of the Maasai Tribe in Tanzania was compared and contrasted with those of the indigenous communities in the Cordillera and the Philippines.

The discussion revolved around the presumed homogeneity versus heterogeneity of indigenous peoples and the prospects of codification versus documentation of customary law. Laltaika argued that, at least in the case of the Maasai, the claim of homogeneity has empirical basis. As to the issue of customary law, Laltaika, who is himself a Maasai, supported the idea of documentation, instead of codification, as the latter might stifle the dynamism of customary laws.

Amerindians in Guyana

The second lecture, held on November 16, 2010, was entitled “Women Defending the Environment: The Case of the Amerindians in Guyana,” as delivered by Ms. Jean La Rose, an indigenous Arawak. She has been working with the Akawaio, Arekuna and other Amerindian communities to halt the mining in their territories and to secure full rights to traditional lands. In choosing her as one of the distinguished Women in the Environment, the United Nations Environmen-

tal Program (UNEP) says that “her work as a representative in the constitutional revision process has been instrumental in guaranteeing for the first time that some Amerindian rights, including the right to a healthy environment, be included in the constitution.” (www.unep.org, 2010)



Jean La Rose is flanked by Dean Raymundo Rovillos (left) and Reuben Muni (right)

In consideration of the undergraduate students (mostly social science majors) in the audience, La Rose deviated from the assigned topic of IP women’s struggles to an introduction to the culture of the Arawak tribe in Guyana. She eloquently spoke of the Arawak’s mix of subsistence livelihood activities such as cassava production (staple crop), hunting and food gathering, fishing and weaving, among others. She also shared on the cultural beliefs, practices and values of the Arawak, including the rites of passage into womanhood. Through a power point presentation of photos, La Rose was effectively able to show the material culture of the Arawak, such as their houses/settlement, traditional attire, cooking and dining implements. Seemingly guarding against essentializing and romanticizing her peoples’ culture, she emphasized that while indigenous cultural practices and beliefs persist, western and non-indigenous cultural elements have also permeated Awarak society and culture.

The last part of the presentation focused on the challenges of modernization

and “development” for the indigenous communities. La Rose lamented the adverse social and environmental impacts of extractive industries such as commercial logging and mining. The narrative was supported by photos of silted rivers, denuded forests and displaced communities. What troubles La Rose most is the fact that some indigenous peoples themselves have decided to sell their properties to mining corporations in exchange for instant cash. She expressed her worries about the future of the Arawak people and their ancestral domain.

Questions from the audience included issues on mining, women/gender and environment, and the notion of human agency among the indigenous peoples in Guyana. The audience also marveled at the many similarities between the Awarak’s culture and the indigenous peoples of the Cordillera and the Philippines. La Rose expressed her profound gratitude to UP Baguio for allowing her to speak about her people and country “whose existence is hardly known by other people across the globe.”

Prospects

Thus far, the GLS has shown the actual and potential opportunities for discourses on the cosmopolitan and global elements of indigenous studies. These fora clearly serve as venues for identifying the global-local nexus on indigenous peoples’ studies while recognizing the peculiarities, i.e. relativism, of cultures and unique historical experiences. Forthcoming is the third lecture under the GLS, featuring an Inuit (“Eskimo”) researcher from Denmark.

A couple of junior faculty at the CSS expressed their hope that these engagements would eventually result in an academic program (research and/or academic) on Indigenous Peoples’ Studies at UP Baguio. I certainly share that vision. ■

Open Access, Open Source System, LibriSource, Greenstone and Healthy Living UP Baguio Library on a roll

■ By Amelia Cendaña, *Contributor, Librarian*



Jocelyn Dagusen, Head Librarian

The UP Baguio Library collaborated with the Baguio-Benguet Librarians Association, Inc. (BBLAI) and the Philippine Librarians Association, Inc./CAR Librarians' Council (PLAI-CARLC) to sponsor seminar workshops in October this year. The first workshop was entitled "Raising the Quality of Library Service through Open Access and Open Source System, Phase II." Phase I was held at the University of the Cordilleras in March. The resource speaker, Lauren Kipaan, Director of the Libraries of Benguet State University, discussed LibriSource, a software involving database sharing by various insti-

tutions. The end users of each institution are shown only the documents to which they have a subscription. LibriSource also has quick links to blogs, official sites, and social media sites.

A second resource speaker, Marilou Pasion, a faculty member in



Library software workshop

Library and Computer Science at Saint Louis University, discussed Greenstone, a software she trained on for three months in Belgium. Greenstone is a suite of software for building and distributing digital library collections.

Finally, these library networks

here in Baguio and Benguet conducted a seminar on "Fostering Healthy Lifestyles for Effective Library Service Providers" with Dr. Erlinda Palaganas as speaker. She discussed ways to avoid hypertension, diabetes mellitus, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) from smoking, and bronchial asthma.

The UP Baguio Library also held its 15th Bookfair in October, with 22 participating book exhibitors. *Mondo Marcos* (Anvil), edited by Frank Cimatu and Roland Tolentino, was launched at the Library on October 13. ■



Dr. Erlinda Palaganas



OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
UP BAGUIO
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