

Epilogue: Will the Village Remain a Village?

Mrs Captain who had been so helpful throughout our study in this village died unexpectedly on 4 February 1997 from a heart attack at the age of 71. Masao Kikuchi and I heard the news in Japan and were able to visit the Philippines to attend a memorial ceremony on the thirtieth day of her 'departure'.

The Captains' house used to be a solid but ordinary wooden house commonly found in rural areas of the Philippines but it was rebuilt as an urban-style concrete house paid for by a daughter who had been employed in the Middle East as a nurse. As we entered the house, a group of old ladies were reciting prayers. Outside, men were being served with beer and palm liquor together with barbecued chicken and pork. Mr Captain was as calm and reserved as usual. He said none but only smiled while receiving our condolences. However, he looked very much older. My former assistant, who had married his son, expressed her concern that Mr Captain had become too dependent on alcohol since the tragedy.

It was not easy to refuse the offer of drinks from old acquaintances, and a few drinks in the tropical heat soon made me feel drowsy. I escaped the feast and took a walk. The village looked as peaceful as ever under the shade of coconut trees, but the major changes since my first visit were very obvious. Houses had become much more dense, while trees had become thinner. The village road on which I was walking had been paved since three years ago, and urban-style houses based on remittances from overseas employment were no longer exceptional, with the result that the main street of the village looked rather like a newly-developed, low-class suburb of Manila. I heard that there was a plan to develop a housing subdivision within the village for sale to urban dwellers. With a sigh I said to myself, 'How long will this remain a rural village?' Suddenly, the lively smile of Mrs Captain when I had first met her a quarter of century before flashed into my mind.

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