IFUGAO RICE TERRACES
AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE SYSTEMS

Dynamic Conservation and Practice
Location: Ifugao Province
Cordillera Mountains
Northern Philippines

Area: 20,000 hectares
Age: 2,000 years

Declared as UNESCO Heritage Site

Ave. Annual Rainfall: 73.4 inches

An Ifugao village surrounded by rice terraces circa 1910.
The IFUGAO RICE TERRACES landscape is made up of series of terraces and “Muyongs” (Private Forests) and patches of swidden farms.
Hungduan rice terraces showing patches of Muyong, extensive rice terraces and the pinugo in the mountain ridges.
Irrigation water comes from the forested sub-watersheds and conveyed through canals to the terraces.
Terracing stabilizes slopes and reduces surface soil erosion.
Water is maintained in the terraces all year round.
The Rice Farming
A “mumbaki” or native priest.

A bulol guarding a newly harvested rice inside an Ifugao’s rice granary.
Traditional rice varieties are grown.
Old rice straw left in the terraces to decompose.
Paad rice ritual conserves and sustains fish and shellfish production in same terraces.
The “Muyong / Pinugo”
– Private Forests

A traditional “Muyong” (private forest) above rice terraces.
It is a natural forest with as many as 264 plant species that supply many family needs.

The Muyong is a family forest located above terraces varying in size from 0.5 ha to 2.5 ha.
A muyong that has been reforested with exotic trees.
Agroforestry is practiced in Muyongs.
Indigenous plants are used as pesticides and removal of pests and insects are manually done.
Woodcarving products
Terracing of the mountain slopes.

Dynamic Conservation and Practices
Maintaining Muyong (family forests) sustains the irrigation water.

Traditional silvicultural practices are carried out in the Muyong to keep them productive.
Strict adherance to planting calendar minimizes damage to rice plants and harvest caused by rodents and other pests.
High diversity in Muyongs supply food, medicine, construction materials and pesticides.
Trees and other plants are harvested selectively when needed.
The traditional rice granary of the Ifugao’s. Note the posts made of tree stumps sourced from the Muyongs.
Mayoyao Rice Terraces. Structures with painted roofs are rice granaries.
Inheritance is the mode of ownership and are not partitioned to smaller sizes.
Natural resources use and rice production are based on old indigenous customs and beliefs preventing over-exploitation of land resources and promoting biodiversity conservation.
Threats and Issues

• Out – migration
• Changes in local governance
• Better access to education
• Christianization
• New crops and farming technologies
• New job opportunities
Increasing build-up of buildings and other structures because of urbanization is taking over some areas of the rice terraces particularly along the main roads near the Banaue poblacion.
Our heritage......