**Asin: Home of the man-made wonders**

**By: Mikka Tuguinay**

Marcus Garvey once said, “People without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots”. We all know that without art and culture, we would really know nothing about our society. Also, Culture in relation to art, plays an important role in preserving our heritage at the same time making other people feel happy and refreshed.

As the technology in the community improves and develop, the culture slowly fade and die. Perhaps this is because we tend to focus on the new trend and forget the old practices and culture that our ancestors grew up with. Tradition and culture starts as knowledge. And when this knowledge is performed, it turns into practice that is being passed down from generation to generation resulting into a tradition. Tradition continues as time passes by until it already became a part of our ancestors’ everyday life as well as our culture.

As a short history, wood carving started in Ifugao around 1940’s and during that time, the only wood carving that was created was the ‘Bulul’ of Ifugao Rice Gods which becomes the very first wood carving product of the Ifugaos. Wood Carving in Ifugao took a step further such that instead of having ‘Bulul’ carvings alone, they also added sculptures such as ‘Deer Hunters’ and they even improved the details of the Bulul. Carving then became a trend until such time that it turned out into a tradition and a culture where men serve as the sculptors while their wives are the ones who varnishes their carvings. They use simple tools and woods such as the Acacia and the Kamagong for them to be able to produce the quality product that they want.

Mr. Peter Pihoc, an Ifugao wood carver for more than 30 years, said that wood carving has been passed on from generation to generation which serves as the primary source of their livelihood. Wood Carving or Handicrafts in Barangay Asin are being exported to other places which makes them suppliers of Wood Carvings in Baguio City.

‘Culture is not static’ according to one of the leading seller of handicrafts the Mondiguing’s Woodcraft. She also stated that wood carving opens doors to most youths who don’t want to go to school. It is just like a give and take relationship, youths who don’t go to school but has skills and passion for art such as Wood Carving, can still work and fend for themselves. It begins by teaching them the right wood to use, the right way to handle the tools and many more. In return, quality products are made and are sold by the suppliers here in Baguio City like the Moundiguing’s. At the same time, Culture for Wood Carving is preserved.

The Barangay Asin is just one of the Barangay here in Baguio that supports, practice, and preserves the cordilleran culture and we all know that Baguio City is known to be the UNESCO CREATIVE CITY. This is one way to see that Baguio, particularly Barangay Asin, is still practicing their culture and does not forget to where they came from. Hopefully, youth’s like us would be passionate and not be impelled by the development of technology but instead we will keep our culture alive and burning in our hearts.