Ruby Day 1: To Tagatay

I'm geeking out about disaster preparation and response today (I'm also doing my day job work, as part of a promise to work-from-philippines for the next 2 weeks). We talk about Ebola (I've been quietly doing bits where I can on the Ebola data response, and my friend is worried that with filipinos coming back from West Africa there'll be an outbreak here too). As i came in the airport, there were Ebola screeners but the early-morning flight from Tokyo seemed to look like low risk. Tracking an outbreak response across hundreds of islands would be a little different to, say, Sierra Leone - hospitals here are mostly private and unmapped, and transport estimates would be much more complex than the road time mapping that the OpenStreetMap crowd have been doing on the Ebola response recently. A new event's shown up on the radar for the weekend, using local drone images to map fallen coconut trees after Yolanda (and use this as a training set for algorithms). I'm asked for a short talk at the OSM event. Ruby isn't really even a topic yet.

I have a little confusion about transport - the pickup in Manila was miles away (which in Manila traffic really is a lifetime) and earlier than I'd assumed (things can be organized but not communicated so much here), so after much back and forth, I'm booked on an afternoon transport from the airport. I take a taxi there… and get stuck in the traffic snarl-ups around the airport: it's Christmas (a big deal where lots of people come home from abroad) and the new airport skyway construction has reduced the lanes available, making any travel there slow and miserable. We're 7km away with half an hour to go and no traffic movement, so we divert and drive out to Tagataya. The toll roads provide relief; the local roads to the sides of us are moving more freely but still packed. It's not dirt roads, but the motorbikes and plywood-built roadside stalls remind me strongly of Africa ("Africa the country", as we've been teasing the MAVC team about). There are slums at the roadside here - brick-built small houses jumbled up in a sea of tin roofs -they're not going to be a good place to be in a strong storm.