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ANCESTRAL LAND/  
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# BUHAY PALA'WAN

A Collection of Ethnographic Research  
from Brooke's Point, Palawan

By the UP AFS 2012 Members

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# KELANG BANUA

Espasyong Sagrado at Kultural

Para sa mga katutubong Pala'wan, ang *Kelang Banua* na nangangahulugang “malaking bahay” ang gumaganap na silungan at tanggulan hindi lamang ng mga mamamayan kundi pati na rin ng kanilang kultura. Kaya naman masasabing naging sentro ang *Kelang Banua* sa mga tradisyunal na gawain ng mga Pala'wan - sa pang-araw-araw nilang gawain o mga ritwal na isinasagawa tuwing may mga natatanging okasyon. Bagamat nagkalat ang mga tribong Pala'wan sa kabundukan ng Palawan, isang pangangailangan na makapagtayo ng *Kelang Banua* sa bawat komunidad na pamumunuan naman ng isang nakakatanda na tinatawag na *Panlima*.

Ang pagiging *Panlima* ay salin-lahi, o minamana mula sa mga ninuno. Ang kahusayan niya ay sinusukat sa pagkamakatarungan ng desisyong ginagawa niya tuwing may pinagkakasundo siyang mga miyembro ng kanyang komunidad na nagtatalo. Sa pangkaraniwan, walo hanggang sampung pamilya ang saklaw ng *Panlima*, subalit maaari itong umabot ng beinte o higit pa. Sa *Panlima* nanggagaling ang desisyon na magtayo ng *Kelang Banua* at siya rin ang nagbibigay ng panuto ukol sa paraan ng pagpapatayo nito. Ang kaalaman ng konstruksyon ay sinasabing minana mula sa mga ninuno.

Ang *Kelang Banua* ang nagsisilbing bukluran ng tribo. Ang mistulang pagpapatayo nito ay isa nang tradisyon at ang mga ritwal ay dito rin idinaraos. May mga ritwal ng pagsasaya't pasasalamat- *Tambilaw*, *Mundeg*, *Umanat*, *Tabad*, *Ubos*, nariyan din ang *Lingew* na isang ritwal ng pagluluksa tuwing may mamamatay sa komunidad. Ang mga ritwal ay kailangan maganap sa loob ng *Kelang Banua* dahil ang istrukturang ito ang nagsisilbing daluyan ng kanilang mga *puwas* o dasal patungo kay *Ampo*. Si *Ampo* ang kinikilalang pangunahing Diyos ng mga katutubong Pala'wan. Siya ang humahaligi at sumusubaybay sa lahat ng bagay sa mundo may buhay man o wala. Ang *Panlima* ang nangangasiwa ng mga ritwal na ito at siya ang namamagitan kay *Ampo* at sa mga miyembro ng kanyang komunidad. Bilang bulwagang bukas para sa bawat Pala'wan, sinadya itong maging malaki't malawak upang kayanin nitong magdala ng malaking bilang ng mga katutubo o bisitang dadalo kung sakaling magkaroon ng mga pagtitipon tipon para sa mga ritwal o okasyon.

Ang *Tambilaw* at *Mundeg* ay parehong ritwal ng pagsasaya't pasasalamat na ginagawa upang humingi ng basbas mula kay *Ampo* para sa mga bago nilang naani. Sa apat na linggong panunuluyan namin sa Brooke's Point, Palawan napagalaman namin na may mga sumusunod sa *Tambilaw* at ang iba nama'y sa *Mundeg* kaya't lumalabas na hinahati ng dalawang ritwal na ito ang mga Pala'wan sa dalawang sekta ng relihiyon. Iisa pa rin ang sinasamba at kinikilalang pangunahing diyos ng dalawang sekta – Si *Ampo*.



Ngunit nagkakaiba lamang ang dalawa sa (1) mga kinikilala nilang dibinidad o mga *ikalawang diyos* na nagsisilbing sugo ni Ampo (2) at sa paraan ng pagbabasbas ng kanilang ani.

lisa lamang ang sinusunod na kalendaryo ng pagtatanim, pagpapataba ng lupa, at pag-aani ng Tambilaw at Mundeg. Sa buwan ng Disyembre at Enero ay sinisimulan nang patabain ang lupa upang maihanda sa **panggas tugda** o pagtatanim na magaganap sa buwan ng Pebrero, Marso, at Abril. Ang mga buwang mula Mayo hanggang Setyembre ang pinakamaselang panahon para sa kanila dahil kailangang mabantayan ng mabuti ang lupa upang patuloy ang pagsipsip ng sustansya ng mga pananim. Bandang Agosto at Setyembre pa lamang ay namumunga na ang mga mais. Ngunit bago pa ito kunin kailangan munang antaying maging handa ang mga palay bago magkaroon ng pangkalahatang pagaani na nagaganap pa sa mga buwan ng Oktubre at Nobyembre.

Para sa mga Pala'wan napakahalagang mabasbasan ang kanilang ani dahil para sa kanila isa itong biyayang ipinagkaloob ni Ampo; at isang pagtanaw ng respeto ang pagdiriwang na ito upang bigyan sila muli ng aanihin sa mga susunod na buwan. Sa prosesong ito, mapapansing mas maraming mga pangangailangan ang ritwal na *Mundeg* kung ikukumpara sa *Tambilaw*.

Walong **Tabad** o "alak na gawa sa kanin" ang kinakailangan sa pagriritwal ng *Mundeg*, hindi katulad sa *Tambilaw* na iisa lamang ang kailangan. Kaya't sa kapistahan ng *Mundeg* mas marami ang nangangasiwa. Nariyan ang *Mamumuwas*, *Manlilimas*, at *Mananagumang*. Ang **Mamumuwas**, bilang pangunahing tagapangasiwa ng ritwal, ang nagdadasal sa walong *Tabad* na na kumakatawan sa walong Diyos na kanilang pinananawagan. Kailangan inuman ng *Mamumuwas* ang banga ng *Tabad* matapos ibulong ang puwas sa **Bungkarag**. Kaya naman nariyan ang **Manlilimas** upang humalili kung sakaling pagod o lasing na ang *Mamumuwas*. Ito rin ay nagsisilbing pagsasanay dahil sa hinaharap ipapasa sa *Manlilimas* ang pagiging *Mamumuwas*. Ang mga **Mananagumang** naman ay ang mga bisitang dumalo sa pista. Hindi lahat ay pinapapasok sa Kelang Banua habang nagaganap ang *Mundeg*. Mga katutubong nakatradisyunal na kasuotan lamang ang maaaring makapasok dito.

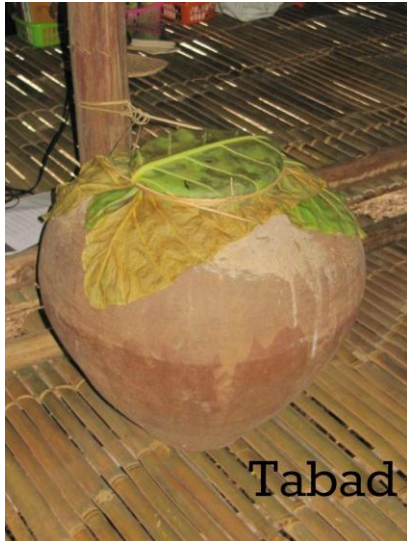


Bungkarag

Isa pang hiwalay na ritwal ang **Umanat**; ayon kay Panlima Wellington isa itong pangako ng pagdiriwang kung may isang dasal, sumpa, o kahilingan kay Ampo ang masasakatuparan. Isa pang ritwal ng pagsasaya ay ang **Ubos**. Dito ipinagiisang dibdib ang *budyang* (dalaga) at *subor* (binata) na nagliligawan. Ang mga magulang nila ang hihingi ng permiso sa *Panlima* na tagapangasiwa ng *Kelang Banua* na gusto nilang pagdausan ng kasal. Sa prosesong ito ang *bitsaran* (ang pagsisirkulo ng mga panlima at ang paguusap sa metapora't pabula tungkol sa dalaga't binata) ang maghuhusga kung maaari nga bang ikasal ang dalawa.

Taliwas naman ng ritwal ng pagdiriwang tulad ng mga nabanggit ang **Lingew** dahil idinadaos ito para sa patay. Isinasagawa ito maaaring dahil sa (1) may namatay (2) nakapanaginip ang miyembro ng komunidad ng kaganapan ng kamatayan o ng isang yumao na (3) mayroong pangakong binitawan sa patay kaya't di matahimik. Mangyari lamang na may namatay, matapos pagluksaan ng mga kamag anak at kaibigan ang bangkay ng isang araw, magaganap na ang *Nangnang* kung saan lumulusot ang mga malapit na mas batang kamag-anak ng namatay sa ilalim ng bangkay habang ito'y buhat ng apat na tao. Ito'y nagaganap habang binababa ang nakabalot na katawan sa *Kelang Banua* ispesipiko sa *Pantaran* o harap na pasukan.

Sa mga ritwal na nabanggit may mga bagay ring kinakailangan upang maitawid ng tama at kumpleto ang okasyon.



Ang **Tabad** o *tinapey* ay alak na gawa sa kanin. Nagiging alak ang nalutong bigas sa loob ng tatlo hanggang apat na linggo; gumagamit din dito ng purad o yeast, dahon pantakip at malalim na banga upang paglagyan nito.

**Basal.** Bukod pa dito nabanggit din na importanteng elemento ng mga ritwal ang *Basal* at *Tarek*. *Basal* ang kolektibong termino na tumutukoy sa kombinasyon ng tatlong instrumentong minana nila mula pa sa mga ninuo – *Agong*, *Sanang* at *Gimbal*. Ang tumutugtog nito ay tinatawag na *Manegtugtog*.

Ang *Gimbal* ay isang tambol na gawa sa buho na binabalutan naman ng balat ng kambing at tinatali ng yantok; pinapalo ito gamit ang dalawang kahoy na may haba na isang dangkal at may lapad na isang pulgada. Tinatakda nito ang bilis at tono ng *Basalan*, tinutugtog ito ng tatlo hanggang apat na daang palo kada minuto na maaari pang mabilisan o mabagalan. Ang *Agong* at *Sanang* naman ay gawa sa halu-halong bakal na pinapalo gamit ang isang kahoy na tatlong pulgada kalapad at isang dangkal kahaba na may balot na makapal na tela sa isang dulo. Pawang mga *gong* ang *Agong* at *Sanang*. Iyon nga lang, mas mataba ng kaunti ang *Agong*. Upang matugtog ang dalawang ito kailangan itong nakasabit at nakalaylay ng malaya. Ang isang kamay ay ginagamit sa pagtatambol samantalang ang isa'y ginagamit para tapikin ang paligid ng *boss* o ang bukol na nakaumbok sa gitna nito para maiyon at mahuli ang tamang alalad at alingawngaw.

**Tarek.** Kung may tunog na nagtatakda ng lagay ng emosyon sa pagdiriwang, mayroon ding sayaw at galaw ng katawan na sasaliw sa musikang ito. Ang kasiyahan ay mas naisisiwalat ng bawat padyak ng paa ng mga sumasayaw ng *Tarek*. Sinasayaw ito sa pamamagitan ng *pagsaraksak* o pagpapadyak ng mabilis sa *Datag* o sahig ng *Banua*. Sinusundan ng *Manegtarek* ang tambol ng gimbal at pinapaingay nito ang kawayang tinahi ng yantok. Ayon kina Lola Leticia at Lola Josita na sumasayaw nito, kailangang mapatunog nang husto ng talampakan ang kawayan. Sinisimbolo ng ingay ng padyak ang antas ng kasiyahan; kung mas malakas ang mga hampas sa datag mas aabot ang pagsasaya't pasasalamat nila sa kanilang Ampo. Ang tradisyunal na sayaw na ito ang dahilan kung bakit ang kawayan sa sahig ng *Kelang Banua* ay *ginayantok* o itinahi ng may kaluwagan;



upang maging maalon ito't makatulong sa mga *manegtarek* at para mabigyan ng ispasyo ang mismong *Datag* at ang pundasyon o balangkas ng sahig sa ilalim.

Tunay na nagsisilbing tahanan ang *Kelang Banua* hindi lamang ng mga katutubong Pala'wan kundi pati na rin ng kabuuang kultura nila. Ito ang nagsisilbing tagapamagitan sa kanila at ng kanilang Diyos na si Ampo at dito rin katatagpuan ang mga materyal o gawain na sumasalamin sa identidad ng Pala'wan.

Sa kasalukuyan, maraming mga isyu at mga suliranin ang kinakaharap ng mga Pala'wan. Nariyan ang kontrobersiya sa awtoritarya ng mga *Panlima* dahil sa kasalukuyan, marami ang naghahayag sa kanilang sarili bilang *Panlima* gayong hindi naman sila direktang anak o kadugo ng mga yumaong *Panlima*. May kinakaharap din silang mga isyu sa pagbibili ng lupa bilang wala naman silang mga titulo. Nariyan din ang *ABS-CBN foundation* at ang proyekto nitong mga *resort* na pilit kinokomersiya ang mga talon sa kabundukan na tahanan na ng mga katutubo. Ilan lamang ang mga ito sa nakaapekto sa persepsyon, tradisyon at gawain ng mga Pala'wan. Marami sa mga katutubong kabataan ang tumatalikod na sa sariling kultura ayon sa mga panlimang aming nakapanayam. Gayunpaman tulad ng tibay na tinatagal ng buhay ng isang *Kelang Banua* naniniwala pa rin ang mga mananaliksik na ganito rin katibay ang buhay ng kulturang Pala'wan. Bagamat may mga tumataliwas at tumatalikod sa tradisyon, uuwi rin ang lahat sa *Kelang Banua*, sa natibong dugo at pagkakakilanlan. Hanggat may *Kelang Banua* hindi kailanman mamamatay ang minanang kultura ng mga Pala'wan.

*Dhanice Anne A. Mengote*  
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# KATUTUBONG ARKITEKTURA: ANG *KELANG BANUA* NG MGA PALAWAN

NI: AMANDA M. PALILEO



*Kelang banua, Purok Proper II, Brgy. Ipilan, Brooke's Point, Palawan. Abril 2012. (F. Delarmente)*

Ang *kelang banua* o ‘malaking bahay’ ng mga Palawan ay espasyong kultural, pulitikal, at sagrado. Ang arkitektura nito ay makakapagsalamin sa kultura ng mga Palawan dahil ito ay sentro ng mga tradisyong Palawan.

*“Sa panlima nanggagaling ang desisyon na magtayo ng kelang banua at siya rin ang nagbibigay ng panuto ukol sa paraan ng pagpapatayo nito. Ang kaalaman ng konstruksyon ng kelang banua ay sinasabing minana mula sa mga ninuno.”*

*Panlima* ang tawag sa isang pinuno ng mga Palawan. Ang pagiging *panlima* ay salin-lahi, o minamana mula sa mga ninuno. Ang kahusayan niya ay sinusukat sa pagkamakatarungan ng desisyong ginagawa niya tuwing may

pinagkakasundo siyang katauhang nagtatalo. Sa pangkaraniwan, walo hanggang sampung pamilya ang saklaw ng *panlima*, subalit maaari itong umabot ng bente o higit pa. Sa *panlima* nanggagaling ang desisyon na magtayo ng *kelang banua* at siya rin ang nagbibigay ng panuto ukol sa paraan ng pagpapatayo nito. Ang kaalaman ng konstruksyon ng *kelang banua* ay sinasabing minana mula sa mga ninuno. Ang *panlima* rin ang nangangasiwa ng pagtayo ng *kelang banua* para sa nasasakupan niyang pangkat ng Palawan. Upang matutunan ng mga binatang takdang maging *panlima* ang mga paraan ng paggawa ng *kelang banua*, pagriritwal, at pangangasiwa sa tribo, lagi silang sumasama sa kanilang ama o kamag-anak na kasalukuyang *panlima*. Tuwing may kasal, nakapaligid sila sa *bitsaran*. Masusi nilang pinanonood at pinakikinggan ang mga ginagawa at sinasabi ng mga *panlima* at sa ganitong paraan sila hinahasa upang ganap na manungkulan.



Panlima Menrido Sador ng Imulnod, BP. (A. Palileo)

Dahil sa ang *kelang banua* ay pag-aari ng buong komunidad, karaniwan ay itinatayo ito sa kalagitnaan ng mga kabahayan. Nang makapili ng lugar kung saan itatayo ang *kelang banua*, nagkakaroon ng munting ritwal ang

*panlima*, kasama ng *tungkol*, isang taong tagapamagitan sa diyos at tao. May pitong butil ng palay na tinatanim sa gitna ng lupang nais tayuan bago ito dasalan. Kinabukasan, kung magkakasama pa rin ang mga butil, naniniwalang sang-ayon si *Ampo* (ang kanilang diyos) sa pagpapatayo ng *kelang banua* sa lugar na iyon. Kapag hindi na magkakasama ang mga butil, kailangang pumili ng ibang pagtatayuan. Nang maitakda ang lupang tatayuan ng *kelang banua*, tatawagin na ng *panlima* ang lahat at bibigyan ng trabaho ang bawat isa. Maaari niyang atasan ang isang pamilya na mangalap ng isang klaseng materyal. Kung anong likas na yaman ang matatagpuan sa paligid ng panirahan ng tribo, iyon na rin ang siyang gagamitin bilang materyal para sa *kelang banua*.



Panlima Pedro Sagad, pagriritwal gamit ang butil ng palay. Enero 2012. (C. Nilasa)

**Pagtatayo ng Kelang Banua.** Kinakailangan ang sumusunod na materyales sa paggawa ng *kelang banua*:

- *Lampung* (kahoy) para sa mga *usok* (poste; pundasyon), at balangkas ng bahay at ng mga bahagi nito;
- *Buho* (makapal at malaking klase ng kawayan) na gagamitin sa *pantaran* (balkonahe) at pangsupta sa ilalim ng bahaging gumagamit ng kawayan; tinatalupan at hinahabi rin upang maging *sawali* (dingding).
- *Kawayan*, na hahatiin upang maging *datag* (sahig), *latep* (pintuan), *bangku* (upuan), *bilit* (bahagi ng *Kelang banua* na tinutulugan), *talimbasan* (tanggapan ng mga bisita; may daanan at upuan), *dapugan* (lutuan), *liwasan* (gitnang bahagi ng bahay kung saan idinaraos ang karamihan ng mga gawain tulad ng ritwal at *bitsaran* [usapang negosasyon]), balangkas ng *bubungan* at dingding.
- *Yantok* para para sa pagtali ng lahat ng parte ng *Kelang banua*. Sa tradisyunal na Kelang Banwa, walang ibang materyal na ginagamit sa pagkakabit-kabit o pagsasama-sama ng mga parte nito kundi yantok.
- *Dahon* na may maraming klase at maraming teknik upang malikha bilang katawan ng bubungan. Cogon ang tradisyunal na ginagamit sa *Kelang banua*, pero maaari din gamitin ang dahon ng nipa o ng niyog.

**Konstruksyon.** Matapos maikalap ang mga materyal, maaari nang simulan ang konstruksyon. Inaayos ang mga materyales: pinuputol ang ilang mga buho upang pantay-pantay silang mailalatag sa magiging *pantaran*; ang ilan naman ay tinatalupan upang magamit sa paggawa ng *sawali*. Binibiak sa tatlo o apat ang mga kawayan at pinuputol sa iba't ibang sukat para sa iba't ibang bahagi ng *Kelang banua*. Pinapawid yung mga dahong gagawing bubungan at pinuputol ang yantok para sa iba't ibang pagkakailanganin nito para sa buong bahay.

**Usok at Balangkas:** Mag-uumpisa ang konstruksyon sa pinakapundasyon ng bahay, ang *usok* o poste. Lampas-tao dapat ang kanyang sukat, dahil ang ilalim ng *kelang banua* ay nagsisilbing *silungan* ng mga tao laban sa init at ulan; pastulan ng mga hayop tulad ng manok, baboy, aso, at baka; at bentilasyon rin para sa loob





Konstruksyon ng kelang banua. Enero 2012. (C. Nilasa)

ng *kelang banua*. Nagiiba-iba ang bilang ng *usok* ng *kelang banua* depende sa laki, haba, at lapad nito, pero labing dalawa ang bilang ng *usok* sa pinakamaliit na *kelang banua*. Sumunod sa pagtatag ng *usok*, sisimulan na rin ang balangkas at *datag* o sahi. Ang balangkas ay kumbinasyon ng *lampung* o punong kahoy, buho, at kawayan at sa balangkas nakabatay ang laki, haba, at taas ng itinatayong istrutura. Ang balangkas din ang maghahati-hati sa iba't ibang bahagi ng *kelang banua*: *pantaran* o balkonahe; *talimbasan* o tanggapan ng mga bisita; *liwasan* o pinagdarausan ng ritwal, *bicharan*, at iba pa; *bilit* o pahingahan na maaari ding maging banko; at *dapugan* o lutuan.

**Datag, Sawali, at Bubungan:** Ang *datag* ay yari sa kawayan na pinaghati-hati, inayos ng may disenyo o patern (sa kaso ng *liwasan* at *talimbasan*), at tinatali gamit ang yantok. Simpleng paghahanay lamang ang ayos ng kawayan sa bahaging *bilit*. Mahalagang banggitin na ang *talimbasan* at *bilit* ay mas mataas sa *liwasan*. Pagkatapos ng *datag*, ang *sawali* o dingding naman ang patatayuin. Habang ginagawa yung mga pangunahing bahagi ng bahay, mayroon nang mga taong naghahabi ng *sawali*. Iba't iba rin ang disenyo ng *sawali*,



*Siniku-siko*. (A. Palileo)



*Inarisaw*. (A. Palileo)

kabilang ang: *tinagadwa*, *tinagatlo*, *siniku-siko*, *inarisaw*, at *matapunay*. Tatakpan halos lahat ng bahagi ng bahay gamit ang *sawali*, pero mag-iwan ng maliit na bahagi sa may bubungan at lalagayan ng kawayang rehas na magsisilbing



*Sawali tinagadwa*. (A. Palileo)

bentilasyon dahil walang *panundawan* o bintana sa *Kelang banua*. *Gipi-gipi* ang tawag sa mahabang bankong inuupuan ng mga bisita sa *talimbasan*. Walang *sawali* sa gilid ng *talimbasan* dahil ang *gipi-gipi* ang nagsisilbing dingding, at bubungan na agad ang nasa ulunan nito. Huling inilalagay ang *bubungan*. May balangkas nang mapapatungan ang naihandang mga atip na *pinewd* o tinupi at inipit o tinahi. Yantok rin ang ginagamit na pantali nito sa balangkas.

**Pagbabasbas.** Kapag natapos na ang pagpapatayo, babasbasan na ng *tungkol* ang *kelang banua*. Kasabay ng pagbabasbas ay pasasalamat kung saan naghahanda ng *tabad* o *tinapey*, nag-aalay ng mga pagkain, tumutugtog (*basal*) o sumasayaw (*tarek*). Ang *tabad* o *tinapey* ay alak na gawa sa bigas. Upang tuluyang matransporma ang bigas sa alak, kailangan munang maghanda ng kalahating kilong bigas – sasaingin ito, sasandukin at papalamigin sa malapad na bilao o malinis na banig. Pagkalamig lalagayan naman ito ng *purad* (o *yeast* sa ingles) at saka hahaluin. Ililipat naman ito ngayon sa banga at pupunuan ng tubig. Tatakpan ang bunganga ng banga ng dahon at tatalian ng yantok upang hindi sumingaw ang pinapaalsang bigas. Dahil nabubulok ang dahong nakatakip dito kailangan palitan din ito pagkatapos ng humigit kumulang



labing limang araw. Mag-aantay ng tatlo hanggang apat na linggo bago ito maaaring inumin. Sa takdang araw, magtitipon ang buong komunidad at ang magdadasal ang *tungkol*. Kakain at iinom ang mga tao, *magbabasal* at *magtatarek* upang ipagdiwang ang matagumpay na pagtatayo ng *kelang banua*.

Matapos ng ritwal ng pasasalamat ay maaari nang gamitin ang *kelang banua* para sa iba't ibang layon kung para saan siya'y itinayo tulad ng pagplantsa sa mga gulo o away sa pagitan ng dalawang magkatribo, pagdiriwang ng *ubos* o kasal, pagdaraos ng *lingaw* o lamay, at ang pagriritwal ng *Tambilaw* at *Mundeg*. Ang *Tambilaw* at *Mundeg* ang pagriritwal na ginagawa upang humingi ng basbas mula kay *Ampo* para sa mga bago nilang naani. Bago pa man maipamahagi ang ani sa mga kasapi ng tribo o maibenta ito sa labas, naniniwala silang kailangan muna itong ipabasbas kay *Ampo* dahil para sa kanila isa itong biyayang ipinagkaloob ng Diyos. Isang pagtanaw ng respeto at pasasalamat ang pagdiriwang na ito upang bigyan sila muli ng aanihin sa mga susunod na buwan.

*“Maaaring sukatin ang galing at husay ng pagkagawa nito at ng mga gumagawa nito batay sa pagkatugma sa tradisyunal na panuto sa paggawa, at sa pagiging matibay nito laban sa hagupit ng kalikasan.”*

#### **Pagbabagong Dala ng Paglipas ng Panahon.**

Sa nakaraang mga siglo, may ilang nagbago sa mga paraan ng pagpapatayo ng *kelang banua*, kasama ang iba't ibang salik tulad ng kung bakit ito itinatayo, at ilang mga isyung ekonomikal, pulitikal, at kultural. Halimbawa, hindi agad masasabi na noon, ang *kelang banua* ay simbolo ng kapangyarihan ng panlima at ng kanyang mga

katauhan. Praktikal ang pagtatayo ng *Kelang banua*; maaaring nararamdaman ng panlima na tungkulin niya sa kanyang mga nasasakupan na magtayo ng *kelang banua*, tulad na lamang ng isang amang may katungkulang pangalagaan at bigyan ng kanlungan ang kanyang pamilya. Maaaring sukatin ang galing at husay ng pagkagawa nito at ng mga gumagawa nito (i.e. ang *panlima* at ang kanyang komunidad) batay sa pagkatugma sa tradisyunal na panuto sa paggawa, at sa pagiging matibay nito laban sa hagupit ng kalikasan. Ang *kelang banuang* naayon sa panutong ipinamana ng hene-henerasyong mga *panlima* ay maaaring gawing



*Pagbabasbas ng panlima (L) at tungkol (R). May 2012 (A. Palileo)*

sukat ng kahusayan ng *panlima*, bagkus, isa itong sagisag ng katayuan niya sa lipunan. Sa panahon ngayon, dulot ng kapitalismo, industriyalisasyon, at modernisasyon, hindi na lahat ng *kelang banua* ay gawa mula sa materyales na kinalap mula sa kalikasan – bagkus, binibili ito mula sa mga negosyante. Dulot na rin ng panahon, nagkakaroon ng pangangailangang magtayo ng *Kelang banuang* may kuryente at inidoro. Ayon din sa mga Palawan, mas mainit na sa ngayong panahon kaya nilalagyan na ng bintana ang ilang *Kelang banua*, kahit na ayon sa tradisyunal na panuto, walang bintana ang *Kelang banua*. Wala ring ginagamit na bakal, ngunit dahil mas matibay daw ito, pinapako ang datag at yari na sa yero ang bubungan ng ibang *Kelang banua*.

Sa kabuuan, sa pamamagitan ng pag-aaral ng *kelang banua*, mas malalim na ang pagkakakilala ng mga mananaliksik sa tribong Palawan, at maaari namang isipin na pagdating ng panahon, makauwi ang lahat sa metaporikal na *kelang banuang* sumisimbolo ng kultura – at ipinagmamalaki ang kayamanan ng ating minanang kultura.

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# ***Ubos et Kakampongan: Marriage and Kinship Practices among the Pala'wans of Brooke's Point, Palawan***

*Delarmente, Faith Emerald T.  
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Marriage “creates a new household, the basic social unit of Palawan society and adds a new structural element to the local group, the next most basic social entity.” It becomes the basis for the expansion of the kin group. It “has public and judicial significance.” It becomes a “recreation of society and a ritual affirmation of the transfer of the groom from one group to another.” (p. 86) “[T]he marriage ceremony essentially centers on three main points: a large gathering of people, a symbolic display of the couple sitting side by side after the groom has ceremoniously entered the bride’s house, and an elaborate, formal discussion (*bitsara*), which is aimed not only at settling practical matters, but also at establishing public acceptance of the new couple and the marriage arrangement in general.” (Macdonald, 2007. p 83.).

Palawan is an island exemplifying Philippine diversity. It has long been a home to a number of ethnic groups cohabiting amicably — Tagbanua, Pala’wan, Batak, Tau’t Batu, Calamina, Jama-Mapun, Molbog, Tausug, and Samal-Bangigni. The Pala’wan people live in the interior of the southern half of the island (Revel, 1996). By tradition, Pala’wans are nomadic blowgun hunters and swidden agriculturists (Revel, 2001). The Pala’wan highly resemble the Tagbanua in many cultural aspects and for this reason, they are frequently mistaken to be people of a single ethnic group. (c.f. Fox, 1982)

Our study is concentrated in the municipality of Brooke’s Point. This paper shall delve upon the cultural practices of the Pala’wan group in Barangay Ipilan, Barangay Aribungos, and Barangay Imulnod primarily focusing on marriage culture, the rituals to strengthen familial bonds, their views on family life and kinship, the importance of these practices within their community, and how these practices change over time.

## **Data Gathering Methods**

In the course of the two-week research in April 2012, we were able to interview *panglimas* and some locals. We were also able to conduct a focused group discussion with four Pala’wan teenagers. The FGD took place on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May during a ceremonial festivity they call the *Umanat*. Fortunately, we were also able to witness a wedding. Our key informants include the community elders and leaders whom they call the *panglima*. The *panglimas* officiate traditional Pala’wan weddings. Among all, they are the most knowledgeable on marriage and family life in a Pala’wan society as imparted and instilled upon them by older *panglimas*. *Panglima* Pedro told us, for the Pala’wans, life is a teacher of lessons and you earn experiences throughout. So the more you go through life, and the older you get, the more experiences you have, the more you learn.

To further analysis on the changes in practices, we put questions upon two age groups. We had interviews with people whose age range from 50 to 80 years old as well as people 13 to 25 years of age. All of them were of Pala’wan ancestry. Except for the teenagers, most of our informants married a fellow Pala’wan while a few married those coming from different areas and/or different ethnic groups.

In the first week we started with semi-structured interviews with informants in Sitio Sabsaban in Barangay Aribungos. Later, we had the opportunity to ask questions to *Panglimas* in Barangay Imulnod during a meeting. We were lucky to witness the preparations before

and after the wedding of Jenebis Kinasa and Branel Abat in Barangay Imulnod. Traditional practices are still observed, though clear manifestations of external influences pave way to the loss of some of these practices.

## ***Ingin: Getting a bride, the Pala’wan way***

From the data gathered, it was found out that there are several norms in courtship for the native Pala’wan, for which they have a simple and direct approach, though it is not courtship per se, as compared to the general depiction of Filipino courting wherein it takes several phases and lengthy transitions. In Pala’wan culture, according to *Panglima* Nolvito “Luway” Norsen, when a boy likes a girl, he would simply ask “*Megay mu daken?*” which is translated to “Do you like me?” If a positive response is attained, a handkerchief is given which starts the process of ‘courtship’, and as this goes on, six other symbolic gifts are given to complete a whole set. These will be given enclosed in the handkerchief once the parents of the *budyang* (maiden) accept the proposal of the *subur* (bachelor). There also comes a time when a *budyang* puts a *subur* to a test. She might reject the *subur*’s confession of interest; however, if a *budyang* sees that the *subur* is genuinely determined to pursue her, she might accept the proposal.

A *panglima* is the one responsible in bringing the gifts to the *budyang* since it is, according to several informants, in the traditional Pala’wan culture that the *subur* should not directly face the parents of the *budyang* until things are settled; this is a sign of disrespect to the parents and may lead to a misapprehension resulting to violence. After three days, if the presents are not returned, the *panglima* will go back to know whether his proposal has been accepted or rejected. This act of bringing of gifts to the *budyang* is locally called *pegdaton*. The Pala’wan only have a short time frame from courtship to marriage. As an example, *Panglima* Luway related to us that he only courted his first wife for a week, and then they were engaged to marry.

These norms not only during courtship but also in other aspects, according to some locals, are hard to follow in present times. This idea, that if they continue doing the traditional way, there would be no improvement in their lives and would be left behind by the developing world, will be tackled later on.

Once the proposal is accepted, the parents of both parties would meet alongside the aforementioned *panglima* (community leader), and a small *bitsara* or a round table discussion (tackled further later) regarding the relationship between their children will commence.

Two people cannot marry without the blessing of their parents. *Meg agaw* or eloping is frowned upon by the Pala'wans.

Part of the discussion will be the schedule of the wedding day. When deciding on the date of the wedding, the *panglima* depends on the moon. According to them, the wedding day should take place only if it is *talikod* (full moon) or *sabang* (new moon). If the *panglima* says *pudi* (decline), it means not to go through as planned; if he says *ubos* (wedding), things will go through as planned and the couple shall be married.

Bride price or *buryan* is also discussed in the preliminary *bitsara*. It is a “transfer from the groom to the father of the wife” (Tertilt, 2002). These are usually composed of transfers from ancestors, and money; the price of a woman is based on the price of her mother (Macdonald, 2007). The one's who will make use of the *buryan* are the parents of the girl, and not the couple – a sort of compensation for the parents for the expenses and hardships they have endured since the birth of the girl. According to *Panglima* Romeo Kinasa, the price of the *buryan* can be changed to fit the economic capacity of the *subur*, but must always be discussed beforehand. If in case the *subur* cannot supply the agreed upon price on time, he must inform his future *pangibanan* (in-laws) at least three days before the wedding, so that a solution may be discussed. In present times, because of the expenses of daily living, the *buryan* is usually asked to be paid as cash instead of inheritance. Sometimes, farm animals like cows and pigs are also given.

The contemporary age has developed a different perspective and preference for matters like this. The *panglimas* who know the details of a traditional marriage regret to say that not all are still practiced today.

### **Ubos: The Wedding**

The ritual of marriage is traditionally done in the *Kelang Banna* (“Big House”), with the permission of the *panglima* that presides over the tribal house. In cases where it becomes exceedingly inconvenient to hold the wedding in the traditional big house, the rite can be done in the house of the bride's parents. If the area is too small to accommodate a number of guests, a temporary construction called the *pala-pala* (a temporary event place made up of bamboo posts and coconut leaves) will be put up for the wedding ceremony.

The festivities begin on the eve of the wedding day. As the researchers observed, the women decorate the area where the wedding will be held with streamers and dangles made of leaves, while the men prepare and cook the food.

Following tradition and as we observed, the *Basal* – the musical ensemble of the Agong, Sanang, and Gimbal<sup>1</sup> (see footnote), is played continuously until early morning of the wedding day. A celebratory dance called the *Tarek*, which follows the beat of the Gimbal with every *saraksak* (step), is danced by women. This is danced by fast-paced *pagsaraksak* on the *datag*<sup>2</sup> or bamboo floors of the *banna*. It is believed that the louder the *saraksak*, the more joyous the celebration, and that the happiness and thanksgiving would reach *Ampu* (god) (Mengote & Palileo, 2012). Traditionally, the *Basal* and the *tarek* continue until early morning, but nowadays, the younger generation chooses modern ‘disco’ (dance and music) as an alternative. Festivities are now halved into the traditional *Tarek* and the modern ‘disco’.

<sup>1</sup>*Agong* and *Sanang* are types of gongs with *boss* or bulge at the middle, made of mixed metals and is tapped using a wooden stick. *Gimbal* is a small drum made out of *buhô* or big bamboo wrapped with goatskin, which is played using two sticks. This sets the pace of the *basal*. (Mengote, Palileo, 2012)

<sup>2</sup>*Datag* is bamboo floors tied loosely with *yantok* instead of using nails, to provide better acoustics when dancing the *tarek*. (Mengote, Palileo, 2012)

For the whole festivities prior to the ceremony, the bride must be kept in isolation as required by tradition. For preparations, the bride must stay in the house where the wedding is to be held, while the groom is to stay in a separate, but nearby house. Both are dressed and made-up by members of their respective families. If situation dictates that only one house is available, the two must stay in separate rooms. The bride and groom wear traditional clothing. The bride wears a *Tadyong*; a circular cloth used as a skirt, and any blouse with long sleeves, while the groom wears a non-white long-sleeve shirt and pants. From our observation, importance is given to the hair ornaments used by the bride and groom in weddings. A mat called the *damdám* is laid on the floor each for the bride and groom to sit on, prior to tending the hair. The hairline must be shortened to have a clean look while wearing the headdresses. Both wear headdresses of the same design. The *pangantim* is a crown-like ornament worn by the bride, while the groom wears a *tupi*, which is, according to informants, similar to the Muslim *Putong*.



**Woman dancing the *Tarek* during a Pala'wan wedding with two men playing the *agong* in the background. (Photo by Dona Mengote at Brgy. Aribungos, Brooke's Point, Palawan.)**

But, in the wedding that we observed, the couple used rented clothing from Muslims. According to *Panglima* Romeo, it is okay to use those clothes since it is similar and more convenient. During the pre-wedding preparations (i.e. clothing, grooming), both the bride and groom must face east. We believe that this is so that the couple may see the sun as it rises, symbolizing the beginning of their life as man and wife.

At the time of the wedding, the groom is brought to the *Kelang Banna* by being carried on the shoulder by someone who is able, and is circled around the house seven times. They are led by the *manegbasal* (a person who plays in the *basal*), while they follow. This



is called *ilibot*, which is similar to the Tagalog translation. The bride is also carried around the house seven times after the groom has finished his rounds. This action is said to symbolize the love that the couple has for each other. It is a sacrifice to prove the amount of love and willingness to marry. Upon entering the *banua*, the couple take their respective seats (groom on the left, bride at the right) in view of all the guests. The bride is to sit first before the groom. Then, several *panglimas* will hold a *bitsara*.

*Bitsara* is like a court of the Pala'wan where the elders generally have a discourse on a specific topic or issue. In the context of a wedding, the bride and groom are assigned a minimum of one *panglima* each to represent their side. The number of *panglima* for

both sides must always be equal, and a single *panglima* is to be set as the mediator of the *bitsara* (i.e. 3 *panglima* for the bride, 3 *panglima* for the groom, 1 mediator, for a total of 7 *panglima*). The whole wedding ceremony revolves around the *bitsara*. The elders discuss life lessons and give advice for the couple using highly colorful and metaphorical illustrations and stylistic elaborations, but they do so in an indirect manner. They would talk about the pair using the native language of the Pala'wan, as if the couple weren't present. Traditionally, the *bitsara* is done with the sharing of *tinapey* or fermented rice wine and tobacco, which goes around the circle of *panglimas*. The discussions may take as long as one day, depending on the flow of the conversation.



**Bitsara.** The groom and bride are seated in view of all the guests, as the *panglimas* discuss before them.  
Photo taken by Dona Mengote

We observed that as long as the *bitsara* goes on, the pair must sit still and quietly listen and understand the discussion of the *panglimas* for it is about them. The discussion usually delves upon marriage life and is seen as a form of marital counseling and so the couple must listen attentively. This was also confirmed by our informant Kuya Chuck Nilasa.

When the discussion is over, the bride and the groom each give their representative *panglima* a hundred pesos, which the *panglimas* consequently bless and return to the bride and groom. According to *Panglima* Salmido Buat, this exemplifies that nobody dictated on them to marry, and that this is of their own decisions and that they have accepted and understood the guidance of the elders. After the *panglima* has given their *puwas* (prayer), they would give the money from the bride to the groom, and vice versa. When the *bitsara* concludes, the couple will stand in unison after the count of three. “*Isa, duwa, talo*” (One, two, three), signifying that they are officially married (we observed that this counting was done by an emcee.

In contemporary wedding ritual, after the *bitsara*, when the bride and groom have showed their gratitude to the *panglimas*, they would have their first dance – a modern slow dance. While dancing, all

guests are encouraged to stick money to the newly wed's clothes, to be used as starting resource for their conjugal lives. After the ceremony, there would be an advising by the *panglimas*. This is called the *usyat*, and is composed of gentle reminders of things the couple must and must not do. The parents may also give *usyat* to the children, but must first be invited by the *panglima* to do so. The *panglima* of the groom is the one that will give counsel to the bride and vice-versa. Festivities from the previous night continue as this conclude.

Macdonald (2007) states that divorce in Pala'wan society is neither favored nor disapproved of. It is not in their culture to view separation as a personal failure, or a social disgrace. Our informants discussed that for the Pala'wan, divorce is socially accepted, but it holds its share of punishments due to the violation of the promise to *Ampu* (god), the spouse, and to the *panglima*. *Pulit* is the sanction given to husband if it is the female that has done wrong. The female is not only to pay the *pulit*, but also return the full amount of the *buryan* given by the male. *Ungsod*, is the male counterpart of the *pulit*, meaning, it is the fee remunerated by the male if he

divorces his wife. This payment symbolizes regret for the action done and a promise to be a better person.



Attaching of money to the newly wed's clothes during their first dance in a contemporary Pala'wan wedding

### ***Kakampongan*: The Kinship Practices**

Like the Tagbanuwa, the basic unit of a Pala'wan society is of a nuclear family constituted by a father, mother, and unmarried children (c.f Fox, 1982). The social structure exemplifies the bilateral type since kinship is traced through both the maternal and

paternal lineage. The kin is composed of one's relatives through consanguinity and affinity. "Cognatic or bilateral systems recognize all descent lines through males and females and therefore do not automatically determine membership in a social group at birth, but leave open a great number of possible affiliations" as Macdonald notes (2007. p 62.). Tracing of family lineages bilaterally, or tracing both the fathers' and mothers' ancestry, results in a vast network of consanguineal (relations by blood) and affinal (relations by marriage) kin. Potentially a lot of kin, even if the exact connection are not known. Case in point is that of Mr. Chuck Nilasa who currently resides at Barangay Mainit. During the last week of April 2012, he accompanied us to a meeting with *panglimas* of Brgy. Imulnod. When we asked him how he came to know all of them, he answered, "*Kamag-anak ko sila.*" I followed up and asked him if, in any chance, does he know the degree of his relationship to each of them. He responded that he can no longer determine, and that he just knows that they are related because many of his mother's relatives were *panglimas*.

For the Pala'wan, the consanguineal system consists of all descendants rooting from the grandparents, extending horizontally to the first cousins. The Pala'wan culture also forbids incestuous marriages, called *sumbang*. Marriage should not take place within members of the bilateral family; otherwise they will be put to death

According to *Panglima* Salmido Buat, in the past, status hierarchy was evident in a Pala'wan society. Social stratification was based on blood inheritance. *Panglimas* are much revered, for they are considered as cultural connoisseurs – those who are taught and trained to be leaders. According to *Panglima* Pedro Sagad, one is of high regard if he comes from a *panglima's* lineage. In one of our interviews, we asked *Panglima* Pedro how does one become a *panglima*. He emphasized a great difference in the process of choosing today, as compared to the past. He told us that before, becoming a *panglima* was based on inheritance. It is a must that one of the *panglima's* sons be a *panglima* as well. As of the present, added *Panglima* Pedro, since only a few of the contemporary generation would want to take the responsibility, only those who genuinely accept the obligation shall be taught and trained by being told of folktale and by observing *bitsara* and other rituals, even they are not a *panglima's* son (though they must still be blood relatives). In addition to the *panglima*, the lineages of the *Baylan* or shaman, and the *Tungkol* or spiritual mediums, are also of high resp

### **CASE STUDY: Elizabeth, a bride in a contemporary Pala'wan wedding**

By the time we conducted fieldwork in April, Elizabeth (real names have been changed) was four months pregnant. As the pregnancy happened unexpectedly, Elizabeth and her husband Jose saw the need to marry so they can live and raise their child together. The moment she knew she was already carrying a life in her womb, the couple immediately consulted their parents to express their intention to marry. Everything went well, as their parents agreed and made all the necessary arrangements thereafter.

This scenario is not far from the usual today. When a girl gets pregnant, marriage usually follows. According to Elizabeth's father, *Panglima* Ramon, the two cannot just live under one roof without getting married because it is considered immoral in a Pala'wan society. Marriage is seen as a mechanism to formalize the union of couples. While both of the couple and their families were baptized as Born Again Christians, they had to resort to the traditional wedding as the Family Code of the Philippines states that one must be eighteen years of age to legally marry. Elizabeth was only seventeen by then. Apparently, she told us that they are going to be married again "*sa simbahan*" ("in the church") – by that she meant a Born Again Christian matrimonial ceremony, once they have enough money to handle the expenses. She further noted that there is a great need to be married 'in the church' because they need a marriage document.

Apart from external influences, the heterogeneity of cultures also creates a big impact on Pala'wan customs, as intermarriages would most likely ignore traditional customs in marriage. Many have said that a number of Pala'wans now marry in either Catholic or Protestant churches for the reasons that their migrant spouse practices the aforementioned religions. Moreover, the locals nowadays opt to go for a legalized marriage – those recognized by the state, and having documents fashioned under the Philippine laws validating the ceremony. In contrast, papers and documents are of no necessity in a traditional *ubos* or Pala'wan wedding since the most essential part of the celebration are the parents of both bride and groom, and the *Panglimas*. As much as ethnic awareness remained fundamental as expressions of Pala'wan identity, some practices are being incorporated to simultaneously identify with the nation – to deal with new circumstances (cf. Mangahas, 1998).



Uxorilocality, as defined by Macdonald (2007), “is a basic rule accounting for the special kind of spatial alignment observed in one form or another in all hamlets of local settlements among the Palawan people.” In native Pala’wan society, newly married couples practice matrilocal, meaning the residences of new members of the kin group neighbors the relatives of the bride. Thus, parents of the bride play an important role of a “warden” (Macdonald, 2007) to the young married couple. Though the pair is already treated like adults, they are still just children undergoing transition. As Macdonald (2007) puts it, marriage “marks the most crucial step, one that separates the young from the adults.” For the Pala’wans, newly married couples must still be guided accordingly to the proper ways of living life as a conjugal pair.

Macdonald (2007) says that polygyny, or the taking in of more than one wife, is permitted, but not prevalent in the Pala’wan society. Usually, the polygynous husband is an elder of high status in the community, with the material and economic means to support the *dunay* or second wife (coming from the word *duma* meaning two). It is very similar to the ways Islamic people take in a second wife. The high influence of Muslim practices is not atypical because of the influence of the Sulu Sultanate through the Tausug, who openly accepted Islam (Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication, 2011), and of the high presence of the Muslim community in Brooke’s Point. In marrying a second wife (or a third one, *asawa yutok*: last wife), the *panglima* of ‘the first wife’ (*asawa pun*) must be present during the *bitsara* since both the husband and the second wife must pay a fine to the first wife. Usually a fine of money or plates is asked. One *panglima* noted that a woman taking on two

husbands is a rare case, but is still accepted in *Pala’wan* society. She must be knowledgeable in ways to prevent her two husbands from fighting.

The Pala’wan of the present in Iplan, Sabsaban, and Aribungos in Brooke’s Point show a highly syncretized, heterogeneous mix of several religious belief systems. Despite developing new perspectives in their systems of beliefs and worship, the Pala’wan however, have not ceased to practice their traditional ways. As we observed, they still believe in *Ampu*, the creator who wove the world and created humanity. They still call on him during thanksgiving or *Umanat* and when healing the sick.

Indigenous culture and modernization are interrelated phenomena such that you cannot avoid one to influence the other. Apparently, modernization has been slowly modifying the traditional practices of the Pala’wans. Riding the waves of change, traditional ways are at risk of being forgotten due to change in preferences and external factors. The “pure” Pala’wan marriage tradition is gradually disappearing. Shall the practice die out, culture loss among the group is not far from taking place.

The researchers recognize that cultures vary, and therefore recommend that future field workers explore other municipalities and barangays in the island of Palawan to determine the differences and variations of the traditional *Ubos*. We also recommend that a comparison of the practices in these areas be done, since several of our informants have informed us that those who live in uplands have a more “pure” culture than the lowlanders.

## Glossary of Terms

### AGONG

Type of gong with a boss or bulge at the middle, made of mixed metals and is tapped using a wooden stick. Bigger and has a deeper sound compared to the *sanang*

### AMPU

The being that is worshipped as the creator and ruler of the world by the Pala’wans

### ASAWA PUN

The first wife

### ASAWA TUMUNGATONGA

The middle of three wives

### ASAWA YUTUK

The last wife

### BITSARA

Jural discussion presided by a *panglima*

### BUDYANG

Maiden

### BURYAN

Bride price; it could take the form of goods like rice, coconut, animals either for consumption or domestication, etc.

### DUWAY

Term used if a man takes in two wives.

### INGIN

Courtship.

### GIMBAL

A small drum made out of buho or big bamboo wrapped with goatskin, which is played using two sticks. This sets the pace of the basal.

### KAKAMPONGAN

Family and kindred. (*Pagpapamilya*).

### KELANG BANUA

Literally means “big house,” this is the Pala’wans tribal house where events pertinent to Pala’wan culture are ideally held i.e. marriage, thanksgiving, community meeting, etc.

### MANEBASAL

A person who plays in the *Basal* or musical ensemble of the *Agong*, *Sanang*, and *Gimbal*

### MEG AGAW

To runaway or elope.

### PALA-PALA

A temporary event place made up of bamboo posts designed by coconut leaves

### PANGANTIN

A crown-like headdress worn by the bride during the wedding. It is traditionally made of gold.

### PANGLIMA

Community elder

### PANGIBANAN

Mother-in-law/ Father-in-law

### PEGDATON

The act of giving gifts (6 items enclosed within a hankerchief) to the *budyang* via a *panglima* during *ingin*.

### PULIT

A sanction made to someone you have done wrong. (e.g. promising to avoid a wrongdoing to cure sickness)

### SANANG

Type of gong with a boss or bulge at the middle, made of mixed metals and is tapped using a wooden stick. Flatter compared to the *agong*.

### SUBUR

Bachelor

### SUMBANG

Incest

### TADYONG

Circular piece of cloth wrapped around the waist as a lower garment for females.

### TAREK

Pala’wan dance for certain occasions i.e. *Umanat* and *ubos*; it is characterized by loud prominent footsteps.

### TINAPEY

Rice wine

<b>TUPI</b> A flat hat, which is worn by the groom during a wedding ceremony; resembles the <i>putong</i> of Muslims.	<b>UBOS</b> Pala'wan wedding  <b>UMANAT</b> A celebration to give thanks to Amпу	<b>USYAT</b> An advising and counseling session by the <i>panglimas</i> ; it is composed of gentle reminders of things the couple must and must not do.
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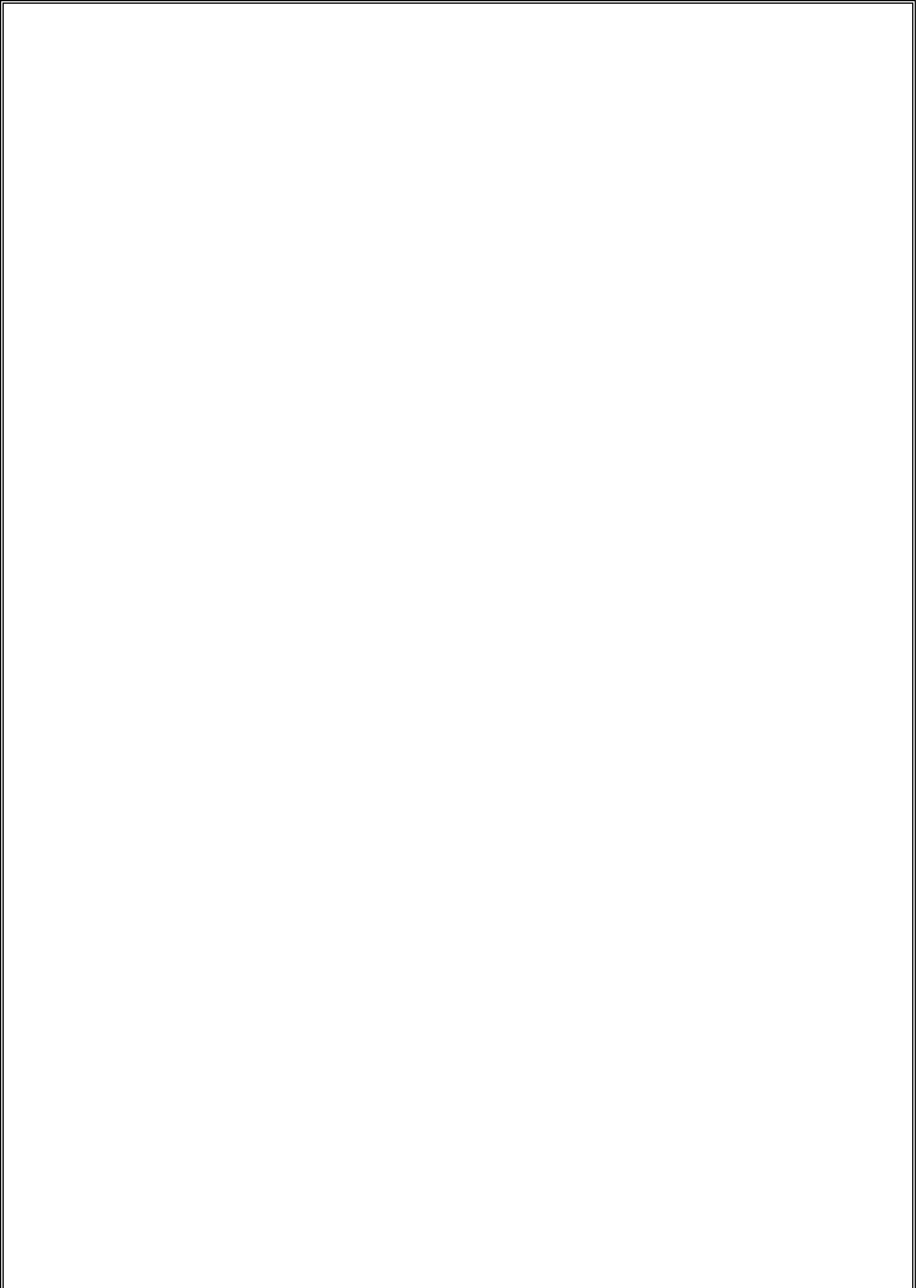
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***When Parallel Lines  
Intersect:  
Acculturation and Religious  
Syncretism among the  
Pala'wans of Barangay  
Ipilan and Sitio Linao,  
Brooke's Point, Palawan***

Santiago Escoto  
Marilene Tadeo

Syncretism is often seen in Roman Catholic missionary history, one example of which is the blending of Catholic elements and animist elements of the Filipino native religious belief system from before the Spanish colonization and religious conversion began. This new folk religion then takes a form of its own with elements from both belief systems. Filipino Catholicism has resulted from acculturation which is defined as, “the processes of change in customs and beliefs that result from the contact of two or more cultures” (Reynolds 1971: 23). Such syncretism is an acculturative response to colonial conversion in our history.

Christianity in itself is relatively new to Brooke's Point, Palawan, unlike Islam which has established its roots in Brooke's Point long before the Spanish arrived. During Spanish colonization, Brooke's Point, known as *Bon Bon* then, was protected and subjected to the power of governorship of the Sultan of Sulu. The local people, composed of the native Pala'wans administered by their *Panglimas* (tribal chieftains) and Muslims who have migrated from Mindanao by their *Datus*, remained relatively unaffected during this time of rapid and forceful changes in the religious belief system to the rest of the Philippines (Laceste 2011).

Since Catholicism was introduced in Palawan by Augustinian missionaries in 1910, long after the Spanish colonization (New Advent 2011/2009), the traditional system of the Pala'wans remains deeply embedded in the local culture. Even exposure to urban life has not reduced the significance of local ceremonialism and rituals of the Pala'wans with regard to their agricultural and social activities. Dress, tools and housing, however, are today the same as those of their Christian neighbors. In contrast, their ritual paraphernalia consists of trait-complexes that reflect their “old life” – costumes, musical instruments and so forth.

The Pala'wan is an ethnic group that lives in the region of Southern Palawan, Philippines. They are divided into two major groupings, the Pala'wans of the upland and the Pala'wans of the lowland (ALDAW 2009). In their religious practices, the Pala'wan do not have a structured clergy or an organized church, unlike the Roman Catholic structure, but they do follow ritual practices which include healing ceremonies, thanksgiving ceremonies and curing dances or *tarek*. The highest being in the Pala'wan belief system is called *Ampo*, equivalent of God the Father in Roman Catholic belief as described to us by our informants. *Ampo* is known as the creator of all things, the most supreme and powerful being.

There were other rituals related to us such as their wedding rituals and burial rituals that had already been influenced by other elements outside of the traditional Pala'wan belief system. More specifically, they had been influenced by the Catholic belief system. For example, some people in Sitio Linao still practice a strictly Pala'wan burial, elements of Catholic burial practices have bled and incorporated themselves into the fabric of the traditional Pala'wan burial practice.



## ***Tabad*: A Ritual Drinkfest**



In this picture: *Panglima Pedro Sagad with wife, Lola Josita, preparing the lutlut and boiled chicken for the tabad ritual.*

Photo by: *Amanda Palileo*

One of the rituals we were able to witness during our stay last April to May 2012 was a thanksgiving ritual. The rite was actually done for us, as visitors to the area. Central to this ritual was the *tabad*, locally known as *tapuy* or rice wine. A large jar of *tabad* was prepared beforehand, along with *lutlut* (sticky rice cooked in bamboo) and chicken cooked in broth. These were the offerings. According to Kagawad Artiso Mandawa, also known as Kagawad Tisoy who was also present during the ritual, along with Panglima Pedro Sagad (one of our key informants), the food cooked for rituals cannot be seasoned. Aside from us, the ritual was also attended by the members of the barangay council of Barangay Ipilan, as well as the locals in the community as a sign of welcoming us to their community.

The ritual started around twelve noon with a solemn prayer led by Panglima Pedro Sagad. The prayer was recited in the Pala'wan language, a prayer of thanksgiving

and adoration for their highest deity, *Ampo*. He also prayed for peace for the country and for the world. Afterwards, we were asked to step forward to sip from the jar and have a taste of *tabad*, which tasted sour with a sweet aftertaste. Since the jar was rather large, we had to kneel or crouch down and place our lips on a hollow strip of bamboo, using it as a straw to sip the *tabad* from the jar. There were four strips of hollow bamboo on each corner of the mouth of the jar. People could then choose to drink one at a time, or three or four at a time. There was no rule on the right amount of people to drink simultaneously, but a person was considered much "stronger" by the community if he or she could finish a round of drinking alone. After we have all had a taste of *tabad*, the locals then took their turns.

Then, when everyone had had a taste of *tabad*, Kagawad Tisoy announced, "*magsukatan na tayo* [let's start measuring]", meaning that each drink would have to be measured. They placed a short strip of bamboo on top of the jar, announcing that

with each drink, the level of the *tabad* should reach the end of the bamboo strip. Each time a person drinks, water was added to the jar to bring the level back up. According to Panglimas present, the moment the taste of the *tabad* disappears and water becomes prominent, that would be the time when the drinking would stop, for it means that all of the rice wine had been consumed.

For the next hours, way into the night, the celebration continued. Gongs were played, people danced the *tarek*, the Pala'wan's traditional ritual dance and most especially, continued to drink *tabad*. The celebration lasted into the night. There was a brief pause around two o'clock in the morning where most of the people fell asleep. It was then continued briefly at around seven o'clock the next morning up until around eleven o'clock. It was an unforgettable day, the day when we actually felt that we had been accepted into the community after staying there for about 30 days.

As we witnessed, it was clear that the Pala'wans put importance in tradition and rituals and the preservation of it. The syncretism of Christian elements and animistic beliefs of the Pala'wans is manifested in their rituals for marriage and death, which would be discussed further below.

### **Past and Present: Marriage in the Pala'wan Community**

Other religious elements have incorporated themselves into the traditional Pala'wan wedding ritual. Most prominent among these are the Catholic elements. Panglima Nelson Landuan shared his observations on this with us during our time in Brooke's Point.

Panglima Nelson Landuan is a resident of Brgy. Ipilán, Brooke's Point,

near the Sabsaban Falls. He recounted to us the story of his weddings since he was married to his wife twice: the first was a traditional Pala'wan ritual and the second was a Catholic wedding ritual. Panglima Nelson said that his reason for getting married under Catholic rites was primarily for the marriage certificate because they were required to present one when his sons entered school.

He recounted that there is not much difference between a "traditional" Pala'wan



In this picture: [right] bride and groom, [left-on the mat] Pala'wan Panglimas (elders) conducting the marriage ritual  
Photo by: Amanda Palileo

wedding and a Catholic wedding. It was just that when he and his wife were married "traditionally", it was in front of their Panglimas or community tribal leaders. When they were married in the Church, they were married in front of a priest, and other witnesses such *ninongs* and *ninangs* (godfathers and godmothers).

One very notable difference used to be the clothing. The Pala'wan men wear *bahag* (loincloth) and women wear *tadyong* or *tapis* (tube cloth). However, according to Panglima Nelson, nowadays, much the same as with other things, their wedding clothing has been influenced by mainstream Filipino wedding clothing, most men now wear



*Barong Tagalog* and women wear white wedding dresses during Pala'wan weddings.

The *tabad* or rice wine is very central to every Pala'wan ritual. That is why during important events, it is more often than not, present and shared by the whole community. Sometimes, instead of *tabad* or the traditional *rice wine*, they use *gin*<sup>1</sup>. This may be due to budget constraints as the elders of the community have informed us. It could also be seen as a symptom of the changing times.

### **Coming to Terms: Changes in the Pala'wan Death and Burial Rituals**

Ka Dado Samador of Barangay Ipilan has recounted to us how, in the past, Pala'wans would bury their dead with no casket but, due to the influence of Catholicism, it is rare for burials with no caskets nowadays. Panglima Nelson Landuan of Sabsaban Falls also recounted to us a similar story. They consider the use of caskets in burial as a Catholic (Christian) influence:

“...’Yung mga ninuno ko, nilibing sila dati walang kabaong. Sinapnan lang, tapos binalot ng kumot, tsaka ililibing sa lupa. Pero ngayon iba na. Mayroon nang kabaong kasi nga impluwensya na rin ng Katoliko...” [“My ancestors were buried without a casket. They would wrap the body with a blanket before lowering it into the ground. Caskets came about as a Catholic influence.”]

Other Catholic influences were evident in the wake of a thirty-two-year-old Pala'wan that we attended in Sitio Linao<sup>2</sup>. A cross, where the name and date of birth and death were stamped, could be seen above the casket where the body lay. In keeping with the Pala'wan tradition of burying a relative within the vicinity of one's residence, a tomb was erected on the

site where he would be buried. Traditionally, Pala'wans bury their dead under the ground with no tomb nor casket.

### **Post-statement**

While the Pala'wan traditional religion has undergone some changes over time. It could be said that these changes have not yet fully affected the core of their religious belief system. Catholicism is a relatively new concept introduced to the Pala'wans of Brooke's Point. Over time, these changes may intensify, perhaps much like how Muslim beliefs had been integrated into the core of the Pala'wan system since before the Spanish arrived, like calling their tribal leader as *Panglima*.

However, that is not to say that these changes are being assimilated into the Pala'wan tradition easily. Robert Fox has commented on this phenomenon, saying that:

*“The introduction of new ideas and beliefs which challenge the traditional social order of minority peoples, particularly if they are in conflict with the basic features of the social organization and the adjustment of a society to a particular environment and set of economic activities, may disturb the social and psychological well-being of the society and its members.”* (Fox 1971, p. 8).

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<sup>1</sup>Researchers Dona Quia Mengote and Faith Delarmente related to us that in the *Bitsara* or court meeting they witnessed to decide the brideprice during a wedding ritual in Barangay Imulnod in Brooke's Point, gin was shared instead of the traditional *tapuy* or rice wine

<sup>2</sup>One of our informants said that he died of hepatitis because it was observed that days before he died, he suffered from what might have been jaundice. However, the cause of death could not be ascertained because he had already died before a medical examination could be performed.

This may explain why some of our respondents were rather hostile to outside influences entering the Pala'wan fold. One of our informants from Barangay Mainit told us about the negative way they view Christian influences. He said the Pala'wans have this concept of "na-civilize na" ("civilized"), meaning that they had been converted or influenced by Christians. According to him, Christian influence was most often associated with the loss of respect for their elders and traditions, as well as their native origins, like when a person from their community experienced living in the city center (Puerto Princesa) and then turned his back on his roots and stopped participating in their rituals and traditions. Our informant said that this was not a rare occurrence. He, as well as other members of the community, hopes that despite these changes, their community could still retain their sense of solidarity and identity.

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## **Evanescence: The Vanishing Tradition of Gathering Resin from *Bagtik* tree in the Forests of Palawan**

By Edmunds Yuzon and Jenifer Camilon



Almaciga Resin owned by Panglima Nelson Sombra  
Photo by Jenifer Camilon

Situated in the south-eastern section of Palawan is Brooke's Point. The municipality has a total land area of 85,000 hectares and is subdivided into 18 barangays. Of the total land area of the municipality, more than one-third were classified as agricultural, of which two-sevenths were used for planting rice crops and the rest were used for agro-industrial crops, which also covers the *bagtikan*, the area where the trees stand. Brooke's Point was named after a British Admiral, Captain James Brooke, when he came to the area.

Apart from agriculture which is considered as the primary economic activity in Brooke's Point and is highly valued for feeding and providing employment to the growing population, several industries, which include wood craft, mat weaving, and bamboo craft, have also started to thrive in the municipality.

According to the 2007 Census, Brooke's Point has a total population of 58,537 which is composed of several ethnic groups including the Tagbanua, Batak, Molbog, Tau't Bato, and Pala'wan. The latter are the largest indigenous people inhabiting Brooke's Point. Mr. Pedro Sagad, a Panglima and also a former resin gatherer, posited that their ancestors were once a nomadic tribe until agrarian settlers in the early twentieth century. Most of them are relying on agriculture for subsistence, which is common to other indigenous people. But, aside from the aforementioned, the Pala'wan are also depending on the gathering and trade of the resin coming from the *bagtik* tree.

Almaciga (*Agathis philippinensis*, also known as Manila Copal), known to the Pala'wan as *bagtik*, is a large coniferous evergreen tree with smooth, grey colored bark which is commonly found

in mountainous areas. Its resin has provided the people livelihood and subsistence.

For the Pala'wan, the *bagtik* tree is a source of life. By gathering and selling the *bagtik* resin, it has been their source of income which helps them provide their basic needs such as food and education. Mr. Sagad asserted that the income he gets from this livelihood was used to pay for his school expenses. Another significance of this tree for them is that it is inherited from their ancestors. Mr. Nelson Sombra, another Panglima and a resin gatherer, asserted that the Pala'wan heavily rely in this tree because everyone can engage in collection the resin of the tree since "...there is no requirement such as educational attainment".

Among the Pala'wan, there is a set of traditional practices in relation to the production of resin from the *bagtik* tree. Mr. Sombra stated that the resin should be hardened within three months before the harvest period. If this rule is violated, the extraction of resin from the tree might stop. To increase the production of the resin, they said that they offer prayers to their *ampo* before taking out the resin from the tree. They also celebrate a festival called *ungsudan*, which involves offering of money, clothes, bed covers, and chickens. They also play *agong*, a local percussion instrument, as accompaniment in the celebration. It is usually conducted at the *Kelang Banua* and its celebration depends on the situation, for instance, lower extraction of the resin.

### **The Market Value of *Bagtik* Resin**

According to an interview with a Pala'wan tapper, the tappers sold the resin at 5 centavos per kilo before 1975. It increased to 1.20 pesos per kilo in 1975. Between

1980 to 1985, the selling price of the resin would depend on its origin. It would be more expensive when the origin of resin is farther while it is cheaper when it is nearer to the market place. In 1986, the selling price became 2 pesos per kilo and nowadays, it is priced at 10 pesos per kilo and above. According to Panglima Sagad, the selling price of the resin in the past would also depend on its hardness and cleanness. First class resin was priced 60 centavos per kilo while second class resin would sold at 40 centavos per kilo and the third class resin at 20 centavos per kilo.

The resin from the *bagtik* tree is being sold by the Pala'wan tappers to a middleman. Ka Pusangi Indayo, a Pala'wan tapper, stated that he sells the resin to the middleman at 15 pesos per kilo at the *tabuan*, a Sunday market in Barangay Aribungos. Then, the middleman will sell these to a concessionaire at 18 pesos per kilo or an income of 3 pesos per kilo which also subsidizes his transportation expenses. The concessionaire transports these to Metro Manila and he sells these to manufacturers of varnish, waterproofing, soap, etc. His income is subtracted from the expenses for the license, transportation and forest charge (1.50 pesos per kilo) which serves as the tax paid to the government.

In the commercial market, the *bagtik* resin is being called Manila Copal. It is called Manila Copal because the Philippines has been one of the main exporters of this resin. Copal is hard, has a high melting point, and is soluble in alcohol. It is being used as a raw material for varnish, paint, aromatherapy, incense, etc. The resin has also premium use for softwood timber in boatbuilding, interior works, decorative plywood, veneers, paneling, furniture, and small wooden articles. Even though the resin is considered as a minor forest product, it is

one of the dollar earners of this country. According to Philippine Forestry Statistics, an average of 127,000 kilos of Manila Copal valued at US \$171,000 were exported to Germany, Singapore, Switzerland, China, France, Hong Kong, and Japan in 2009.

### **The Life Story of A *Bagtik* Tapper**

Mr. Nelson Sombra, 66, lives in a lowland area of Barangay Maasin in Brooke's Point and started the *bagtik* tapping in 1970's. According to him, he inherited these trees from his ancestors. Tapping the tree is one of his major sources of income aside from rattan making. Tapping this tree serves as his sideline because the extraction process of the resin takes place in a span of three to six months therefore, he needed another livelihood to support his family, his wife and their four children. Getting the resin in the mountain would take him half or whole day while the drying of the resin takes place for three to six months. He sells the resin directly to a concessionaire at a price of 15 to 20 pesos per kilogram. Before tapping the tree, he prays to *ampo* and offer *mulmol* to the tree to increase the extraction of the resin. He also partakes in *ungsudan*.

He chose this livelihood even though the process of resin extraction is longer than other jobs because the main expenses in this livelihood are only the renewal of license from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, transportation expenses, and forest charges which the concessionaire should pay. Mr. Sombra further asserted that albeit he wanted to find another job such as office employment or factory work, he only has very few options because he has no educational attainment.

These trees are really important for him and his family because these provide income that supports their basic needs. Even if he cannot sell some of the resins, they could use these as a light source or as herbal medicine. He notes that this tree is also important for them because it helps in preventing landslides in their area. Nowadays, he will still continue this livelihood and he will protect the *bagtikan* against mining.

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**Telling Stories from Memory**  
*Delving into the Tultul as a Mirror of Palawan Culture*  
by Karminn Cheryl Dinney D. Yangot

Folklorist Dan Ben-Amos writes, “Folklore is very much an organic phenomenon. . . . It is possible to distinguish three basic conceptions of the subject underlying many definitions; accordingly, folklore is one of these three: a body of knowledge, a mode of thought, or a kind of art. . . . Folklore is not thought of as existing without or apart from a structured group. . . its existence depends on its social context. . . . As an artistic process, folklore may be found in any communicative medium; musical, visual, kinetic, or dramatic. . . . In sum, folklore is artistic communication in small groups.” (Dan Ben-Amos 1972: Folklore)

### THE PALAWAN AND FOLKLORE

The Palawan are an indigenous people residing in Southern Palawan. Their language is called Palawan, as their ethnolinguistic group is also named the same. According to Nicole Revel, the linguist-ethnographer who has done intensive fieldwork and has published many works on the Palawan, they are “a society of blowgun hunters and swidden agriculturists. Surrounded by lush vegetation of thousands of species and a peculiar fauna—both fauna and flora are akin to those in Borneo and Luzon—the people live in an intense relationship with nature. (Revel 2001: The Palawan Epics). They are also a people who have their own traditional laws that govern their affairs in the community. *Tultul*, Revel says, is the Palawan long sung or chanted narrative. However, it is one of the intangible cultural heritages in danger of being forgotten. Why so? Living in the community of Brgy. Ipilan for twenty eight days, we observed that not all the Palawan youth are aware of the existence of *tultul*. Some of them know what it is, but it is the members of the old population that are really trained to deliver it. Thus, we have inferred that its continuity is unsure in the next generations.

### TULTUL and its ELEMENTS

*Tultul* is an ethnoepic. Ethnoepics, according to Dr. E. Arsenio Manuel, are “narratives of sustained length, based on oral tradition, revolving around supernatural events or heroic deeds, in the form of verse, which is either chanted or sung, with a certain seriousness of purpose, embodying or validating the beliefs, customs, ideals, or life-values of the people”. (Manuel 1962: A Survey of Philippine Folk Epics)

Examining the *tultul* narratives we heard, we can say that one *tultul* normally lasts from one hour to three hours and on special occasions such as weddings and thanksgivings, it lasts until up until the last hour of dusk. Length is dependent on the vocal ornamentations that the narrator will embellish his/ her delivery with. In addition, the style by which the epic is told may change; it may be syllabic, one note per syllable, or melismatic, many notes per syllable, or both (according to Nanay Josita, a *manigtultul* and our key informant). *Tultul* is passed from generation to generation by word of mouth (*viva voce*). *Panglima* (community elder) Pedro Sagad says they do not document or write down their *tultul*. It is learned by listening, and not by reading. Based on our interview with *Panglima* Pedring, there are two kinds of *tultul*: the “*Tuturan*” or *tultul* by chanting and the “*Pagliyagun*” or *tultul* by singing. The narrator has the option to recite *tultul* in two different ways.

With only a smartphone with 16GB internal memory, a camera with 4 GB memory stick, and a flashlight, we collected *tultul* for eight nights. During the day, we went around the community and tried to interview people on their knowledge of *tultul*. As we went around the sitio, we were able to chronicle three different meanings of the word “*Tultul*”: (a) as the long story chanted or sung, (b) as the act of storytelling, and (c) as the assistant/ secretary of the tribal chief. For those nights we collected *tultul*, we would go to the house of *Panglima* Pedro Sagad. Nearby lives his Aunt, Nanay Josita Baldin, and his sister, Lydia Sagad, who are both *manigtultul*. A *manigtultul* is one who delivers *tultul* (in Filipino *manig*= ‘*taga*’ and *tultul*= ‘*mahabang kwento*’). The *manigtultul*, therefore, is a storyteller. It does



*Nanay Josita, our key informant, giving an introduction to the tultul she will deliver. Photo taken at Pedro Sagad's residence in Sitio Linao, Brooke's Point Palawan. (Photo by: KCDD Yangot)*

not matter whether the *manigtutul* is male or female, whether young or old, as long as he/she has been trained by a *manigtutul* of an elder generation, Panglima Pedring says. There are no strict qualifications for being a *manigtutul*. What is just required is that he/she be able to memorize the stories. Moreover, it is expected that the *manigtutul* master the art of voice ornamentation. This is especially needed when singing the *tutul*.

Such is the skill of the *manigtutul*-- to be able to remember and recite the stories passed on to them by their mentors. Once the *manigtutul* forgets a part (no matter how short it is) of the *tutul*, there is a high risk that that *tutul* will get lost. Thus, being a *manigtutul* is not something that can be done overnight and there is more to being a *manigtutul* than just plain memorization. *Tutul* is a skill and an art form.

*Tinultulan*, Nanay Josita said, are the listeners of *tutul* (in Filipino, its translation is 'kinwentuhan'). While *tutul* is being delivered, the *tinultulan* may eat or drink. They are also allowed to go in and out of the group.

#### **RULES THAT GOVERN TULTUL AS A CULTURAL PHENOMENON**

Panglima Pedring and Nanay Josita both said that there are several restrictions as to the recital of *tutul*. No *tutul* must be recited in the house where someone has died. It is considered a disrespect to the soul of the dead. A *manigtutul* cannot deliver *tutul* when his/ her relative has died. This will set a bad precedent, as they say, and might upset the passing soul. No *tutul* must likewise be recited in the morning as it is said that the creatures of the night are asleep in the day, and they must not be disturbed. Disturbance of these entities may cause sickness among people, it is believed.

Traditionally, *tutul* is recited at night, it is forbidden to recite *tutul* in the day. Tatay Pedring explains that *tutul* is intended to be delivered in the silence of the night. In the day, there is too much human activity whose sound will interfere with the *tutul-telling*. Nay Josita adds that the night provides the most conducive environment for a storytelling session. Usually, *tutul* is recited at the residence of the *manigtutul*. In the case of a large audience, such as for that in a wedding, it is delivered in the community's *Kelang Banua* (communal house).

#### **TULTUL NOW**

For the Palawan of Sitio Linao, the degree of knowledge and familiarity of the elder generation of the *tutul* is almost inversely proportional to the degree of knowledge and familiarity of the younger generation. The effect of culture change---"modernization" is so much so that knowledge of *tutul* is looked down on in the mainstream Palawan society as it reflects the "*natibo*" character. It is undeniable that there is a division between the people in Palawan who are Christians and those who still adhere to the indigenous ways. Thus, knowledge of *tutul* becomes a basis for labelling and this pushes the young population to detach themselves from their indigenous culture.

Having been able to speak with both the elders and the youngsters, we may say that the elders are in fear that the rich culture of yesterday will not be perpetuated tomorrow. As they say, today they are seeing that the lines between the traditional and the modern are becoming thinner and that the traditional is getting drowned in the stream of modernity. Such is the disparity between the two that for the elders, *tutul* is something to be proud of while to the youngsters, *tutul* is a marker of shame---of backwardness, or "being uncivilized".

#### **AN INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

*Tutul* is considered as one of the intangible cultural heritages of the Palawan. To preserve a culture, can we put into writing a tradition intended (by its people) to be oral? For the Palawan in Linao, this is a contested matter: the youth wanting it to be preserved by writing, the elderly wanting it to be preserved by mouth.

Nicole Revel writes, "Oral epics in the Philippines, as in other countries of South Asia and Southeast Asia, convey a history of manners and customs. They exemplify kinship systems and social organization, religious practices, customary law, material cultures, and trade between exogenous and endogenous groups. Rather than a history of events, they illustrate a history of tradition in its holistic sense." (Revel 2001: The Palawan Epics) Further "In sung narratives, like *tutul*, we find treasures of ancient memory, an intangible heritage endangered in all areas of the world by any or all of the following factors: the impact of modern technological and economic development, changes in social structure, wars and political or religious intolerance, vanishing traditions, and the advanced age of its last performers." (Revel 2001: The Palawan Epics). And this is certainly why intangible heritages such as *tutul* must be preserved.



*Ka Tisoy (Left, beside blackboard) translates to Filipino the tultul delivered by Nanay Josita (far left, seated) in Palawan. According to Revel, tultul is delivered in a supine position. However, in our case, the storyteller was seated and not lying on the floor (Photo by: Janine Ochoa)*

We collected seven tultul narratives. I decided to pick out three stories with commonalities: recurring characters and themes. Here is a triad of stories:

**TUWAN PUTLI IKAN-IKAN**  
(The Beautiful Baby Princess)

Narrator: Josita Baldin

Narrated in (language): Palawan

Translated to Filipino by: Pedro Sagad

Translated to English by: Karminn Cheryl Dinney D. Yangot

Place of delivery: Sitio Linao, Brgy. Ipilan, Municipality of Brooke's Point, Palawan

File type: Video (.mp4)

File size: 2.12 GB

Recorded on: 26 April, 2012

Tagalog Translation

May sultan. Yung sultan, kung magkakaroon ng anak, gusto niyang manganak ung asawa niya pero gusto niya lalake, ayaw nya babae [na anak]. Kung manganak siya ng babae, ihahatid nya sa bundok, ilalayo niya. Taapos nagbuntis ung asawa tapos nanganak. Pagkaanak niya, babae. Ginawa nya [ng sultan] yung pangako niya sa sarili niya na pag nanganak yung asawa nya ng babae, talagang hindi niya buhayin, itapon nya sa bundok.

Putli ang anak niya. Pagkatapos nung natagalan, nung lumaki na sya doon sa bundok, may roon ding isang lalake narinig niya yung tilaok ng labuyo [manok]. Tapos pinuntahan niya. Pinuntahan niya yung tilaok. Nakita nya doon yung bata nakakulambo. May unan, may kulambo, may banig may kumot. Nakita niya, pero talagang lupaypay na siya. Talagang

mamamatay na. Tapos binuhat siya. Tapos nakita niya yung bata na halos malagutan na ng hininga. Pinawisan siya [yung lalake], tapos kinuha niya ung pawis, winisikan niya ng pawis yung bata, tapos nabuhay yung bata.

Inalagaan ng lalake iyong bata. Pagkabuwan na ng bata, nakapagsalita na. Maliksi na siya. Hinatid na siya sa saudagar. Yung sumunod sa panglima. Pagkahatid na sya doon, tao na siya, dalaga na siya. Ung naghatid sa kaniya doon sa gubat, yung nakahanap sakaniya, umaga gabi sila naglalakad papunta sa bahay ng saudagar. Tapos ung asawa ng naghahatid, nagselos kasi raw bakit ganon araw araw maglakad sila, uuwi gabi. Araw araw maglakad, uwi gabi.

Sabi nung babae na may asawa sa batang inutusan, dalhin mo dito si putli, tignan ko. Dinala niya. Tapos nung dumating doon,



nakita na maganda, binalbal (pinalo). Namatay. Hinila yung gantong liyag [at kinamatay]. Tapos pagkamatay, hinatid sa bundok.

Pag uwi, tinanong niya [lalake] ung babae kung nasaan yung putli. Hinanap niya ng hinanap ng ilang araw. Nagalit ung asawa na babae, nagtanong bakit daw uwi gabi, uwi gabi. [Sabi ng lalake] Baka raw matagpuan niya yung patay na babae.

Yung lalake na may asawa, naglakad sa bundok. Tapos ang nadatnan niya, ang natagpuan nya doon, ung babae. Patay na. Doon pa rin sa bundok. Pagkakita niya sa babae na patay na, binuhat niya sa kamay niya, binuhay niya ulit. Dalawang beses namatay. Ginanon niya ulit. Winisikan ng pawis. Ulit.

Tinanong niya [lalake] kung ano ang nangyari sa kanya [putli].Sabi ni putli, pinalo siya kaya siya namatay. Nalagot (nahila) kuwintas niya kaya siya namatay. Nagalit na siya [lalake] sa asawa niya. Iniwan na niya asawa niya. Tapos nung malakas na ulit yung putli, ayun, inasawa na niya. Yung putli na namatay ng dalawang beses, yun na yung inasawa niya. Naging masaya sila.

#### English Translation

There was a Sultan who wanted to have a child. He wanted to have a son, and not a daughter. He promised himself that if his wife would bear a child and it was a girl, he would have the child thrown into the mountains to die.

His wife bore a child. It was a girl-- a *putli* (princess). He fulfilled his promise to himself and had his baby thrown into the mountains. One day, a man heard the crow of the rooster, followed the sound, and found the baby. He saw the baby girl, lying on a pillow and mat,

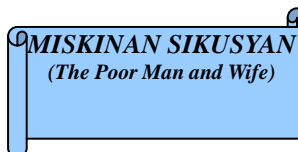
covered by a *kulambo* (mosquito net). He helped her, but she was feeble and motionless. After seeing this state, the man perspired profusely. He gathered sweat in his hands, and sprinkled it on the baby. She came to life.

He took care of the baby, and brought her up. When she was of age, he brought her to the *saudagar* ( a person of rank next in line to the *panglima*. The *saudagar* in this story is in search for a wife). The man had to take her to the home of *saudagar* and so they had to walk for days and nights to get there. The wife of the man who found the child got jealous of this. She ordered a kid to take the *putli* to her. Upon seeing the *putli*, she slapped her and pulled her *gantong liyag* (the *Putli's* necklace). The *putli* died because of this. The wife asked the kid to bring the body of the *putli* to the mountains.

When the man arrived home, he asked about the *putli*. He went on searching for the *putli* in the days that followed. His wife got angry at him for coming home so late at night. She asked him why he was always late. He said that maybe he'd find the *putli* if he kept on searching.

One day, while he was walking in the mountains, he saw the dead body of the *putli*. He cradled her in his arms, and then sprinkled her with his sweat once again. She came to life. Again.

He asked her what happened. She told him that his wife slapped her and pulled her necklace, which caused her death. The man was furious. He was angry at his wife. He took home the *putli*. He left his wife. When the *putli* was already able and back to her normal state, he took her as his wife. They became happy for the rest of their lives.



Narrator: Josita Baldin

Narrated in (language): Filipino

Translated to English by: Karminn Cheryl Dinney D. Yangot

Place of delivery: Sitio Linao, Brgy. Ipilan, Municipality of Brooke's Point, Palawan

File type: .mp4

File size: 1.75 GB

Recorded on: 22 April 2012

#### Tagalog Translation

May mag asawa. Hirap na hirap na talaga walang wala. Walang pagkain ung kinakain nila talbos ng mga

rikotrikot. Yan na lang kinakain nila, wala talaga. May anak sila. Isa. Maliit pa. Pagkatapos ung maliit na un wala talaga nakatikim ng pagkain hanggang sa siya'y lumaki. Hindi siya nakatikim ng ibang pagkain, yun talbos lang kinakain nya,

ung talbos na un. Pag laki na sabi nya, "Nay, tay, ano ba to ang kinakain nyo?"

Sabi ng nanay at tatay, "Anak, wala talbos lang."

Sabi nya, "Ano ba wala talaga, naglaki na ako na di ako nakatikim ng pagkain. Yun lang din kinakain nyo, talbos. Parang hindi talaga ako mabubusog dyan."

"Anak, yun lang talaga swerte natin. Wala tayong swerte."

Pag siya lumaki na, sabi ng anak, "Nay, Tay maglakad ako."

"Anak, huwag. Baka mawala ka."

"Hindi nay, hindi ako mawala. Maglakad lang ako dyan sa tabi tabi."

"Ikaw ba, anak."

Naglakad yung bata. Naglakad siya patungo sa bundok, pagkatapos sabi nya, "Pagod ako talaga. Magpahinga muna ako."

Pagkatulog nya mayroon sa panaginip nya, sabi ng matanda, "Bakit nandito ka?"

"Wala ah."

"Hindi ako maniwala ah, may problema ka talaga. Magising ka na. Yung kalabasa dyan sa tabi mo, dalawa. Biyakin mo yung isa, kainin mo. Yung isa, sa nanay at tatay mo."

Pagkagising nya patingin tingin nya, wala ring tao, wala yung tao na nagsalita. Diyan ung kalabasa, nandyan sa tabi nya. Dalawa. "Sabi ng matanda biyakin ko daw". Pagbiyak nya, un pala ung kanin. Nagkain muna sya. Kumain sya. Pagkatapos kumain, pinawisan sya ng husto kasi ngayon lang nakatikim eh. Basang basa siya. Sabi nya, "Ganoon pala pag nakakain." Nagpahinga siya konti.

Sabi ng mga magulang nya, "Anak san ka galing?"

"Nay wala. Ito lang dala ko kasi Nay, Tay, ito biyakin ko."

Paglapit ng nanay at tatay, biniyak. Pagbiyak nandun na yung kanin at ulam.

"Nay, Tay, magkain na kayo."

Kumain sila at pinagpawisan silang dalawa. "Sarap talaga. Anak, meron pa dun?"

"Nay wala na."

Pagkaumaga, maglakad naman ung bata na yun.

"Nay maglakad naman ako."

Naglakad yung bata at nung napagod, nakatulog ulit. Nanaginip ulit nung matanda.

"Bakit dito ka? Kahapon dito ka rin. Bata, uwi ka na. Yung bahay niyo sunugin mo na."

"Bakit ko sunugin?"

"Basta paguwi mo dun sunugin mo."

Umuwi yung bata, "Nay, Tay..."

"Bakit anak?"

"Sunugin ko yang bahay."

"Uy anak wala na tayong tirahan. Wag mo sunugin."

"Sunugin ko. Dito nalang tayo matulog sa lupa."

Nasunog na yung bahay nila. Abo nlang.

"Nay bigyan mo ako ng lalagyan ko. Ibebenta ko yung abo. Nay, basta ako magbenta ng abo."

Kuha siya ng sako, yun pala yung abo nila may ginto, nilagay niya sa dalawang sako na may abo.

"Nay, Tay, bukas sumama ako sa sultan, bentahan ko ng abo yung saudagar."

"Uyy anak wag ka ganyan. Masama yan. Nakakahiya."

"Basta punta ako, ibenta ko abo."

"Yung sa kanila dalawang adyong, ung palay pati bigas ung sultan na yun may dala. Pagkatapos nakarating na sila sa pupuntahan nila, inano nila ung agong (larrge bossed gong), pinukpok.

Sabi ng bantay ng saudagar, "Ano lakad nyo, masama o hindi?"

"Hindi, yung lakad namin, magbenta kami ng palay at bigas ko."

Bumalik na yung uripen sa saudagar. Lahat ng mga utusan nya [saudagar], andyan na. Kanya kanyang bitbit dinala nila. Pagdating dun, yung batang iyon na may dalang abo, siya lang magisa. Yung abo nya, pinasan nya.

"Ito yung abo ko. Kung di ninyo bi, lhin, di ko na rin kukunin yang abo ko na yan. Pinasan ko yan dito."

Binayaran na lahat ung dala ng sultan, ung palay nya, bigas nya, ahh malaki nabenta nya.

Sabi nya [saudagar], "Sayo bata, ano dala mo?"

"Abo lang po."

"Dalhin niyo sa likod at tignan ang abo."

Dinala sa likod ng bahay at binuhos. Doon nakita nila ginto.

"Sige bata, maghintay ka lang. Mag-akyat ako sa bahay"

Pag akyat niya sa bahay, binigay sa bata puro palay at bigas, halos hindi na kasya sa bangka. "Pati yung lupa ko, sa iyo na, ito ring bahay ko, dito na kayo magtira. Kalahati ng kaniyogan, sa inyo na."

Sabi ng sultan, "Grabe ung bata na yun. Abo lang binta ang laki ng bayad." Gagayahin daw niya yung bata. Sinunog niya yung bahay. Sabi ng sultan, "Sunugin ko na lahat, bahay ko. Bakit yung bata na un abo lang yumaman na. Anak, pinagtawan, bumaba kayo diyan. Iwan ninyo mga gamit ninyo at susunugin ko yang bahay natin."

Sinunog ng sultan yung bahay nya. Pagkatapos nasunog, kinaumagahan, sinako nya yung abo nya at dinala nya sa pingbentahan nya ng palay. Pagdating dun, tinugtog nya ung agong nya.

“Ano yan?”

Sabi nya, “Wala mgbenta lang ako.”

“Ano dala mo?”

“Abo.”

“Ako, di namimimli ng abo.”

“Bakit ung bata na yun binili mo abo nya? Kaya sinunog ko bahay ko.”

“Hindi mo alam yun, yung abo nya, pero may palaman. Alam ninyo, may palaman na ginto. Umuwi ka na. Hindi ko bibilhin yan. Ibuhos mo nlang sa dagat yan.”

Pagdating bahay nya malungkot siya kasi wala na sila bahay, nasunog na nya. Sabi ng asawa niya, “Napagbili ba abo mo?”

“Huwag mo ako tanung tanungin. Yung abo nya, may palaman.”

“Yaan ang sinasabi ko sayo. Huwag mo gayahin bata na yun dahil yung bata na yun, walang wala. Ngayon, saan tayo magtira? Doon na tayo sa bata na yun.”

Yung sultan, nandun na sa bahay ng bata. Nagyaman ung bata na mahirap. Naghirap ung sultan na mayaman. Ito ang kwento ng Miskinan Sikusyan. Tinubos ng anak yung kahirapan ng ama.

#### English Translation

There was a couple who was really poor. They had nothing good to eat. All they can eat were *talbos* (shoots). They have one child, a baby. Thier child never ate anything other than talbos. He grew up in a few years, and asked his parents, “Mother, Father, what is that you are eating?”

They replied, “Son, nothing. Only *tulno* (shoots).”

“Ever since I was a child I never tasted any other food. All I've ever eaten is that. I dont think I will I will ever be full with that”

“Son, this is how it is. This is our luck. We have no luck”

When he grew a few more years older, he said, “Mother, Father, I will walk in the mountains.”

“Son, you might get lost.”

“I will not.”

“Okay then.”

So the child walked in the mountains. He got tired and decided to rest. He feel asleep and then dreamt. In his dream, there was an old man.

“Child, why are you here?”

The child said, “oh nothing.”

“I do not believe you, child. Why are you here? Do you have a problem? When you wake up, there will be two pumpkins beside you. Cut one pumpkin into half and take it to your parents.”

When the child woke up, he looked around, saw no one but two pumpkins beside him. So he opened one pumpkin. Upon opening, there was food inside-- rice and viand. He ate and ate and perspired so profusely that he was already taking a bath in his sweat. This was the fitrst time he ate this kind of food.

“So that is how food tastes like. It is delicious. It makes you sweat.” He decided to rest before going home. After gaining strength, he went home.

His parents said, “Son, what is that you brought? What took you so long?”

“Mother, I saw a bird and I played with it. Here is a pumpkin, let's open it.”

Upon opening, there was food-- rice and viand. And so they ate.

“Delicious!”, they exclaimed while sweating profusely.

In the morning, the child walked again. He got exhausted so he decided to rest. He fell asleep again. And dreamt.

The old man said, “Child, why are you here again? Go home. When you reach your house, burn it.”

“Why would I burn it? We would have no place to live in anymore.”

“Even so. Just do as I say.”

When he woke up, he found no one.

He then went home. “Mother, father, please come down”

“Why, son?”

“Mother, Father, I will burn our house.”

“Ah! Son, why? We will have no place to live in.”

“Let it be, Mother. Let's stay here on the ground We will live”

“But son! Please! Do not burn it!”

“I have to. I will!”

The child took his *santikan* (flint stone) and made fire. He burned the house down.

“Son, we will have no place to sleep later.”

“Mother, Father, let's sleep here, on the ground, on the soil.”

In the morning, the child decided to collect the ashes of their house and accompany the *sultan* to where he would sell his cavans of rice.

“Mother, I will sell these ashes.”

“My son, please do not! It is a shame! No one will buy that.”



The child collected the ashes. In the ashes were two big gold bars. He packed them with the ashes in the sack. He went to the *sultan*.

“Child, why are you here?” asked the *sultan*.

“I will go with you tomorrow to the *saudagar* (rich man- like the mayor of a town or village) and sell my ashes, if it is okay.”, the child replied.

They sailed in two *adyongs* (bangka). One *adyong* had sacks of rice. When they reached their destination, they hit the *agong* (large bossed gong) to signal their arrival. The *saudagar* told his *uripen* (slave) to go check what brought the *sultan* to his house. The *uripen* said, “They are here to sell some commodities”.

“Tell them to bring here what they have so I can pay it already.”, said the *saudagar*. His helps carried the sacks of rice brought by the *sultan* in the house. He paid the *sultan* the price of his commodities. The child then carried his two sacks and presented to the *saudagar*.

“Child, what is that you have?”

“Oh, this is ash.”

The house help took the sacks to the back side of the house and emptied them of their contents slowly. While pouring out the ash, two gold bars fell from the sack. The *saudagar* said, “Wait, child. I will just go upstairs and give you your payment.” He paid the child many sacks of rice, so many that they would not fit in the *adyongs* of the *sultan*.

“Half of my wealth will be yours, child. This *kaniyogan* (coconut plantation), this is yours now. Live here.”

The Sultan and the child went back home.

At home, the child said, “Mother, we shall now live in a coconut plantation!”. They moved to the *kaniyogan* and occupied the house of the *saudagar* which was also given to the child.

The *sultan* thought that he could burn

his house and sell the ashes to the *saudagar* as the child did. He told his *pinagtawan* (wife), “You and the children, come down. Don't bother getting your things. I will burn the house. The child went from rags to riches, and so could I! I shall be richer! He burned down just a hut. My house is a big and beautiful one. If I burn this, I will have more ashes than he had.”

So he burned down his house.

In the morning, he filled sacks with the ashes of his house and brought them to the *saudagar*. Upon arrival, he hit the *agong*. “Who is t?”, said the *uripen*. “It is I, the *sultan*. I am here to sell my goods to the *saudagar*.”

“What is that you are selling?”, asked the *saudagar*.

“Ashes.”

“Ashes? I do not buy ashes!”

“How come you bought the two sacks of the child? I burned my house because of that.” “His was not just ashes. It had fillers. There were two gold bars. That child was poor, so the Creator gave him what he needed. Go home, I do not buy ash, and I will not buy yours. Scatter it in the sea perhaps, but I will not buy it.”

When he got home, the Sultan was devastated and depressed because he burned his own house down. “Did you sell the ashes?”, asked his *pinagtawan*.

“Do not ask me, I thought the sacks of the child only had ashes but I was wrong”, he answered.

“I told you not to imitate the child. Look at what happened! Where we will now live?”

“Let's live with that child.”

And so the *sultan* and his family lived in the house of the child. The poor kid who ate nothing but shoots now became rich and the rich *sultan* who wanted more than he had became poor. This is the story of *Miskinan* (poor husband) *Sikusyan* (poor wife). “*Tinubos ng anak yung kahirapan ng ama*”. (The son paid for the debt of poverty of his father)

**SULTAN MAGAYAGAK PITO  
NGA MAGKATIPUSOD**  
(The Sultan who had Seven Daughters)

Narrator: Lydia Sagad

Narrated in (language): Palawan

Translated to Filipino by: Pedro Sagad

Translated to English by: Karminn Cheryl Dinney D. Yangot

Place of delivery: Sitio Linao, Brgy. Ipilan, Municipality of Brooke's Point, Palawan

File type: .mp4

File size: 1.93 GB

Recorded on: 25 April 2012

### Tagalog Translation

Una, yung sultan saka yung gurong gurong may anak sila na pito. Tapos nung may anak na silang pito, namatay yung tatay. Pagkapatay ng tatay, nilibing. Halos hindi nabaon lahat ung katawan tapos nawalan sila ng apoy. Wala na silang pwedeng makain kasi wala na sila apoy. Nagkaroon ng pag-uusap yung magkakapatid kung paano sila makakakuha ng apoy. Sabi ng ate, “Ako maglakad maiwan kayo”.

Paglakad ng ate, napunta siya doon sa bahay na madaming apoy. Pagdating sa bahay, umupo. Narinig nya may gumalaw doon sa bahay. Ngayon may bintana, tinignan at narinig nya yung kaluskos doon sa loob. Pagtingin niya sa bintana, nakadungaw yung ahas. Nakadilat ung bunganga at nakalabas ung dila. Nagtanong [ung ahas], “Putli, saan ka punta?”.

Hindi na nakasalita yung putli kasi natakot. Tumakbo kasi malaki ung ahas. Yung mga damit niya, ung mga patadyong niya nagkandapunit-punit, sumabit sa mga tinik tinik. Pagdating niya sa bahay nila halos di na sya makagalaw sa takot at nerbyos. Tinanong siya ng mga kapatid niya, “Ate bakit di ka magalaw, di ka makasalita”

Ang ginawa nila, kumuha ng tubig at binanyusan ng tubig [ung ate]. Nung nagkamalay siya, tinanong kung bakit. Sabi niya, “Meron akong bahay na napuntahan pero ang lumabas ahas, kaya ako tumakbo.”.

Yung sumunod na kapatid ganun din. Lahat ng anim na magkakapatid, ganun din, parehas, tumakbo sila sa takot sa ahas pagkarating sa bahay. Tapos ung pangpitong kapatid sabi niya, “Ate ako na ang maglakad, kasi kung di ako maglakad, wala tayo makain.”. Naglakad siya, dun din siya napunta sa bahay na iyon. Humingi siya ng apoy.

“Tao po”, ayun lumabas ung ahas. Sabi niya, “Putli, saan ka punta?”

“Maghingi ako apoy.”

“Pwede, bigyan kita ng apoy kasi ung mga katapid mo baka mamatay sila. Pero, mag uwi ka dito sa akin, ikakama na kita.”

Ang nangyari doon, nag oo nalang yung putli. “O sige sige na magkuha ka ng apoy.”, sabi ng ahas.

Nagkuha ng apoy yung putli. Hinatid doon sa kapatid. Pagdating doon, “Ito na yung poy, magluto na kayo. Ako magbalik doon sa ahas.”. Nag iyakan na sila. Pagkatapos yung nangyari doon, sumunod din ung nanay na namatay. Wala na sila magulang. Babae, lalake, puro patay na. Sabi ng isa, “Gutom na ako.”. Wala na sila

makain.

Sabi ng putli [na pangpito], “Wala na ako magawa kasi yun na yung sinabi ng ahas sa akin.”. Umuwi siya, umuwi na sa bahay ng ahas. Pagdating doon, e andoon na. Pinaakyat siya, doon na raw sa loob. Sinabihan yung putli na magsaing na. “Mayroon dyan bigas, may ulam. Gusto mo itlog, gusto mo karne, may manok, may isda, maraming pagkain dyan.”

E yung putli alanganin, ayaw magsaing kasi nahihya siya. Nung nagutom siya, nagsaing na lang. Sabi ng ahas, “Ikaw dyan ka sa kabilang kwarto matulog, ako dito sa kabila. Ayan may banig, may kumot. Kumpleto dyan sa loob ng kwarto, wag kang matakot.”

Kung gabi raw, kung gabi, ung ahas, lumabas, akyat baba raw. Nasa bubong mamaya mahulog, mamaya nasa taas, mamaya mahulog. Pagdating ng hating gabi doon na sya matulog, doon na sa higaan nya. Ngayon nung ilang buwan na siya [putli] doon, nagsabi yung ahas, “Bukas, maglakad ako. Dito ka lang sa bahay.”

Sabi ng putli, “Wala akong kasama.”

Sabi ng ahas, “Wag kang matakot. Andito ka lang sa bahay walang mangyari sayo.”

Pagkaumaga, lumakad siya. “Putli dyan ka lang, wag kang matakot.” Naglakad ung ahas. Yun pala ang pakay ng ahas lumakad e kumuha ng grupo nya paghahatian na pala siya. Kakainin na siya (putli). Pagkatapos, nung tanghali nakatulog si putli. Pagtulog niya nanaginip siya.

Pagtulog niya sabi, “Putli alam ko kailangan mo. Pag magising ka na sunugin mo yung bahay.”

“E wala na uwian ung ahas.”

“Basta sunugin mo.”

Nagising na ung putli. Pag gising ng putli, sinunog ung bahay. Nung nagkaabo na ung bahay, nakita nya may lumabas na tuhod, tapos lumabas ung katawan. Ang lahat lahat lumabas na. Tapos si putli pinawisan. Pinawisan sya ng maraming pawis sa nerbyos. Kinuha nya ung pawis nya tapos winaslit nya. Tinamaan ngayon ung tao na galing sa abo. Mmaya konti, nakita nyang gumalaw. Bakit, sabi nya, di bumangon. Di bumangon. “Bumangon ka,” sabi nya bat di magsalita. Nagsalita ngayon yung tao, sabi nya, “Ngayon nagawan mo ng paraan na maging tao ako, hindi ka na pwede makauwi sainyo. Kailangan na magsama tayo.”.

Pagkatapos noon, yun pala yung ahas nagsundo ng mga sultan, pitong grupo ang sinundo niya. Sila ung kasama niya naging tao andoon na sila sa bahay. Pagkatapos noon, nung

andyan na ung mga sultan, “Uy maganda pala itong babae na to.”

Nagtanong daw ung sultan kung may kapatid ba sya. Sabi nya [putli] meron. Sabi nya, “sunduin”. Nung sinabing sunduin, sinundo sa bahay nila. Pagdating sa bahay, ung mga kapatid nya hindi makagalaw doon nalang nakahiga. Puro gutom na. Pagkatapos nun, binayusan sila ng tubig. Lahat lahat sila, yung anim. Nung pinaliguan sila, gumaling na. Malakas na. Sabi ng sultan, “Maghanda na kayo, sumama na kayo sa akin, doon na tayo tumira.”

Naghanda yung mga kapatid. Pagkatapos maghanda lumakad na sila. Pagdating sa bahay, ayun na doon na sila kinasal. Pitong baka ung kinatay nila kasi pitong grupo ung pumunta. Pagkatapos nila ikasal nagkasundo na sila,, dyan na sila titira. Magasawa na sila. Nagsama na sila. Wala silang anak o ano basta ganon. Yung ahas, naging tao na.

#### English Translation

There was a *sultan* and a *gurong-gurong* (mother of a princess) who had seven daughters. One day, the *sultan* died. They buried him but his body was not totally buried. They lost their fire, so they could not cook anything to eat. They discussed among themselves how they would find fire. The eldest daughter said she would go walk in the woods and find fire.

While walking, she spotted a house full of fire. She heard the sounds inside the house. When she looked through the window, she saw a big snake looking at her, eyes wide open, tongue out. “Where are you going, *putli* (princess)?”, asked the snake.

The *putli* could not answer as she was so afraid. She ran back home. Her clothes, her *patadyong*, everything got torn in the woods while running. When she got home, her sisters shouted. She fainted. They took water and bathed her with it. She came to, and they asked her what happened. “I saw a house. A snake lived in it. So I ran.”, she said.

The five other daughters tried to search for fire. They ended up in the same house and saw the same snake. They all went running away. Finally, the youngest daughter, the seventh, decided to walk and search for fire. When she reached the house with the snake, she knocked on the door. The snake showed up and asked where she was going. She said, “I just wanted to ask for fire.”

The snake replied, “Okay, your siblings

must be so hungry. I will give you fire but you must come home here. Live with me.”. She had no choice but to say yes. She took fire and brought it home to her sisters and mother.

When she got there, “Here is the fire. Now cook. And I must go back to the snake.” They all cried upon finding out about the deal. Their mother then died. They were now orphans. The princess went back to the snake. When she got there, she was led inside the house, “Here, this is rice. There is egg, chicken, fish. Feed yourself.”

The *putli* did not touch her food as she was shy. Finally, she could not hold her hunger any longer so she ate. The snake led her to her room, “You sleep there, and I will sleep in the other room. Do not be afraid”. The room was complete with mats, blankets, and more.

The *putli* stayed there for months. One day, the snake said, “Tomorrow, I am going out. Please stay here at home.”

She retorted, “But I will be alone. I am afraid.”

“Do not be afraid. Just stay here.”

The following day, the snake went out. The *putli* fell asleep and dreamt. In her dream, someone spoke to her, “*Putli*, I know what you need. When you wake up, burn this house.”

She said, “But the snake will lose his house!”

“Just burn it. Do as I say.”

When she woke up, she burned the house. When it became ashes, a human emerged. The princess perspired and perspired. She took her sweat and sprinkled it over the human who emerged from the ashes. A little bit later, the human moved.

“You have already risen, why don't you speak?”, asked the *putli*.

The human spoke, “You were able to make me human. Do not go back to your family. We have to be man and wife, you and I.” The human, who was actually the snake, went on to call six other sultans. He asked the *putli* if she had any other sisters. She said yes and so they went and fetched her sisters.

When they reached her house, her sisters were just lying on the floor, motionless and famished. They bathed them in warm water and felt better. Once they were able, the human [sultan] said, “Be ready. Come with me. Live with me. Marry these sultans.”

When they got to the destination, they all got married. All seven pairs did. They butchered seven cows for the seven pairs in



union.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

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*Thank you to the community of Ipilan, Brooke's Point, Palawan!*

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# ORAL TRADITIONS TO SHAPE PALA'WAN LIFE: PALA'WAN TULTUL

By: Jasmine H. Zapata

The Pala'wan are an indigenous group living in an island in the Philippines bearing the same name, Palawan. The UP Anthropology Summer Field School in 2012 went to Brooke's Point on the Southern part of Palawan. During our stay there, we observed that the Pala'wan practiced more of their own rituals and beliefs than that of the Catholic faith. They would go to their traditional healers called the *bahyan*, the term they use for their healers. They apparently placed great faith in their traditional practices. As much as they wanted to keep their identity intact, however they welcomed changes and accommodated visitors who wanted to share with them new ideas and teachings. Nowadays, the Pala'wan are intermarrying Catholics thus, they are giving birth to religious syncretism in their group.

The Pala'wan tultul has been recognized as an important aspect of the Pala'wan Culture. The Pala'wan Tultul is also known as the Pala'wan 'epic' and an important part of Pala'wan folklore. As an intangible heritage of the Pala'wan, tultul are oral traditions and part of the knowledge and traditions of the Pala'wan. There is a conflict between the older generation and the younger generation. The younger generation want to preserve these tultul by writing and publishing them. But the older generation won't allow it. According to them, if these stories would be written or published and distributed to others then the essence of this intangible heritage will be gone.

The tultul can either be sung or simply spoken. Tultul also cover a vast array of topics such as marriage, kinship and warfare. They are narrated by a story – teller called a *manigtultul*. According to Nicole Revel in her work entitled *The Teaching of the Ancestors (2001)*, the tultul are stories that always show a quest for a wife. Tultul usually have happy endings wherein the protagonist of a high birth marries another character. Majority of the stories also involve supernatural events such as giving life to a person by just sprinkling sweat or tears. Tultul also show the different day – to – day activities of the Pala'wan people such as how one family needs fire in order to cook their food or how valuable gold is to the people. The tultul functions to establish ancestral domains because these stories include their history as Pala'wan people. The tultul can be recited for various reasons and events, some of these are the celebrations of birth and marriage, they are a means of thanksgiving and leisure activity as well. They usually range from thirty minutes to an hour. But there are tultul which range from several hours to several days or rather, nights of chanting.

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## Surutan Magiyagak Pito na Magkatipusod (The Sultan who had Seven Daughters)

Narrated by (Manigtultul): Josita Baldin

Filipino Translation By: Pedro Sagad

Translated to English: Jasmine H. Zapata

Place: Sitio Linao, Brgy. Ipilan, Brooke's Point, Palawan

Date: April 25, 2012

Filipino Translation:

*May isang surutan na may pitong anak na babae. Nang namatay ang surutan, nawalan ng apoy ang kanyang pamilya. Wala ng makain ang magkakapatid dahil hindi nila alam kung saan kukuba ng apoy. Dahil sa pangangailangan, napagpasyahan ng panaganay sa magkakapatid na umalis upang maghanap ng apoy. Sa kanyang paglalakad, nakakita siya ng isang babay na sadyang napakaraming apoy. Kumatok siya sa babay na ito kaya lamang ay wala taong tumugon dito. Pinilit niyang makita ang loob ng babay at ng sumilip siya sa bintana ay may isang abas na dumungaw mula dito. Tinanong siya ng abas, "Putli, saan ka pupunta?" Sa sobrang gulat at takot ng babae ay nagtatatakbo siyang pauwi. Pagdating niya sa kanilang babay ay agad niyang ikinuwento sa kanyang mga kapatid ang kanyang naranasan. Sinabi niya ang tungkol sa nakitang niyang babay na maraming apoy ngunit ito ay pag-aari ng isang abas. Matapos ang pangyayaring ito, ay naisipan ng pangalawa sa magkakapatid na siya naman ang lalakad upang maghanap ng apoy. Katulad ng kanyang nakakatandang kapatid, ganito rin ang sinapit niya. Iisa ang naging karanasan*

ng magkakapatid sa kanilang paglakad upang maghanap ng apoy. Pare-pareho nilang nakita ang babay na maraming apoy, na pag-aari ng abas, na labis nilang ikinatakot. Iisa ang naging kapalaran ng magkakapatid maliban sa pinakabata.

Naisip ng pinaka bunso sa magkakapatid na kailangan na niyang lumakad at humanap ng apoy sapagkat kung hindi niya gagawin iyon ay wala na silang makakain. Sumapit siya sa babay na pag-aari ng abas. Kinausap niya ito at sinabing manghibingi siya ng apoy. Pumayag ang abas sa kanyang kabilingan kapalit ng isang kundisyon. Sinabi ng abas na bibigyan niya ng apoy ang putli kung papahinaya siya na doon na tumira kasama ng abas. Dabil naisip ng putli ang kalagayan ng kanyang mga kapatid, wala na siyang nagawa kundi ang pumayag sa kagustuhan ng abas. Matapos na siya ay pumayag sa kundisyong ibinigay sa kanya, siya ay binigyan ng apoy at agad niya itong ininwi sa kanyang mga kapatid. Sinabi din niyang babalik siya sa abas at doon na maninirahan. Dabil sa pangyayaring ito, namatay ang kanilang nanay. Pagdating niya sa babay ng abas, siya ay binigyan ng sarili niyang kuwarto na may kumpletong mga gamit, tulad ng kumot, banig at labat ng kailangan niya. Sinabi din sa kanya ng abas na kainin niya ang labat ng gusto niyang kainin, hindi siya dapat matakot.

Makalipas ang ilang buwan, nagpaalam ang abas sa putli na aalis siya kinabukasan. Natakot ang putli dahil wala siyang makakasama sa babay. Sinabi sa kanya ng abas na hindi siyang dapat mag – alala dahil walang mangyayaring masama sa kanya. Ang pakay pala ng abas sa kanyang pag-alis na iyon ay upang magtawag ng grupo niya para paghati – hatian ang putli. Kinaumagahan, Umalis na ang abas kinaumagahan. . Habang wala ang abas ay natulog muna ang putli. Sa kanyang pagtulog ay nanaginip siya at sa panaginip na ito ay parang may nagsasabi sa kanyang kailangan niyang sunugin ang babay. Ayaw sanang gawin ng putli ang bagay na ito dahil wala na raw uuwian ang abas, ngunit ginawa na din niya. Sinunog niya ang babay. Mula sa mga abo ng babay, may lumabas na tubod ng isang lalaki, at pagkaraan ay lumabas ang buong katawan nito. Walang malay ang taong nanggaling sa abo. Pinatakan niya ito ng pavis mula sa kanyang mukha at pagkatapos ay sinabihan niyang bumangon na ito at magsalita. Ilang sandal pa ay gumalaw na ang lalaki. Nagsalita ito at sinabing siya ang abas na may – ari ng babay. Sinabi din niya na dahil nagawa na siyang tao ng putli, kailangan na nilang mag – sama at magpakasal.

Sumundo siya ng iba't – ibang grupo ng mga surutan. Ang mga surutan palang ito ang mga dati niyang kasamahan na naging tao na rin. Tinanong ng mga surutan sa putli kung mayroon siyang mga kapatid. Nang sinabi niyang mayroon siyang anim na kapatid na babae, ang mga ito ay ipinasundo ng mga surutan. Pag-uwi ng putli sa kanilang dating babay, nakita niya ang kanyang mga kapatid na nanghibina, balos hindi na makagalaw at parang mga buto na lang. Pinaliguan niya ang mga ito kaya bumalik ang kanilang lakas. Sinabihan niya ang kanyang mga kapatid na magsipag banda at sila ay kaniyang isasama upang sama-sama na silang tumira sa babay. Nag – ayos ang kanyang mga kapatid at lumakad na papunta sa mga surutan. Ikinasal ang kanyang anim na kapatid sa mga surutan. Siya naman ay nagpakasal sa dating abas na naging tao at nagkasundong maninirahan na magkasama..

#### English Translation:

Once there was a sultan who had seven daughters. When he died, his family didn't have any sources of fire for cooking their food. Thus, they started to go hungry because they didn't know where to look for fire. The eldest of the seven siblings decided to go on a journey in search of a source of fire. While she was strolling, she saw a house full of fire. She immediately knocked and looked for the house's owners. But there was no one. She looked through the window to see the interior of the house. Just as she was scanning the house, a big snake, with its tongue hanging, arose and asked her, "Princess, where are you headed to?" She got frightened and ran as fast as she could back to their home. She told her sisters about the talking snake which owned the house. Then, the second sister decided to go and search for fire. Just like her older sister, she got frightened of the snake and failed to do her task. All the rest of the siblings had the same fate except for the youngest. When the youngest realized that they might all die of hunger, she decided to go and search for fire. She also went to the house owned by the snake. When she got there, she immediately asked the snake for fire. The snake instantly agreed but with one condition. It said that the princess can take as much fire as she needed but she will have to stay with the snake. The princess was hesitant at first but when she thought of her siblings, she agreed. She took the fire and delivered it to their house. She told her sisters about the condition that she had agreed to. Because of the sad fate of the princess, their mother died.



*When she arrived at the snake's house, the snake gave her a room of her own. The room contained complete furnishings that she might need. The snake also told her to eat and cook whatever she liked. After a few months, the snake told the princess that it needed to go somewhere in the morning. The princess got scared, not because of the snake but because she will be left alone in the house. The snake told her not to be scared because nothing will happen to her. She will be safe inside the house. Then morning came. The snake left. What the princess didn't know was that the snake's motive for leaving was to call its group so that they can divide and eat her. While she waited for the snake, she took a nap. She heard a voice in her dream that told her to burn the snake's house down. Of course, she was hesitant because the snake would lose its house. But the voice was very persistent. When she woke up from her nap, she did what the voice told her. She burnt the house down. From the house's ashes, she saw a man's knee then the man's whole body. The man wasn't conscious. She flicked some sweat from her forehead to the man's body. After a few moments, the man finally rose and talked. He told the princess that he was the snake. The same snake who was the owner of the house. He also added that since the princess was the one who turned him into a human, they needed to be married immediately*

*He fetched other groups of sultans and these sultans were also snakes who turned human just like him. The other sultans asked the princess if she had sisters. When she said yes, the sultans told her to fetch them. She arrived at their old house and what she saw shocked her. She saw that her sisters were all very weak. So she bathed all of her sisters for them to regain their strengths. When her sisters recovered, she told them to come with her and marry the other sultans. Her sisters arranged all their belongings, and their appearances as well. All of her sisters married a sultan of their own while she married the snake who she had turned to human. They all lived peacefully and happily together.*

The manigtultul can be anybody. The word manigtultul came from “manig” which means “person who does” and “tultul” which is the Pala’wan epic. They retell the tultul to their families or even to visitors. According to the Pala’wan, anyone can be a manigtultul. The manigtultul can be male or female, young or old, as long as one has the interest and the passion for retelling tultul. Since these are oral traditions that are passed on from one person to another, the power of listening and the ability to remember the stories plays an important part in the passing-on of these traditions. It is also important for the manigtultul to know or master the different tones used in a chanted tultul. This is to guarantee that the tultul will be delivered or passed on correctly.



\*Lola Josit, a manigtultul. Photograph by Prof. Ianine Ochoa

There was one manigtultul named Josita Baldin and better known as “Lola Josit”, in Sitio Linao, Brgy. Ipilan, Brooke’s Point, Palawan. She is one of the well – known artists of the place. She not only retells tultul but is also a known singer and dancer of the *Taruk*, the dance performed during celebrations, especially on weddings. There were two other manigtultul who shared tultul with us. They were Lydia Sagad and Luming Sagad. They are sisters of Pedro Sagad, a *panglima* or tribal chieftain of Sitio Linao. Both manigtultul are residents of Sitio Linao.

The listeners of the tultul are called *tinultulan*. The tinultulan are allowed to do whatever they want during a tultul – telling. They are allowed to leave or join the group anytime they want. They aren’t even prohibited to make any noise or ruckus during the session. Listening to a tultul isn’t that easy especially when one wants to be a

manigtutul someday. One must listen attentively to understand and comprehend the different stories narrated.

Tultul have a restriction on when they are to be told – which is at night time. According to Lola Josit, people often stop working in order to listen to the tultul. Tultul are often told during the evenings after dinner, because this is the time when the family members are gathered together. It also serves as a narrative lullaby for the children who can't sleep well. Aside from being told only at night time, tultul are also forbidden to be told during mourning due to a death of a family member or someone who lived near the manigtutul's home. Lola Josit said that the tultul are considered as a form of merrymaking, thus making it disrespectful to be told during a wake. A week after the death of a person will be the time when the tultul – telling will again be allowed.



\*Nanay Luming and Nanay Lydia, both manigtutul.  
Photograph by Prof. Janine Ochoa

According to the Pala'wan, they don't really know the origins of these tultul. They only know the stories because of what their parents/grandparents have shared with them. A thing to ponder on is how come these tultul have many Muslim concepts/terms. The tultul usually contains a character called a raja. He is known as the father of the *putli*, princess. There are also stories which feature a *datu*, one which is of lower rank than a raja and sultan. Some stories involve polygamy, a practice which is more associated with the Muslims than with the Catholics. It can mean that the Pala'wan ancestors were greatly influenced by the Muslim culture.

We can never tell what the future might bring us. All we know is that if these tultul aren't passed on to future generations, this wonderful oral tradition **might** die forever. We can only hope for the future generations to take interest in this valuable heritage.

As outsiders, we can only appreciate and value the beauty of this practice which is very foreign to us. But one thing is for sure, as long as this tultul is in the minds and hearts of the Pala'wan, they will shape the identity of the Pala'wan.

- based on the Paper of Yangot, Karminn Cheryl Dinney D. and Zapata, Jasmine H. entitled *The Pala'wan Tultul: A Surviving Unwritten Evidence of a Rich Cultural Heritage* (2012) for the University of the Philippines Anthropology Field School 2012 (UP AFS '12) under Prof. Janine Ochoa and Dr. Nestor Castro of the UP Anthropology Department

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photo by Joanne Chua

## Turismo sa Talon ng Sabsaban

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By: Feliciano, Ma. Roxanne P.

Ang talon ng Sabsaban ay kilala sa paniniwala ng mga Palawan bilang sagradong lugar. Ito ay puno ng makasaysayang kwento, makulay na kultura, at ang umuusbong na turismo.

Ang talon ng Sabsaban ay mahalaga sa buhay ng mga katutubong Palawan kung kaya't ang pag-iingat at pagpapahalaga nito ay hindi matatawaran.

Sa pag-agos ng panahon kasabay ng maraming pagbabago, marami ring nag-iba sa kapaligiran na nasaksihan ng nakakarami. Ang dating naturang lugar na limitado sa taong naninirahan sa paligid ay isa na ngayong pook pasyalan kasabay ng malakas na pagsulong ng turismo.

At sa aming pagsisiyasat sa mayaman na kultura at tradisyon ng mga Palawan, nabaling ang aming pansin sa pagkakaugnay ng

makabagong konsepto na turismo at lupaing ninuno sa talon ng Sabsaban.

Sa pakikisalamuha rin namin sa mga katutubong gumagawa ng pang araw-araw na gawain tulad ng paglalaba at pagliligo at pakikipagkwentuhan ay aming natuklasan ang pagpapahalaga ng mga natibo sa naturang lugar. Gayundin, ang pakikipanayam namin sa mga *key informants* para sa malalim at malawak na pag-unawa tungkol sa nasabing paksa ng pag aaral, at *focus group discussion* o ginabayang talakayan sa mga turista upang malaman ang kanilang pananaw ukol sa proyekto na gawing *tourist spot* ang talon ng Sabsaban.

Sa patuloy na paglakas ng turismo, minarapat rin namin na isaklaw ang mga epekto nito sa naturang lugar, sa mga katutubong Palawan, at sa iba pang grupo na nakikinabang sa talon.

Makikita ang talon ng Sabsaban sa gitna ng Sitio Pangatleban, Barangay Ipilan (silangan) at Sitio Sabsaban, Barangay Aribungos (kanluran). Ang tubig mula sa talon ang nagsisilbing pagitan ng dalawang barangay.



Ang talon ay isa sa mga *tourist spots* na matatagpuan sa Brooke's Point. Ayon sa mga *pamphlet* na pinapamigay ng opisina ng turismo ng Brooke's Point, ang talon ng Sabsaban ay matatagpuan sa puso ng lupaing ninuno (*Ancestral Domain*) ng mga katutubong Palawan.



Photo by: Dona Mengote

### **Pagsasahulugan ng mga Palawan sa Sabsaban**

Ayon sa aming mga nakapanayam na nakatatanda, ang talon ng Sabsaban ay isang sagradong lugar kung saan ang malamig na tubig na dumadaloy mula sa rurok ng kabundukan ay may angking makapagpagaling ng mga may sakit. Dito dinadala ang mga may karamdaman upang paliguan ng mga manggagamot o tungkol.

Isang pangangahulugan rin sa Sabsaban ay ang pagiging lupaing ninuno nito. Ito ay ang bahagi ng paniniwala nila na pagmamay-ari ng mga katutubo ang naturang lugar sapagkat dito na rin lumaki, nabuhay at naghanap-buhay ang kanilang mga ninuno.

Maliban rito, ang mga pang araw-araw na gawain tulad ng paglalaba at pagligo ay isang aspeto rin ng kanilang pagsasahulugan sa talon ng Sabsaban.

Mayaman rin sa mga kwentong bayan at paniniwala ang talon ng Sabsaban tulad ng ilang kilalang lugar.

Ayon sa mga kwento ng aming mga impormante, ang talon ng Sabsaban ay binabantayan ng *galap* o sirena sa Palawan kung kaya't sila ay taon-taon nag-aalay bilang

paggalang at pagbantay sa kanila. Gayunpaman, pinaniniwalaan na tuwing may nalulunod ay kinukuha ang mga ito ng mga *galap*. Nagsisilbi itong babala para sa ilan na hindi lumangoy sa malalim na bahagi. Ang mga kwentong ito ay paalala rin sa nakakarami bilang pagrespeto sa paniniwalang Palawan at bahagi na rin ng oral na tradisyon.

### **Turismo sa talon ng Sabsaban**

Ang pagtaguyod sa talon ng Sabsaban bilang isang *ecotourism site* ay sa pangunguna ng isa sa mga sangay ng ABS-CBN Foundation, ang Bantay Kalikasan na layuning magbigay halaga sa kalikasan (ABS-CBN Foundation, 2011). Isa sa mga programang ipinatupad ng naturang organisasyon ay ang Bantay Kalikasan Eco Academy, Brooke's Point, Palawan na may *slogan* na '*true ecotourism*' (tunay na *ecotourism*<sup>1</sup>).

Ang Bantay Kalikasan Eco Academy ay isang proyekto sa Talon ng Sabsaban na nakalugar sa isa sa mga gilid ng *Mount Matalingaban Protected Landscape*. Tinatampok nito ang ilang mga edukasyonal na klase na nagpapalawig ng kamalayan tungkol sa kultura ng grupong Palawan at sa pagpapanatili ng kalikasan.

Ang proyekto ay ipinaris sa Bantay Kalikasan Eco Academy sa La Mesa Eco Park; isang *ecotourism* na lugar na pananatilihin hindi lang para sa kasalukuyang panahon kundi para sa hinaharap o *sustainable* para sa lipunan, partikular sa mga nakatira sa paligid ng talon. Hangad din ng proyekto na ito na maipakilala ang munisipyo ng Brooke's Point sa larangan ng turismo. Ukol sa usaping *sustainability*, ang pamamaraan nila para maisagawa ito ay ang paggawa ng mga istraktura katulad ng restoran, *cottages*, opisina, banyo, atbp. na hindi nakakasira o kung hindi

<sup>1</sup> Ang *ecotourism* ay nilarawan ng *The International Ecotourism Society* bilang ang responsableng paglalakbay sa mga likas na pook na pinagiingatan at pinagbubuti ang kalagayan ng kalikasan at lokal na komunidad (The International Ecotourism Society, 2012)

man ay may maliit lang na epekto sa kalikasan. Naisaad rin na parte ng proyekto ang pagpapabahagi sa mga turista ng kultura ng mga Palawan.

Katuwang rin sa layunin na ito ay ang pakikibahagi ng Augustinian Missionaries Philippines. Ang hangarin ng nasabing grupo, mula sa kanilang opisina, ay ang makabuo ng isang alternatibong edukasyon at sentro ng

paglilinang ng kultura na magiging daluyan sa pagtataguyod at pamamahala ng lupaing ninuno at katutubong kasarinalan. Mithiin nila na makita ang mga katutubo na manirahang mapayapa at sama-sama na may malasakit sa pagpapanatili at pagprotekta ng kanilang kalikasan at kultura.

Ang lokal na gobyerno ay nakiisa rin sa proyekto sa pamamagitan ng pagtibay ng Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) sa pagitan ng ABS-CBN Foundation, Inc. Bahagi ng nakasaad sa MOA ay patungkol sa kikitain na mapupunta umano sa pagpapanatili ng operasyon ng proyekto at ang sobrang pera ay gagamitin sa mga pampublikong programa kung saan makikinabang ang komunidad na nakapalibot sa Talon ng Sabsaban. Ang kikitain ay makukuha mula sa serbisyo at pasilidad na tinatampok ng bagong programa at idiniin na hindi sila maniningil ng *entrance fee* para sa pagpasok sa naturang lugar.

Anupa't kasabay ng pagbubukas ng ecotourism na ito ay ang pagkakaroon ng oportunidad na trabaho sa mga katutubo. Ito ay makakatulong sa mga katutubo sa pagkakaroon ng bagong hanapbuhay. Ilan rito ay trabaho sa restoran bilang tagaluto ng katutubong pagkain, taga-gabay sa tinatawag na *ecotrail*, tagapagbantay, tagatayo ng mga *tents*, atbp. Ayon kay G. James Bicaldo, Project Management Officer-in-Charge – On Site, sila ay dumaaan sa 'butas ng karayum' o pormal na proseso na kabilang ang pagpapanayam, pagpapasa ng *biodata* at *resume*. Ito ay paraan na makakatulong mapaunlad ang Sabsaban, maging ang mga katutubo, lalo na't planong panatiliin ang kultura ng mga Palawan.

Gayunpaman, ang pagsisimula ng turismo sa Sabsaban ay nagdulot ng iba't ibang reaksyon at isyu.

### **Ang Talon ng Sabsaban Bilang Isang *Contested* na lugar**

Inilalarawan ng World Tourism Organization ang Turismo bilang isang industriyang may implikasyon sa ekonomiya, sa kalikasan, sa lokal na populasyon, at sa mga turista. Makikita na marami ang sangkot o apektado ng Turismo kaya hindi maiiwasan ang hindi pagkakasunduan. Isang halimbawa nito ang talon ng Sabsaban kung saan ang pagpasok ng bagong proyektong pangturismo ay nagdulot ng hindi pagkakaunawaan.

Isa sa mga ugat ng alitan ay ang hindi pagsagawa ng pagkonsulta sa mga katutubo. Taliwas ito sa sinabi ng panig ng ABS-CBN Foundation at ng lokal na gobyerno na siyang mga tagapagtaguyod ng proyektong ito. Posibleng pangyayaring may ilang mga Palawan na hindi inabot ng impormasyon tungkol sa naganap na konsultasyon.

Ito rin ay pumapatungkol sa lupaing ninuno, kung saan kabilang ang Talon ng Sabsaban, na kasalukuyang pinoproseso sa NCIP. Nakasaad sa batas na IPRA (Indigenous Peoples Rights Act) na anumang proyekto na isasagawa sa loob ng isang lupaing ninuno ay nangangailangan ng FPIC (Free Prior and Informed Consent) mula sa katutubong may-ari ng lupaing ninuno. Maaring may konsultasyong nangyari subalit iba ito sa pagkuha ng FPIC na nangangailangan ng legal na dokumentong nagpapatunay na sumangayon ang mga katutubo sa pagkakaroon ng FPIC.

Dahilan rin sa hindi pagkakaunawaan, ang hindi pagkakaroon ng mga katutubo ng MOA sa pagitan nila at ng namamahala ng proyekto. Ayon sa mga Palawan, ang hinihiling nilang MOA ay magiging katibayan para isakatuparan ang kasalukuyang pangako sa kanila na hindi sila pagbabayaran ng *entrance fee*.

Sa aming pananaw, ang hindi pagkakaunawaang ito ay dulot ng hindi

pagkakaroon ng maayos na komunikasyon sa pagitan ng dalawa.

Isang malaking isyu rin ang pagkakawatak-watak ng mga katutubo bago pa ang pagdating ng proyekto at turismo. Ang dahilan ng pagkakawatak-watak na ito ay ang pagpasok ng planong pagmimina sa naturang lugar. Ang Lebach Mining Corporation angmadalas na naisasambit ng mga nakapanayam namin bilang may interes sa Sabsaban.

Mula sa isang pag-aaral na may kaugnay ang kontrobersya ng pagmimina sa Brooke's point (Sangkula, A. at Tamsi, M. 2007), ang mga katutubo ay nahahati sa dalawa, ang *pro-mining* at *anti-mining*. Ang *ecotourism* ay pinaniniwalaang alternatibo sa pagmimina kaya naman hanggang sa usaping turismo, ang pagkakahati-hati ng mga tao dahil sa pagmimina ay nananatili.

Maraming haka-haka ang lumalabas dahil sa umiiral na pagkaaway-away ng mga grupo kabilang ang mga *pro-mining* na hinimok ng Lebach Mining Corporation at ang mga *anti-mining* na pinapaboran ang Ecotourism bilang alternatibong solusyon.

Maliban sa hindi pagkakaunawaan sa pagitan ng ABS-CBN at ang mga katutubong Palawan, isang grupo pa ang nasasangkot sa gulo, ang Augustinian sisters.

Nang magtatag ng panibagong organisasyon ang mga madre na tinawag nilang OIPAP o Organization of Indigenous Peoples for Action in Palawan, Inc. nagdulot ito ng pagkakahati ng mga katutubo. Ang kasalukuyang miyembro ng OIPAP ay mga natibong Palawan na hindi naninirahan sa sitio Sabsaban. Sila ang mga kasalukuyang nagtatrabaho sa proyekto na nagpapairal ng kumpetisyon kung saan ang hindi naging prayoridad ang mga taga-sitio Sabsaban.

Hindi kaila na maraming pagbabago sa lokal na komunidad na epekto ng turismo. Isa na rin ang pagbabago ng ilang kaugalian. Gaya ng naikwento ng ilang katutubo, noong dati'y malaya silang nakakapagpapaligo ng

mga may sakit sa talon, ngayon ay dinadala na nila sa bahay ang tubig upang doon paliguan.

Hindi man pinuwera ang mga pagbabagong ito, hindi maiiwasan ang pagbabago ng kultura sa pagpasok ng turismo. Maaari din na ang turismo ang makapagpatibay sa ibang aspeto ng kulturang katutubo sa pamamaraan na maalala at maisapuso ng mga katutubong Palawan na naghahanap-buhay para sa proyekto na ang kanilang kultura ang ibinabahagi sa mga bisita.

Pinapatotohanan ng pag-aaral ang pagiging contested na lugar ng Talon ng Sabsaban dahil sa iba't ibang interes ng tao. Pinatutunayan rin nito ang mga epektong dulot ng turismo sa mga katutubo at sa naturang lugar.

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**Mula sa papel na isinulat nina:  
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bilang bahagi ng Anthropology Field School, 2012.**



## *Ugdang Bulawan: Ang Hagdan Pabalik Kay Ampo*

Jerome Leano at Alexis Jerome Tolibas



Katapusan. Makikita dito ang pamilya ni Panglima Pedring habang “tinatawag” ang espiritu ng namayapa niyang pamangkin. Kuha ni Amanda Palileo

*Kamatayan sa ating Kamalayan.* Madalas nating naririning sa mga *enlogy* at kwentuhan sa mga burol, at maaring tanda ito na pasok na sa ating mga kamalayan, na ang kamatayan ay hindi ang katapusan ng buhay; bagkus ito ang simula ng walang hanggang pamumuhay sa kabilang buhay. Iba’t-ibang paniniwala, paliwanag at metapora ang ating ginagamit upang maunawaan at bigyang kahulugan ang kamatayan, at ang relihiyon ang pangunahing pinagmumulan ng mga kaalamang ito. Ayon kay Jung, ang mga pangunahing relihiyong pandaigdig ay representasyon ng mga komplikadong sistema ng paniniwala para paghandaan ang kamatayan (Jung in Dezutter et. al, n.d.). Tanda ng kaisipang ito ay ang mga pag-aaral na nagbibigkis sa relihiyon at kamatayan sa iba’t-ibang sangay ng Agham Panlipunan.

Sa taong 2007 hanggang 2010, karamihan sa mga pangunahing dahilan ng karamdaman sa Munisipalidad ng Brooke’s Point ay mula sa impeksyon tulad ng mga sumusunod: UTI, malaria, bronchitis, diarrhea, pneumonia, at influenza. Sinasabing ang mga karamdamang may kaugnayan sa pamamaraan ng

kanilang pamumuhay ang namamayagpag bilang sanhi ng kamatayan sa Brooke’s Point, partikular dito ang CVA, diabetes mellitus, heart diseases, at cancer. Ang mga sanhi ng kamatayan sa taong 2010 ay ang mga sumusunod: pneumonia (62, 10.39), myocardial infarction (17, 2.85), lahat ng uri ng cancer (14, 2.35), vehicular accident (10, 1.68), hypertensive CVD (10, 1.68), cerebro-vascular disease (9, 1.51), congestive heart failure (8, 1.34), chronic renal disease (8, 1.34), renal hypertension (8, 1.34)<sup>1</sup>.

Ang bulto ng mga datos ay nakalap sa pamamagitan ng pakikipanayam (structured at semi-structured). Ang mga inisyal na tanong ay ginabayan ng mga naunang librong naisulat tungkol sa mga iba pang tribung Palawano; ito ay ang Tagbanuwa (Tagbanuwa Religion and Society ni Fox) at Tau’ t Batu (Tau’t Batu Studies ni Ramos et. al).

Sa aming ginawang pag-aaral tungkol konsepto ng kamatayan, pagluluksa, at paglilibing ng mga Pala’wan, hindi maikakaila na nagkaroon ng mga pagkakataon at kalagayang humadlang sa pagkalap namin ng mga

<sup>1</sup>Ang mga datos na ito ay halaw sa isang powerpoint presentation “A profile of the MUNICIPALITY of Brooke’s Point (2010)”

kinakailangang datos upang mas malawak at malalim na pagpapakahulugan ng nasabing paksa.

Sa heyograpikal na aspeto nang aming pananaliksik, apat sa labingwalong baranggay na bumubuo sa Brooke's Point ang aming napuntahan. Kung saan ang karamihan sa aming mga nakapanayam at napaggugulan ng maraming oras ay mula sa Baranggay Aribungos at Baranggay Ipilan. Bukod sa nabanggit, nagkaroon ng panayam sa ilang Pala'wan sa Baranggay Imulnod at Baranggay Mainit.

Ang kakulangan sa oras, sa proseso ng pagkalap ng kinakailangang datos sa loob lamang ng labingdalawang araw. Kung saan may mga pagkakataong hindi tugma ang iskedyul o kinailangang palitan ang nakatakdang araw ng panayam nang aming mga impormant dahil sa kanilang tungkulin sa araw-araw tulad ng kabuhayan, kalusugan, at ilan pang personal na rason.

Nagkaroon din ng dalawang obserbasyon, partisipasyon, at dokumentasyon ng aktwal na burol at proseso ng paglilibing sa dalawang Palao'an sa Baranggay Ipilan. Kung saan aming naobserbahan ang paghahalo ng tradisyunal na paniniwala at ng relihiyong Kristyanismo. Ngunit, wala kaming naobserbahan na aktwal na tradisyunal napaglilibing.

Dahil sa lawak ng saklaw ng aming paksa ay naisipan naming hatiin ang paksa sa mga mas maliliit na tema. Ang mga nabuo naming tema ay ang mga sumusunod:

**PAGTATALANG:** Sinasaklaw ng temang ito ang lahat ng mga bagay na ipinapabaon sa patay, ang mga uri ng bagay na isinasama nila sa loob ng hukay o sa paligid nito, ang paniniwala nila tungkol sa pagtatalang. Ang pokus ng temang ito ay ang materyal na kulturang nakatala sa paglilibing.

**PAGLILIBING:** Sa temang ito ay nakapaloob ang preparasyon sa labi ng yumao bago ilagak sa kanyang pahingahan, ang buong proseso ng paglilibing, ang pagpili ng paglilibingan, pagkakaayos at orientasyon ng bangkay, lalim at laki ng hukay at iba pa. Ang pokus ng temang ito ay ang mga nangyayari sa labi ng yumao.

**PAGLULUKSA:** Ang pokus naman ng temang ito ay ang mga naiwan ng yumao. Dito nakapabilang ang mga kaugalian at paniniwala ng mga kaanak ng patay pagdating sa pagluluksa, ang mga maari at bawal gawin, mga ritual na nagpapakita ng pagluluksa at iba pa.

**KABILANG BUHAY:** Sa temang ito ay kasama ang mga paniniwala ng Palaw'an sa kabilang buhay, kung saan nagpupunta ang kaluluwa ng mga yumao, ano ang nangyayari sa kabilang buhay at iba pa.

Sa apat na temang ito uminog ang aming pagtatanong.

## **PAGTATALANG**

Nakaugalian na ng mga Pala'wan ang **PAGTATALANG** o ang pagsasama ng mga bagay sa labi ng kanilang mga patay. Naniniwala sila na ang mga gamit na kanilang ipinabaon ay magagamit ng **KURUDWA** o kaluluwa ng yumao sa kabilang buhay. Mapapansin na karamihan sa mga bagay na *itinatalang* ay ang mga kagamitang ginagamit sa pang-araw-araw tulad ng plato, baso, **SALAPA** (sisidlang kuwadrado na yari sa tanso na karaniwang pinaglalagyan ng nganga at apog), **ALEP** (sisidlan ng tabako, papel at santikan yari sa buho), **BALING** at **SANTIKAN** o pangsindi at iba pa. Karaniwang *itinatalang* sa mga kalalakihan ang **TUKAW** o itak pati ang **TAGUBAN** o ang lalagyanan nito. Ang mga Pala'wan ay naniniwala na ang mga lalaking nasa wastong gulang ay dapat magdala ng itak dahil tamad ang tingin nila sa mga lalaking walang dalang itak. Kapag nagtatalang ng itak ay binabalian ang dulo nito para kung **MAKASABLAW** o makabati ang kaluluwa ng patay ay hindi lubhang masakit. Hindi naman mawawala sa mga kababaihan ang malong at suklay. Makikita rin sa mga bagay na *itinatalang* ang estado sa buhay ng yumao. Ang mga nakakaangat sa buhay lang ang may kakayanang *magtatalang* ng mga mamahaling bagay tulad ng **AGONG** o gong, **SALAPA**, at **TAPAYAN** o banga.

Bukod sa mga bagay na karaniwang na *itinatalang*, ang mga Pala'wan din ay nagpapabaon ng pagkain. Ito ay kadalasang isinasama sa loob ng kaldero na naglalaman ng kanin at ulam. Pinaniniwalaan ng mga Pala'wan na kailangang kumain ng yumao para sa kanyang paglalakbay sa kabilang buhay. Ayon kay Panglima Pedring *itinatalang* din ang mga paboritong gamit ng yumao para hindi ito balik-balikan ng mga patay. Iniinawan ng mga Pala'wan na magkahalubilo ang mga kaluluwa ng mga namatay dahil naniniwala silang maaari silang magkasakit.

## **PAGLILIBING AT ANG UGDANG BULAWAN**

Hindi nag-eembalsamo ng kanilang patay ang mga Pala'wan. Naniniwala sila na hindi dapat paghiwalayin ang kanilang katawan kahit na sa kamatayan. Hindi rin sila gumagamit ng kabaong at ng puntod. Ayon kay Panglima Welinton, ang hindi paggamit ng kabaong at puntod ay nakakapagpadali sa pag-angat ng kaluluwa mula sa hukay. At dahil hindi sila nag-eembalsamo at kailangang mailagak na agad ang labi sa huling hantungan ay walang burol o lamay para sa patay. Hindi dapat abutin ng 24 oras ang bangkay. Sa ilang okasyon na may kailangang hintaying kaanak mula sa malayong lugar ay pinauusukan nila ang bangkay gamit ang

sinunog na dahon ngunit hindi ito madalas na ginagawa.

Pagpanaw ay nililinis ang katawan ng namatay dinadamitan at inaayusan. Kailangan ay hindi itim ang kulay ng damit na isusuot sa patay dahil maghihinagpis daw ang yumao kung maglalaba ito ng damit at subukan niya itong paputiin sa kabilang buhay. Pagkatapos ay babalutan ang bangkay ng banig at tatalian sa may bandang ulo at paa. Apat na tao ang magbubuhay sa patay palabas ng bahay at patungo sa paglilibingan nito. Gumagamit sila ng dalawang tali na nakaangkla ang isa sa bandang ulo at ang isa naman ay sa paa. Bago tuluyang ilabas ng bahay ang bangkay at kadalasang ginagawa sa pantaran, ay NAGNANANGNANG o humihingi ng paumanhin ang naiwang pamilya sa mga kasalanang nagawa nila dun sa yumao habang ito ay nabubuhay pa.

*“Patawarin mo na ang asawa mo, ang mga anak mo sa mga kasalanang nagawa nila sa iyo... hanggang sa katapusan ... at huling pagkikita...”*

Ang lugar na pinaglilibingan ng mga patay ay karaniwang malapit lang sa mga bahay ng mga naiwan nito. Kung saan kadalasang pinagtatabi ang mga mag-asawa at ang kanilang mga anak.

Ang hukay ay sukat sa haba ng labi at ang lalim ay hanggang dibdib. Ang ilan ay naniniwala na mabuti ang tao kung malambot ang lupa habang hinuhukay at masama naman kung matigas ang lupa. Ibaba muna ang bangkay sa tabi ng butas at tatanggalin ang tali sa bandang ulunan at ilalabas ang ulo nito sa banig. Matapos gawin ang mga ito ay mayroong magbabanggit, kadalasan ang Panglima o iba pang nakakatanda, ng mga sumusunod na salita:

*“Pagmasdan mo na ang mundo dahil ito na ang huling pagtingin mo, ang mga kaboy na maliliit at malalaki, ang mga dabon at ang buong mundo dahil patay ka na at diyan ka na kay Ampo...”*

Lalagyan ng tabla ang ilalim ng hukay bago may dalawang tao ang bababa dito para saluhin ang ibababang bangkay. Magkaiba ang orientasyon ng babae sa lalaki. Ang talampakan ng mga lalaki ay nakaharap sa bundok habang ang sa mga babae naman ay nakatutok sa dagat. Ang paniniwala nila ay kapag bumangon ang kaluluwa ay bundok o dagat ang una nitong makikita at doon tutungo ang kaluluwa para MANUPOK o manguso ang lalaki at MANGAWIL o mangisda ang babae. Matapos maibaba ang bangkay ay

maghuhulog ng UGDANG BULAWAN o Hagdanang Ginto.

Ang UGDANG BULAWAN ay isang simbolikal na hagdanang gawa sa tangkay ng isang halaman. Hihiwaan ang tangkay na ito ng pahilig sa dalawang gilid, isang pataas at isang pababa. Ang magiging hitsura nito ay isang hagdanan kung saan ang isang gilid ay paakyat at ang isa naman ay pababa, Habang inilalagay ito ay sa hukay ay sasabihing “paakyat ang kaluluwa ng mga buhay at pababain naman ang sa mga patay”, pagkatapos ay saka aakyat ang mga sumalo sa bangkay. Ilalagay na ang mga TALANG bago takpan uli ng tabla ang bangkay at tuluyang tabunan na ng lupa. Sa taas nito ay magtatanim sila ng mga panandang halaman, karaniwang gumagamit sila ng mga bulaklak o ng nipa. Ilalatag muli ang mga TALANG at saka gagawan ng silong ang patay gamit ang maliliit na kahoy at mga dahon. Matapos nito, gigisingin ang patay at paghahandaan ito ng kanin na may kasamang ulam. Magsasagawa ng GIRA o paggawa ng iba’ t-ibang ingay ang mga nakipaglibing saka maglalakad pabalik sa bahay ng mga namatayan Ang unang makakarating sa bahay ay kukuha ng bao na may lamang abo at ipapahid ito sa katawan. Ganoon din ang gagawin ng mga sumunod sa kanya at ang huling darating ay ikakalat ang abo at babasagin ang bao sabay sasambitin “hindi sana makita ng mga espirito ang mga nakipaglibing”.

## PAGLULUKSA

Ang mga ritwal patungkol sa kamatayan ay nag-uumpisa bago pa man may mamatay. Sa mga pagkakataong malubha na ang sakit ng isang Pala’wan ay nagsasagawa sila ng PAGLILINGAW. Ginagawa rin ang PAGLILINGAW kung madalas na napapanaginipan ng mga Pala’ wan ang kanilang mga yumaong kamag-anak. Sa PAGLILINGAW ay tinatawagan ang kaluluwa ng mga patay. Ayon kay Panglima Pedring, hindi direktang tinatawagan ang kaluluwa ng mga patay. Ang unang dadasalan at tatawagin ay si AMPO at si AMPO naman ang tatawag sa kaluluwa ng namatay. Kapag *maglilingaw* ay naghahanda rin para sa patay. Nang minsang *maglilingaw* si Panglima Pedring ay naghanda sila ng kanin at manok na niluto sa gata. Bawal gamitan ng asin ang mga pagkaing handa para sa patay. Malalaman nila kung tinanggap ang mga alay sa iba’ t-ibang mga paraan: ang biglang paglamig ng kanin, mga langaw at iba pang

insektong dumapo sa pagkain, ihip ng malamig na hangin at iba pa.

Ang SABLAW ay ang sakit sa tiyan, pagduduwal, at sakit na huling naramdaman ng yumao, na nakukuha kapag ang isang miyembro ng pamilya ay dinalaw o nilapitan ng kaluluwa ng yumao. Nakabase ito sa paniniwala na dumadalaw ang kaluluwa ng mga yumao kapag may kinakailangan sila o may nais ipabatid sa dinadalaw nila. Sa pagdalaw na ito, nagkakaroon ng negatibong epekto o SABLAW sa miyembro ng pamilyang dinadalaw. Ang pamilya ng yumao ay hindi pinahihintulutan ng mga PANGLIMA na magtrabaho, lumabas ng bahay, mag-ingay, magsaya, maglinis ng bahay, at mag ayos ng kanilang sarili hanggang mailibing ang yumao. Ito ay tanda ng pagrespeto nila sa yumao at sa buhay na naputol. Kung ito ay malalabag ng isa sa mga miyembro ng pamilya, siya ay kinakailangang magbayad ng BATANG/UNGSOD o multa depende sa patakaran ng PANGLIMA ng partikular na angkan.

Ang KASARUNGAN o KATAPUSAN ay ginaganap isang linggo o pitong araw matapos ang libing ng yumao. Pinaniniwalaan ng mga Pala'wan na sa "katapusan" ay tuluyan nang umaalis ang kaluluwa ng patay para makapiling na si Ampo. Naghahanda ang pamilya ng yumao na nagsisilbing huling salu-salo kasama ang kaluluwa ng patay bago ito tuluyang umalis. Katulad ng sa *Paglilingan* ay hindi ginagamitan ng asin ang mga pagkaing hinahanda. Nakadalo kami sa *katapusan* na ginanap para sa yumaong pamangkin ni Panglima Pedring. Ang mga hinanda ay apat na baso ng tubig, apat na platong may kanin, apat na platong may dinuguan, apat na platong may MULMOL o *fermented rice* na nakabalot sa dahon at ang lahat ng ito ay nakapatong sa isang banig at may partikular na pagkaka-ayos. Nabanggit din ni Panglima Pedring na hindi dapat bababa sa apat ang mga plato o kung sosobra man ay dapat laging magkaka-ayos. May mga katagang binanggit din si Panglima Pedring sa Pala'wan. Tinawag niya ang kaluluwa ng yumao at itinuro ang mga hinanda. Sinabi niya sa amin na binilinan niya ang kaluluwa ng kanyang pamangkin na dun na siya sa kasiyahan niya sa kabilang buhay, kung ano man ang kasiyahan ng mga nabubuhay ay huwag na siyang makialam.

## PAGTATASA

Katulad ng sinabi ni Ramos (1983) para sa mga Tau't Batu, isang grupo ng mga Palawan na matatagpuan sa Singnapan Basin sa may Timog Kanlurang bahagi ng Palawan, hindi kakikitaan ng paghahati ng banal at ordinaryo ang iba't-ibang aspeto ng buhay ng Pala'wan. Ang pagsilang sa isang sanggol ay ipinagbubunyi at pinasasalamat katulad ng pasasalamat sa masaganang ani, sa pag-galing mula sa karamdaman at sa pag-iisang dibdib ng dalawang taong nagmamahalan sa kasal. Napuna namin na sa kaibuturan ng mga ritwal na ito ay hindi mawawala ang pagpapasalamat, pagpapasalamat para sa kaginhawaan.

Ang Panglima ang nagbibigkis sa isang komunidad. Bukod sa *functional* na kahalagahan nila sa kanilang mga nasasakupan ay nagsisilbi silang kanlungan ng kulturang Pala'wan. Sila ang may kakayanan at karapatang mangasiwa at magsagawa ng iba't-ibang mga ritwal ng Pala'wan.

Ang mga ritwal na ito ay hindi lang limitado sa paglilibing, pagluluksa at kamatayan bagkus ay laganap ito sa iba pang mga aspeto ng buhay Pala'wan. Susi ang mga ritwal na ito para lubos na maunawaan ang kosmolohiyang iniinugan ng kamalayang Pala'wan.

Kaginhawaan din ang nakita naming pangunahing konseptong nagpapatakbo sa kanilang pagtrato sa mga namatay. Sa isang banda ay naniniwala sila sa SABLAW o sa sakit na maaaring makuha kapag nakikihalubilo ang mga patay sa mga buhay. Palasak sa mga ritwal sa patay ang hiling ng mga nabubuhay na huwag nang makialam sa kanila ang mga patay. Sa kabilang dako naman ay naniniwala rin sila sa BUSONG o sakit na maaaring makuha sa hindi pag-respeto o pagkalimot sa mga nakakatanda. Ginagamit naman ng mga patay ang panaginip bilang paraan para ipaabot sa mga nabubuhay na huwag silang kalimutan.

Ang lahat ng mga paniniwalang ito ay hindi umiiral sa isang bakyum. Hindi maihihiwalay ang Kulturang Pala'wan sa kapalagirang pinaglalagakan nito. Ano pa ang sisilipin ng yumao sa PALTEG kung wala nang punong kahoy at ang mga dahon nito? Saan na mapupunta ang KURUDWA kung wala nang KALABOGANG, na pinaniniwalaang isang gubat na mayroong lawa sa gitna kung saan lahat ng hayop o *game* at isda ay matatagpuan dito? Magkakaroon pa rin ba ng TINAPUY o *rice wine*, MULMOL at LUTLOT o *rice cake* kung wala nang aanihing bigas?



Ang tanong na, “Paano nga ba “mamamatay” ang mga nakaugaliang tradisyon at ang ating kalikasan?”, ay maaaring pumasok sa ating kamalayan.

Ayon kay Rivel (2011), ito ay dahil sa mga polisiya ng pamahalaan at ang pamamahala sa mga minahang patuloy na binabago ang landscape ng tinaguriang Philippines’ “Last Frontier”. Kinakitaan man ng malakas na pagtutol sa panig ng mga Panglima, ng local na pamahalaan, ng simbahan, at maraming mga NGOs. Tinuloy parin ng DENR ang pagbibigay ng karapatan

sa mga multinational companies para magoperate sa Palawan sa ngalan ng “KAUNLARAN”.

Dahil dito nanganganib ang buhay hindi lamang ng mga Pala’wan kundi na rin ng isla ng Palawan mismo.

Patuloy pa niya, ang nagbabadyang pagkasira ng Palawan ay isang malaking kawalan, hindi lamang sa kasalukuyan at hinaharap ng bansang Pilipinas, kundi sa buong mundo.

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