

Filipino Martial Arts



Digest

Special Issue
2009

Culture - Customs - Traditions



Publisher

Steven K. Dowd

Contributing Writers

Veltisezar Bautista

Sharen Simborio

Antonio Montalvan

Ivan Anthony S. Henares

Contents

From the Publishers Desk

The Philippines: Then and Now

I. Land and its People

II. Flashback: The Early Filipinos

III. Pre-Hispanic Culture

IV. Under Foreign Invaders

V. The Huk Rebellion

VI. From Philippine Independence to Ramos Regime

VII. The Modern Philippines

Filipinos Unique

History of the Filipino Language

Philippine Wedding Culture and Superstitions

Philippine Fiestas and Holidays

Ati-Atihan Festival	Flores De Mayo	Bonok-Bonok Festival
Sinulog Festival	Mudpack Festival	Penafrancia Viva la Virgen
Dinagyang Festival	Pinyahan sa Daet	Zamboanga Hermosa Festival
Panagbenga Festival	Parada ng Lechon	Masskara Festival
Moriones Festival	Tacloban Pintados Festival	Lanzones Festival
Kaamulan Fiesta	Sandugo Festival	Pinta Flores Festival
Cutud Lenten Rites	Kinabayo Festival	Feast of San Clemente
Pahiyas Festival	Kadayawan sa Dabaw	Giant Lantern Festival
		Shariff Kabunsuan Festival

Filipino Martial Arts Digest is published and distributed by:

FMA Digest

1297 Eider Circle

Fallon, Nevada 89406

Visit us on the World Wide Web: www.fmadigest.com

The FMA Digest is published quarterly. Each issue features practitioners of martial arts and other internal arts of the Philippines. Other features include historical, theoretical and technical articles; reflections, Filipino martial arts, healing arts and other related subjects.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this digest are those of the authors or instructors being interviewed and are not necessarily the views of the publisher or editor.

We solicit comments and/or suggestions. Articles are also welcome.

The authors and publisher of this digest are not responsible for any injury, which may result from following the instructions contained in the digest. Before embarking on any of the physical activities described in the digest, the reader should consult his or her physician for advice regarding their individual suitability for performing such activity.

From the Publishers Desk

Kumusta

The FMA Digest believes that to truly know an art, one must know something of the history, culture, customs, and traditions of the country that the art comes from.

The FMA Digest has in the past years, brought you the reader different aspects of the Philippine history and culture. In this Special Issue the FMA Digest brings some more information for you the reader to digest.

In the Then and Now section is a brief history bring you information about the land and its people, and highlights some aspects of history, that we may not have covered before, up to today in the Philippines.

Next; just a short piece on what makes Filipinos unique and what links them back to their Philippine culture and heritage, then a little information about the language or should I say languages of the Philippines. Then learn a little about Philippine weddings culture and superstitions.

Finally throughout the year in the Philippines there are (besides barrio fiestas), scheduled fiestas that are celebrations that have tradition and really brings out the cultural side of the country.

Now I know some will say, Oh! "The FMA Digest missed this festival or that aspect of something". Well the FMA Digest has brought you what we could obtain. And if you might have something on events we did not get, please send and maybe the FMA Digest can get together another Special Issue together on the subjects.

Anyway please enjoy.

Maraming Salamat Po





The Philippines: Then and Now

Excerpted from the Filipino Americans (From 1763 to the Present)

Their History, Culture, and Traditions

By Veltisezar Bautista

The Philippines is located in the southeastern portion of Asia. Her neighbor on the north is the Republic of China (Taiwan or Formosa), while on the west is Communist Vietnam. Further west is Thailand. Immediately to the south of the Philippines is Indonesia and to the southwest are Malaysia and Singapore

The Philippines is separated from her nearby Asian neighbors by several bodies of water. They are the Pacific Ocean on the east, the South China Sea on the north and west, and the Celebes Sea and the coastal waters of Borneo on the south.

I. Land and its People

The Philippines is an archipelago of 7,107 islands and islets. The biggest islands are Luzon, with a land area of 40,530 square miles (105,000 square kilometers); Mindanao, 36,670 square miles (95,000 square kilometers); Palawan, 5,749.86 square miles (14,896 square kilometers); Negros, 5,278.55 square miles (13,675 square kilometers); and Samar, 5,183.59 square miles (13,429 square kilometers). She has a rugged land mass and, similarly, she has an irregular coastline, which is twice as long as that of the continental U.S.A. This irregularity has resulted in numerous fine harbors and landlocked straights that can accommodate large ships. They can also be a refuge of ships in distress during stormy weather.

The land surface is 115,800 square miles (300,000 square kilometers). Land forms include hills, plains, valleys, and mountains. Her mountain ranges, which are volcanic in origin, are drained by small river systems. There are seven major mountain ranges. The largest and longest is Sierra Madre, which faces the Pacific Ocean on the eastern coast of Luzon. The highest peak is Mt. Apo, a volcano in Davao del Sur Province. It has an elevation of 9,691.60 feet (2,954 meters).

Three Major Islands. The three major geographical groups in the country are Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Luzon comprises the northern portion of the archipelago. The Visayan region has about 6,000 islands including Leyte, Cebu, Samar, and Bohol. Mindanao is the second largest land and encompasses about 400 small islands.

These islands are divided into provinces, which are run like states in the United States. Each province is ruled by a governor, a vice governor, and members of the provincial board. Each province is composed of cities, towns, and barrios.

Several "Pinatubos". There are several volcanos in the Philippines. These have been one of the natural causes of destruction to life and property for centuries. At least 10 are considered active. The most famous are Iraya on Batanes Island; Taal in Batangas; Banahaw in Quezon; Mayon in Albay; and Hibok-Hibok on the Camiguin Islands; Makaturing in Lanao; Apo in Davao, and Mt. Pinatubo in Zambales.

Mt. Pinatubo has gained notoriety as being the most destructive volcano in the world. It lay dormant before it erupted in June 1991. It directly and indirectly caused damage to public and private property in the provinces of Zambales, Bataan, and Pampanga, including the Clark Air Force Base in Angeles City, Pampanga Province. Its

ashes spread all over the world, causing global warming, damage to the ozone layer, and adverse effects on communications.

After six years of eruption, the lahar deposits along the volcano still cascade down the slopes after heavy rains. They continue to take lives, destroy bridges and roads, and defy billion-peso dikes built to contain lahar flows. These lahar flows are expected to last for five or more years, according to volcanologists. The Philippines lies within the Pacific seismic belt, which is why she experiences severer earthquakes.

There are several ethnic groups and more than 65 so-called cultural minorities in the Philippines, which speak their own dialects or languages. Among these ethnic groups are the Tagalog, the Ilocano, the Pangasinanian, the Pampangueño, the Bicolano, the Cebuano, the Ilongo, and the Waray-Waray. They comprise more than 90 percent of all Filipinos and are the Christians. About 84 percent of Filipinos are Roman Catholics.

- **The Tagalogs** live in Manila and in central and southern Luzon. Although they speak Tagalog, they have intonations of their own, as do the Batangueños from Batangas Province. The Tagalogs mostly live in such provinces as Nueva Ecija (the Ilocanos also live in some towns in the northern part of the province), Bulacan, Rizal, Batangas, Quezon, Laguna, and Mindoro (Oriental and Occidental). The Tagalogs dominate the people in Manila. There are, however, many people in the city who have come from different parts of the country, including Luzon, to live in the big city. Many also have come from the Bicol region and the Visayan Islands.
- **The Ilocanos** live in the Ilocos region in northern Luzon, particularly Ilocos Sur and Ilocos Norte, but many of them have migrated in large numbers to central Luzon, and, of course, to the United States. Most of the oldtimers in the United States in the late 1920s and early 1930s came from the Ilocos region. The Ilongos live in western Negros, in southern Mindoro, and on the island of Panay. The Cebuanos predominate in Cebu, western Leyte, Bohol, eastern Negros, and in some coastal areas of Mindanao.
- **The Bicolanos** are in the southeastern Luzon and nearby islands, including the provinces of Albay, Camarines Norte, etc. The Pampangueños or Kapampangans live in central Luzon, particularly in Pampanga Province. The Pangasinanians live in the Lingayen Gulf region of Luzon, including Pangasinan Province; however, many Pangasinanians have migrated into other towns in central Luzon. The Waray-Warays are in the provinces of Samar and eastern Leyte.
- **Other Groups.** Chinese and other groups also live in the Philippines. The Chinese comprise 1.5 percent of the population, and are active in business.

Cultural Minorities. There are more than 65 cultural minorities, similar to the Indian tribes in the United States, who live in reservations and in the mountains.

- They include the Muslim groups, which are comprised of the Maranao, the Samal, the Maguindanao, the Tausug, etc. They live in the Sulu Archipelago and southern Mindanao.
- There are also the so-called upland tribal groups who live in the mountain regions of the country, such as in the Mountain Province of Luzon. In northern Luzon, the other ethnic groups include the Bontoc, the Kalinga, the Ifugao, the Kankanay, the Ibaloi, the Isneg, the Ilongot, the Tinguian, and the Gadang.

- The Mangyan group lives in Mindanao and the Batak and the Tagbanua live in Palawan. In Mindanao there are groups known as the Tiruray, the T'Boli, the Bagobo, the Mandaya, the Bukidnon, the Subanun, and the Manobo. The Negritos, popularly known as the Agta or the Aeta live in the mountainous areas of Luzon, Negros, Panay, and Mindanao.

“I love You! Iniibig Kita!” Yes, “I love you” is said in about 87 dialects or languages in the Philippines. These include Tagalog, Kapampangan, Ilocano, Cebuano, Pangasinanian, Bicolano, Hiligaynon, Chabacano, and the different dialects spoken by other ethnic groups such as Muslims and cultural minorities.

The Filipino dialects belong to the so-called Malayo-Polynesian language family, which is said to be the largest language family throughout the world. Pilipino (not Filipino), which is based on Tagalog, is the national language in the Philippines, but both English and Pilipino, are the official languages in schools, in government, and in private institutions, especially in urban places. English serves as the official language used in communications and in business meetings, especially by Rotarians, Jaycees, and other organizations. That is, English and Pilipino both serve as the media of communications among the people who also speak their own dialects.

It is common that when a Filipino in the Philippines and a Filipino in America write to each other, they communicate in English. But in daily conversation, English and Pilipino are combined, which is called Taglish (meaning Tagalog (Pilipino) and English. For instance, one may say, “Pupunta ako sa Maynila, to enroll at the University of the Philippines, (I’ll go to Manila to enroll at the....) or “Okeng, okey ka, you’re so sweet!” (You’re okay and you’re so sweet!”)

So whenever you meet Filipinos in the United States, they may be speaking their own dialects when not speaking in English. However, these groups know Pilipino. So if you want to know a Filipino language, it should be Tagalog or Pilipino so that you’ll have more people whom you can converse with.

Government. The Philippines has a democratic form of government, like that of the United States. The government is divided into executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

Have Pesos and Enjoy! If you have the dollar, you can have it changed to the Philippine peso. The dollar when this book was about to go to press was equivalent to forty pesos (P40.00). The Philippine currency consists of the peso (P) and the centavo. One hundred centavos equal P1. Coin denominations are 1, 5, 10, 25, and 50 centavos, and P1, P2, and P5. Bill denominations consist of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 500, and 1,000 pesos. Foreign currency may be exchanged in banks, hotels, and most large department stores, which have authorized money-changing shops.

Charge It! Charge It! Most large hotels, stores, restaurants, and resort areas accept major credit cards, including Visa, Mastercard, and American Express. At hotels and other large stores, traveler’s checks are accepted, preferably American Express.

Note: In July 1997, as a result of the Hong Kong stock market crash, all the currencies in Southeast Asia, including the Philippine peso, suffered steep falls in value against the U.S. dollar. The collapse of the stock market there was triggered by the jacking up of

interest rates initiated by Hong Kong to protect its currency against any speculative attack.

How's the Weather? The weather in the Philippines is tropical, the country having only two seasons, the dry and rainy seasons. It's usually hot from April to July. The dry season is between November and June and the rainy season is between July and October. Filipinos consider December, January, and February as the cool months. But they may not be considered as winter without snow as in the United States; maybe it's milder or like spring or fall.

II. Flashback: The Early Filipinos

The Philippines, scientists believe, once was a part of Mainland China. According to the scientists, during the Ice Age, the waters surrounding the Philippines dropped to about 156 feet below the present levels, exposing large bodies of land. These became land bridges connecting the Philippines to the Asian mainland.

The Philippines, Out from the Bottom of the Sea? In February 1976, Dr. Fritjof Voss, a German scientist who studied the geology of the Philippines, questioned the validity of this theory of land bridges. He maintained that the Philippines was never part of mainland Asia. He claimed that it arose from the bottom of the sea and, as the thin Pacific crust moved below it, continued to rise. It continues to rise today. The country lies along great Earth faults that extend to deep undersea trenches. The resulting violent earthquakes caused what is now the land masses forming the Philippines to rise to the surface of the sea.

Dr. Voss also pointed out that when scientific studies were done on the earth's crust from 1964 to 1967, it was discovered that the 35-kilometer-thick crust underneath China does not reach the Philippines. Thus, the latter could not have been a land bridge to the Asian mainland.

When They Came, How They Came. The traditional teaching of Philippine history in Filipino schools today has early Philippine habitants coming in waves.

In 1962, it was concluded that about 250,000 years ago, primitive men came to the Philippines from the Asian mainland. Then about 25,000 years ago came the pygmies, the small, black-skinned, squat-nosed, thick-lipped, and kinky-haired people from the south over the still remaining land bridges. (They are considered the ancestors of the Negritos, who are, in turn, regarded as the aborigines of the Philippines.)

Around 12,000 to 15,000 years ago, another Negrito (or Aeta) migration occurred. They reached Luzon from Borneo over land bridges in Palawan and Mindoro. The submergence of the land bridges when the ice melted with the passing of time did not prevent other people from inhabiting the Philippines.

5,000 to 6,000 Years Ago? The first Indonesians arrived by boat from Southeast Asia some 5,000 to 6,000 years ago. Much later, around 1500 B.C., a second wave of Indonesians arrived. Then came the Malays in two successive waves, the first between 800 and 500 B.C. and the second, between 300 and 200 B.C. From Borneo, they traveled by sailboats and settled in the three major islands of the Philippines: Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Subsequent peoples who came from the start of Christianity until the present time include the Indians (Hindus), the Arabs, the Chinese, other Eastern Asians, the Europeans, and the Americans.

Who Came First? The matter of who the first settlers were has not been really resolved. This is being disputed by anthropologists, as well as the theory of Professor H. Otley Beyer that the first inhabitants of the Philippines came from the Malay Peninsula.

The Malays now constitute the largest portion of the populace and what Filipinos now have is a Malayan culture. Anthropologist F. Landa Jocano of the University of the Philippines contends that what fossil evidence of ancient men show is that they not only migrated to the Philippines, but also to New Guinea, Borneo, and Australia. He says that there is no way of determining if they were Negritos at all. However, what is sure is that there is evidence the Philippines was inhabited as early as 21,000 or 22,000 years ago. In 1962, a skull cap and a portion of a jaw, presumed to be those of a human being, were found in a Tabon cave in Palawan Province.

The discovery proved that man came earlier to the Philippines than to the Malay Peninsula; therefore, the first inhabitants of the former did not come from the latter.

Jocano further believes that present Filipinos are products of the long process of evolutions and movements of people. This not only holds true for Filipinos, but for the Indonesians and the Malays of Malaysia, as well. No group among the three is culturally or racially dominant. Hence, Jocano says that it is not correct to attribute the Filipino culture as being Malay in orientation.

According to Jocano's findings, the peoples of the prehistoric islands of Southeast Asia were of the same population as the combination of human evolution that occurred in the islands of Southeast Asia about 1.9 million years ago. The proofs of this are fossil materials found in different parts of the region and the movements of other peoples from the Asian mainland during historic times.

He states that these ancient men cannot be categorized under any of the historically identified ethnic groups (Malays, Indonesians, Filipinos) of today.

Some Filipino ethnic groups were pagans while others were Muslims. The pagans were converted to Christianity by the Spaniards. The Americans later arrived and introduced further cultural changes, which made the Filipinos more and more different from the peoples of other Southeast Asian countries.

III. Pre-Hispanic Culture

The Filipinos lived in settlements called barangays before the colonization of the Philippines by the Spaniards. As the unit of government, a barangay consisted from 30 to 100 families. It was headed by a datu and was independent from the other groups. (The Tagalog word barangay came from the Malay word balangay, a boat that transported them to the islands.)

Usually, several barangays settled near each other to help one another in case of war or any emergency. The position of datu was passed on by the holder of the position to the eldest son or, if none, the eldest daughter. However, later, any member of the barangay could be chieftain, based on his talent and ability. He had the usual responsibilities of leading and protecting the members of his barangay. In turn, they had to pay tribute to the datu, help him till the land, and help him fight for the barangay in case of war.

In the old days, a datu had a council of elders to advise him, especially whenever he wanted a law to be enacted. The law was written and announced to the whole barangay by a town crier, called the umalohokan.

The People's Commandments. Pre-college Filipino textbooks teach that the only written laws of pre-colonial Philippines that have survived are the Maragtas Code and the Code of Kalantiaw, both prepared in Panay. Some historians believe that the Maragtas Code was written by Datu Sumakwel, one of the chieftains from Borneo who settled there. As for the Code of Kalantiaw, it was said to have been promulgated by the third chief of Panay and possibly a descendant of Datu Sumakwel, Rajah Kalantiaw, in 1433. W. Henry Scott, however, has disputed the authenticity of the Code of Kalantiaw.

Classes of Society. There were four classes of society. They were the ruling class (datu), the freemen and notable persons (maharlika), the commoners (timawa), and the dependents and slaves (alipin). The alipin were of two kinds: the aliping namamahay, who were household servants, and the aliping saguigulid, who were slave workers.

Clothing and Ornaments. The natives already wore clothes and personal ornaments. The men wore short-sleeved and collarless jackets, whose length reached slightly below the waist. The color of the jacket appeared to indicate the position of the wearer in society, e.g., red for the chief, and blue or black for those below him, depending on the societal class. For the lower part, they wore a bahag, a strip of cloth wrapped around the waist, passing between the thighs. Their thighs and legs were left exposed.

A piece of cloth wrapped around the head, called a putong, served as a head gear. The kind of putong one wore was important. For example, a red putong meant the wearer had killed a man in war while one who had killed at least seven people signified so by wearing an embroidered putong. They also wore necklaces, armlets or kalombiga, earrings, rings, and anklets, usually made of gold and precious stones.

The women's upper garment was a sleeved jacket, called a baro. Over their skirts (saya or patadyong) was wrapped a strip of cloth called tapis. They also wore gem-studded bracelets, necklaces, rings, and gold earrings.

Tattoos were part of the body ornaments of pre-Hispanic Filipinos, men and women alike. These were also sported as war "medals." The more tattoos, the more impressive was a man's war record.

The Filipinos from the Visayas Islands were the most tattooed, which was why early Spanish writers referred to them as Pintados or painted people. The writers referred to their Islands as Islas del Pintados or Islands of the Painted People.

Rice and More Rice. Agriculture was the early Filipinos' main means of livelihood. They also grew an abundance of rice, sugarcane, cotton, hemp, coconuts, bananas, and many other fruits and vegetables. Land cultivation was by tilling or by the kaingin system. With the kaingin system, the land was cleared by burning the shrubs and bushes. After that, it was planted with rice and other crops, which were watered by irrigation ditches.

The world-famous Ifugao rice terraces of Mountain Province, which have stone walls and run for thousands of feet on the mountain sides, are irrigated by a system of ditches. From afar, the terraces seem to be a giant stairway leading to the sky. From end to end, the length could be about 12,000 miles or halfway around the Earth.

There were public and private lands. Those along the mountainsides and less arable lands were public property. They were open to everyone who wanted to till them. Private lands were usually exclusively for nobles and datos.

Other Industries. Other industries were fishing, mining, lumbering, poultry raising, shipbuilding, and weaving. Fishing was particularly thriving for the settlements along rivers and seas.

Domestic trade existed among the barangays and the islands. The Filipinos' foreign trade was with China, Japan, Siam (now Thailand), Borneo, Sumatra, Cambodia, and other islands of old Malaysia. The barter system was used in business transactions because there was no currency.

Their God. Bathala was the supreme god of the pre-Spanish Filipinos. They attributed to Bathala the creation of the heavens, Earth, and man. There were lesser gods and goddesses, like a god of death, a god of agriculture, a goddess of harvest, sea gods, river gods, and the like. It was also believed that things found in nature were full of spirits more powerful than man. Spirits of dead relatives were also revered. Sacrifices were offered to all of them.

The ancient Filipinos believed in the immortality of the soul and in life after death. Disease or illness was attributed to the whims of the environmental spirits and the soul-spirits of the dead relatives.

The pre-Spanish Filipinos also revered idols, called anitos in Tagalog and diwata in Visayan. These seem to be the counterparts of the present saints, to whom Filipinos offer prayers and food, much like their ancestors did.

How Islam Conquered Parts of the Philippines. The Islamization of Southeast Asia was generally accomplished by peaceful means through Muslim traders, missionaries, and teachers. They went to Java, Sumatra, Jahore, Malacca, Borneo, and nearby islands to conduct their mission. To speed up the conversion process, these proselytizers usually married into the families of the rich and ruling class.

By the 13th century, most of the lands in Southeast Asia were Islamized. From there, Islam filtered to Mindanao and Sulu, the southern part of the Philippines, in the 14th century. In 1380, an Arab teacher, Mukdum, arrived in Sulu from the Malay peninsula to preach Islam. He built the first mosque in Simunul, Sulu. Around 1390, he was followed by Raja Baginda, a minor ruler of Menangkabaw, Sumatra. About 1450, Abu Bakr, a Muslim scholar, came to Sulu and married Paramisuli, the daughter of Raja Baginda. After Baginda died, Abu Bakr established a sultanate form of government with himself as sultan. Islam then spread rapidly to all parts of Sulu.

Serif Kabungsuwan was responsible for the spread of Islam in Mindanao. He led a force of Muslim Samals from Jahore that conquered the natives of what is now Cotabato and converted them to Islam. He also married into an influential family and founded the first sultanate of Mindanao, with himself as head.

On the other hand, Muslim Malay traders from Borneo spread Islam to the natives in Manila and in the provinces of Batangas, Mindoro, and Pampanga. When the Spaniards arrived in the Philippines during the first half of the 16th century, many parts of Luzon, including the large native kingdoms of Manila and Tondo, had already been Islamized.

However, the further spread and influence of Islam were cut short by the conquest and Spanish colonization of the Philippines starting in 1665.

Chinese and Indians. Chinese influences on Filipino life were mainly economic. However, at the same time, cultural influences were inevitable. Many words in the Philippine language have Chinese origins. The Chinese also taught the ancient Filipinos

the use of gongs, umbrellas, lead, and porcelain, as well as the manufacture of gun powder, and metallurgy and mining methods. Filipinos also adopted customs from the Chinese.

Many words in the Philippine language also appear to have Sanskrit origins. In addition, ancient religious beliefs of the Filipinos show Indian influence. It is said that some elements of the Indian culture reached the Philippines through the Hinduized Malays who settled in the country permanently.

IV. Under Foreign Invaders

The Philippines was colonized by the Spaniards for about 333 years and by the Americans for 48 years. Later, World War II broke out and the Japanese occupied the Philippines for three years.

V. The Huk Rebellion

After World War II, the bad relationship between landlords and farmers, who were seeking better conditions, became worse. The tenancy problem plagued the country, particularly in the provinces of Pampanga, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, and Tarlac in central Luzon.

There was too much tension when the landlords who evacuated to urban areas during the war came to the rural areas to ask for back “rent” for their lands from the farmers. With the help of their own armed bands, they tried to force the peasants to give to them what they owed them.

At the same time, the Huks, or Hukbalahaps who fought against the Japanese as U.S.-supported Filipino guerillas did, were reluctant to give up their arms.

As a result, General Douglas MacArthur put to jail Luis Taruc and Casto Alejandro, the leading Huk leaders. Furthermore, the U.S. forces were ordered to disarm the Huks. Instead, the Huks fled to the mountains. Still armed, they supported the Pambansang Kaisahan ng mga Magbubukid-PKM (National Peasant Union) in its fight against the landowners.

By that time, the peasants’ movement represented about 500,000 members. The PKM, as part of the left-wing Democratic Alliance, which also included other groups, had supported Sergio Osmeña as the Nacionalista Party’s presidential candidate against Manuel Roxas during the 1946 election campaign. Osmeña was the president of the Philippine Commonwealth, who replaced President Manuel Quezon after he died in the U.S. in 1944.

Osmeña got the support of the labor movement. He promised the farmers that a new law giving 60 percent of the harvest, instead of the then 50 percent or less, would be passed. At that time, Taruc, who was released from jail, and five other candidates of the Democratic Alliance won congressional seats during the 1946 elections which elected Roxas to the presidency.

However, Taruc and the other Democratic Alliance winners were not allowed to be installed into their positions. They were accused of having used terrorist acts during the campaign. Violence by landlords with the help of the police worsened against peasant activities. In August 1946, Juan Feleo, a PKM leader was killed, resulting in the rebellion of the Huks in central Luzon. The People’s Liberation Army (Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan) became the new name of the People’s Anti-Japanese Army.

VI. From Philippine Independence to Ramos Regime

The United States, as provided in the Jones-McDuffie Law of 1934, granted independence to the Philippines on July 4, 1946.



The Roxas Administration (1946-1948). Inaugurated as first president of the new republic was Manuel A. Roxas, who defeated then-President Sergio Osmeña, Sr., in the April 1946 national election. (Osmeña was elected vice president in 1935 and succeeded Quezon to the presidency after the latter died while in exile in the United States.)

President Roxas, a native of Capiz (now Roxas City) had to deal with the rehabilitation of the Philippines, tremendously ravaged by World War II.

Various agreements with conditions, in favor of the United States, were discussed and approved by the authorities. One such condition was that American investors be given “parity” rights. That is, the U.S. investors had the right to be treated as equals of Philippine nationals, not as investors from any other foreign country.

At the same time, there were absolute quotas of Philippine exports to the United States. On the contrary, there were no quotas for American exports to the Philippines. Moreover, the U.S. military obtained military bases in the Philippines without any rent for 99 years. The duration was later reduced. The lease was to end in 1991.

In February 1948, President Roxas pardoned those who had cooperated with the Japanese during the war. Those who had served the Japanese were called “collaborators.” Roxas himself had played a part in the Japanese-sponsored wartime “puppet government.”

It was during the Roxas administration that the Philippine Constabulary and landlord private armies had their days fighting the Huks and their farmer supporters over tenancy problems. The Huks had earlier fought the Japanese along with U.S.-supported Filipino guerillas. But later, they supported the peasants in their fight with the landlords to improve the economic conditions of the land tenants.

At first, President Roxas held negotiations with the Huks. As a matter of fact, his administration created an Agrarian Commission that passed a law giving 70 percent of the harvest to the tenants. However, there were difficulties in implementing the law.

On the other hand, the Huks demanded that the winning congressmen of the Democratic Alliance be reinstated, among whom was Luis Taruc. They likewise demanded that the military police be disbanded and a general amnesty be given to those involved in the movement. Instead, President Roxas in March 1948 declared the People’s Liberation Army as a subversive Organization.

Quirino Comes to Power (1948-1953). In April 1948, Roxas died of a heart attack. He was succeeded by Elpidio Quirino, his vice president. Quirino, a native of Vigan, Ilocos Sur won as president in the 1949 election against Jose P. Laurel, who was president in the Second Puppet Republic during the Japanese Occupation of the Philippines. Quirino’s main goals in his administration were to obtain peace and order



and minimize graft and corruption in the government. He believed that mass corruption existed during the Roxas administration. But Quirino also was severely criticized by the press and the public for alleged corruption.

It was during his administration that the Huks increased to a greater number. In the 1949-51 period, there were between 11,000 and 15,000 armed Huks. Although they were mostly in central Luzon, there were regional committees of the People's Liberation Army in provinces now known as Southern Tagalog region, in northern Luzon, Visayan Islands, and Mindanao. Quirino appointed Ramon Magsaysay, a former guerrilla and a congressman from Zambales Province, as secretary of defense to fight the Huks. With the efforts of Magsaysay, the backbone of the Huk movement in central Luzon was broken.

The Magsaysay Era (1953-1957). In 1953, because of his popularity and his success in fighting the Huks, the Nacionalista Party lured Magsaysay to be its presidential candidate. He was then called as "*Man of the People*." They also said, "*Magsaysay Is My Guy*."

Born in Iba, Zambales, Magsaysay defeated Quirino of the Liberal Party in the November 1953 election. As a man of the people, he opened the Malacaang Palace, the White House of the Philippines, to the people. He also established special courts for landlord-tenant disputes and built roads, bridges, irrigation canals, and "liberty wells" in the rural areas. The Huk movement further weakened with the surrender of Luis Taruc in May 1954.



In 1955, Magsaysay worked for the redistribution of land. In that same year, Congress passed the so-called Land Reform Act. The law created the Land Tenure Administration that had the power to acquire private lands through either purchase or expropriation. Such lands would be sold by the government to farmers at reasonable prices.

However, the law was hampered by a lack of funds. Hence, Magsaysay, was not able to push through in Congress his full program for land reform. He died in March 1957 in a plane crash at Mt. Pinatubo.



The Garcia Regime (1957-1961). Carlos P. Garcia, Magsaysay's vice president, succeeded him to the presidency. Garcia, a native of Talibon, Bohol Province, was himself elected president in the 1957 election. Diosdado Macapagal, of the opposing Liberal Party, won the vice presidency.

President Garcia immediately imposed import controls on manufactured goods from abroad. His objective was to jump-start the Philippine economy. His administration was known for its program of austerity and its "Filipino First" policy, with a view to creating economic independence for the Philippines. This led to a kind of industrialization. However, as in the time of President Quirino, Garcia's government was plagued with graft and corruption.

The Macapagal Administration (1961-1965). With graft and corruption as the election issue for the 1961 election, Garcia was defeated by the Liberal Party's Diosdado

Macapagal. Calling himself the “Poor Boy” from Lubao, Pampanga, Macapagal lifted the import controls imposed by Garcia.

In 1963, Macapagal signed the Agrarian Land Reform Code into law. The code abolished tenancy by the institution of an agricultural leasehold system, which was intended to lead toward the eventual goal of ownership of the land by the farmers. However, when Macapagal’s term ended in 1966, the extent of the land area affected was not significant. Only about 29,150 hectares of the 405,000 hectares of rice and corn, were cultivated by tenants.



Macapagal was also known for his changing the Independence Day of the Philippines from July 4, 1946 (given by the United States) to June 12, 1898. It was on the latter date that President Emilio Aguinaldo had declared the Philippine independence in his hometown in Cavite from Spain.

Besides launching his version of Agrarian Reform, Macapagal promoted the stability of the peso and initiated a socio-economic program for the betterment of the poor.

The Era of Marcos: A President Who Became a Dictator (1965-1986). In the 1965 Presidential election, Macapagal was defeated by Ferdinand E. Marcos, a former Liberal, who became the Nacionalista Party’s presidential candidate. In 1969, Marcos, a native son of Sarrat, Ilocos Norte, won his reelection.

However, during the Marcos regime, corruption in the government reached unparalleled proportions. Thus, opposition to Marcos’s administration grew stronger and stronger. On September 21, 1972, President Marcos imposed martial law. He abolished Congress, clamped opposition print and broadcast media, and jailed thousands of his critics. He became an absolute dictator. His presidential proclamations became the laws of the land.



In 1973, his second and final term as president should have ended. However, with martial law, Marcos continued to rule as the absolute dictator in the Philippines. Plebiscites were held during the years 1973, 1975, and 1978. However, the will of the Filipino people didn’t prevail. All the plebiscites of disputable legitimacy gave approval to the extension of martial law.

In 1978, the Philippines held elections for the legislature (the National Assembly had replaced the former Congress). Marcos’ party, the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL), or New Society Movement obtained three quarters of the seats in the national assembly. In 1981, Marcos formally ended martial law. However, as president, he had emergency powers. In June 1981, in an election during which many people didn’t vote, Marcos won another six-year term as president.

During the martial law era, both the administrations of U.S. Presidents Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter continued to give military and other economic aid to the Marcos administration.



In August 1983, Senator Benigno Aquino, Jr., a staunch Marcos critic, went home to the Philippines from his exile in the United States. He was murdered at the Manila International Airport upon his arrival.

In February 1985, General Fabian Ver and 24 other soldiers were tried by a special court composed of what the opposition groups called “Marcos loyalists.” Ver and his soldiers were acquitted.

A so-called “snap” presidential election, proposed by President Marcos himself, was held in February 1986. Corazon Aquino, wife of the late Senator Aquino who was murdered, became Marcos’ rival candidate. Aquino, with the backing of the people, won a clear majority of the votes. However, Marcos had the National Assembly declare himself winner in the election.

A section of the military, led by Juan Ponce Enrile, Marcos’ Secretary of Defense, and Fidel Ramos, Chief of Staff of the armed forces of the Philippines, rebelled against the dictator. Due to the mass demonstrations in Manila, called “people power,” Marcos was forced to escape aboard a U.S. Air Force plane to the United States. That ended the Marcos regime and started the rule of President Aquino. Marcos died in exile in the United States.



The Aquino Regime (1986-1992). Upon taking over the Presidency, President Aquino, freed all political prisoners jailed by President Marcos. In the same year, all presidential decrees by Marcos were revoked, and the constitution, the fundamental law of the land, was adopted by a nationwide plebiscite in 1987.

During her administration, Aquino attempted to alleviate the economic conditions of the people. However, she was not successful. In fact, some criticized the weakness of her administration in dealing with economic problems. Furthermore, during her term, some elements of the armed forces, along with Marcos loyalists, revolted seven times against the Aquino government. The coup attempts were thwarted by loyal sectors of the military, led by Fidel V. Ramos, chief of staff of the armed forces and secretary of defense.

It was during the Aquino administration that the issue of extending the expiring leases of U.S. military bases in the Philippines came about. In September 1991, as Aquino objected to it, the Senate disapproved the extension of the leases of the bases. (Earlier, in June 1991, the nearby Mount Pinatubo damaged the Clark Air Force Base in Pampanga rendering it unusable.)

Former Executive Secretary Joker Arroyo said of Aquino, “Cory Aquino’s greatest legacy is the fact that we are all here today, talking freely.”

In the next presidential election, President Aquino didn't seek reelection. She chose Fidel V. Ramos, as her candidate for president.

The Ramos Administration (1992-1998). Fidel V. Ramos won in the 1992 Presidential election against six other candidates. In the last five years of his administration, he has changed the Philippines from being "the Sick Man of Asia" into "The Next Tiger of Asia."

In September 1992, he lifted the ban on the Communist Party. Likewise, he eliminated foreign-currency restrictions to attract foreign investment to the Philippines. Ramos, besides courting foreign investment, has liberalized the Philippine economy to move toward industrialization.

He negotiated with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), headed by Nur Misuari, to bring peace in Mindanao, the southern part of the Philippines.

A peace agreement between the Philippine government and the Muslim group was signed on September 2, 1996, that ended the 24-year-old war in Mindanao. The agreement was signed by the government chief negotiator Manuel Yan, Nur Misuari, Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, and Secretary General Hamid Algabid of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC).

Later, Misuari ran for and won the Governorship of the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARM) in the September 9, 1996, elections.



Vice President Joseph Estrada, a former movie actor, was elected to the presidency with a landslide victory in the 1998 elections, pledging to help the poor and develop the agricultural sector. Under the cloud of the Asian financial crisis, which began in 1997, Estrada's wayward governance took a heavy toll on the economy. Unemployment worsened, the budget deficit grew, and the currency fell. Eventually, the economy recovered but at a much slower pace than its Asian neighbors.

In late 1999, Estrada waged an all-out war against the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front in Central Mindanao, which displaced half a million people. In March 2000, the bandit group Abu Sayyaf kidnapped Basilan 21 hostages, including 10 foreign tourists, from the Sipadan Island resort in neighboring Sabah, Malaysia. They were freed in batches after over \$20 million ransom were reportedly paid by the Libyan government.

In October 2000, Estrada was charged of receiving millions of dollars in illegal gambling payoffs. The House of Representatives impeached him, but his impeachment trial in the Senate broke down when the senate voted to block examination of the president's bank records. In response, masses of people protested and demanded Estrada's resignation. Estrada's cabinet resigned en masse and the military and police withdrew their support. On January 20, 2001, the Supreme Court declared the presidency vacant and swore in Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as the country's fourteenth President.



Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is sworn in as president at the 2001 EDSA Revolution.

On April 25, 2001, two weeks before the mid-term senatorial elections, the Sandiganbayan - the Philippine anti-graft court - issued an arrest warrant for Estrada. Estrada's supporters staged a so-called "EDSA Tres", or third People Power Revolution at the EDSA Shrine, which on May 1 tried to overthrow Arroyo's government. Arroyo was elected to a full six-year term in 2004, though the balloting was spoiled by a monotonous vote-counting process that was completed six weeks after the election.

In 2005, a tape of a wiretapped conversation surfaced bearing the voice of Arroyo apparently instructing an election official to increase her votes. The tape flashed protests calling for Arroyo's resignation. Arroyo admitted to inappropriately speaking to an election official, but denied allegations of fraud and refused to step down. Attempts to impeach the president failed later that year.

Arroyo currently spearheads a plan for a repair of the constitution to transform the present presidential republic into a federal parliamentary government.



Due to his economic programs and accomplishments, Newsweek Magazine, cited the Philippines as the "*The Next Tiger of Asia.*" The Ramos term ends this year, 1998.

VII. The Modern Philippines

Today, the Philippines, an independent nation of about 70 million people, is becoming one of the most progressive countries in Asia. The Philippines has rebounded from the economic debacle that former dictator Ferdinand Marcos had put her into. Investors from the United States, Japan, Malaysia, and other nations in Asia are bringing in millions of dollars as investment in factories, recreation establishments, and other businesses.

The "States" of the Philippines. A "state" in the Philippines is called a province. The Philippines has 72 provinces and 61 chartered cities.

Manila and its Satellites. Metro Manila is the political, economic, social, educational, cultural and recreational hub of the Philippines. It comprises the city of Manila, Quezon City, Makati, and other suburban cities.

Malls, boutiques, flea markets, and other shops abound in Manila and its environs. You'll be amazed at beautiful attractions in Manila itself, like the Intramuros, the old walled city, and Chinatown. Here you'll see a number of McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's, and Kentucky Fried Chicken. When you're inside the malls and you don't concentrate on the crowd, you'd think that you were somewhere in America.

Filipinos Unique

Learn About What Makes Filipinos Unique and What Links Them Back to Their Philippine Culture and Heritage.

Below are a few unique customs seen in most Filipino interactions depending on how 'Traditional' the Filipinos are that you encounter.

1. **"Mano po"**

"Mano po" (pronounced mah-noh poh) refers to a physical gesture of taking the hand of an elder and bringing it towards your forehead. This is a sign of respect for the elder and is usually done at the point of greeting or farewell. Children are expected to perform this gesture towards adult relatives & adult family friends. Failure to perform "mano po" would be considered as disrespectful.

2. **"Kuya" or "Ate"**

The Filipino culture is very big on respect. The older an individual is, the more they call for respect. The term 'kuya' (pronounced koo-yah) refers to an older male person; it means 'big brother.' Its verbal usage indicates that you respect the older male and recognize the difference in age. The feminine form is 'ate' (pronounced ah-teh) which is directed towards an older female person; it means 'big sister.' Children are encouraged to use these terms with their older siblings. Adults can use these terms to address friends or co-workers regardless of whether or not they are truly related. It simply demonstrates a form of respect for the older individual.

3. **The power of the eyebrows.**

In American culture, the eyebrows usually convey emotion via a variety of facial expressions. In Filipino culture, raising your eyebrows can also communicate a positive affirmation of "yes" when a yes/no question has been asked. So, should a Filipino fail to verbally answer your question, look at their eyebrows before feeling like you were being ignored. In reality, they may just be answering you non-verbally through the raising of their eyebrows.

Raising your eyebrows accompanied with strong eye contact can also serve as a greeting or farewell to an individual you cannot physically touch.

4. **The lips give direction.**

Again, a non-verbal expression performed by Filipinos. By puckering their lips and facing a certain direction, they are using their lips to point to communicate a certain direction. Instead of wasting physical energy by lifting their arm/hand to point, they conserve energy by using their puckered lips.

5. **Food at every gathering.**

Whether it be a grand party or just an informal meeting, Filipinos express their hospitality & friendship through the serving of food. The more grandiose the cuisine, the more 'love' they are trying to convey to those at the gathering. Instead of asking, 'how are you?' Filipinos will ask, 'have you eaten yet?'

6. **Take your shoes off when entering a Filipino home.**

By taking your shoes off when entering a Filipino home, you are conveying utmost respect towards the owners of the property. You are showing them that you care about their property and have the desire to maintain its cleanliness. More modern Filipinos who have tile or wood floors may not expect you to take your shoes off because

of the coldness of the floor, however, if you do adhere this custom, then you will surely make a favorable impression.

7. Hellos and Goodbyes cannot be taken for granted.

You must greet everyone "hello" at every meeting and say "good-bye" at each farewell. For anyone present, you can either offer a 'mano po,' a kiss on the cheek, or offer eye contact coupled with raising your eyebrows to those you are unable to physically reach or those you do not know very well. Failure to offer a greeting or farewell would indicate that you are disrespectful, and a snob. So, be attentive to those present as you do not want to offend anyone.

Filipinos communicate less verbally than their American counter-parts and it is clearly demonstrated in the Filipino quirks discussed here. The minimal verbiage in Filipino Culture could be best explained through a silent adherence to the common expression: "actions speak louder than words."

History of the Filipino Language

By Sharen Simborio

The existence of a national language in one country promotes national unity and geographic and political solidarity. It is by this reason that a search for a national linguistic symbol began.

Just like any other languages, Filipino, our national language, has gone through a lot of stages to become what it is today.

Having a national language was first conceived as early as 1925 when Manuel L. Quezon recalled Rizal's feeling of frustration for not being able to communicate with a fellow countrywoman while on a boat bound for Europe.

It was during the Commonwealth period that our search for a national language was first recognized officially. In Section 3, Article XIII of the 1935 Constitution, The National Assembly shall take steps toward the development and adoption of a common national language based on one of the existing languages.

The chief agency for the creation of the development of a common national language is the Institute of National Language (INL), which was established through Commonwealth Act No. 148 in November 19, 1936.

A director, executive secretary and seven members compose it.

The group was to make a descriptive and comparative survey of one of the major dialects namely, Tagalog, Kapampangan, Waray, Ilokano, Bikolano, Hiligaynon and Pangasinan. From these, one would be chosen, to become the basis of the national language.

After ten months of study, the members chose to recommend Tagalog as the basis of the national language. Tagalog was heavily favored because it has the most number of highly developed literatures and was considered as the best-studied language during that time. The national language based on Tagalog dialect came through Executive Order No. 134 on December 30, 1937.

Two years later, on December 30, 1939, Tagalog officially became the National Language of the Philippines. However, many opposed the decision especially the non-Tagalog speakers.

The Cebuanos, under the leadership of Paulino Gullas, came to present Cebuano as an alternative to Tagalog. The biggest objection comes from the fact that in terms of numbers of speakers, Visayan has an overwhelmingly large number of speakers than the Tagalog.

The post-war period was the period of propagation for Tagalog, but opposition against Tagalog arose during the 1960's when INL rejected the orthography of Geruncio Lacuesta, a lawyer and editor of a magazine called KATAS. Lacuesta questioned the 20-letter alphabet, the orthography and the vocabulary. Above all these, he demanded a distinction between the vernacular Tagalog and the National Language. It seemed to him that Pilipino was nothing more but a change of name that he called as the purist form of Tagalog [4]. Lacuesta served as the spokesman of the non-Tagalog's who felt inferior because of Tagalog dominance. They felt that with the choice of Tagalog as the national language, it made them second-class citizens in their own country.

On December 23, 1971, the committee on National Language adopted the proposal of the University of the Philippines known as the universal approach. This method proposed the adoption and development of a national lingua franca used all over the country as the National Language [5]. The non-Tagalog delegates, who finally voted Filipino into the constitution, finally adopted this proposal.

On August 13, 1979, through Department Order No. 7, the national language referred to as Pilipino to impress upon the national language the indelible character of the Filipino nationhood. It is in effect nationalizing what once was a regional dialect [6].

The INL also published books that provide guidelines and models for drafting official letters in Pilipino. Translations of official documents into Pilipino were also done, like that of the 1973 Constitution. The Institute likewise conducted seminars and workshops for teacher training.

It was in the 1987 Constitution when our search for a National Language when it made the following declaration in Article XIV, Section 6: "The National language of the Philippines is Filipino."

"Unlike Pilipino, which is based on one native dialect, the term Filipino used in the above constitutional provision has a multilingual basis.

It is a language that developed and continues to develop by accepting and adopting many elements especially words, from different Philippine and other foreign languages such as English and Spanish in particular.

At present, Filipino is used almost exclusively as the lingua franca throughout the entire archipelago. It can be made to perform all the functions that a modern language, like English or French, is made to perform, as a medium of instruction in all subjects; and as a language of research, science and technology.

Dramatic progress in the use of Filipino in our education and government is sure to come our way in the coming years.

The optimistic forecast on the future of Filipino is bolstered by the provision in the 1987 Constitution, quoted below, which ordains the government and education: Subject to provisions of law and the Congress may deem appropriate, the government

shall take steps to initiate and sustain the use of Filipino as a medium of instruction in the educational system.[7]

[1] Joseph Ralston Hayken - The Philippines: A Study in National Development. New York: McMillan 1942. p. 583.

[2] Andrew B.Gonzales - Language and Nationalism. pg 71

[3] Andrew B.Gonzales - Language and Nationalism. pg 75

[4] Andrew B.Gonzales - Language and Nationalism. pg 107-108

[5] Andrew B.Gonzales - Language and Nationalism. pg 141

[6] Andrew B.Gonzales - Language and Nationalism. pg 102

[7] Ernesto Constantino - What is Filipino? pg 3-8

Philippine Wedding Culture and Superstitions

The Engagement

After the couple has decided to marry, the first order of business is the pamanhikan, where the groom and his parents visit the bride's family to ask for her hand in marriage. Wedding plans are often made at this time, including a discussion of the budget and guest list. Don't be surprised if the groom-to-be is expected to run some errands or help out around the bride's house. This tradition is called paninilbihan, where the suitor renders service to his future wife's family to gain their approval.

The Wedding Outfits



The white wedding dress has become popular in the last hundred years or so with America's influence in the Philippines. Before that, brides wore their best dress, in a festive color or even stylish black, to celebrate a wedding. Orange blossom bouquets and adornments were a must during the turn of the last century. For men, the barong tagalog is the traditional Filipino formal wear. It is a cool, almost transparent, embroidered shirt, made from silky pina or jusi, two native ecru fabrics. It is worn untucked, over black pants, with a white t-shirt underneath. These days, a Filipino American groom might wear the conventional black tux, but Filipino male wedding guests will usually show up in their finest barongs.

The Ceremony

In pre-colonial days, a wedding ceremony lasted three days. On the first day, the bride and groom were brought to the house of a priest or babaylan, who joined their hands over a plate of raw rice and blessed the couple. On the third day, the priest pricked the chests of both bride and groom and drew a little blood. Joining their hands, they

declared their love for each other three times. The priest then fed them cooked rice from the same plate and gave them a drink of some of their blood mixed with water. Binding their hands and necks with a cord, he declared them married. The majority of Filipino weddings are now Catholic weddings, but some native traditions remain. Most have special "sponsors" who act as witnesses to the marriage. The principal sponsors could be godparents, counselors, a favorite uncle and aunt, even a parent. Secondary sponsors handle special parts of the ceremony, such as the candle, cord and veil ceremonies. Candle sponsors light two candles, which the bride and groom use to light a single candle to symbolize the joining of the two families and to invoke the light of Christ in their married life. Veil sponsors place a white veil over the bride's head and the groom's shoulders, a symbol of two people clothed as one. Cord sponsors drape the yugal (a decorative silk cord) in a figure-eight shape--to symbolize everlasting fidelity--over the shoulders of the bride and groom. The groom gives the bride 13 coins, or arrhae, blessed by the priest, as a sign of his dedication to his wife's well-being and the welfare of their future children.

One of the Filipino customs is the money dance. That's one of the traditions you do at a Filipino wedding. The bride and groom dance to a Filipino love song or folksong and while they are dancing, the guest will put money in the bride's mouth. The person who gives the money brings the couple's heads together as if kissing. Sometimes people throw money on the floor or pin the dollar bills on the bride and groom's clothing. Sometimes the money is placed in an envelope and put into the bride's mouth. The money dance has become a tradition at Filipino weddings in Hawaii. The idea of this is to help contribute to the wealth and happiness of the couple.

Music and dancing are an important part of Filipino culture. At Filipino gatherings you often see the tinikling (Bamboo Dance) or the wine dance in which young girls dance with filled glasses on their hands and heads. Just as there are many different languages in the Philippines so are there different styles of dance. For example, the Igorot dances come from a Filipino mountain tribe. Their instruments are mostly drums and flutes. The customs of these people resemble the bright, woven cloths of Indian tribes. There are the Muslim dances which come from the south where some people dress like those living in Arabia. The music of the Filipinos coming from the island of Luzon, which is where many of Hawaii's Filipinos come from, is similar to the Spanish or Mexican music played during fiestas.

The Food

The Filipino wedding feast is elaborate. One feast celebrated at the turn of the last century involved these foods: First was served cold vermicelli soup. The soup was followed by meats of unlimited quantity--stewed goat, chicken minced with garlic, boiled ham, stuffed capon, roast pork and several kinds of fish. There were no salads, but plenty of relishes, including red peppers, olives, green mango pickles and crystallized fruits. For dessert, there were meringues, baked custard flan, coconut macaroons and sweetened seeds of the nipa plant.

Numerous Widely-Held Folk Beliefs

Filipinos still adhere to numerous widely-held folk beliefs that have no scientific or logical basis but maybe backed-up by some past experiences (yet can be dismissed as

mere coincidence). Below are just a few that concerns weddings. Some are still practiced to this day primarily because of 'there's nothing to lose if we comply' attitude while the others are totally ignored for it seemed downright ridiculous.

Read on...

- Brides shouldn't try on her wedding dress before the wedding day or the wedding will not push through.
- Knives and other sharp and pointed objects are said to be a bad choice for wedding gifts for this will lead to a broken marriage.
- Giving arinola (chamberpot) as wedding gift is believed to bring good luck to newlyweds.
- Altar-bound couples are accident-prone and therefore must avoid long drives or traveling before their wedding day for safety.
- The groom who sits ahead of his bride during the wedding ceremony will be a henpecked husband.
- If it rains during the wedding, it means prosperity and happiness for the newlyweds.
- A flame extinguished on one of the wedding candles means the one on which side has the unlit candle, will die ahead of the other.
- Throwing rice confetti at the newlyweds will bring them prosperity all their life.
- The groom must arrive before the bride at the church to avoid bad luck.
- It is considered bad luck for two siblings to marry on the same year.
- Breaking something during the reception brings good luck to the newlyweds.
- The bride should step on the groom's foot while walking towards the altar if she wants him to agree to her every whim.
- A bride who wears pearls on her wedding will be an unhappy wife experiencing many heartaches and tears.
- An unmarried woman who follows the footsteps (literally) of the newlyweds will marry soon.
- Dropping the wedding ring, the veil or the arrhae during the ceremony spells unhappiness for the couple.
- In early Filipino custom, the groom-to-be threw his spear at the front steps of his intended's home, a sign that she has been spoken for. These days, a ring suffices as the symbol of engagement.



Philippine Fiestas and Holidays

The fiesta is part and parcel of Filipino culture. Through good times and bad times, the fiesta must go on. Each city and barrio has at least one local festival of its own, usually on the feast of its patron saint, so that there is always a fiesta going on somewhere in the country. But the biggest and most elaborate festival of all is Christmas, a season celebrated with all the pomp and pageantry the fun-loving Filipino can manage.

Ati-Atihan Festival

Kalibo, Aklan

13-19 January

Ati-Atihan is one of the greatest, most colorful and fun festivals. Its nickname, "The Filipino Mardi Gras" a feast held in honor of the Santo Niño held annually in January concluding on third Sunday, in the town of Kalibo, Aklan in the Philippines.

It is the wildest among Philippine fiestas and considered as the Mother of All Philippine festivals. Celebrants paint their faces with black soot and wear bright, outlandish costumes as they dance in revelry during the last three days of this two week-long festival. Catholics and non-Catholics alike observe this special day with processions, parades, dancing, and merrymaking.

Time to Party and Dance to the Beat of the Drums in Kalibo! Enjoy Life! Dance in the Streets! Party till You Drop!

The name Ati-Atihan means "make-believe Atis." It has been known as the wildest among Philippine fiestas. The Ati-Atihan is a festival in honor of the Santo Niño. During the last three days of this week-long festival (fiesta), a parade is characteristic, a colorful happening with celebrants who paint their faces in many different ways and who are dressed in the most outstanding costumes.



The Ati-Atihan Festival is named after the Ati, the indigenous natives of the island before the arrival of the Malay in the 10th century and the Spanish in the 16th century. The festival is held on the third week of January every year on the second Sunday after Epiphany in Kalibo in the Aklan province on the island of Panay. The festival is to rejoice the arrival or gift of the Santo Niño by Magellan to the native Queen of Cebu in 1521

and is manifested by hyperactive merriment on the streets. The dancing on the rhythms of the drums makes this festival very similar to the Mardi Gras celebration in Rio in Brazil. The key activity of the festival and one of the main reasons tourists gather to the island is the native dance competitions pitched to rhythmic and mesmerizing drumbeats

that run nonstop for several days. Competitors rehearsed for weeks before the festival and dress in very colorful costumes, wearing masks and headdresses, and paint their bodies with black ash to turn up like the native Ati. Dancing troupes, some numbering 40 or 50 children or teenagers, dance for local prestige and cash prizes.

The Origin

The museum on the town square is worth a visit to learn more about the origin of Ati Atihan. In the thirteenth century, long before the Spaniards came to the Philippines, light-skinned settlers from the island of Borneo (Kalimantan) in Indonesia arrived on Panay. The local people of Panay, the Ati (negritos), a small and dark (black) kinky-haired people, sold them a small piece of land and permitted them to settle down in the lowlands. The Atis themselves, lived more upland in the mountains.



One time the Ati people was in need of food because of a bad harvest in their homelands because strong rains wiped out hillside crops. They came down to the lowlands of the Maraynon and asked them food. Every year since then, the Atis came down to the lowland people to ask for some food. The lowlanders who had a good harvest shared their blessings with the black, kinky-haired people. They danced and sang in gratefulness for the helping hand. A real friendship was born and the Maraynon started to paint their faces black in honor of the Atis and took part in the fiesta.

Sometime in the 13th century, ten datus from Borneo fleeing the oppression of Datu Makatunaw purchased some land in Panay from the Ati Marikudo, son of the old chief Populan. The price agreed upon was a solid gold hat and a basin. In addition, the Ati chief's wife wanted an ankle-length necklace for which the natives gave a mass of live crabs, a long-tusked boar, and full-antlered white deer. Datu Puti, leader of the expedition and a relative of Makatunaw, established the Panay settlement and left Datu Sumakwel in charge.

Datu Puti went on farther north to the island of Luzon and left Datu Balensuela and Datu Dumangsil in a settlement in Taal. Datu Puti later returned to Borneo. These we gather from Maragtas, a book written by Pedro Monteclaro in 1907 and supposedly based on an ancient manuscript that nobody has ever seen.

Aklan is the oldest province in the Philippines, structured in 1213 by settler from Borneo as the Minuro it Akean to include what is now Capiz. The festival is a festivity of the king of the "Aetas", the original indigenous inhabitant's agreement with the leader of the Malays that came by "banca" from Sabah's sultanate in the 1200s, 800 years ago. Aklan's capital presently, Kalibo but has changed location several times throughout their history.

Spanish Influence

After the Spaniards settled down in the Philippines, some Catholic elements get into in the fiesta, especially honoring Santo Niño. A Spanish representative arranged a

deal with the local leaders of the Atis and the leader of the immigrants from Borneo. The outcome of the deal was, that in the future the existing native celebration would be devoted to the Santo Niño. Nowadays it is a mix of parades, procession and dancing people on the beat of monotonous music of drums or the rhythmic tinkling of metal and stone on bottles. It looks as if the dancing never stops! The ritual dance originates from the Atis. Viva kay Santo Niño!

It is said that the procession is the peak of the fiesta. It is held on the last Sunday. The street dancers never fail to enter the Kalibo church every time they pass by. The jingle "Viva kay Santo Niño!" is repeated commonly. It is clear that it is Santo Niño who is honored.

The Beat and Rhythm

Although the Ati-Atihan appears to show only revelry, a closer look shows that it has historic origins.

Boom Boom Boom Bo Boom Bo Bo Boom!
Boom Boom Boom Bo Boom Bo Bo Boom!

The beating of bass drums and the rhythmic tinkling of metal and stone on bottles echo in the air during the celebration. Monotonous and vivacious, the music blasts a while then stops to wait for a response from others. Drums beat continuously and everyone talks and shouts,

Hala Bira, Puera Pasma!

By midmorning, small groups gather in their respective neighborhoods. They are prodded by drums as they dance their way to the town center. They grow in numbers as different groups from remote areas merge into one as they get closer to the center of town. Sometimes the crowd thins as a few drop out to worship in silence and offer themselves to their own gods. But they always come back to rejoin the group to disappear in the gyrating crowd. The dancing never stops.

All week long, celebrants arrive by land, sea, and air. As inter-island boats dock, they are greeted by pseudo-New Guinea tribal drummers. Tourists are ferried across rice fields and coconut plantations to Kalibo hotels while others are accommodated in private homes and public buildings. Others camp on the beach. By weekend all accommodations are gone although there seems to be no need for them as nobody bothers to sleep anyway. There is music everywhere and the loud crowd often finds itself inside improvised halls dancing all night long.

The steady beat of drums can sometimes be heard late in the night as a single drummer is suddenly inspired to pick up the rhythm.

Viva El Señor Santo Niño!

Celebrants ape the dance of the Atis. This ritual is said to be the result of the sale of land in Panay by the Ati chieftain Marikudo to Datu Puti and the Borneans so that they can have a place to settle.

It has been observed that the unyielding street dancers never fail to enter the Kalibo church every time they pass by. Repeated shouts of "Viva kay Santo Niño!" and

placards carried around with the same slogan make it known to everybody that this profane merriment is the participants' rowdy way of honoring the Santo Niño.

The coming of the Santo Niño into the fiesta started with the involvement of the first encomiendero of Aklan, Don Antonio Flores. He made arrangements with Datu Malanga and Datu Madayog to have their then existing native celebration be dedicated to the Santo Niño.

Boom Boom Boom Bo Boom Bo Bo Boom!

Among the Visayans, the Spaniards wrote, it is not quite proper to drink alone or to appear drunk in public. Drinking is done in small groups or in "gatherings where men as well as women sat on opposite sides of the room, and any passerby was welcome to join in." Father Loarca admired their control for they rarely got angry when drunk and Alcina relates that the Visayans could decide disputes in the "best, quickest and most equitable way" when wine was used to enliven the discussion. "After drinking something, he who proposes does it with eloquence, those who respond, with discretion, those who decide, with attention, and all with fairness."

One of the first things the Spaniards learned about the Visayans was that they were good drinkers. Magellan had no sooner landed in Homonhon, when people from nearby Suluan presented him a jarful of what Pigafetta recorded as uraca-that is, arak, the Malay-Arabic word for distilled liquor. In Limasawa, Pigafetta drank from the same cup as Rajah Kolambu, and his translator, Enrique de Malacca, got so drunk he wasn't of much use; a few days later, the local harvest was delayed while Kolambu and his brother Awi slept off a hangover. In Cebu, Pigafetta drank palm wine, tuba nga nipa, straight from the jar with reed straws together with Rajah Humabon, but in Quipit he excused himself after one draught when Rajah Kalanaw and his companions finished a whole jar without eating anything.

Looking for the Prehispanic Filipino

The early acceptance of Catholic rituals had much to do with the eventual suppression of the natives' ritual drinking. The Spanish clergy did not oppose moderate drinking but were able to attack excessive indulgence as a threat to public morality. What aroused the friars was that drinking was tightly bound to pagan celebrations of betrothals, weddings, and funerals. These activities would eventually be eliminated among Christianized Filipinos. (Phelan, 76-7)

However, this did not happen with the Ati-Atihan.

Hala Bira!

Boom Boom Boom Bo Boom Bo Bo Boom!

In spite of the isolation of some native settlements, the fiesta enabled the religious orders to reach out to their scattered flock. "There were three fiestas of consequence to the Filipinos, namely, Holy Week, Corpus Christi, and the feast in honor of the patron saint of the locality." The natives would flock to the cabecera and it was also an opportunity to teach them in Christianity. Fiestas offered religious processions, dances, music, and theatrical presentations to the people. Although it may be "sacred or profane

blended together...it is highly doubtful that the Filipino were aware of the ceremony's elaborate liturgical symbolism, but they obviously enjoyed the pageantry involved." This statement seems particularly appropriate for the Ati-Atihan. Wherever the flock may be, they can hear the drumbeats from far-away Kalibo calling them at the start of every year.

Kalibo's Ati-Atihan has become so admired that similar festivals have cropped up all over Western Visayas. Antique has its Binirayan and Handugan festivals while Iloilo City has a more lavish and choreographed edition called Dinagyang. Bacolod, not one to be left behind, has also started its own version. (Hoefler, 255) In Cebu, it comes as Pit Senyor, a hopping dance to drums, (Joaquin, 18) or Sinulog. Today, Ati-Atihan is celebrated in the Aklan towns of Makato, Altavas, and Ibajay, a small town northeast of Kalibo which claims to be the original site where the Negritos came down from the hills to celebrate with the lowlanders. Of course, this claim is recounted in various towns along the northeast coast of Panay but through the years, Kalibo has established itself as the Ati-Atihan center.

Puera Pasma!

Boom Boom Boom Bo Boom Bo Bo Boom!

The original commemoration of a land barter and thankfulness to the Provider for the post-monsoon harvest has turned into a feast day for the Santo Niño. He is the direct link to the Father, the God of all, the Redeemer from infamy, the Absolver of all sins, the Deliverer to a better life. That is why Filipinos carry Him close to their hearts as a talisman, or anting-anting, and as protection from the unholy.

Hala Bira! Boom pak. Puera Pasma! Boom pak.
Hala Bira! Boom pak. Puera Pasma! Boom pak.

There is so much to be thankful for. It could be the achievement of a good trade, a bountiful harvest, release from famine and storm, a peace pact between military people, a prayer answered, a vow reaffirmed, or just plain ecstasy for life. The beat goes on and frenzy builds up in the noonday heat as sweat and brew eats up the senses. Icons of history, pop characters, and political personages dance with Congolese warriors in mock battle with caballeros. The celebrants' dreams are reinforced by rosaries and prayers which absolve them from their sins and resurrect them as new persons, maybe with a hangover, but definitely saved again.

Once inside the church these costumed revelers would kneel along the communion rail to have their heads, shoulders, and backs rubbed by the now exhausted sacristan, priest, or church helper with a small statue of the Santo Niño. And just as the Ati-Atihan is an outward display of revelry and adoration, the devotee is in search of something which is missing from within. That which was empty is now filled, probably as much with spirit from the bottle as much as anything else. The celebrant becomes at peace with himself, the world, and his god. The loob (inner self) is once again purified by the performance of the ritual of the (celebration) panlabas.

With church bells ringing to the rhythm of Hala Bira! Puera Pasma! a now cleansed assembly of revelers stagger back to the streets of the Ati-Atihan climax, the end of a long precession where muggers, gropers and thieves have rubbed elbows with

schoolgirls and church ladies tearfully singing religious hymns. The twin lights of media and tourism have done their bit in egging the frenzy on, but at the core, it is only the Filipino pulling two polar ends of his soul together.

Sinulog Festival

Cebu City

18-19 January

Cebu City's fiesta of fiestas. Characterized by its peculiar two-steps-forward-and-one-step-backward shuffle, thus simulating the Holy Child of the shores, the Sinulog is a century-old tradition observed in the part of Visayas region. The prayer-dance is synchronized to the beat of drums and shouts of "Pit Señor! Viva Sto. Niño!" Feel free to dance with the best of them, grooving all the way to the grand final presentation at the Cebu City Sports Center.

The Sinulog festival is one of the grandest, most distinguished and most colorful festivals in the Philippines. The major festival is held each year on the third Sunday of January in Cebu City to honor the Santo Niño, or the child Jesus, who used to be the patron saint of the whole province of Cebu (since in the Catholic faith Jesus is not a saint, but God). It is fundamentally a dance ritual which remembers the Filipino people's pagan past and their recognition of Christianity.



The festival features some the country's most colorful displays of ceremony and pageantry: participants clothe in bright-colored costumes dance to the rhythm of drums and native gongs. The streets are generally lined with vendors and pedestrians all wanting to witness the street-dancing. Smaller versions of the festival are also held in different parts of the province, also to celebrate and honor the Santo Niño. There is also a Sinulog sa Kabataan, which is performed by the youths of Cebu a week before the Grand Parade.



Recently, the cultural event has been commercialized as a tourist attraction and instead of traditional street-dancing from locals Sinulog also came to mean a contest highlighting groups from various parts of the country. The Sinulog Contest is traditionally held in the Cebu City Sports Complex, where most of Cebu's major provincial events are held.

The Festival

The celebration traditionally lasts for nine days, ending on the ninth day when the Sinulog Grand Parade reveals. The day before the parade, the Fluvial Procession, a water-parade, held at dawn from the Mandaue City wharf to Cebu City wharf with the Santo Niño carried on a pump boat decorated with hundreds of flowers and candles. The procession ends at the Basilica where a re-enactment of the Christianizing of Cebu follows. In the afternoon, a more formal procession takes place along the major streets of the city, which last for hours due to large crowd participating in the religious event.

On the feast day, at the Basilica, a Pontifical Mass is held, given by the Cardinal with the assistance of several bishops of Cebu. The majority of the city's population and devotees would flock to the Basilica to attend the mass before heading out to the streets to watch the Parade.



Background

'Sinulog' comes from the Cebuano adverb *sulog* which is "like water current movement," which proficiently describes the forward-backward movement of the Sinulog dance. Traditionally, the dance consists of two steps forward and one step backward, done to the sound of the drums. The dance is classified into Sinulog-base, Free-Interpretation, and recently a Latin Category, which most people have argued that it had nothing to do with Sinulog tradition. Candle vendors at the Basilica continue to perform the traditional version of the dance when lighting a candle for the customer, usually accompanied by songs in the native language.

Dinagyang Festival

Iloilo City

25-26 January

Merry mayhem breaks loose in Iloilo City during this weekend, when Ilonggos leave everything behind to join in the fiesta



of the year. All inhibitions are dropped: boring everyday clothes are exchanged for "Ati" warrior costumes and black body paint. Shields and "weapons" are held amidst the pounding rhythm of drums, the costumed Ilonggos put their best feet

forward in celebration of... Dinagyang!

The Dinagyang is a religious and cultural festival in Iloilo City, Philippines held on the fourth Sunday of January, or right after the Sinulog In Cebu and the Ati-Atihan in Aklan. It is held both to honor the Santo Niño and to celebrate the arrival on Panay of Malay settlers and the subsequent selling of the island to them by the Atis.

Dinagyang began after Rev. Fr. Ambrosio Galindez of a local Roman Catholic parish introduced the devotion to Santo Niño in November 1967. In 1968, a replica of the original image of the Santo Niño de Cebu was brought to Iloilo by Fr. Sulpicio Enderez as a gift to the Parish of San Jose. The faithful, led by members of Confradia del Santo Niño de Cebu, Iloilo Chapter, worked to give the image a fitting reception starting at the Iloilo Airport and parading down the streets of Iloilo.

In the beginning, the observance of the feast was confined to the parish. The Confradia patterned the celebration on the Ati-atihan of Ibaday, Aklan, where natives dance in the streets, their bodies covered with soot and ashes, to simulate the Atis dancing to celebrate the sale of Panay. It was these tribal groups who were the prototype of the present festival.

In 1977, the Marcos government ordered the various regions of the Philippines to come up with festivals or celebrations that could boost tourism and development. The City of Iloilo readily identified the Iloilo Ati-atihan as its project. At the same time the local parish could no longer handle the growing challenges of the festival.



The Dinagyang is divided into three Major events: Ati-Ati Street Dancing, Kasadyahan Street Dancing and Miss Dinagyang.

Today, the main part of the festival consists of a number of "tribes", called "tribus", who are supposed to be Ati tribe members dancing in celebration. There are a number of requirements, including that the performers must paint their skin brown and that only indigenous materials can be used for the costumes. All dances are performed to drum music. Many tribes are organized by the local high schools. Some tribes receive a subsidiary from the organizers and recruit private sponsors, with the best tribes receiving the most. The current Ati population of Iloilo is not involved with any of the tribes nor are they involved in the festival in any other way,

Video: [Click Here](#)

Video: [Click Here](#)

Panagbenga Festival

23 February - 3 March

Its flower season in the city of Pines - perfect timing for an all-out fiesta in the streets. The Baguio folk take a break on these days to revel in the cool climate and the

unique culture of the city. Multi-hued costumes are worn, mimicking the various blooms of the highland region (or any of its 11 ethnic tribes). These are flowerbeds - disguised, of course, as the Panagbenga parade floats.

The Panagbenga Festival is held yearly during the month of February. The celebrations are held for over a month and peak periods are the weekends. The Panagbenga Festival showcases the many floral floats and native dances. The fragrant smells that could be presently teasing olfactory senses are probably less from the now-dried flowers from Valentine's Day than air floating all the way from Baguio City. At this time of year, the City of Pines is almost surely in flower fury over Panagbenga Festival, the city's biggest festival. Panagbenga is a kankanaey term for "a season of blooming." It is also known as the Baguio Flower Festival, a homage to the beautiful flowers the city is famous for as well as a celebration of Baguio's re-establishment. Since February 1995, it has been held to help Baguio forget the 1990 earthquake that distressed much of the city.



Panagbenga Festival will have spectators enjoying a multiple floral and float parades over two days. The Baguio Flower Festival Association (BFFA) will have a street dancing parade and band exhibition. The Baguio Flower Festival Foundation (BFFF), meanwhile, will hold a parade. So where should spectators be stationed to not miss any of the float and floral parades? Session

Road and Burnham Park. A search for the Mr. and Ms. Baguio Flower Festival, FM Panagbenga Pop Fiesta, Skateboard competition and Dolls of Japan exhibit were added to the BFFA calendar. The festival is supported by constituents of La Trinidad, La Union, Pangasinan, Marinduque and Masbate.

Often a Cañao is an undertaken to kick-off and celebrate the occasion. A Cañao is a dance that also is regularly performed at special occasions such as fiestas. In this two-person dance, the men hang blankets usually woven with an indigenous pattern or design over each shoulder. The woman wraps a single similar blanket around her. The man leads her and dances in a circle with a hop-skip tempo to the beat of sticks and gongs. The dance must continue until the viewers decide to honor the dancers twice with a shout of "Ooo wag, hoy! hoy!" Once this has happened, the dancers can stop. It is an honor to be invited to join the dance, and elders and other respected members of the community are expected to join in at every occasion.

Moriones Festival

Marinduque

13-20 February

The island of Marinduque prides itself in being the "Lenten Capital of the Philippines", and it is easy to understand why. Come the seven days of Holy Week, the people of the island take part in the age-old ritual of the "Moriones". Colorful warrior costumes are worn, topped with finely carved masks depicting the fierce Roman soldiers of Christ's time. All these are done to depict the story of the conversion of Longinus, the centurion who pierced Jesus' side - and his subsequent beheading.



One of the most colorful festivals celebrated in the island of Marinduque is the Moriones Festival. Morion means "mask" or "visor," a part of the medieval Roman armor which covers the face. Moriones, on the other hand, refers to the masked and costumed penitents who march around the town for seven days searching for Longinus. This week-long celebration starts on Holy Monday and culminates on Easter Sunday when the story of Longinus is reenacted in pantomime. This is a folk-religious festival that re-enacts the story of Longinus, a Roman centurion who was blind in one eye.

Legend has it that Longinus pierced the side of the crucified Christ. The blood that spurted forth touched his blind eye and fully restored his sight. This miracle converted Longinus to Christianity and earned the ire of his fellow centurions. The re-enactment reaches its climax when Longinus is caught and beheaded.



The festival is characterized by colorful Roman costumes, painted masks and helmets, and brightly-colored tunics. The towns of Boac, Gasan, Santa Cruz, Buenavista and Mogpog in the island of Marinduque become one gigantic stage.

The observances form part of the Lenten celebrations of Marinduque. The various towns also hold the unique tradition of the pabasa or the recitation of Christ's passion in verse. The Via Crucis is also reenacted and flagellants, known as antipos, inflict suffering upon themselves as a form of atonement. After three o'clock on Good Friday afternoon, the Santo Sepulcro is observed, whereby old women exchange verses based on the Bible as they stand in wake of the dead

Christ.

Did you know that

Morion means mask, which is part of the medieval Roman centurion's helmet. Moriones are the masked penitents who take part in the reenactment of the legend of Longinus, and Passion of the Christ.

Kaamulan Fiesta

Malaybalay, Bukidnon

28 February - 1 March

Expect the Bukidnon to go tribal from the first to the second week of March, when the streets of Malaybalay take on that familiar fiesta theme. Banners, banderitas, and beer will be norm, as well as the sweet, haunting sound of native music. An early morning pamuhat ritual kicks off the festivities, to be followed by an ethnic food fest, trade fairs, and a lot of native dancing. The fiesta is part and parcel of Filipino culture.

Through good times and bad times, the fiesta must go on. Each city and barrio has at least one local festival of its own, usually on the feast of its patron saint, so that there is always a fiesta going on somewhere in the country. But the biggest and most elaborate festival of all is Christmas, a season celebrated with all the pomp and pageantry the fun-loving Filipino can manage.



Bukidnon Heritage Kept Alive

By Antonio Montalvan

It has become a norm for many provinces and cities to stage cultural festivals. Festivals are tourist come-ons. They are crowd-drawers. They bring in much-needed receipts.

In our enthusiasm to think of what festivals to stage, we create traditions that weren't there to begin with and pass them off as "indigenous." Many of our festivals range from the bawdy to the bizarre. One town in the country is even thinking of putting up a "suman festival." At other times, we couldn't seem to make up our minds whether this was an Ati-atihan or a Brazil Mardi Gras. Other festivals are just plain and simple bacchanalia.

One festival that certainly does not fall into this category -- at least not yet -- is Bukidnon's Kaamulan Festival, held during the month of March each year. The Kaamulan is anything but contrived.

It all began in 1974. It was the fiesta of Malaybalay, May 15, in honor of San Isidro Labrador. The town's vice mayor then, Edilberto Mamawag, thought of inviting

some indigenous Bukidnon tribespeople to town. Mamawag thought a few dance steps by the natives at Plaza Rizal would enliven the fiesta-goers.

That simple idea caught fire. A former reporter for the Manila Times, Mamawag had at that time a guest Manila reporter who later wrote about it for a national magazine. That signaled the start of Kaamulan's fame. One year led to another. On Sept. 16, 1977, the Regional Development Council adopted Kaamulan as the regional festival of northern Mindanao.

By then, Mamawag was already the Municipal Mayor of Malaybalay (now a city). Although born of Ilocano parents who, like many others, settled on the cool mountain plateaus of Bukidnon, Mamawag married a Higaunon girl, Eden Suclatan Tan-Nery, who was a descendant of Datu Mansiagnao. But there was also a pure-blooded Higaunon in the municipal council, Pepita Caterial Ongklatco (many of the natives had adapted to the surnames of the migrant culture since Hispanic times). That was probably one factor that spelled the difference for Kaamulan since the start: that it was conceived and implemented by people with real indigenous genealogical lines.

The name Kaamulan is Binukid for "social gathering." There are eight indigenous groups in Bukidnon: the Matigsalug, Umayamnon, Ilianon, Pulangihon, Talaandig, Tigwa Manobo, Western Bukidnon Manobo and the Higaunon who are also found in the hinterlands of Agusan del Sur, Misamis Oriental and Lanao del Norte. Comparative linguistic studies have shown that their languages, along with other Manobo languages of Mindanao, are daughter languages of an earlier parent language called Proto Manobo, the speakers of which were believed to have migrated to southern Mindanao many centuries ago.

Unlike other festivals, Kaamulan is not all street theater pageantry, although that is only one of its many facets. If other festivals have to stage-direct schoolchildren and make them appear as natives, in Kaamulan it is the real indigenous peoples who attract the crowds. And which is probably why the authentic rituals are what spice up the Kaamulan pageantry.

There is the pangampo (general



worship), the tagulambong ho datu (a political ritual marking one's formal ascendancy to the datanship), the panumanod (spiriting ceremony), the panlisig (edging away of evil spirits), another ceremony called pamalas and a native horse fight called kagsaba ho kabayo.

Dance clinics are held in the afternoons. These are conducted by the indigenous peoples themselves, using real native drums and musical instruments.

Young people who otherwise go "jamming" using CD compos and portable disc players

are the ones instead who are drawn to these clinics like an ethnic Woodstock, truly an educational alternative.

In the evenings, there are chants of the Bukidnon epic olaging, recitations of the lyric poetry limbay, the singing of ballads called idangdang, and other literary forms such as bayok-bayok (verses), antoka (riddles), nanangon (folk tales) and the tracing of one's genealogy in debate form, the dasang.

Because it is the product of a well thought-out research, and includes the participation of real natives in its conceptualization and implementation, Kaamulan has attracted its own following of researchers. It is a heartwarming sight to see students painstakingly taking notes, interviewing the native folks. Kaamulan is a virtual Filipino culture history laboratory, and its educational benefits to many students cannot be underestimated.

Where otherwise we find "neo-ethnic" choreographies and "modified" costumes in some of our festivals, Kaamulan is everything authentic. Where other festivals parade the town's patron saint à la Santo Niño Ati-atihan or Sinulog-style, Kaamulan is no copycat. If other festivals sashay to the beat of the Ati-atihan even if the place had no Ati people to begin with, Kaamulan follows only its indigenous cadence. Kaamulan's charm is not in the frenzy of the Ati-atihan, nor in the pomp and glitter of Sinulog. Its charm lies in its authenticity.



Bukidnon has always been a refreshing destination, not just for its climate but also for its montane vistas, its Grand Canyon of the Philippines, its fog-laden pine-wooded hills of Malaybalay City, its mighty Pulangi River that becomes the Rio Grande de Mindanao as it reaches the vast Cotabato plains. Perhaps the best wonder of Bukidnon is its unique indigenous culture.

Cutud Lenten Rites

San Fernando, Pampanga

16-18 April

Prayer of a different meaning during the Lenten season, when villagers of San Pedro, Cutud, engage in the act of self-flagellation. This ancient ritual is performed in the morning of Good Friday during the Holy Week. Backs, arms, and legs are cut and then struck with burillo whips. The climax to this occasion happens at midday, when penitents are



literally nailed to their waiting crosses.

The San Pedro Cutud Lenten Rites is a Holy Week re-enactment of Christ's Passion and Death complete with a passion play culminating with the actual nailing of at least three flagellants to a wooden cross atop the makeshift Calvary. Every year on Good Friday, a dozen or so penitents - mostly men but with the occasional woman - are taken to a rice field in the barrio of San Pedro Cutud, 3km from San Fernando, Pampanga and nailed to a cross using two-inch stainless steel nails that have been soaked in alcohol to disinfect them. The penitents are taken down when they feel cleansed of their sin. Other penitents flagellate themselves using bamboo sticks tied to a rope.



San Pedro Cutud is a town in Pampanga province in the Philippines, approximately 70 kilometers north of Manila. It is known for annual re-enactments of the crucifixion of Jesus. During Holy Week each year, thousands of penitents arrive in the area to watch and take part in a pageant commemorating the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus, including the Good Friday flagellation and crucifixion rituals. A small number of participants choose to have their hands and feet temporarily nailed to makeshift crosses as a sign of faith and repentance; some undergo the ritual yearly.

Video: [Click Here](#)

Pahiyas Festival

Pahiyas/Mayon/Agawan

Quezon

11-15 May

Flowers come out in May, but these aren't the only things flaunted during this merry month. Down south in the town of Lucban, Quezon, there's also the kiping - a colorful, translucent rice tortilla that serves as an edible ornament of sorts. You will see lots of these at the Pahiyas Festival, an annual celebration held to usher in a bountiful harvest, and smashing good times.

It's a free-for-all, grab-all-you-can



affair with suman-sweet, sticky native rice cakes-as the center of contention. It is also the grand prize, so feel free to join the fray. Rest assured, whether you get handfuls or just a mere mouthful, the Mayohan sa Tayabas will leave you wanting for more - suman, of course!

Sariaya's own version of the San Isidro festival showcases the creativity and ingenuity of the townsfolk in their craft and culinary tradition.

One of the most extravagant festivals celebrated in the country is the Pahiyas Festival. Province of Quezon hosts this festival on the 15th of May. The celebration of the Pahiyas Festival has been going on since the 16th century. It is a way for the local folk to give thanks to a bountiful harvest.

The Province of Quezon is the second largest province of the Southern Tagalog region and is host to lavish Pahiyas Festival. The preparation for the festival takes quite some time and the actual Pahiyas Festival is held for only a short time.



During the Pahiyas Festival the small towns of the Province of Quezon in the Philippines evolves from sleepy small villages into exquisitely adorned houses. The Pahiyas Festival is commemorated in honor of their patron saint San Isidro Labrador, patron saint of farmers.

Legend says that San Isidro Labrador magically plowed fields whenever he went to

church. Spain passed on this legend to the Philippines from Mexico during the country's colonization. Since then, the Pahiyas Festival has been a source of excitement for the locals and visitors to the Quezon Province.

One of the highlights of the Pahiyas Festival in the Philippines is the colorful decoration on the houses. These are made of food. During the Pahiyas Festival, the houses of the local townspeople will be adorned in fruit, vegetables and the famous kipings. The kiping is a wafer that's shaped into a leaf. It is made of dried rice and dyed in brilliant colors.

The locals use different leaves to add flavor and color to the kiping. The locals to produce a variety of tastes and textures using Kabal, coffe, talisay (umbrella tree), cocoa, and banaba leaves. The locals boast that the procedure of making the kiping is a big secret among the people of Quezon and only a chosen few are entrusted with the secret recipe.

During the Pahiyas Festival, people display their harvest in front of their homes for the parish priest to bless as the procession passes their homes.

A competition is usually held during the Pahiyas Festival. Families would compete for the title of best-decorated house. After the competition is over and the awards are handed over, the winning house's decorations will be thrown away to the huge flock of people as free treats.

Try the pancit habhab when you're at the Pahiyas Festival. Enjoy the chance to try noodles straight from banana leaves without using forks or chopsticks. The delicious taste of the noodle blends well with the famed Longganisang Lucban (a local sausage of Quezon).

The Pahiyas Festival is a time of joyous merriment for the people of Quezon. You'll never walk away from the Pahiyas Festival with an empty stomach. It is a mouthful of a welcome to how the people of the Philippines welcome their guests. Just watch the calories while you're at it.

Flores De Mayo / Santacruzán

Queen of Filipino Festivals

Nationwide

May

A parade of the town's loveliest ladies, depicting the search and discovery of Christ's Cross by Queen Helena and Constantine.

May is the merriest and the most beautiful month of the year. It is the season of colorful festivals and Flores de Mayo or Santacruzán is one such festival. Stop and smell the roses. During the month of May, in the tropical islands of the Philippines, we don't have to stop - the fragrance of flowers floats in the air. When the rains begin to pour after a long dry spell, flowers magically bloom overnight. And being predominantly Catholic, the Filipinos celebrate the beneficial rains by giving praise to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The town folk gather the colorful flowers to decorate the Parish Church altars and aisles. They bundle the blooms in exotic arrangements for the many different festivities all together referred to as the "Flores De Mayo" (Flowers of May). Many towns celebrate Flores De Mayo with the community congregating in the afternoons to pray the rosary, offer flowers to the Virgin Mary, and share homemade delicacies and snacks. Children and adults wearing their Sunday best sing and dance to welcome the rains that will water the new crops.

Santacruzán is held annually in the warm month of May and is considered to be the "Queen of Filipino Festivals". Beautiful town belles are selected to participate in this colorful pageant parade. The stars are selected not for their looks alone, but for their embodiment of traditional feminine qualities. It is a week-long street pageant in almost every town; from the dirt road barrio to the metropolis honoring beautiful Philippine maidens and their handsome escorts under the hand-carried bamboo arc's decorated by fragrant native flowers.

May is also the month dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of Christ. Filipinos turn each of the 31 days in May into a charming honor to the virginal virtues in Flores de Mayo, the flowers of May fiesta. Spiritual virtue searches to reach even the young. Every day in May, children, with cut flowers and baskets of petals in hand, march down the church center aisle. As the children march down the aisle they sprinkle the fragrant petals for Mama Mary. This custom is called alay sa Birhen. In Filipino, because it is an offering



(alay) to the virgin (birhen), at the main altar, the youngsters sing hymns to Lady Immaculate, and leave their bouquet of flowers loose and dethroned.

Flore de Mayo History

Flores, from Spanish flores or "flowers," also known as Flores de Mayo (flowers of May), Flores de Maria (flowers of Mary) or alay (offering), may refer to the whole Flower Festival celebrated in the month of May in tribute to the Virgin Mary. The Santacruzán was a novena procession remembering St. Helena's mythical finding of the cross. St. Helena was the mother of Constantine the Great. According to legends, 300 years after the death of Christ, at the age of 75, she went to Calvary to conduct a search for the Cross. After some archeological diggings at the site of the Crucifixion, she unearthed three crosses. She tested each one by making a sick servant lie on all three. The cross where the servant recovered was identified as Christ's. St. Helena's feast day falls on August 8 but the anniversary of the finding of the Cross is on May 3rd, in the Philippines, this celebration took the form of the Mexican Santa Cruz de Mayo.

As another legend puts it, Constantine the Great, facing a battle against the Mighty Roman Emperor, Maxentius in the year 312 A.D. turned hopeless to the new Christian God for help. Constantine cast his eyes heavenwards and saw in the night sky a glowing sign of the cross with the words "In hoc signa vincit", meaning "By this sign thou shalt conquer". He adopted the Cross as his battle insignia with the words and forthwith went to defeat the Roman Army and entered Rome a victory, pledging his faith in Christianity.

In the Tagalog region, this custom and celebration started after the declaration of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 and after the publication circa 1867 of Mariano Sevilla's translation of the devotional Flores de Maria or Mariquit na Bulaclac na sa Pagninilaynilay sa Buong Buan nang Mayo ay Inihahandog nang manga Devoto cay Maria Santisima (The Flowers of Mary or the Beautiful Flowers that in the Meditations During the Whole Month of May are Offered by Devotees to Mary the Holiest). A Santacruzán is a religious-historical beauty pageant held in many cities, towns and even small villages throughout the Philippines during the month of May, one of the most colorful May-time festivals in the Philippines which represent the finding of the Holy Cross by Queen Helena, mother of Constantine the Great. Many movie and television personalities participate in the events and are featured as major sagalas and escorts. The festivity celebrates the search of the Holy Cross by Queen Helena (Reina Elena) and her son, the newly converted emperor Constantine. After the Holy Cross was found in Jerusalem and brought back to Rome, there was an enjoyable celebration for thanksgiving.

Nine days of prayer (a novena) in respect of the Holy Cross lead the Flores de Mayo or Santacruzán. This festival was introduced by the Spaniards in the Philippines and has since become part of Filipino traditions recognized with youth, love and romance.

This colorful pageant parade is arranged in this order:

1. Methuselah - he is bearded, curved with age, riding a cart looking preoccupied with toasting some grains of sand in a pan over a fire. This is a reminder that all that glitters will end up as dust like what he is toasting.

2. Reyna Banderada - a young lady dressed in a long red gown carrying a yellow triangular flag. She represents the coming of Christianity.
 3. Aetas - represent the state of the country before the coming of Christianity. These are the unconverted Filipino pagans.
 4. Reyna Mora - represents the dominant religion before Christianity (feminine of Moro from the Moslem religion).and singing the Moslem religion).
 5. Reyna Fe - symbolizes the virtue of faith - the first of the theological virtues. She carries a cross.
 6. Reyna Esperanza - symbolizes the virtue of hope - the second theological virtue. She carries an anchor.
 7. Reyna Caridad - symbolizes the virtue of charity - the third theological virtue. She carries a red heart.
 8. Reyna Abogada - the defender of the poor and the oppressed. She wears a black graduation cap (toga) and gown and she carries a big book.
 9. Reyna Sentenciada - has her slim hands bound by a rope. She is the symbol of the innocents who have been convicted. She is escorted by two Roman soldiers.
 10. Reyna Justicia - an image of the "mirror of justice". She carries a weighing scale and a sword.
 11. Reyna Judith - representing Judith of Pethulia who saved her city from the Assyrians after she beheaded the cruel holoferns. She carries the head of the beheaded man on one hand and a sword on the other.
 12. Reyna Sheba - who visited the famous King Solomon and was overwhelmed by his wisdom, power and riches, she carries a jewelry box.
 13. Reyna Esther - the biblical Jewish who secured her countrymen from death and destruction through timely intervention with the King Xerxes. She carries a scepter.
 14. Samaritana - the woman who Christ spoke to at the well. She carries a jug on her shoulder.
 15. Veronica - the woman who wiped the face of Jesus. She carries a bandana printed with the three faces of Jesus.
 16. Tres Marias
 - a. Mary of Magdala - she carries a bottle of perfume;
 - b. Mary, Mother of Christ - she carries a handkerchief;
 - c. Mary, mother of James - she carries a bottle of oil.
 17. Marian - celebrating the many titles of the Virgin Mary.
- A-v-e--M-a-r-i-a -- represented by eight (8) girls all Wearing long white dresses with wings to make them look like angels. Each one carries a letter to complete the word "AVE MARIA."
- a. Divina pastora (Divine Shepherdess) - she carries a shepherdess' staff.
 - b. Reyna de las Estrellas (Queen of Stars) - she carries a wand with a star.
 - c. Rosa Mystica - she carries a bouquet of roses.
 - d. Reyna Paz (queen of peace) - she carries the symbol of peace.
 - e. Reyna de las Propetas - she carries an hour glass.

- f. Reyna del Cielo (Queen of Heaven) - she carries a flower. She has two (2) angels.
 - g. Reyna de las Virgines - she carries a rosary and is surrounded by two (2) little angels.
 - h. Reyna de las Flores (Queen of Flowers) - she carries a bouquet of flowers.
18. Reyna Elena (Queen Helena) - She is the highlight of the procession, the legendary founder of the true Cross, represented by the small cross she carries. She is escorted by her son, Constantine, under a huge canopy of May flowers. Immediately behind her is a float carrying the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, followed by a brass band that lends the festive sounds to the procession.



The procession is followed by the steady beat of rondalla, playing and singing "Dios Te Salve". The devotees walking with the procession hold lighted candles in their hands and singing the prayer.

Mudpack Festival

Murcia, Negros Occidental

24 June

Oneness with nature is the underlying theme behind Murcia's annual mud-moving spectacle. Check on its murky highlight - a lively street dancing parade with the participant wearing nothing but mudpacks (well, almost...). It's a surefire way to mix our ecological concerns with good, clean, cloddy fun - just be sure to shower afterwards!

The famous Mambukal Mountain Resort in Barangay Minoyan, Murcia, Negros Occidental is the host for this festival. The festival is a symbolic celebration of man's return to primitive time when he was closer to nature. Oneness with nature is the underlying theme behind this annual mud-moving spectacle. Check on its murky highlight - a lively street dancing parade with the participant wearing nothing but mudpacks (well, almost...). It's a surefire way to mix our ecological concerns with good, clean, cloddy fun - just be sure to shower afterwards!



First conceptualized by local artists to showcase Mambukal's natural wealth, the Mudpack Festival has also become a venue for educating the youth on environmental conservation. It is held from June 23-24, coinciding with the feast of St. John de Baptist and the height of the monsoon season. The highlight of this emerging festival is a merry-making with dancers' faces covered with mudpack and bodies painted with Mambukal clay.

Video: [Click Here](#)

Pinyahan sa Daet

Daet, Camarines Norte

15-24 June

Sweet, succulent pineapple is the fruit of choice for the people of Daet, Camarines Norte. In fact, they loved it so much that they made a festival in its honor. Join the locals as they celebrate the Pineapple Festival featuring a colorful street presentation complemented by art exhibits, trade fair, cultural dances, and sport events. Feel rich when you go for a visit at Paracale Gold Mines, and be acquainted with some Bicol heroes like Vinzon and Panganiban and Lucban.

Parada ng Lechon

Balayan, Batangas

24 June

A different sight and flavor are introduced in June with a festival in Balayan, Batangas, popularly known as the "Parada Ng Lechon". These succulent roasted pork form the highlight of the occasion, decked out in their platforms with all kinds of decor. Since the festival coincides with the feast of St. John the Baptist, be prepared to get wet as people expect the Bukidnon to go tribal from the first to the second week of March, when the streets of Malaybalay take on that familiar fiesta theme. Banners, banderitas, and beer will be norm, as well as the sweet, haunting sound of native music. An early morning pamuhat ritual kicks off the festivities, to be followed by an ethnic food fest, trade fairs, and a lot of native dancing.

Parada ng Lechon

In the Philippines, it is not unusual for lechon or whole roast pig to grace any Filipino fiesta table. Parada ng Lechon is a parade of golden-red and crispy roasted pigs. The delicious aroma of this sumptuous dish led the locals of Balayan and Batangas to commemorate the feast of St. John, their patron saint on 24 June with the presence of the delectable, crispy lechon.

It is on the night before the festival that an anniversary ball is held at the town plaza to choose and crown the lechon queen. On the event day itself, a mass is held at the Immaculate Conception Church. After the mass, at least, 50 lechons are gathered in anticipation of the celebration. The parade proceeds after the holding of blessing of the pigs and people in St. Johns' name. At this celebration, one can witness a hilarious sight when the roast pigs are dressed according to the theme of the participating social organizations. Some of the lechon are dressed in wigs, sunglasses, raincoats, or whatever the decorators want.



In an event of sheer madness such as this, one can expect mischief just around the corner. During the celebration, pranksters toss water or beer over the lechons, drenching not only the lechons, but the bearers and onlookers as well. Some will even attempt to have a free sample of the roast pig's prized crispy skin. To prevent this from happening, some participants cover their lechons with barbed wire.

After the fiesta, the lechons are then brought back to their respective club headquarters or home for yet another celebration of drinking and feasting. As for those who believe in the spirit of sharing, they will gracefully give away their prized lechons to the crowd of audience.

Tacloban Pintados Festival

Tacloban City

29 June

Back during pre-Hispanic years, tattoos signified courage among the natives of Tacloban. These days they symbolize a cultural revival, and a wild, wacky fiesta called the Pintados. Join the town residents as they deck themselves out in body paint, mimicking the warriors of old while dancing to the frenetic beat of drums.

The Pintados-Kasadyaan Festival is a merry-making event lasting a whole month, highlights of which include the Leyte Kasadyaan Festival of Festivals, the 17th Pintados Festival Ritual Dance Presentation and the "Pagrayhak" Grand Parade. These festivals are said to have began from the feast day of Señor Santo Niño, held every June 29th. The Leyteños celebrate a religious festival in a unique and colorful way. Since the Visayans are experienced in the art of body tattooing, men and women are fond of tattooing themselves.

The Pintados Festival displays the rich cultural heritage, incorporating native music and dances, of the people of Leyte and Samar. The Leyte Kasadya-an Festival of Festivals, meanwhile, showcases the unique culture and colorful history of the Province of Leyte. Started by former Leyte Governor Remedios Loreto-Petilla, the celebration was first held on May 12, 1996. The festivities weren't always held every June 29th; the first three years saw different dates. It was only in 1999 that it was fixed to June 29, the Feast of the Señor Santo Niño de Leyte.

"Kasadyaan" in the Visayan tongue means merriment and jollity. Various municipal festivals of Leyte gather together in the original capital of Tacloban City for the celebration. There, lively dance-drama parade of many colors takes place. There is an important role that the festival plays, and it is strengthening the Leyteños' sense of pride. Every municipality mounts a storyline all their own to portray with pride their local folklore and legends.

The Festival

The Pintados festival of Tacloban City is a Filipino festival with its own unique flavor. This Pintados festival recalls Pre-Spanish history of the native Leytenos from wars, epics and folk religions. The most expected aspect of the Pintados festival are the festive dancers, painted from head to toe with designs that look like armor to resemble the tattooed warriors of old. During the course of the Pintados festival, dancers whose bodies are painted in an amazing array of colors fill the streets of Tacloban city. At first sight, they may seem outrageous as grown men pour into the streets decorated in such dazzling colors as luminous blue or neon green. But as one gets used to this and sees the dances depicted, one gets a glimpse of the history of the people that once lived on the islands of Leyte so long ago.



The folk dances presented by the dancers portray the many traditions that flourished before the Spaniards came. These include worship of idols, indigenous music and epic stories. The hypnotic rhythms of native instruments beat through the air accompanying the dances performed on the streets as the Pintados festival goes. Aside from the folk dances, is the much likely parade, which crisscrosses the avenues of Tacloban city. The parade traditionally begins at the Balayuan Towers and proceeds throughout tacloban leyte city. The surprised spectators follow the procession of dancing colors from the beginning to end. The Pintados festival concludes in much merrymaking with a signature traditional Filipino fiesta, where everyone is invited to join the fun and celebrate the Pintados Festival.

History

In 1668, the Spaniards came to the Visayas and found in the islands heavily tattooed men and women, whom they called Pintados. These people had a culture of their own, commemorating victories by holding festivals and honoring their gods after a bountiful harvest.

It was in 1888 that missionaries from Spain brought the Child Jesus image known as "El Capitan" to the island. It had a rich and colorful background that draw out the devotion and worship of the Leyte natives to the Santo Niño.

Then in 1986, the Pintados Foundation, Inc. was founded by civic-minded businessmen and entrepreneurs based in Tacloban City. They began organizing religious cultural activities for the city fiesta in honor of Señor Santo Niño. This marked the advent

of the Pintados Festival, which was first celebrated June 29th of the year 1987. Today, it is called the Leyte Pintados-Kasadyaan Festival and is called as the "Festival of Festivals."



The name "Pintados" is derived from what the native warriors, whose bodies were adorned with tattoos, were called. In those times, and even in some places today, tattoos were a mark of courage and beauty. Since tattoo-making was not yet as precise as it is today, they were rather painful and one risked the chance of contracting an infection. Therefore, a man who faced the dangers of tattooing and lived was considered to be both strong and brave. But even before the tattoo process itself, one would have to earn them after fighting heroically in wars.

Tattoos (Pintados) served as a status symbol; much like a general's badge would today. It was the mark of courage, rank and strength. The bravest warriors were heavily adorned in tattoos which covered every inch of their bodies, head to foot. Indeed, these men were in fact such an unusual sight that western missionaries considered them frightening and uncivilized upon their first glimpses of these warriors. But as time passed, they learned to see the tattoos as a part of the life of native peoples and even as a sign of beauty for them. With the passing of time, as the story is with all things, the old made way for the new. The traditions of tattooing (pintados) and worshiping earth spirits were replaced as modernization came. But these traditions are still remembered with the celebration of the Pintados festival.

This Pintados festival helps us to see the worth and beauty of the traditions of the country's ancestors. It gives us the opportunity to feel a rare first-hand experience, the experience of culture.

Sandugo Festival

Tagbilaran City

1-2 July

The Spanish colonization of the Philippines began with a blood-sealed peace treaty on the shores of Bohol. This historic event is remembered today with an all-out fiesta at the island's capital city. Check out the Sandugo street dancing parade featuring ten colorfully-dressed groups dancing to the beat of drums. There's also a traditional Filipino carnival, a martial arts festival, and Miss Bohol Sandugo Beauty Pageant, among the dozens of other exciting activities.

Sandugo Festival is a yearly historical event that takes place every year on the month of March, in the island of Bohol. This festival honors the celebration of a local



Philippine leader Datu Sikatuna's blood compact and association or treaty of friendship with the Spanish king conquistador, Captain General Miguel López de Legazpi in March 16, 1565.

History

It began with the arrival of Miguel López de Legazpi in the shores of Tagbilaran, Bohol in 1565 and the swearing of commitment of Datu Sikatuna to the Spanish crown. The two people were believed to have made a cut on their left arms with a dagger and sprinkled their blood into a cup filled with wine, which both drank in honor of their friendship and brotherhood. The treaty was signed on the SW coast of Bohol Island in March of 1565. This was 44 years after Ferdinand Magellan was killed attacking a Philippine village on Mactan Island about 50 miles north of here.

The Sandugo treaty is called a blood compact because the participants each drink a small amount of the other's blood. ("Dugo" means blood in the Visayan language.) This was a traditional way to formalize treaties of friendship in the Philippines. Magellan himself took part in several of these ceremonies before attacking Mactan Island.

The Blood Compact preserved the ties of friendship between two people once different in religion, nationality, culture and civilization. The Tagbilaran native chieftain who swore by his ancestral Anito and Bathala, and the Spanish courageous explorer and colonizer, who sought New World with the sword and the cross, drank to the common cause - friendship. It was the first international treaty of friendship and comity between the Filipinos and Spaniards.

Kinabayo Festival

Dapitan City

25 July



An exotic and colorful pageant re-enacting the Spanish-Moorish wars, particularly the Battle of Covadonga where the Spanish forces under General Pelagio took their last stand against Saracans, they were able to reverse the tide through the miraculous apparition of St. James. The addition of local color and innovation has made this annual revelry a popular attraction which brings thousands of visitors to the

city.

Kinabayo Festival which is celebrated every July 25 in Dapitan City Zamboanga del Norte Philippines celebrate a mysterious and colorful pageant re-enacting the Spanish-Moorish wars, mainly the Battle of Covadonga where the Spanish forces under General Pelagio took their last stand against Saracans. They were able to overturn the tide through the miraculous spirit of St. James. The addition of local color and modernism has

made this annual celebration a popular attraction which brings thousands of tourists to the Dapitan City.

History

St. James, the Greater is the patron saint of Dapitan City. Earlier on into the Spanish rule, Dapitan was still flooded by Moro pirates. The Jesuit priests fatefully set up St. James, to protect the Dapitanons from an attack of invaders. It was believed that in the fifth century, an apparition of St. James, atop a horse carrying a sword, guided the Spansih Christians into victory over the Moors in the Battle of Covadonga. Three centuries later, St. James still plays a significant part in the Dapitanons' lives. For the past three years the Kinabayo Festival of Dapitan has been celebrated by city folk centering on his feast day, July 25. On that day a magnificent re-enactment of the Battle of Covadonga is unfurled before the city folk and tourists. It is 45 days of celebration that can only be rivaled by Cebu's Sinulog and Aklan's Ati-Atihan.



Kadayawan sa Dabaw

Davao City

20-24 August

Davao's annual festival, Kadayawan Sa Dadaw promises another weekend of fanfare and fun - tribal style. Watch as the festivities reach a glorious climax on Saturday morning: that's when the Kadayawan parade is held, featuring colorful, orchid-bedecked floats and more than a dozen "ethnic" groups dancing to the beat of wooden drums.

Davao is very alive every third week of August because it celebrates their festival called "Kadayawan sa Dabaw". The "Kadayawan sa Dabaw" festival is one of the popular and also world renowned fiesta in the Philippines. The festival is celebrated together with the harvesting of fruits and blooming of flowers. The festivities are kick off with tribal dances and music with "Indak indak sa Kadalanan" (street dancing). The Festival is highlighted with streetdancing in which the performers where gracefulful and colorful ethnic-inspired garments with Floral Float Parade, which features floral and agricultural bounties.



Held every August, Kadayawan does not only involve the promotion of investment and tourism in Davao and Mindanao; it aims as well to promote arts and culture and mold creative individuals. The festival manifests Davao's committed effort in

nurturing of culture, understanding of history and appreciating art as part of the city's total development.

Kadayawan is a celebration of life, a thanksgiving for the gifts of nature, the wealth of culture, the bounties of harvest and serenity of living. Institutionalized in 1986 to unite the Dabawenyos after the turbulent Martial Law years, it was then called "Apo Duwaling", a contraction of the famous icons of the city – namely Mt. Apo, Durian and



Waling-waling. Two years later, it was renamed "Kadayawan sa Dabaw" to better reflect the merry spirit and indigenous theme of the celebration. Today, Kadayawan has metamorphosed into a festival of festivals, the mother of May other festivals in the region.

To showcase the interlacing prides and wonders of Davao and Mindanao various cultural events like (Festival Opening and Promenade), Tingog Kadayawan (Concert of 200 Voices),

Tugtug World Music Festival (World Music Festival), Hiyas sa Kadayawan (Search for Festival Symbol), Urog Etnika (Mindanao Fashion Showcase), Suba sa Kinabuhì (Davao River Festival), Agongan ug Kulintangan (Indigenous Music Festival), Sayaw Mindanaw (Mindanao Indigenous Dance Festival), Indak-indak sa Kadalanan (Whole Day Street Dancing), Yanog ug Yugyugan sa Kadalanan (Street Disco), Halad (Floral Float Parade) and Banda Lanog (Parade Band Competition) are held with the full attention of the Dabawenyos and tourists alike.

In "Kadayawan sa Dabaw", you will experience and explore the past, present and future of the Davaoeños, the Mindanaoans, the Filipinos.

Video: [Click Here](#)

Bonok-Bonok Festival and Silop Cave Adventure

Surigao City

9 September

Behind Surigao's multi-faceted culture is its original tribal background. The Surigaonons go back to their roots this month as they celebrate their heritage with a loud, rowdy street dancing parade.

A day-long festival highlighting the annual city fiesta celebration, the main feature is the Bonok-Bonok, an ethnic Mamanua (IPES) dance performed by the natives during thanks giving, worship and wedding ceremonies.

The introduction to the celebration of the Maradjao-Karajao Festival is the Bulawanon



Barangay "Bulawanon" means beautification. Before the Bonok-bonok festivity held, preliminary contest between the 22 barangays of Surigao City and 9 coastal barangays is ongoing to highlight the month-long festivity that livens up to the household of each respective family of Surigao City.

Other activities are street dancing participated by different private government groups using creative costumes, huge floats and entertaining chanting "Viva Señor San Nicolas! Viva Maradjao Karajao!"

Tourism potential aside, Surigao is more importantly home to one of the country's most colorful tribes, the Mamanwas. Known for their creative patterns, brass jewelry and indigenous crafts, the Mamanwas fill the streets dancing during the Bonok Bonok Maradjao Karadjao festival on September 9. Celebrated on the occasion of the feast of San Nicolas de Tolentino, the Bonok Bonok shows the natives' gratitude to their animistic gods for a bountiful harvest and good health.

A collection of antique archaeological diggings like burial coffins jars and antique Chinese kitchen wares discovered in Panhutungan, Placer is on public display at the Surigaonon Heritage Mini-Museum situated at the Boulevard in Surigao City.

History of Bonok-Bonok

One of the oldest and still existing tribes in the Philippines is the Mamanwas, who are quite alike to the Negritos in physical profile. Although forced to settle in the hinter islands because of the arrival of development, they still practiced, however, their customs and traditions. Among these is the faith about "Kahimunan", a tribal festivity, where music and graceful dancing are typical features. They chant and play accompanied with their instruments, such as: the gimbar (drum), the gong and the bamboo called the "kalatong" and "katik". A "baylan" or priest preside the celebration as a tribute to their God, "Magbabaya" and ancestors for good health and abundant harvest intercessions.



During the "Kahimunan" or ancestral festivity, wild pigs, chicken and different fruits are offered to the ancestors. A thanksgiving dance called "Bonok-Bonok" is presented by the different village chieftains and babaeyons. Happiness and friendship are expressed through dancing, shouting and singing. They wave scarves of "Banay" as signs of good will, wealth and blessings for the whole tribal village.

Thus, Bonok-Bonok is a ritual dance which originated from these early settlers. The rhythm usually starts with a slow beat and slowly gets faster, causing the dancers to work at pace with the music. Adding to the attraction of the dance is the colorful costumes, which includes beaded headdresses or tubaw, bracelets and anklets of the women. The ceremonial dress of the men and women are likewise elaborate in design, and of various colors.

The dance ritual has been brought down through the generations and still being practiced today. In respect to the Patron Saint San Nicolas de Tolentino, the people have

already adopted the “Bonok-Bonok Maradjaw Karadjaw” Festival which is a reflection of Surigao’s rich cultural heritage.

Held in honor of the city’s patron, San Nicolas de Tolentino, this famous Mardi Gras celebration features street parties and traditional ethnic dance rituals. The day-long festivities take place in the area around the Provincial Sports Complex which is a great place to see the many different dancers perform. This deeply traditional event is a way of asking the gods for excellent health and abundant harvests.

Penafrancia Viva la Virgen

Naga City

21 September

Bicol Region's biggest celebration is an annual affair that combines religion with culture and tradition, packing it all in a 9-day fiesta of biblical proportions. Stay until sundown for stirring climax: the fluvial parade as it makes its way down the river, surrounded by a sea of glowing candles - a fitting end of this truly spiritual occasion.

The feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia is celebrated on the third Saturday of September in Naga City, Bicol Philippines. All roads and routes will lead to Naga City in Camarines Sur where six million Bicolanos from here and abroad will flock to that progressive city to pay honor to the Virgin of Peñafrancia, miraculous patroness of the Bicol Region. Bicolanos from all walks of life will be in Naga City to meet their relatives and partidarios, share food, drinks, and prayers with them, and most of all, to pay homage and make thanksgiving to the Virgin of Peñafrancia, whom the Bicolanos fondly call Ina. Viva la Virgen, they will shout to high heavens. The feast day is headed by a novena, nine days of prayer, in honor of the Virgin. On the first day, the image of the Virgin, a copy of the Madonna in Peñafrancia, Spain, is brought from its shrine to the Naga Cathedral where the novena is held. On the last day, the image is returned to her shrine following the Naga River route. The colorful evening procession is lit by thousands of candles from followers in boats escorting the image. When the flatboat reaches its destination, the devotees shout "Viva la Virgen" (Long live the Virgin!) and the image is carried back in a procession to the cathedral.

Millions of Bicolanos will once again show to the whole Christian world their strong faith and loyalty to their Heavenly Mother. amongst triumphant sounding shouts of Viva la Virgen , Bicolanos and pilgrims, with lighted candles in their hands, will kneel on the ground and bow their heads in prayer as the colorful fluvial procession carrying the Virgin plows through the Bicol River in downtown Naga.

A multicolored pagoda carrying the images/icons of the Virgin of Peñafrancia and the Divino Rostro will pass through the Bicol River.



Male, sunburned devotees of the Virgin will adhere to the huge pagoda in a heartwarming display of faith and devotion. Actually, the fluvial procession marks the return of the Virgin from the Naga Metropolitan Cathedral to her home shrine at the Basilica. Upon its arrival, the Virgin will be received in formal religious rites by Roman Catholic dignitaries of the Bicol Region led by Cardinal Jose T. Sanchez.

Considered the biggest and most popular religious event in the Philippines, the Peñafrancia fiesta is in fact a one-week affair that starts on the second Friday of September when the miraculous Ina is transferred from her shrine to the centuries-old Naga Metropolitan Cathedral where a nine-day novena and prayers are held in her honor. Ranking government officials, Cabinet members, ambassadors, governors, mayors, senators, diputados, business/industry leaders, landlords, etc., vie for the distinct honor of sponsoring a nightly novena and prayers at the Naga Cathedral.

A procession, locally called *traslacion* (is the transferring of the miraculous Image of the Virgin, Our Lady of Peñafrancia and of the Divino Rostro to the Metropolitan Cathedral of Naga City for a Novena and Holy Masses. This begun in 1885.), ushers in the weeklong festivities which include civic and military parades, sports competitions, agro-industrial fairs, cultural shows, and the coronation of Miss Bicolandia beauties.

During the *traslacion*, which passes through the main streets of Naga, the miraculous Ina of the Bicolanos is borne on the rugged, muscular shoulders of barefooted *voyadores* who form a human barricade to protect the Virgin from the unruly crowd. Call it absolute coincidence or plain superstition, but any Bicolano will swear to high heavens that the presence of a woman, Filipina or foreigner, aboard the merrily decorated pagoda will surely spell disaster. Whether this belief is true or not, only the Bicolanos know. But past events and experiences support their claim.

History

A Spanish government official from Peñafrancia, Spain, a native of San Martin de Castanar, the Covarrubias family, settled with his family in Cavite in 1712, according to locals. One day, A son, Miguel Robles de Covarrubias, a seminarian studying in the Universidad de Santo Tomas, Manila got very ill. He and his family prayed to Our Lady of Penafrancia whose picture he was clutching to his breast for his recovery and to spare his life. He also made a vow that if cured, he would construct a chapel by the bank of Pasig river in Manila, in gratitude to Her. Miraculously cured, he eventually was ordained a priest not in Manila but in the Ciudad de Nueva Caceres (now known as Naga City) by Bishop Andres Gonzalez. To fulfill his vow, Padre Miguel, the first diocesan priest to be ordained in Naga, did two things: one, he mobilized the natives along the slopes of Mt. Isarog to construct a chapel made of local materials, nipa and bamboo this time by the bank of the Bikol river in Naga, not by the Pasig river as earlier envisioned; two, he ordered a local artisan to carve an image patterned after the picture of Our lady he always had with him. Miracles happened then and there. Among them was the story of a dog killed, its neck slashed in order to take out the poor animal's blood that was used to coat/paint the newly carved image. Dumped into the river, the dead dog began to swim once again alive with hundreds of people witnessing this prodigy. News of many other miracles spread like wildfire so was the devotion to Nuestra Senora de Penafrancia. The letter of Padre Miguel to the Dominican Fathers of Salamanca, Spain in 1712 reported many miracles through the intercession of Our Lady. In the meantime, the devotees grew

in number as the devotion spread fast far and wide, even outside the Diocese of Nueva Caceres which before comprised not only the Bikol region but including Tayabas (now Quezon), Marinduque, Laguna up to Palanan, Isabela along the cordillera ranges. Like the biblical "mustard seed" the Penafrancia devotion today is like a "giant tree" whose branches extend to other parts of the world like America, Europe, Australia and Asia. The love story between our lady of Penafrancia we lovingly call "Ina" and us, her children is never ending.

The famous Madonna is said to have miraculous powers. On her feast day, pilgrims gather at her shrine to pay her homage for favors received.

Video: [Click Here](#)

Zamboanga Hermosa Festival

Zamboanga City

10-12 October

All roads in Mindanao lead to Zamboanga, as the "City of Flowers" celebrates its grand, annual Hermosa Festival. The vintas, those colorful native sea boats, once again make their appearance in a fast-paced, race-till-you-drop regatta. There's also a wealth of cultural and flower shows, art exhibits, and trade fairs. It's an all-out celebration of life - Chavacano style!

Every October the scenic city of Zamboanga, as the "City of Flowers", celebrates its grand annual Zamboanga Hermosa Festival or the popularly known as Fiesta Pilar with 12 days and nights of events and celebrations. The beautiful city of Zamboanga welcomes thousands to the region's biggest, most extravagant celebration of the year. The two day celebrations are mainly in honor of the miraculous image of Our Lady of the Pilar Nuestra Señora del Pilar de Zaragoza, which is also commonly known as the "Fiesta Pilar" at the legendary Fort Pila who has a special fiesta in October. The people of Zamboanga passionately believe that the lady has served as their unifying cultural and historical symbol.

In tribute of her feast day, Zamboanga displays its loyalty and enthusiasm with a nine-night procession, the event includes live music, cultural performances; street parades, fireworks displays and one of the most amazing aspects of the festivities include a wonderful regatta with old sailing ships and yachts sporting red, yellow and other brightly colored sails. There are also art exhibitions and colorful flower shows displaying the botanical wonders of Mindanao's tropical vegetations. (Watch out for the orchids, which are particularly striking). 'Hermosa', which means beautiful, is an appropriate term for this visually dazzling event.



Video: [Click Here](#)

Masskara Festival

Bacolod City

14-21 October

The carnival spirit fills the air as masked participants donning fabulous costumes dance their way around the city's main thoroughfares. This annual event reflects Bacolenos' love for fun and gaiety. Coinciding with the city's character day celebration, the festival features carnivals, fairs, and madrigal-style street dancing.

The Masskara Festival through the years gives the people of Negros, as well as local and foreign visitors, a chance to drink and be merry for 20 days. Originally designed to show the hardships of the people of Negros, the Masskara Festival has become a tool of escapism and a way to generate revenues for big business. It has indeed come a long way, and it is clear that the path turns away from the progressive goal.

Bacolod City is known for the popular Masskara Festival which takes place here Oct. 1-20. Local and foreign visitors get a chance to enjoy 20 days of merry making, beer drinking, dining and street dancing. On the weekend nearest to 19 October, the biggest party in Bacolod is scheduled to take place. Bacolod is the capital city of the country's sugar-producing province of Negros.



The term Masskara is created from two words: mass, meaning crowd, and the Spanish word cara, for face; thus the double meaning for "mask" and "many faces". It was coined by Ely Santiago, a painter, cartoonist, and cultural artist, who devoted his art works to show the many faces of Negrenses overwhelmed with various crises.

A smiling mask, which is the symbol of the fiesta, was conceived by the organizers to show the happy spirit of the Negrenses despite experiencing

bad times in the sugar industry.

The Masskara festival was first envisioned in 1980 to add color and jollity to the Bacolod City's celebration of its Charter Day anniversary, on 19 October. The symbol of the festival - a smiling mask - was adopted by the organizers to dramatize the Negrenses' happy spirit, in spite of periodic economic downturns in the sugar industry.

Throughout the week, people from all over the Visayas gather to the town plaza. They join Bacoleno in the non-stop round of festivities. Even if you don't feel like dancing and singing, the pig catching and pole climbing competitions are musts. Some are also trying their luck and testing their skills in mask-making contests, disco king and queen competitions, coconut-milk drinking to name a few.

Masks are the order of the day at the Masskara parade, as brightly-costumed men and women dance and strut in the streets. Their beaming faces are be-dimpled, smiling and laughing in molded clay or papier-mâché. Every group is represented: civic associations, commercial establishments, schools, even private and government organizations. They march out in excited crowd wearing their painted masks and elaborate costumes, all vying for prizes in judging that will be held in the afternoon. The festival also benefits Bacolod tourism not only because tourists flock the city during this time to join the merrymaking but also to buy the orchids and ornate handicrafts on sale.

History

The festival instills among the people the culture of escapism and obscurantism, where they have to accept and forget their sufferings caused by the exploitation and oppression of the landlords.

In this city, people are encouraged by the organizers, mostly big business and hacenderos (big landlords), to forget the economic hardships and depression which happen especially during tiempo muerto (dead season, or off sugar harvest-milling season). Bacolod is the capital city of Negros Occidental, known as the Sugar Bowl of the Philippines and is part of Western Visayas in central Philippines.



Originally and ironically, the masks reflected the people's grief over the loss of their numerous loved ones when, in 1979, Negros Navigation's luxury liner MS Don Juan crashed with a tanker. Five years before, there was a big drop in sugar production. The people of Negros suffered from the excess of sugar in the world market caused by the Caribbean sugar crisis and the introduction of sugar substitute like the High Fructose Corn

Syrup in the United States. All these led to the holding of the first Masskara Festival in 1980. Santiago's original proposal to hold annual parade using masks to capture the crisis in Negros, was changed by the local elite into street dancing and merry-making festival. This rich imagery of masks was used by the hacenderos and local politicians to hide the suffering of the Negrenses. From then on, Masskara Festival became one of the popular attractions in Negros, drawing thousands of people within and outside the country.



During this festival every October, the city's public plaza is brought alive into a huge beer garden. There is also Masskara Street-dancing contests highlighting the whole festival. Masskara Festival was intended as an encouragement to all to fight back and to

keep smiling despite the sugar problems, and highlighted that hope still existed. Since then, the smiling masks have become the city's symbol, thus earning its tag as the "City of Smile."

Lanzones Festival

Camiguin, Northern Mindanao
25-28 October

Camiguin Island's favorite fruit becomes the object of adoration in this superb street dancing extravaganza. Watch the streets of Mambajao become colorful, lively stages as the Camiguinons strut their stuff; dressed in the costumes of the Mindanao tribes, and carrying bunches of sweet, sumptuous lanzones. Everyone is welcome to join the fun - it is a come-as-you-are, eat-all-you-can, and dance-till-you-can affair.



Lanzones Festival - The harvest of sweet lanzones fruit is celebrated every year in October with a weekend of street dancing, parade and pageants in the town of Mambajao. This festival includes an exhibit of agri-cottage industry products, barangay beautification, indigenous sports, tableau of local culture, grand parade of the lanzones, which is the golden and extra sweet fruit, found in the entire province of Camiguin.



Lanzones is a tropical fruit that grows abundantly on the north-central coast of Mindanao. It is said that the sweetest lanzones comes from Camiguin. Portrayed in the photographs below are typical lanzones trees found in the province of Camiguin. The lanzones fruit, which has a pale brown skin and sweet translucent flesh, is also shown. This fruit ripens sometime during the third week of October.

Camiguin Island's favorite fruit becomes the object of adoration in this superb street dancing extravaganza. Watch the streets of Mambajao become a colorful, lively stage as the Camiguinons strut their stuff, dressed in the costumes of the Mindanao tribes, and carrying bunches of sweet, sumptuous lanzones. Everyone is welcome to join the fun, it's a come-as-you-are, eat-all-you-can, dance-till-you-drop affair!

People from around the Philippines, flock to the Lanzones Festival, which features costumes displays, sports and dances, as well as the highly popular Miss Camiguin Tourism beauty pageant. The festival is centered around the lanzones, a fruit

with pale brown skin and a sweet translucent flesh, which is the main income source of Mambajao.



The town is draped with fruits during the Lanzones Festival which highlights locally grown produce, indigenous sports, folk dancing and a grand parade, choosing a festival beauty queen brings the celebration to choose. Showcase agro-industrial and tableau of the province's heritage through street dancing.

The Lanzones Festival is Camiguin's contribution to making the island of Mindanao as a cultural

destination.

The Lanzones fruit is a major source of the Camiguin Islands' livelihood and it is for the annual harvest that they celebrate this Thanksgiving Day. Houses, carriages, street poles and even people are decorated with lanzones and lanzones leaves. townsfolk dance in joy abandon in commemoration of the legend that a beautiful, unknown maiden took from the its former bitter flavor to leave only its luscious, sweet taste.

“Life goes on in Camiguin after that tragedy. Camiguin is a very beautiful place with so much to offer to tourists,” she said.

Camiguin, which came from the word “Kamagong,” the name of a tree in the ebony family, is a pear-shaped volcanic island lying in the Bohol Sea some 54 kilometers southeast of Chocolate Hills and 10 kilometers north of Misamis Oriental.

Old Spanish documents indicate that the great explorers, Ferdinand Magellan and Miguel Lopez de Legaspi, landed in Camiguin in 1521 and 1565, respectively. But it was not until 1598 when the Spanish settlement was established in what later came to be the Guinsiliban town.

The first major settlement of the Spanish era was Catarman in 1679. This grew and prospered to what is now known as Bonbon. The 1871 Mt. Vulcan Daan eruption destroyed these towns, the remains of which are the ancient Spanish church and convent to the present center town of Catarman.

The Lanzones festival is the residents' way of giving thanks to a bountiful harvest not only for lanzones but other agricultural products.

Pinta Flores Festival

San Carlos City, Negros Occidental

3-5 November

This city in the sugar-producing island of Negros Occidental honors its patron saint, San Carlos Borromeo, with a pageant where participants with floral painted bodies dance in rhythmic beat as they wind through the major streets. The festival is inspired by the tattooed Negrenses of pre-colonial times.

The Pinta Flores Festival was born out of the city's search for a cultural identity and tradition. With Cebu City having its Sinulog, Bacolod City its MassKara Festival, and Aklan its Ati-atihan, San Carlos City also dreamed of having its own unique festival.

In 1992, after successfully holding two activities, the Nabingkalan Tattoo Festival and the Dances of Flowers as highlights of the city fiesta, the idea of blending the two concepts to come up with a presentation that could be considered the city's very own started what today is one of the most popular street dancing festivals in the region, the Pinta Flores Festival.

Pinta Flores is coined from the words *pintados* ("painted ones"), the concept behind the Nabingkalan Tattoo Festival, and *flores*, the Spanish word for "flowers" that dominated the theme of the Dances of Flowers. The Pinta Flores street dancing and ritual competition highlights the annual Pinta Flores Festival every November 3-5.

It features rhythmic dances and dance dramas of life and death and the triumph of good against evil that depict the people's thanksgiving and merriment, abundant



The sunflower is a symbol of Pinta Flores

blessings and success. As part of the *Pintados* tradition, the faces, arms, bodies and legs of the dancers are painted with flowers to express gratitude to man and his environment.

The street dancing is culminated by a dance ritual performed at the City auditorium. Different dance steps and musical accompaniment add to the thrill of the competition. The human flower formation is another impressive part of the dance ritual which are products of the ingenuity and skill of the choreographers and dancers.



Feast of San Clemente / Higanes

Angono, Rizal

23 November

A fiesta of "gigantic" proportions, this one is highlighted by a grand procession featuring the *higantes*, ten-foot paper-muche puppets, surrounded by a crowd of drenched, water-fighting revelers. Better bring your squirt gun if you want to join the fun. It is a water-logged event that is sure to leave you wet n' wild - and wanting for more.

Adding color and gaiety to Angono town fiesta, celebrated early the 23rd of November, are the "Higantes", paper to mache to giants measuring four to five feet in diameter and ten to twelve feet in height. Philippine Rizal Angono's joyous major festival in honor of San Clemente (patron saint of fishermen) whose image, glorious in papal vestment, is carried by male devotees during a procession accompanied by "pahadores" (devotees dressed in colorful local costumes or fishermen's clothes, wooden shoes and carrying boat paddles, fish nets, traps, etc.) and "higantes" (giant paper mache images). The street event finishes in a fluvial procession in Laguna de Bay amidst revelry that continues until the image is brought back to its sanctuary.



History

The "higante" tradition began last century, when Angono was a Spanish hacienda. The hacienda owners concerned about costs prohibited all celebrations except for one annual fiesta. The townspeople concerned about enjoyment decided to make the best of a bad situation. Using an art form brought from Mexico by Spanish priests, they created larger-than-life caricatures of their Spanish landlords. In typical Filipino fashion, the fiesta become in equal parts, a stunning spectacle and a tricky inside joke. There too was a story that a French man happened to pass by this coastal town of Laguna de Bay as he cruised from Manila Bay. Captivated by the town being divided by a river, he predicted that someday giants would come out and become famous. True to his words, Angono can show off of two national artists - Carlos "Botong" Francisco in the field of visual arts and Professor Lucio D. San Pedro in the field of music. There are other Angono sons and daughters who are becoming big or giants on their chosen field of endeavor. Paper mache making is an art that is known back during the Spanish Era. The head of the giants is fashioned from a mold made of clay, which is dried under the heat of the sun.

With the advent of modernization and technology clay is changed to plaster of Paris and resin. The mold is then pasted with lots of newspapers then split into the middle and sun-dried, after which it is then pasted with the brown paper (the slit being covered) then sun-dried again and painted. The body is made of bamboo, but other materials like yantok (rattan) and thin iron bars can also be used. Yards are yards of clothing materials and accessories complete the costume of the "Higantes". Before, Angono town fiesta features a "Mag-anak" (family) Higantes consists of three figures, the father, the mother and the son. In 1987, Mr. Perdigon Vocalan visualized the idea of having a Higante Festival wherein all the barangay's in Angono (13 of them) are to be represented by two to four Higantes symbolizing the industry or the personality of the barangay. This idea materialized with the funding given by the Dept. of Tourism and Provincial Tourism Office thus in a year after a seminar and a workshop in Higante Making the fiesta was flooded with thirty-nine different Higantes. In that year too, there was a contest among the Higantes, thus one can see them a Higante with a duck on its head and another one a

basketful of duck eggs representing a barangay that known for its fried itik and balut-making.

Giant Lantern Festival

San Fernando, Pampanga

3 December

San Fernando makes the biggest, most spectacular lanterns, at around 40 feet in diameter and bearing thousands of light bulbs a piece. Watch them all in their twinkling, blinking, flashing glory in this grand Christmas exhibit.

The Story Behind the Giant Lanterns of the City of San Fernando, Pampanga

By Ivan Anthony S. Henares

Most only see the finished product. The dynamic interplay of lights and color that precisely moves with the rhythm of a brass band, the magnitude of size and their intricate designs, and so much more which spectators only get to appreciate as the giant lanterns of San Fernando are pitted against each other on festival night. No one can dispute the fact that the Giant Lantern Festival of San Fernando is the event that the province of Pampanga is most known for. And it is sad that we rarely acknowledge the tremendous preparation and investment the makers put in each of these giant lanterns. It is because of these giant lanterns and the San Fernando lantern-making industry that the City of San Fernando has been dubbed the "Christmas Capital of the Philippines."

Introduction

It is one of the trades that are undisputedly Kapampangan. Lantern making first began in the town of San Fernando during the early part of this century. What distinguish the San Fernando lantern from the ordinary parol are the intricate designs and the illusion of dancing lights, which highlight the vibrant colors of the lantern.

The Christmas lantern can never be distanced from the town which created it, the City of San Fernando. It is what San Fernando is known for. And it is what has made the city famous all over the country and even around the world. Such a creation however, did not come without the untiring efforts of San Fernando's citizens, and more so, their creativity and innovation. And it is because of the Christmas lantern that San Fernando has earned for itself the title of "Christmas Capital of the Philippines." And to truly appreciate the colorful and intricate display of lights, one must understand its deep history and the strong traditions involved in the creation of the San Fernando Giant Lantern.

The San Fernando Giant Lantern Festival

The San Fernando lantern industry evolved from the Giant Lantern Festival of San Fernando. The festival, which is held every December, finds its roots in Bacolor where a much simpler activity was held. Following the transfer of the provincial capital from Bacolor to San Fernando in August of 1904, this parol event followed as well. "Ligligan Parol" was said to have started in San Fernando in the year 1904. But some say

that the "Ligligan Parul" did not happen immediately after the transfer and in fact began in 1908.

This predecessor of the modern day Giant Lantern Festival was actually a religious activity which we know today as "lubenas." The lanterns measured just two feet in diameter, a far cry from the fifteen feet that we see today. These were created in each barrio from bamboo and other locally available materials. During the nine-day novena before Christmas, which coincided with the *simbang gabi* from December 16 to 24, these paruls were brought around each barrio in procession to their visita. Before the midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, the lanterns were brought to the town church together with the barrio patrons.

This tradition gradually evolved as the lanterns became bigger and the designs more intricate. Later, one big lantern was made for each barrio, which was created through a cooperative effort. Each resident contributed to its construction, from the concept and design, to the materials and labor. In the end, these lanterns became a symbol of unity for the barrios.

It was in the year 1931 that electricity was introduced to the San Fernando lantern, thus sparking the birth of the first Giant Lantern Festival. The added illusion of dancing lights highlighted the bright colors and intricate designs of these Giant Lanterns. At this time, the lights were controlled by individual switches that were turned on and off following the beat of the music. The barangays of Del Pilar, Sta. Lucia and San Jose were among the first barangays to participate in the festival.

According to another version claimed by old folks, the Giant Lantern Festival started during the time of President Manuel L. Quezon. At that time, President Quezon was trying to make Pampanga a model province. In fact, Quezon made Arayat his resting place and converted the legendary Mount Arayat into a tourist resort. As a show of gratitude to Quezon, the people of San Fernando held a Christmas lantern contest to honor the first family. Quezon himself donated the prize for this lantern contest, which was personally awarded to the winner by First Lady Aurora Aragon Quezon.

Fernando Creativity at Work

In years that followed, more innovations were introduced to the giant lanterns. Colored plastic replaced the traditional papel de hapon. Large steel barrels called rotors also substituted the hand-controlled switches to manipulate the lights. Strips of masking tape on these rotors determine the sequence of the switching on and off of the lights.

The technology of the rotor is quite simple. Hairpins, attached to the end of the wires leading to each individual bulb, connect the lights to the rotor, which in turn, is connected to the source of electricity. Strips of masking tape are placed on the metal rotor to serve as light switches. As the rotor is turned, the hairpins pass through the strips of masking tape. When a certain hairpin hits a strip of masking tape, the current to a specific set of bulbs is temporarily cut thus switching off that particular set of bulbs. When that particular hairpin regains contact with the steel barrel, the bulbs are again lit. Thus, the placement of the masking tape on the rotors determines the interplay of lights on the lanterns and can spell success or disaster for each entry.



Thinking about it, one needs a lot of creativity and technical know-how in designing a giant lantern. It is not as easy as getting a pen and paper and drawing a symmetrical design. As the giant lantern maker visualizes his design, he also has to take into consideration the interplay of lights and colors. And just to illustrate the magnitude of difficulty, the designer should be able to picture when each of the 3,500 light bulbs should go on and

off. And just to stress, no computers are involved in the interplay of lights. Everything is done manually, yet the result produced by the lantern makers of San Fernando can even rival light effects done by computers.

The design, however, is just a part of the actual labor involved in the creation of a giant lantern. Once this has been finalized, the lantern makers weld together a steel frame, which follows the design itself. This is the first step in the actual construction of the giant lantern. The frame is then lined with cardboard and foil. This is followed by another monumental task, placing the over 3,000 light bulbs in their proper places and wiring them up together. Even an expert electrical engineer would go crazy while working on this intricate network composed of hundreds of yards of electrical wires.

The wires are then connected to the rotors. And let me stress rotors with an "s" since barangays have to change the interplay of lights with each tune. In fact, some barangays even use as much as eight to ten of these steel barrels for variety in movement. Finally, there is of course the plastic covering, which is cut and shaped precisely to fit each section.

The Giant Lantern Festival is an inter-barangay contest. In past festivals, it really was a barangay effort and the best lantern makers of the barangay were called on to create the entry to the competition. During that time, each participating barangay had resident lantern makers. However, as the years passed, many of these lantern makers were unable to pass on the trade. Today, only Del Pilar, Sta. Lucia, Dolores and San Jose can boast of resident lantern makers. So to keep the show on the road, other barangays have to rely on lantern makers from other localities.

One of these commissioned giant lantern makers is Ernesto D. Quiwa of Barangay Sta. Lucia. Although from Sta. Lucia, he has actually created lantern entries for other barangays. During the 2000 Giant Lantern Festival, Mang Erning created the entry for Barangay San Nicolas, which was adjudged the over-all champion for that year. His creations have in fact won the over-all honors in previous years including 1974, 1982, and a three-peat from 1993 to 1995. For the 2001 lantern competition, he again made the one for San Nicolas. In fact, aside from Sta. Lucia's own entry and the entry of San Nicolas, it is said that two other lantern entries were being made in the same barangay.

When the Star Did Not Shine

The Giant Lantern Festival was not held continuously since its conception in 1931. The tradition died out as a result of Martial Law. In 1978, San Fernando Mayor

Armando Biliwang decided to forego with the festival because of the high cost of producing a lantern. But more so was the fact that curfews had to be observed.

In 1979, the different barangays who were regulars in the competition clamored for its return. "Sayang lamang," said Gilbert Paras of Barangay Dolores who manufactured the lantern annually. "Not so much because of the thousands of pesos in prizes but more so of the popularity that the seasonal industry of lantern making had been receiving out of the town," he added.

It was in 1980 that Governor Estelito Mendoza and then acting mayor Amante S. Bueno revived the tradition. There were however constraints to the festival. In 1982, Mayor Vicente Macalino decided that the lanterns should not exceed eleven feet in diameter but not less than ten feet. These austerity measures may have been in place as a sign of the times. But despite the trying times, eight barangays entered the competition that year.

A Multi-Sectoral Effort

Back in 1988, Mr. Antonio Castro, then a 64-year old native of Barangay Dolores, recalled the time when the time for the construction of the giant lanterns arrived. His family had been involved in lantern making since 1939 and these were very happy occasions. It was not just a family effort but also a barrio effort. "We paid no one, everybody worked in the spirit of bayanihan."

In 1991, the Giant Lantern Festival was almost postponed in sympathy for those who were left homeless and jobless due to the Mount Pinatubo eruption. But Mayor Paterno Guevarra said "the people in the town said that it was not the right thing to do because people might think that San Fernando is likewise crippled and investments may not come in." To Fernandinos, the Giant Lantern Festival was thus a sign of strength amidst the calamity that had just struck. Guevarra added, "Besides, it is a tradition and we cannot disappoint our friends who come a long way to see our famous lanterns. It was also an opportunity to utilize tourism potentials of Pampanga and hasten the rehabilitation in areas devastated by the eruption."

Six giant lanterns entered the competition that year. The seventh lantern, that of the defending champion Barangay Del Pilar, was disqualified from the competition for exceeding the maximum allowable size, to the disappointment of the barangay officials. They were instead entered as an exhibition lantern. But the spirit of giant lantern making still lived on. As according to Del Pilar Kagawad Francisco Peczon, "*Mahirap talaga gumawa (ng giant lantern), at tunay na magastos pero ok lang sa amin iyon kasi naging tradisyon na at parang hindi kumpleto and Pasko kapag hindi kami nakagawa niyan.*" For the recently concluded 2001 Giant Lantern Festival, Barangay Del Pilar went home with the top honors.

With all that discussion on the creation of a giant lantern, one realizes that just by looking at the many materials and the amount of effort put into each lantern that would of course not be possible without any incurred costs. And the expenses are definitely not loose change and are said to reach almost P200,000 for each of these giant lanterns. So where do the participating barangays get their funds?

Being the most popular festival in Pampanga and world-renowned at that, no one can blame the City Government of San Fernando for putting so much value on the Giant Lantern Festival. It in fact provides the funding for most of the expenses of each lantern

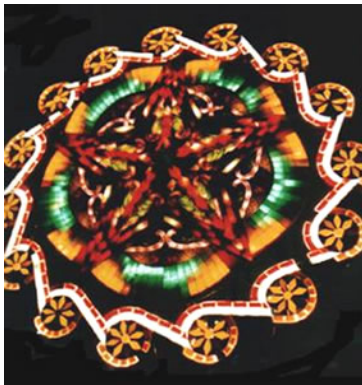
as it has done so in previous competitions. The administration of Dr. Rey B. Aquino gives its full support for this festival. And according to Mayor Aquino, for the year 2001 festival, the City Government released P70,000 for each barangay which entered the competition. San Fernando is simply living up to its well-earned name as the unmatched "Christmas Capital of the Philippines."

Also back in 1991, the Department of Tourism gave a subsidy of P25,000 to each lantern. However, that subsidy is no longer given to the lantern makers of San Fernando. In 1982, the cost of an 11-foot lanterns was only P14,000. And contributions came in from different sectors of San Fernando. The local government headed by Mayor Macalino shelled P5,000, and Rotary International gave in P2,000. In 1984, the municipal government under Mayor Virgilio L. Sanchez released P20,000 for each lantern. In the 1988 competition, the municipal government of Mayor Pat Guevarra shelled out a P55,000 subsidy for each lantern. The increasing subsidies are a sign of the times. But they also illustrate the unyielding fervor of Fernandinos to continue the festival despite the increasing costs of production.

And just like the festivals today, barangay officials are left to solicit the remaining amount which the subsidy did not cover. But many residents in the barangay are too willing to shell out money from their own pockets just to continue the tradition.

The subsidies may not be enough to cover all the expenses in creating the giant lanterns, nor are the rewards. Winners simply receive some prize money and a trophy. But that is not important to the barangays who join the festival. And according to many of the lantern makers, "*kahit nga walang contest ay gagawa kami niyan.*"

The Lantern-Making Industry



During the early years of the Giant Lantern Festival, people were only able to see these works of art, innovation and technology during the contest night itself. According to Mr. Eddie Garcia, barangay secretary of Dolores in 1988, the San Fernando lanterns were done on a commission basis. And they were only made by the elders of the community. But some lantern-makers decided to make smaller versions for display in their own homes. This of course attracted the attention not only within the town but with other people as well. People who thus passed by San Fernando wanted to have a San Fernando lantern for their own homes in Manila. This sparked the beginning a new industry in Pampanga.

Seeing the business potential, younger people joined the lantern-making process. After learning the basics, they put up their own stalls along the roadside. It is said that the famous San Fernando lantern was made available to the public in 1964. Lantern makers began marketing this product outside the town by displaying these in various gas stations and delicacy centers in Metro Manila. The fascination for the lantern soon spread around the country and thus made San Fernando known for this trade.

Lantern making thus became a family trade passed on from generation to generation. There were about seventeen families known to make giant lanterns. They included the Garcias, Castros, Parases, Carreons, Capatis and Mendozas.

Many people claim the credit for being the first to commercialize the San Fernando lantern-making trade. In Barangay San Jose, the Tiongson couple, Eddie and Maritel, claims the distinction. They began by making a few to decorate their store "Bahay Pasa Lubong" in San Matias, Sto. Tomas. To their surprise, most of their customers inquired where they got the lanterns and were offering to buy them. Taking a cue from these inquiries, the Tionsons assembled their barriomates in San Jose and began a modest trade that eventually grew. Jesus Maglalang was their head lantern maker.

There is in fact so much export potential for this product as the fascination for this unique display of lights is universal and is much appreciated around the world. In fact, San Fernando giant lanterns have graced many international events such as the 75th Anniversary of the Philippine-Hawaii Commission way back in 1979, the Kutnitchiwa Asian Fair in Yokohama, Japan (1989) and the World Expo in Seville, Spain (1992) among others. But the most notable of these appearances was during the Hollywood Christmas Parade of 1993 where the San Fernando lantern adorned the Philippine float entry to the parade. The Philippine float won top honors for that year.

A Trade in Peril

Ironically, the older lantern makers say that the San Fernando lantern making trade is actually dying. They blame it on the introduction of new materials like capis and Christmas lights. If you happen to pass by the Gapan-Olongapo Road or MacArthur Highway during the Christmas season evenings, you would notice so many new types of lanterns on display, most of which look so ordinary and at times, tasteless. Because of the introduction of these ordinary capis parols in San Fernando, the real San Fernando lanterns have to compete with these other decors you can find anywhere in the country.

By introducing these lanterns that are not uniquely Fernandino, the lantern makers fail to realize that they are gradually killing the trade. In the future, gone will be the days of the flashing interplay of lights, vibrant colors and intricate designs, when the San Fernando lantern may just be reduced to a thing of the past.

Conclusion

It is a work of love and full of passion. How simple technology can produce such an advanced technological interplay of lights is still a marvel for many who watch the Giant Lantern Festival year in and year out. The San Fernando giant lantern is a product of Kapampangan innovation, creativity and tireless effort. It is this innovation and creativity among Fernandinos that earned for the City of San Fernando, Pampanga, the moniker "Christmas Capital of the Philippines." So the next time you witness their spectacular display of lights and color, do appreciate the hard work put into each of these works of art that can be considered truly Fernandino, truly Kapampangan.

Shariff Kabunsuan Festival

Cotabato City

15-19 December

Cotabato City's Moslem population celebrates the arrival of Islam to the region with a series of fun-filled activities. No need to go native to enjoy these - there's a fluvial parade, an outrigger boat race, as well as various musical and athletics events.



Shariff Kabunsuan Festival it is a colorful festival celebrating the arrival of Shariff Kabunsuan via Rio Grande de Mindanao more than 500 years ago to introduce Islam to the natives. The festival, which will be held from Dec. 15 to 19, will feature SK trade fairs, battle of the bands, Mindanao business forums, cultural presentations, street dancing competitions, and Kanduli

(thanksgiving banquet).

A celebration of Islam, the Shariff Kabunsuan Festival is a display of Muslim religion and culture.

Cotabato City's Sharif Kabunsuan Festival is very popular among foreign and local tourists who visit their families and relatives during this holiday season.

Shariff Kabunsuan Festival is a very significant event in Cotabato City and people look forward to various activities lined-up for the week long festivity. Events include cultural presentations, Alimango Festival, Culinary Arts Competition featuring Muslim delicacies, cultural musical showdown, Kulintang Ensemble Competition, Philippine Legend Acrobatic Show, Inaul Fashion Show, and Photo Exhibit Contest. Water sports, boat racing, ethnic sports competition, cultural dances, and a week-long trade fair, add color to the Kabunsuan Festival.



Other highlights of the Kabunsuan Festival include fluvial parade along Rio Grande de Mindanao, the Kuyog Street Dancing Parade, the Guinakit and re-enactment of the arrival of Shariff Kabunsuan, Banca Race, Kuyog Showdown and Pagana sa Maguindanao. The highlight is the "Guinakit" which is the colorful fluvial parade of colorful decorated bancas along the Rio Grande de Mindanao.

Capping the Shariff Kabunsuan Festival is the "Pagana Maguindanao," a traditional way of dining among Maranaos and Maguindanaons in honor of special guests. This is a solemn gathering for the guest.

The visitors are served with traditional Muslim cuisine like tinadtag, plil, putrid mandi, sininang baka among others followed by a cultural presentation. Traditionally the guests sit barefooted on the floor during dinner. The lavish meal begins with a

thanksgiving prayer. At the end of the meal, the host will give a token to the honored guests.

Cotabato City had witnessed more history than any other place in Mindanao. Its history dates back to the 16th century when Shariff Kabunsuan, an Arab missionary from Johore, landed along the banks of the Masla Pulangi now known as Rio Grande de Mindanao. Shariff Kabunsuan introduced Islam to the natives, which lead to the establishment of the Sultanates of Maguindanao, Rajah Buayan and Kabuntalan.

During the golden age ushered in by Sultan Dipatuan Qudarat in the 17th century Cotabato became the first capital of Mindanao.

The introduction of the Christian faith in 1870 by the Jesuits and the ruling of Sultan Makakua gave rise to the birth of the modern-day Cotabato with the construction of roads and bridges and wharves. Today, Cotabato City is the only Tagalog speaking city in Mindanao, the only place where both seeds of Islam and Christianity grew and flourished.

Video: [Click Here](#)

Websites worth visiting for more information:



www.philippinecountry.com



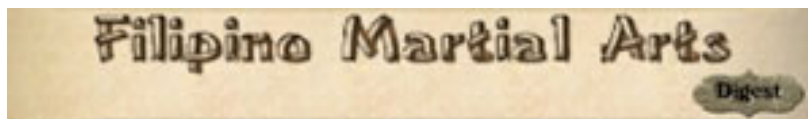
asiarecipe.com



www.gabbydictionary.com



Rapid Journal



Filipino Martial Arts Digest

**Register your FMA School
Post your Event**

Advertise with the FMAdigest

An Ad in the Filipino Martial Arts Digest can create Business. Your Advertisement for Filipino martial arts equipment, books, videos etc, can be included in the Filipino Martial Arts digest.

Website Advertisement - Free

Subscribers Online {e-book} digest - \$5 per Issue

**Website Application
Hard Copy Application**