The Palawan, who number around 50,000, are one of the three autochthonous groups from the island of the same name. They live in the southern part, starting from the breach in the mountain range between Quezon and Abo-Abo. The Tagbanua live in the central part, concentrated in the Aborlan area, but are also present in the northern Cuyo archipelago. The third autochthonous group, the Batak, an Aeta nomadic community of only about 200, live in the forest farther north, between Puerto Princesa and Roxas.

They call themselves "Palawan," "Pala'wan," or "Palawanän" depending on the dialectal variations within the Palawan language, and there are 12 of these. They are designated as "Palawano" by the Christian settlers, a derivation borrowed from Spanish. Their language is composed of four vowels and 16 consonants; stress is not relevant and the morphology is less complex than Tagalog.

With steep slopes of mountain ranges and peaks, fallows, cliffs and primary forest of tropical density, Palawan rests on the Sunda Shelf, a bridge between Borneo and the Calamianes. Its unique flora and fauna are related more to Borneo than the other Philippine islands.

The southern part of the island is divided by a central mountain chain culminating in Mount Mantalingayan (2,085 meters). Steep slopes on the eastern coast overlook a rather narrow coastal plain along the Sulu Sea, while a hilly western landscape with many limestone caves faces the South China Sea. These natural formations provide good shelter when the monsoon comes, as in the Ransang area where the Palawan have seasonal variations in their habitat. In the dry season they live in bamboo houses, and in the rainy season they use cave dwellings. Their territory is made up of green luxuriant forest, with mountain streams and sunlit clearings. They live at an altitude ranging from sea level to 1,000 meters above sea level. At this altitude, rice no longer grows, but the extensive forest with almaciga trees takes over. The resin of these trees is collected by the highlanders, who may cross the mountain range in search of medicinal plants or visit faraway friends and relatives.

History

Prehistorians and naturalists consider Palawan as having been crucial not only during the Ice Age of the Pleistocene, when the sea level was lower, but also during Paleolithic and Neolithic times.

Man has lived here for thousands of years. The archaeological diggings initially conducted in 1970 by Robert Fox and the staff of the National Museum in Lipuun Point (Quezon), namely, in Tabon and in nearby limestone caves, revealed the presence of humans through their tools as far back as 30,000 BC.

Two types of stone industries have been found, one in Tabon Cave and the other in Duyong Cave (circa 5,000 BC). In more recent times (3,000-500 BC) the caves

became a burial site. The Manunggul Cave provided the most beautiful testimony of jar burial. This practice has not been in use for centuries, and the earliest archaeological evidence of ground burial known in Palawan to this day dates from the 13th century.

Today the area is still inhabited by the Palawan people and some Tagbanua. For centuries other ethnic groups came and settled permanently or temporarily on the seacoast and on the coastal plain of southern Palawan. These are Islamic groups, namely, the Jama Mapun of Cagayan de Sulu, who speak Pullum Mapun, and the Tausug and the Sama from Jolo and the Sulu archipelago; the Molbog, on the other hand, five in Balabac and (less numerous) in the southern tip of the main island.

In the past, the Spanish missionaries failed to settle there because of malaria and piracy. Since the American period, however, the coastal area and the lowlands have continued to attract Christian settlers. Since the 1930s, and especially after World War II, Palawan has been home to migrants from Luzon (mainly from the Ilocos and Zambales) and the Visayas, and some Chinese merchants. Adding to population increase were government resettlement policies and uncontrolled migration of fisherfolk and peasants in search of land in a pioneer area. These people brought with them their native languages, like Ilocano, Cebuano, and Ilongo; but Filipino tends to be the lingua franca, the province being part of southern Tagalog.

Economy

The Palawan have a type of economy at the juncture of two models: food gathering, hunting, and fishing on one hand; and kaingin or slash-and-burn agriculture on the other.

Work is distributed according to sex. Women have to carry out most of the agricultural tasks, mainly clearing and weeding, but the felling of trees is reserved for men. Women harvest grains and tubers, collect wild products in the forest, fish with a hook and line and with a net. They prepare the food and look after the children. Men can also participate in agricultural work, like planting and weeding, but their favorite activities are hunting with a blowgun or with dogs and spears; fishing with a trap or with a spear gun and goggles. While the women weave basketry, the men are responsible for building the houses and the rice granaries. The division of work is neither absolute, nor marked by prohibition or exclusivity.

The production of rice, the chief staple food, varies according to the lowland and highland areas. In contrast to the fertile soil found in the hilly area of Punang, the landscape of the Makagwa Tamlang highlands is abrupt and their fields are smaller and less productive. Swidden agriculture needs a low demographic density and space and time in order to rotate properly. Rice is grown in association with tubers in the *uma* or kaingin (swidden). Private ownership of land is a concept and practice totally alien to the Palawan tradition, being introduced by new Christian settlers. Today, however,

the territory of the Palawan has been drastically reduced in the coastal plain and the foothills.

In the highlands the system of production and consumption is more self-sufficient. The main resource of cash income is the *bagtik*, the resin of huge almaciga trees. It is processed outside Palawan to make *copal de Manila*, but the Palawan do not control this market. The hard labor entailed in bagtik gathering and transportation in the forest has introduced the national currency into the Palawan economy, but remains a very modest source of income for the highlanders. Those who benefit more are outsiders, the concession holders.

In the ancient trade with seafaring people, the Palawan exchanged forest products (resin, honey, rattan, beeswax, edible nests) and rice, for gongs, jars and celadons, plates, blades, and bronzeware.

Social and Political Organization

Characterized by a bilateral kinship system and the absence of any kind of hierarchy (no title, rank, class or caste), Palawan society is one in which roles are distributed between men and women, elder and younger, relatives (consanguines and affines), and neighbors. The framework of the collective life is the hamlet or group of neighbors, *rurungan*. Husbands live at their wife's place of residence, hence the rurungan forms a close-knit community.

The Palawan give great emphasis to the *adat at pagbagi* or custom of sharing and to *tabang* or mutual help between sisters, husband and wife, elder and younger. There is nonetheless a certain disymmetry in this social organization, and it is the men who wield authority. The *panglima* or headman of each hamlet is the father or uncle of a group of sisters and first cousins considered sisters. Through marriage young men adhere to this group of sisters and make up the community, which itself is marked by a certain disymmetry. This practice is known as *pikit*.

In order to maintain the balance of the society and to follow a moral code based on nonviolence, sharing, and mutual help, the headmen are also specialists in Adat or customary law and masters in *bisara* or jural debates. This function implies prestige and some authority, but not superior economic status or political power. Palawan society is egalitarian, based on a respectful, courteous relationship of youngers and elders. Solidarity between siblings provides an individual with unconditional support and generous help. A man has to be obedient to his in-laws; his wife and children expect his love and dedication. While he has to serve his father-in-law, he will in turn expect the same behavior from his future sons-in-law.

The *ukum* or judge, the *salab* or go-between see to it that Sara, the Law, is respected. They also mediate in conflicts, and see to it that physical and verbal violence is avoided.

Here is an extremely pacific society from which conflict is not absent, but is always controlled and refrained by the mastery of "thinking and speaking," the very etymological content of the word *bisara* (from Sanskrit *vi-cara*, thinking, examination, to make a judgment).

The Palawan, within the framework of their Adat, cannot defend themselves against outsiders, for they have no institutional means of organizing violence. They only know how to avoid it, and in this respect they are exemplary but extremely vulnerable.

When a social contract is to be established or an agreement reached, when disagreement arises or when open conflict takes place, the Palawan gather in the large meeting house, *kalang banwa*, in order to think and discuss, deliberate and decide, make *ukuman*, a judgment, and restore peace. The verbal communication, extremely codified and beautiful, that develops between experts is bisara.

The *mamimisara* or masters of speaking, undergo a long period of training, having been inclined towards the art of speaking since childhood. As adolescents they act out roles under the guidance of the *magurang*, the elder. As adults they have to memorize the Adat and Sara.

Burak at baras, literally "flowers of speech," represents not only a rhetorical exchange, but also an art of relating to the other, discussing openly and courteously, and solving problems. The rhetorical devices and strategies of the Palawan include: (1) *paribasa*, a stringing together of politeness devices, which often take amazing forms, such as astonishment, feigned ignorance of an event, pretending to be worried, allusion to a serious thus apocryphal event; (2) *baliwat*, an inversion device (e.g., a negative expression is used instead of an affirmative one), which is more tactful: (one accuses one's self when the other is in the wrong, a more elegant way of proceeding, and is more likely to make the other person think); (3) *lilibu*, speaking in a roundabout way, convoluted, as opposed to the matigna or direct way; (4) *mababa baras*, speaking covertly, "without spelling things out," but "speaking volumes," *mabwat tugna-an*, "long in meaning"; (5) ellipsis, a widely used device where whole phrases and even clauses can be implied; (6) *ulit-ulit*, to repeat, to make redundant, the opposite device, (apart from repetition of the message, metabole or accumulation of synonyms is also used to express one idea or one aspect more emphatically); (7) *sindir*, metaphor and simile in poetry and jural debate, e.g., *manuk* (chicken, little hen), which symbolizes a girl, a fiancee; *tampur* (cockfight), marriage; *luwak at njug* (coconut shoot), the young man; *damdam* (mattress), adulterous relations; (8) *alagad*, a transposition device, a shift of register, e.g., serious matters may be treated in a light, playful manner; (9) hyperbole, a clause marked by exaggeration, e.g., *magansur* (to burn to ashes), *manutung* (to burn the field, to set fire), express the idea of punishment; (10) *ma-intur maras*, a form of speech marked by extreme prudence, avoiding both extremes of assertion and negation; (11) *badyu at baras*, literally "clothing one's word," or "speaking covertly," in an indirect way "using kid gloves," another elegant way of speaking; (12) *bisara paryab-ryab*, a speech that sends a

pleasant sensation to the listener but gives a foretaste of a reproach for the wrong he has done; and (13) *karang*, a general term which describes elaborate rhetoric or a composition in verse. But these require a high level of skill in style and speech, and thus are not that common.

In bisara, each debate has an outline and figures of speech linked to certain types of jural cases. In this respect, bisara is not a conversation. There is a convergence of ideas which must lead to an *isun* or agreement. The final goal is renewed harmony, and the judge must say: *pwas at sala-ya* or "his/her mistake is over."

In an area around Brooke's Point from 1970 to 1992 the ancient script, a syllabary of Indic origin, is scarcely but still in use. It conveys brief messages and notices. These are related to the rights and duties among the members of the kindred and the Adat. Incised on bamboo slats or banana leaves are *tingkag*, a call to an assembly; *bawal*, a prohibition; *tabang*, a call for help or assistance; ukuman, a judgment; and *pasawud at inglaw*, a notice for an epidemic. The function of the *surat tinagbanua* is to spread the word of the headman and the judge. The script is not a vessel for speeches of a religious, literary, or scientific nature, but is concerned with jural matters and public weal. It consists of 17 basic graphs: 3 for vowels, 16 for consonants, and 2 diacritic signs to symbolize vocalic variation within the syllables. The combination makes up a code of 45 graphs.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

In Palawan cosmogony, Ampu, the Master, wove the world and created several kinds of humanity, hence he is also called Nagsalad, the Weaver. He is the supreme deity in a system of religious thought which can be qualified as "theist" and "animist." He is a protective watching presence, always invisible to *taw banar* or the real people. In the verticality of the universe, *andunawan* represents his abode. While people live on *dunya* or earth, another benevolent and protective deity stays in *lalangaw*, the median space. This is Diwata, a mediator between humans and Ampu. Since this world is made up of a vertical succession of realms, conceived of as a series of plates (seven levels or twice seven), there are other invisible humanities, beings, and deities. However, the pantheon is not organized in a fixed pyramidal order. The *langgam*, also called *saytan* (a word borrowed from Arabic and brought by the Malay sea traders), are ambiguous beings who can be harmful to humans as *taw mara-at* or "evil doers," but who can also be *taw manunga* or "good doers," benevolent bringers of inspiration and knowledge.

Other deities are more directly associated with human destiny: Ampu at Paray, the Master of Rice; Linamin at Barat, the Lady of the Monsoon Winds; Linamin at Bulag, the Lady of the Dry Season; or Upu Kuyaw, Grandfather Thunder. They are linked to natural phenomena and to an order which relies on the respect of humans for the Adat, such as the rule prohibiting incest, the violation of which can destroy the whole world, triggering off earthquakes, landslides, and a deluge. Innumerable beings,

treemen, dwarves, ogres, giants, and animal-like creatures, all invisible but so very present on earth, interfere with men in an aggressive manner, causing anguish, diseases, and death. The *kagunggurangan* or the ancestors demand a lot of attention and watch over people's acts. In Palawan religious and cosmogonic thought, the order of the universe relies upon the good behavior of the people.

The relation to the Invisibles and Deities is established by the *balyan* or shaman during the main rituals already mentioned and by lay persons in a daily need to relate to Ampu, the ancestors and the benevolents, or to deal with the Masters of Things and chase away the Evil Doers. Complex calls and prayers help the people to overcome anguish and to cure with medicinal plants their sick relatives and friends; these also help in dealing with the main natural phenomena and the deities that rule them.

In highland culture, *ulit* designates the voyage of the soul of a shaman, a major religious experience. It is related to the cosmogonic mythology, and to the vertical succession of realms inhabited by good-oriented or ill-oriented people with whom he has to negotiate.

In other areas of Palawan (Punang and Quezon) the opposite belief is at work: the deity itself or the spirits come down to earth and enter the body of a medium, converting the shamanistic experience into one of possession.

Six types of prayers have to be mastered by the shaman: *sagina*, invocation; tingkag, call; *ampang at kagunggurangan*, speeches to the ancestors; *ampang at kamamatayan*, speeches to the dead; *gayat at lapis*, invitation to the protective souls; *lumbaga*, chanted dialogue between the shaman's soul or *karuduwa* and the invisibles during the voyage. Aside from these, the eight different stylized forms of address when they cure with medicinal plants have to be learned: tagtag, magic formula; *tagtag at siring*, imitative magic formula; *baras at ubat*, words to the medicine; *ampang at kayu*, speech to the tree; *ampang at Mara-at nang Taw*, speech to a Malevolent; *sumpa*, vow; *nangnang* "evil spell"; and *batya*, magic spell for love, war, speaking mastery, snake bites, and poisons.

Tawar is a magic spell cast by a *diwata* (spirit deities). It is transmitted by a dream from father to son or uncle to nephew, but only a few people know this. It is cured by the *mananabang* or healer through *ruruku* (a basel flower), *bangbawang* (garlic) or *luya* (ginger).

In other more important rituals, the *parina* resin is smoked, providing clairvoyance to the shaman, and gongs are played in order to communicate with Ampu, the Lord Master or Ampu at Paray, the Master of Rice.

Tagtag is used in case of a disease, by siring or imitation, and is characterized by a lapidary formulation marked by an assonance (homophony of vowel in the last syllable), as the following treatment of a jaundice of a newly born baby shows (in relation to the water colored dark yellow by the roots of *tupak* tree):

I apply you by friction
Tupak, your designation
He might turn out maroon
Don't cause more imitation
Similar to you, maroon.

The annual celebration of *tambilaw at lungsud* is offered for the fertility of the earth, the harmony of the world, chasing away pests and other diseases of the rice, hoping for good meteorological conditions, and regular alternation of heat and rain.

As the oral ritual performance takes place, a very complex dialogue develops between the shaman—with the help of Ampu—and the Invisibles, for an earnest negotiation will bring the two to an agreement. This type of discussion is also used for curing severe cases of diseases and is composed of a *sagina*, an invocation, followed by tingkag, a call alternating addresses to the Malevolents and to the Benevolents, and *ungsud*, the offering with another invocation that seals the agreement.

The whole discussion is very similar to a bisara and uses the rhetorical devices of the "mediators," the experts in "thinking and discussing," although this time the dimension is at a higher level of the universe. These cosmological dialogues are characterized by the courtesy, kindness, and discreet calm inherent to Palawan culture.

Tambilaw at tabang is a vast and generous sharing of food and rice wine in order to restore a patient to health; thus it is a very important ritual in the annual cycle. There are many other brief rituals related to curing and offered to the Masters of pigs, trees, or birds, in a gift and return-gift relationship. Rituals of birth and death are rather simple and are mainly intended to protect the living during these delicate moments of passage into another world.

By the end of December, when the last variety of rice has been harvested in the highlands, a ritual feast to commemorate the Master of Rice is celebrated: *Tamway at Ampu at Paray*. It closes an annual cycle and starts a new one. It consists of a drinking ceremony of rice beer, *tinapay or tabad*, among relatives. A jar is prepared several weeks in advance—with *basal*, the music of gongs. The pleasure the music gives to the Master of Rice will produce in return a stronger and more fragrant beverage. Then all the relatives, who gave their rice to the jar, choose the day of the drinking ceremony and play the gongs every day at sunset to invite people around.

On that evening, plain cooked rice portions on leaves, and nothing else with it, will be given to the guests—if the harvest was good—but the main gift is tinapay, and the drinking will last until dawn. The chief, who prepared the jar together with his wife (who made the yeast), opens the jar and adds the necessary water, sugarcane leaves, bamboo straws, and one measure of the concoction. The shaman will look for the child's lost souls and then will perform ulit, the voyage, together with a *gimbar*, or acolyte. As the shaman chants his/her encounters with the saytan, he/she reaches and tastes the jar of ampu; then the acolyte enters into a trance. Once they are back on

earth and fully conscious, the jar will be offered to the people and a judgment to control violence will be proclaimed by the master of the house. Anyone who reciprocates the violent motions of a drunken person with violence will be fined.

As the drinking starts in earnest, the first song is performed. It is the elegant and moving *timpasan*, a chanted invocation to the Master of Rice. It can be performed solo by the host or as an alternating song between the host and one of his guests, inviting Ampu to sit on the main beam of the house that night. Then the old jar song *kandiri*, *aridi*, and *sudsud* and the more recent one *lantigi* and *yaya* alternate and are sung mostly by men. But women are allowed to sing too, as they come to the jar two by two and drink from the bamboo straws. Meanwhile, everyone talks, chews, or smokes in the flickering light of *salang*, the fragrant resin torches.

The master of the jar, the host, starts and his guests answer. *Paribasa* (politeness) is gradually taken over by togetherness, solidarity, and a shared joy. This ceremony is the time for *sangdugu*, the blood pact that seals forever the links between two people, their rights, and their reciprocal duties.

It can also be performed during the *simbug* or the honey-wine drinking ceremony and is followed by *bangkiyaw*, an address to Ampu at Burak, the Master of Flowers, who is honored on that occasion.**Architecture and Community Planning**

Palawan habitats vary in the highlands and the lowlands: specifically, the areas of Makagwa-Tamlang and Punang-Iraray on the eastern side of the island, and also Quezon on the western side of the island and farther south in the Ransang and Kubli-Kanipa-an areas.

A scattered habitat with small hamlets (5 to 7 houses) or larger ones (10 to 15) is found in the highlands; and a scattered habitat with a very large and strongly built meeting house is seen in the hilly area of Punang and the coastal plain. On the other hand, cave-mouth dwellings during the rainy season are a seasonal variation in the Ransang area, where the landscape is characterized by many limestone cliffs. These natural shelters are set up with several platforms on very tall and intricate scaffolding, following and taking advantage of the cave's opening.

Wood, rattan, and bamboo are the basic raw materials of Palawan architecture. Cogon grass and palm leaves of many kinds are the complementary elements used to cover the roof and make up the walls. No iron, rivets, or nails are used; the joints are tightened by ligatures, not fixed. Thus, a Palawan house is a flexible vegetal structure that is perishable.

A nuclear family's house or an individual house is built on posts, made of two bays with one frontal platform for access and an upper platform at the rear. The framework of the roof is made of trusses with a *kamagan* (beam) and *tangan* (rafters). The trusses support the purlins and the roof is covered with thatch of cogon leaves or *diplak*. The *binubungan* (ridge pole) has to be perpendicular to the

upstream-downstream axis.

Agdan (a wooden log with notches) or a bamboo ladder gives access to the porch if the posts are high. The outline is rectangular or square with only one room, but on different levels: *datag*, the main floor, is lower than *sarimbar*, the lateral or rear floor. Below the house, between the posts is the *sirung*. This is a neutral place, and dirty, but it is also a playground for children and animals, and a place where several things can be stored and protected from the rain.

Dapugan (the hearth) has no definite place, and several can be temporarily at use either on the ground or in a corner of the house. It is then made of three stones on a square of each contained by a wooden frame or just a few logs set parallel.

There is no partition in this type of small house (3-6 square meters), and the roof and walls are made of seven species of palm leaves and three species of split or woven bamboo, and *taring*.

The utensils used in daily life are few and scarce. Near the house one can see the *lasung* or mortar, a monoxyle-sculpted trunk of a tree, the *lalo* or pestle, the *nigu* or winnowers of varied size, and the woven baskets without a lid— *sukatan*, *tabig*, *tagtabig*, according to the capacity, for containing unhusked or husked rice.

The staple food is cooked in *kandiru* or pots hanging from a *sagab* or rattan string, and in a *kawali*, the large Chinese pan laid on *paga*, a tray. The water container on the highlands is a large bamboo with several large internodes. A half-sized coconut, *isap*, serves as a glass; Chinese plates with fish or ax motifs, along with banana leaves, traditionally serve as plates, and the cooked rice is served from a *luwag* (large spoon) carved in wood. Meals are taken on the main floor.

At night the wife opens the *biray*, mats of parallel rattans tied up with strings. On top of these, they also unfold a *damdam* or second mat of softened pandan leaves, with the most intricate geometrical designs, handwoven by the Jama Mapun and by the lowland Palawan. These mats delineate their *igaan* or sleeping area on the sarimbar platform or on the main floor.

The rice granary *lagkaw* is not part of the family's house. These granaries are usually located at the ends of the village or upland near the fields. A rice granary is a hospitable, shaded place under which one can rest. The Palawan love to sit there awhile, and women and children often take shelter there to chat and play.

The basic structure is made up of *six usuk* or strong posts with six circular wooden plates to prevent the rodents from climbing up and destroying the harvest. The framework of the roof is made of trusses with tie beams and rafters. As in the individual houses, the trusses support the purlins. Because the roof is usually covered with thick cogon leaves, the ridgepole is reinforced by a flattened thatch fixed by two horizontal poles. The external walls are made of strong tree bark in order to protect

the rice from humidity, sunlight, and insects.

Weather boards protect this small structure from too much rain and too much sun. The clean edges of the roof and the ridge are considered beautiful.

The *kupu* is the bachelor's house. With nine very high posts (5-6 meters), this tiny house is remarkable for its extraordinary height—it is a way for a young man to signal that he is ready for marriage. The floor is made of floor beams tied up to the posts resting on a notch. A spectacular double-wooden log with notches gives access to a single platform where the bachelor sleeps, cuts his arrows for hunting with the blowgun, and smokes alone while the children play in little bands.

In Kubli-Kanipa-an, the young maidens have a very charming little *pupu*, a house on posts linked by a catwalk to their parents' house. The *maligay* is also a beautiful little structure decorated with crossed brooms at the edges of the roof and the end of the ridgepole, where the young girls stay, as the long narratives tell us. On the frame of the only door, the young girl is courted by a young boy.

The most striking building, however, is *kalang banwa*, the large meeting house of the local group and its head or magurang, the elder. Here the jural discussions are held, marriage contracts and other agreements sealed, conflicts resolved, and feasts and rituals celebrated.

Made of very strong wooden posts from the *malaga* tree and dug into the ground, this large structure with trusses is characterized by floor beams supporting joints on which rests the *lawasan*, the main floor, made of bamboo laths tied with rattan. At the sarimbar, the raised lateral platform on the four sides and the main feature of this building, the guests can sit or lie down at night.

Two opposite entrances with a lower platform are covered by a secondary porch roof going down nearly to the ground, and acting as a protection against sun and rain.

Inside a *singlab* or small alcove made by raising a partition of flattened bamboo is the place where one or two jars of rice beer and some personal effects of the headman are stored. Sometimes the chief, his wife and children can live in the kalang banwa; when they have visitors, the two of them can sleep in this small room.

The set of one or two big gongs and a pair of small ringed gongs hang from the wall plates, while the drum rests on the lateral platform ready to be played, mainly at sunset and nighttime. Together with the betel-nut boxes and Chinese plates, beautiful large bladed knives with carved wooden handles, they make up the *pusaka* (heirloom); these are shared by the siblings and enhance their solidarity.

The kalang banwa is a most pleasant place where people can talk for hours, celebrate large feasts and ceremonies, and listen to tales and epics. Like the individual houses it has no furniture, no inner partition, but is an open space allowing great freedom of

movement.

Visual Arts and Crafts

For daily use the Palawan make functional objects which are delicate and simple. The works, made of rattan, wood, bamboo and leaves, emanate from nature and integrate into it. There is no violent contrast of colors, but a variation of greens and yellows.

Ukir, the geometric motifs, are made by incision and pyrography. The Palawan people do not paint nor do they weave colorful threads. They have no cotton cloth or ikat, in contrast to the Hanunoo of Mindoro or the Tboli of Mindanao, but they do weave rattan, bamboo, and other palm leaves like buri or pandan, depending on local availability. The technique of *tapa* making was revived during the Japanese Occupation. It consists of beating up the bark of a tree to make *baag* (G-strings) and a piece of cloth for *tapis* (skirt) for women. However, cloth as well as iron, brass, and chinaware are acquired by the Palawan through trade with seafaring people, a centuries-old tradition.

Fashion varies according to the subcultures, culminating in ornamentation and glamour in the Punang-Iraray and the Kalang Danum areas. The *sigpit*, with a rectangular cut of the leaves, enhanced with shells and/or sequins complements the tapis. Those worn in the highlands have colorful squares, while the groups on the coastal plain and the seashore wear *sulindang*, varied printed batik motifs.

The men create from hard material like iron, wood, bamboo tubes, while the women work on flexible materials like leaves, clothes, and food.

Woven baskets in the highlands are among the finest in the archipelago and are linked to rice cultivation. From July to August, with the first variety of ripening rice, women weave new nigu (winnowers) and baskets of varied size like sukatan, tabig, and tagtabig, for the coming season of harvest.

In the offshore islands of Quezon and in the Batarasa-Brooke's area, the most intricate weaving of pandan mats are done by women.

Men's artifacts are an offshoot of hunting and the cutting of the trees to clear a new field. With the help of the *labungan* (malay forge), the men prepare their knives and spears. They carve lalo or wooden pestle, lasung or mortar, and handles for their bolo. They sometimes carve *luyang*, a bracelet for their future wife in the hard black *mantalinaw* wood, and small birds and wild boars as a gift to the Master of Preys in return for a successful hunt. They also carve out of the trunk of a narra tree the long-necked *kusyapi* (lute) or the bangka, an outrigger canoe. They master the art of making *sapukan*, the blowgun, out of three bamboo poles, *karbang* (the quiver), in the internode of a large bamboo, as well as *alap*, a double tobacco container. In the Quezon area they make *biray* mats out of *saka* rattan, decorate the blowpipe with

gitgit, pyrogravure, and make flutes by piercing with a hot iron bar the tiny *sumbiling*.

Adult and children carve and play *kasing* (big tops), during the dry season, when the soil is hard. They love to compete in flying *taguri*, the graceful bird-shaped kites while the hot winds of March blow. With their aeolian bow they sing in the median space.

Literary Arts

There are charming evenings, when all the *kanakan*, the hamlet children aged 7 to 11 years, gather in a house and frolic with the adolescents and adults. Palawan children enjoy a lot of freedom going at night from house to house in search of delicacies (a pigeon, for instance) and fun. But some evenings they spend answering *igum*, riddles. An igum game compels one to think and reply as quickly as one can.

Igum ni Upu samula:
Duwang raja
Kasdang lakbang
Anu atin? (Atin lungsud)

Grandfather's riddle starts:
Two plates
Same diameter
What is this? (This is the universe)

Igum ni Upu samula:
Kaya magbaras baba
atay ja magbaras
Anu atin? (Atin kusyapi)

Grandfather's riddle starts:
His mouth does not speak
His heart is speaking
What is it? (This is the lute)

After the fixed introductory formula comes a brief lapidary composition based on parallelism and symmetry, a minimal utterance made up of two phrases of four words (2 x 2), expanding to six (3 x 2) and including a verb, followed by a question mark and a single nominal answer.

Igum refer to natural objects and phenomena, parts of the body, plants, animals, elements of matter, objects and tools, musical instruments, and more abstract notions like the soul or myths.

In the Palawan highlands, etiological myths are called *tuturan at kagunggurangan*.

Etymologically, *tuturan or turu* means to pinpoint, to show, to teach, to give news, to impart information; therefore it can be literally translated as the teaching of the ancestors. It consists of a stock of information and experience, a traditional knowledge transmitted from generation to generation to explain natural phenomena, the origin of things, a cosmology, and a demonology.

In this oral tradition there are a few major sets of myths consisting of 30 or more variants that share many semantic components. They are organized into a specific narrative pattern such as the myth of the creation of the world, the origin of rice and tubers, the drought, the flood, the seven Thunder Brothers, the geographical metamorphosis of the hero Tambug and his wife Bihang. There are also shorter narratives relating the origin of birds, constellations, and certain human activities. Very few relate a social, religious, or cultural rule, except those prohibiting incest.

Palawan myths are rather concise and brief, for they aim to "inform," and the literary form of such a "teaching" is simple and straightforward. The opening formula "Once upon a time the ancestors said . . ." is not compulsory, and the conclusion is rather abrupt: "That's all, that is the end."

The audience is always interested and attentive, but relaxed. The narration of a myth helps to understand—in an implicit way—certain magico-religious practices, for mythological knowledge provides the highlanders with a peculiar world view that underlies specific rituals, and most particularly the shamanistic voyage.

In the Punang-Iraray area the term *arut* is used. Its semantic value is broader, for it refers to any narrative in a nonchanted form. In the Quezon area, the term *usul* is retained. It also means "tradition" and refers to any ancient knowledge.

In a society with a pure oral tradition, all narration is considered the teaching of an ancestor and is transmitted by collective memory. *Sudsugid* refers to fictional stories whose aim is to teach the people the Adat ("good manners") and the art of relating to one another in order to live harmoniously in this world. The narratives reveal human failures, mistakes, and misbehavior; they convey an implicit or explicit moral. While myths never end with a moral statement, tales educate in a playful and entertaining manner. Some of the storytellers are children, and this is the start of their public training.

The narrative can be brief or may last several nights. Many cunning and hilarious tales teach the people how to work, share, be happy in marriage, trade, cure, eat, and behave in this society according to its moral code based on *bagi* or sharing and tabang or mutual help. These include "Muddy Datu," "Porcupine," "Two Land Snails," "The Good and Bad Brother-in-law," "The Three Sons of Raja," "Sawragar, the Rich Merchant," "The Monkey and the Civet," "The Quail and the Owl," and "Scorpion Datu."

The vocal gesture reaches the boundary of speech and chant, and the narration flows in

a melodic curve with a periodic, repetitive, expected motion. The narrator shifts from a free intonation to a stylized, measured, and tonal quality. The Palawan believe that all narration is the teaching of an ancestor. From childhood, they are trained to tell stories.

Parallel to the narrative tradition in prose and spoken dialogue is a wealth of long, chanted narratives that relate the valorous deeds and ordeals of a hero. The chant builds up to a crisis, a flight, a conflict, a war and its resolution (restoration of harmony). It is a fresco, a mosaic of Palawan society that is depicted: nature, social institutions such as kinship, social organization, religious concepts and cosmogony, the history of manners and customs of a people with an oral tradition.

In the Palawan highlands, *tultul* or epics are chanted for various reasons: to honor a visitor; entertain the people on the eve of a wedding; thank the Master of Prey, si Lali, after a successful hunt in the forest; or appease the Master of Game whose animal has just been caught.

An epic is chanted only at night. The bard must stop with the first rays of the sun, as singing during the day is forbidden. Night is the time for the shamanistic voyage, ecstatic trance, and direct contact with the Invisibles.

The poet sings lying down, one arm folded over his face, while the other hand rests on his chest, holding a light blanket in place over his relaxed body. His melodic voice rises in the night, assimilated into the karuduwa, his double, the voyage of his soul. As a matter of fact, in Palawan culture, all balyan are bards and the ritual song of the shaman, the *lumbaga*, has a melodic line similar to the chant of an epic. It narrates the obstacles and ordeals that the shaman's soul has to overcome, its discussion with the Evil doer as it is surrounded by 1 to 7 *lapis*, the protective or accompanying souls, a transposition at the supernatural level of an epic fight.

Simultaneously, it is believed that a *tutultulan* or singer of tales is possessed by a Good doer of the forest or the median space who comes down and enters him. Hence, the person becomes a medium. As a matter of fact he/she is possessed by the epic heroes, the *kawasa* (Powerful Ones), who express themselves through the very voice of the singer.

In the highlands, the tultul is the most stark and moving expression of the performing arts. It is devoid of theatricality (no puppets, mimicry, acting, or dancing). The performer lies in the darkness of a house, and only his/her voice takes the audience to the confines of the world, where the visible and the invisible merge and become accessible to mankind through the work of the imagination, stimulated by a poetical form and a fabulous content. In the past the *babarak* or tiny ring flute provided musical accompaniment, but this practice declined in the 1970s. The flutist would lie down beside the singer and duplicate his melodic lines at a slight interval. But the audience would give feedback with *tubag*— spontaneous, brief comments, exclamations of wonder, or compassion for the heroic characters. It became more stylized in the

Punang area, where a chorus of men and women would periodically sing the name of the hero in a fixed melodic line.

The epic chant of the highlands represents the most sophisticated expression of this lyric art, for each character has a peculiar melodic line, in contrast to the other areas (Quezon and Punang), where the song is a repetitive monody.

The *kulilal* is a more recent form of expressing love in poems that are sung. The ancient form among the highlanders is *lantigi*.

The *karang* are stanzas of two, three, or four verses making up stanzas of two distichs. All the lines are characterized by a fixed heptasyllabic meter, rhymes, and assonances. The originality of these sung poems is due to the language itself as well as to themetrical form which regulates it— borrowings from neighboring languages: Palawan, Tagalog, Tausug, and Sama. In the end, a secret language develops and allows the lovers to exchange messages in a subtle and covert manner.

The poems are always chanted with a musical accompaniment, an art of *magibut* or playing together. The men play the kusyapi or lute, and the women the *pagang* or bamboo zither; the music is accompanied by an alternating song between a man and a woman, and the instruments are tuned to a hemitonic scale with seven pitches: *laplap kulilal* or kulilal touch. This scale conveys peculiar emotions, the smaller intervals of the kulilal scale being more appropriate to express love. There are duets, trios, or quartettes or sometimes even larger ensembles. The man points the neck of the lute towards the woman he secretly loves, the bamboo zither completing a triangle formed with two lutes, in the shadow of a kalang banwa or outdoors on moonlit nights. The pagang player follows the music of the lutes on which she has previously tuned her instrument. Any of the listeners can reply with a stanza, and thus unfold alternate songs which can develop into a joust and last the whole night. The sung poems do not tell of courting a young girl, for such courtship is very discreet in these valleys. The melodies are traditional but enriched by recent compositions.

These songs, whose composition is reminiscent of the *ambahan* of the Hanunoo, the *pintasan* of the Tausug, and the *pantun* of the Malays, speak of fleeting, hopeless or forbidden love, thwarted by separation, or even by punishment and death.

Passion is measured by numerous opposing poles, a microcosm of feelings shaping a kaleidoscope, whose shimmering lights turn around distant poles: love/death; fleetingness/constancy; elopement/retraction; invitation/rejection; pleasure/pain; desire/obstacles to desire; and possession/resistance.

Some songs are a communication within the context of a forbidden love:

kapal tumilatak
itut bulan sumilak

sapantun pandak-pandak

unuhun ku unuhun
hindi kita gunahun

mamaan lisak dalan
limpakan kung linduan
atay ku mangan-mangan

pikpik papikatan
silay tanduk lumisang
itut bulan sumimbang
bingayan gila dupang

dagat manilatak
babai pandak-pandak
pantun bulak-bulak

Far is the boat you ride on
The moon that shines
Pandak-pandak flower, you are small.

What shall I do, what shall I do?
I really do not want you!

Beside the bunga tree by the road
I planted a sign
My empty stomach makes noises.

Rat's ear grass, rat's ear grass
Her friends are known and famous
The moon that shines
Is driving me out of my mind.

The wave that fights the sea
Is like the short maiden
Is very much the pandak-pandak flower.

Performing Arts

The Palawan are a sound-oriented people. Hunting with a blowgun and living in such an environment intensify this receptivity, and stimulate an inclination towards language, poetry, and music. The Palawan lexicon is very rich in onomatopoeic word creations. And the people often imitate the soundscape—bird songs, the wind, insects, and rain. There is a musical scale reserved exclusively for the imitation of the sounds of nature, *laplap bagit* (bird touch or bird scale).

The two-stringed lute kusyapi, the biggest in the Philippines and probably of its type, has other shapes and names in Mindanao, other varieties in Sulawesi, and three

to six strings among the Kenyah and Kayan in east Kalimantan. In all these lutes, two musical elements are found in common—a melody played by one string and a drone sounded by one or more strings. Singing with accompaniment on the kusyapi is also practiced among the Palawan and the Tboli of Mindanao, although not in the majority of cultures in Mindanao.

The lute played in bagit music is small, consisting of two strings called *dalas* or *kawat*. *Saningan* (from *saning* or "the acute"), the melody string, has six frets on which six pitches may be produced, while the drone string *lambagan* (from *lambag* or "the low sound") has no frets, and produces only one sound, an ostinato. The parts of the instrument are designated by terms referring to the human body, more specifically to the man's body: *ulu*, the head; *dabdab*, the chest; *duru*, the breasts or frets; *utin*, the penis; *balibang*, the hips; and *ipus*, the tail on which the instrument rests on the ground or the floor of the house. The long neck is called *tawil*, and is linked to the resonance box, *ruwang*, by *talinga*, the ear. *Tanglab*, a lid underneath the box, is perforated with holes shaped into rectangles or stars.

The melody string rests on a bridge called *upu* or grandfather, which stands higher than the six frets of this lute. A sound obtained by plucking the ostinato string and the melody string without pressing gives the *tubag katan*, the very basis of tuning, the other pitches of the bagit scale. These pitches are determined by pressing on frets which are glued with *kalulut*, the beeswax, to their exact places on the melody string. The theory of the anhemitonic musical scale is not conveyed by the pitch names as in our system, but by the position of the fingers and the manner of playing, of touching the strings.

The pagang, the polychordal zither found in Palawan, is also played in the Moluccas, New Guinea, Borneo, Sumatra, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia. Malaysia, and Madagascar.

The little ring flute *babarak* has a scale distinct from that of *suling*, the banded flute which is used exclusively for the bird scale. The ring may be made of another bamboo tube, a leaf or a piece of rattan. The system of placement of stops is important, for the theory of making scales is based on this system. Ring flutes in Palawan, Mindanao, and other parts of Southeast Asia use one segment of a bamboo tube with a narrow bore. The segments may vary in length, but the system of placement of stops adapts to these lengths. Usually there are four plus one stops—three on one side of the tube, and one on the other side.

As observed by Jose Maceda, all ring flutes among the Palawan bore the first stop midway along the length of the tube. Theoretically, this stop represents the octave of the fundamental. However, in many instances, the sound is short of an octave, because the hole is bored not exactly at midlength, and a compensation must be calculated for the open end of the tube. Once the middle hole is bored, the distance of the other holes, which are usually three, is measured from this first hole by the width of two or three fingers, the palm of the hand or the circumferential length of

the tube. Any of these manners of measuring stops have been repeated from generation to generation, producing the desired intervals of tones in a descending scale, with about the fourth as the lowest interval, and the other two intervals between this fourth and the octave of the fundamental varying in accordance with the above-mentioned measurements from the middle stop (Maceda 1987).

Ring flutes of the Palawan and Mindanao groups are vertical, different from the horizontal ones found among the Tagbanua and Cuyunon of Palawan, as well as among the Hanunoo and Buhid of Mindoro.

A delicate percussion instrument of bamboo, *aruding*, the jew's harp, is known by different names in Mindanao, Sulu, Luzon, and parts of Malaysia, Indonesia, and continental Southeast Asia. This type of jew's harp is made of bamboo and is plucked with a finger, not pulled by a string as is the case in Java, Bali, and Lombok, while placed before the open mouth by the opposite hand. The sounds approximate the friction of a vine stirring in the wind, the buzzing of the hard outer wings of *linggawung*, the palm-weevil, or the cooing of doves. This instrument is played by men and often by women with repetitive rhythmic formulas, and has a tenuous, delicate sound.

Suspended gongs with a boss played in the Palawan highlands and the Punang area are an important example of music based on rhythm and color, distinct from the music of suspended gongs played in a row, *kulintang* or *kulintangan*, found on the western coast and islands south of Quezon, as well as in the Sulu archipelago. In the latter, the suspended gongs support the kulintang melody, while in the former the suspended gongs are freer to associate themselves with different instruments and to combine different rhythms. "Among the Palawan highlanders, two small suspended gongs, *sanang*, are combined with a drum, *gimbal*, that leads one, two or three big *agung*. In the neighboring island of Borneo, among the Kenyah groups, the Modang and Kayan, various types of suspended gongs also exist and provide other combinations" (Maceda 1987).

Jose Maceda (1987) has isolated some musical elements among the instruments played by the Palawan. First the very widespread use of the musical language of punctuation and repetition characterized by syncopation, alternation, permutation, colotomy, metricity, and hierarchy may have had its origins in the simplest suspended gongs as found in Palawan music. Second, a repetition of tones is manifest mainly in the agung, gimbal, and sanang of the gong ensemble; in the drone of the two-string kusyapi; and the jew's harp aruding. All these instruments repeat their tones successively, and common to these repetitions is a metricity or regularity of beats on which music is based. Within this metricity, rhythmic phrases often characterize the music. Third, Palawan music scales serve specific social functions and are related to dual-scales in Asia. The two-string lute tuned to the pentatonic scale without half-steps of the bagit scale is used exclusively for a music related to nature and the environment, while the pentatonic scale with half-steps, on the kulilal scale, is the vehicle for expressing love sentiments.

As the comparative studies of Maceda show, musical practice among the Palawan is related to that of their neighbors, the Tagbanua; also, the music of these two peoples may be generally related to the music of other communities in Mindanao where similar instruments are found.

Among the performing arts, dance and theater are diversely emphasized in Palawan culture. Here a clear distinction must be made between the highland culture and that of the Punang-Iraray area on the eastern coast.

In a traditional culture such as this, theater and religion are linked. Since the 19th century, anthropologists and philosophers have shown the religious origin of theater, and Palawan culture is a revealing example of it. In the highlands, where cosmology is more complex and is related to a set of myths explaining the vertical levels of the universe, the ritual of shamanistic voyage takes place. As the shaman's soul travels, he/she chants this voyage to the upper and underground worlds, encounters diwata and saytan in order to bring back the soul of a patient.

During the Tamway at Ampu at Paray or the Commemoration of the Master of Rice, the balyan, accompanied by an acolyte, enters into a trance as they taste the fermented juice of the celestial jar. This moment, intense and dramatic, is marked by a physical imbalance. The body of the acolyte shakes in what is believed to be a state of blindness, deafness, sleep, unconsciousness, and temporary death, an ecstatic state manifested by convulsions and closed eyes, followed by exhaustion as the performer lies on the floor. Trance is experienced as a state of drunkenness, followed by catalepsy and return to normality. It is exemplified by *Kudaman*, the epic chant that also shows the *tarak* or dance of women, who express their joy and fun during the ritual by rhythmically stamping hard on the bamboo floor. This is matched by the basal or gong orchestra, made up of 1 drum, 2 or 3 big gongs with a boss, and 1 pair of small ringed gongs with a boss played exclusively by men.

As counterpoint, the ritual dances of women in the Punang area accompany the *sinsin* and *budlung* cyclical ceremonies, the giving of *ex-votos* or thanksgiving towards the many diwata who cure a girl of a disease. The sinsin ritual cycle develops over six years (five ceremonies in the first year, followed by one every year for five years) and the girl performer, surrounded by the women's community, has to manifest the presence of 31 diwata.

The *ugang*, old priestesses who accomplished the ritual as teenagers and young women, train their daughters and nieces in this ritualistic tradition. The choreography is very stylized and repetitive. The young women have to memorize many chants with an archaic formula and esoteric vocabulary. They also have to learn a complex sequence of steps, motions, a hairstyle, attributes to complement their attire with precise colors, pieces of cloth, and ways to wrap and tie them (C. Macdonald 1990).

Here the deity is manifested by the whole ritual performance. In this long pantomime

the society projects all its aesthetic imagination and creativity.

A similar attempt is exemplified by the oniric ritual performances. These feature music (37 melodies on the violin with accompaniment on the lute), dance (37 dance steps), players, costumes, and choreography for the community of men and women who are together but have their respective lines; the performance takes place in the cleared space near the house of the man conducting the ritual. It is preceded in the afternoon by the offering of a raft carrying rice and chicks to the Tulak bala, the Diwata of the Sea in order to chase away disease. Brought to the shore by the whole community of men and women in full attire and coming in procession while the tide is low, the ritual leader calls the deities of the sea and offers them not only the food but also the beauty of the music and the choreography performed by the community (C. Macdonald et al. 1983). The ritual is observed, inspired by oniric revelations, with the leader hoping to acquire knowledge of medicinal plants and healing techniques. • N. Revel-Macdonald

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