

## NOTES FROM MIARAYON

Fr. Camilo P. Balansag, S.J.

In the old traditional spirit, a Jesuit is expendable, a shock trooper, a light cavalry man, a trail blazer, who would go anywhere in the world for A.M.D.G. (*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*). That was the vision of Ignacio de Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus. With that vision I volunteered to start a parish in Miarayon.

In my first sermon in the unfinished chapel, I told the people present, "I am here because I volunteered to devote the remaining years of my life to serve you. I know your life here is hard because there is no road. You have been neglected by the government and even by the authorities of the Church also, but not any more. I have come here to share your life and hardships." A woman interrupted me and said, "Father, if you die, I hope you would be buried here." I replied, "I just arrived yesterday, you are already thinking of burying me; we don't have a Catholic cemetery yet." The people laughed. Then, I continued, "It is a tradition in the Society Of Jesus from the time of our founder, St. Ignatius of Loyola, that education is important, so one of my projects is to open a High School, which you need, but do not have."

Starting a parish from scratch is beset with many difficulties, especially in Miarayon. The biggest drawback is the lack of a road accessible by vehicle in the last 13 kilometers from Paganan. I had to build a convento in Miarayon with an allocation of ₱25,000.00.

The first problem I had to solve was logistics, to bring supplies of all sorts to Miarayon. Since no motored vehicle could go there, we had to use pack animals. To have a place where the Toyota land cruiser would be safe while I am up in Miarayon and to store up supplies, I built in Masimag, a logistics station, a multi-purpose building which could serve as chapel, garage, bodega, and sleeping quarters.

My problems were physical, financial, and psychological. The physical consisted in the hard knocks I had to put up with on the trail either on foot or mounted on a bull or carabao. Up in Miarayon, because the small house I bought for ₱2,000 was neither wind nor water proof, the nights were cold, especially towards midnight, where moisture on the low G.I. roof would condense in the early morning and drip. When it rained, the roof leaked in several places. As Fr. Raviolo, the local superior of Bukidnon remarked, "A house that costs only ₱2,000.00 should leak."

\* Fr. Camilo P. Balansag, S.J., is a native of Tandag, Surigao del Sur. As a Jesuit missionary he was assigned to different places in Bukidnon between the years 1951 and 1979. His last parish was in Miarayon, deep in the highlands of this province. Now in retirement at the Loyola House at Ateneo de Davao University, Fr. Balansag has written reminiscences of his years in Miarayon, whose little-known inhabitants had been his parishioners and friends.

My most pressing problem was financial. My parish was still in the organization stage. The people were well disposed, it seemed, but in general, they were illiterate and poor. My only source for my sustenance and the Toyota land cruiser maintenance was ₱500.00 monthly subsidy from the Province. The Toyota ate up most of this amount leaving me very little for my expenses on food, medicine, postage, periodicals, and such expenses as bull rent and pack animal fees for cargoes when I went to and from Miarayon. For food supplies, I limited myself to driedfish, *bulad* and *ginamus*, and I mixed rice and corngrit 50-50. I could not afford to take along with me canned goods to Miarayon because their prices in Cagayan de Oro City had skyrocketed.

Building a house for the parish in Miarayon was not as easy as building a house in Malaybalay. I ordered the lumber needed in Miarayon, but the G.I. roofing, cement and hardware must come from Cagayan de Oro City. This was a big problem. Building materials coming from Cagayan de Oro City must be hauled 86 kilometers partly by vehicular transportation and 16 kilometers by animal packs. The cost for transporting by carabao of one G.I. sheet is ₱3.00; for smaller cargoes, ₱0.30 per kilo. Another problem plaguing me was psychological, I was worried that my building fund would soon run out. So I asked for another ₱10,000.00 added subsidy. When I got that I was able to go ahead with the construction of the house.



### The Story of Miarayon

Miarayon was given its name by Don Manuel Fortich, the first appointed governor of the Province of Bukidnon under the Americans. It was named Miarayon from the Miaray plant, an orange-like tree. So Miarayon is the place where the Miaray tree grows. The present site of barrio Miarayon was started after the war. In the old barrio site a battle between the Japanese soldiers and the guerillas took place, during which many casualties were sustained by both sides. According to the belief of the Bukidnons, a place where many people died



is a haunted place, and a place of bad luck. That place must be abandoned. Many barrios in the Miarayon area were abandoned and relocated because of violent experiences. This is also the reason why Miarayon was transferred to its present site.

### A Rebellion

Paganan, a sitio of barrio Tagbak, Talakag is at the end of the road on the way to Miarayon. It would have been an ideal resting station for travellers to Miarayon, which is 13 kilometers from Paganan; but it was now a ghost sitio with empty houses and a spooky atmosphere. The empty houses were burned some months ago. Nobody knows who put the ghost houses to the torch.

While I was passing through Paganan with the owner of the carabao I hired, the man pointed out to me the sites of the stores, bodegas, and houses that had stood on this place where a "rebellion" had taken place. The carabao owner pointed out to me the position taken by the rebels armed only with home-made shot guns (*paltik* or *palintud*) and bolos. They dared to confront the soldiers who had armalites and other high-powered guns because they naively trusted in the magic power of the bottles of oil tied around their waists, which would make them impervious to bullets. The rebels with all their oils were no match against the well-armed soldiers. Nobody counted the casualties among the rebels. All the carabao owner could say was "*daghan*" meaning many. There were no known casualties among the soldiers. The encounter was decidedly a one-sided affair.

Paganan is now deserted. The *kevek* clearings where houses once stood were still visible, and partly burned timbers, which were once part of the humble dwellings of the rebels were strewn here and there along the road. Someday the grass will claim the clearings for its own, and the partly burned timbers will become firewood for somebody's native hearth (*abohan*). Then all vestiges of sitio Paganan will disappear, but it will go down in the annals of Miarayon as the scene of the first face-to-face armed encounter between the rebels and the armed forces of the martial law government of Mr. Ferdinand Marcos.

### Potatoes, Apples and Garlic

The story of the potato was related to this writer by Mr. Romualdo Ciervo. In the early days, the Public Schools were under the supervision of the Americans. The American supervisors would visit even the barrio schools. Mr. Romualdo Ciervo, an Ilocano, was the teacher in the barrio school of Miarayon. He used to buy potatoes for the Americans when they come to visit Miarayon. When the Americans left, there were some potatoes left. The natives had no

<sup>1</sup> Before the house was finished, the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception, came to Miarayon and I gave the house to them.

taste for potatoes as yet, they preferred camote. The problem was what to do with the potatoes that the Americans had not consumed. Even the pigs would have nothing to do with them. So the school teacher planted them in the school garden. For every piece of potato planted, the average yield is ten pieces. It was found out that the high altitude, 5000 ft. and the still fertile soil was ideal for cultivating the tuber. In no time Miarayon became a potato land. Potatoes from Miarayon found their way to Cebu, Iloilo, Iligan, Cagayan de Oro, and Davao City, and even to Tandag when I went there for a visit.

During the war against Japan, Lt. Dorado of the P.C. who was assigned in Miarayon told me that a caravan of carabaos would rendezvous with a submarine coming from Australia loaded with arms somewhere in Lugait, Misamis Oriental. On its return voyage to Australia the submarine would be loaded with potatoes from Miarayon.

Apples also grew in Miarayon. Around the house I bought, there are three old apple trees, one of which still bears fruit. In the orchard of the school teacher, Mr. Labadan, there are ten apple trees planted in a row. They bear fruit, and Mrs. Labadan used to give away some of the fruits. I even went down to Cagayan de Oro City, to the Radio Station DXCC with a couple of ripe apples still in the branches with leaves to show to Fil Evoran, who was broadcasting at the time, that apples do grow in the Philippines.

Many more crops thrive better in Miarayon than in many other regions, but the main drawback is the lack of adequate means of transportation. The average size of the cabbage in Miarayon is as big as a man's head, a big head at that. The best variety of coffee, *Arabica*, is the coffee I have seen in Miarayon. Garlic (*ajos*) also grows very well here, better than in any other place in Bukidnon.



### The Agents of Magic Oils

Two men came to Miarayon: one from San Fernando, Bukidnon; the other from Cawayan, Lantapan, Bukidnon. The man from San Fernando was boasting that he was the Secret Agent of Pres. Marcos, and that he belonged to the "Lost Command," whatever that means. He was sporting a bayonet. Some said that the man was selling rings at P 15.00 each, and those who submitted to his medical treatment paid him P 15.00 more. He was also peddling magic oil at an undisclosed price.

The P.C. commander got wind of the presence of the two men in Miarayon. He dispatched three soldiers to arrest them, and they were brought to Tikala-an, the headquarters of the P.C. detachment. According to the P.C. commander, the man from San Fernando claimed that he had been to Miarayon thrice, and had recruited thirty followers and sold one hundred bottles of magic oils.

On the night of February 10th, the three P.C. guards of the two men became drunk and fell asleep. The prisoners lost no time in taking to their heels. But alas, they were captured again in Cawayan, in the house of the other man by the Barrio Captain and his home defense force. Eyewitnesses say that the prisoners were butted by the P.C. in the feet, in the knees, and in shoulders. One of the soldiers got the bayonet the man from San Fernando was carrying and with the point of the bayonet cut a cross on the man's forehead. Then the men hiked with their captors 24 kilometers from Miarayon to Tikala-an.



### The Rivers of Miarayon

Taking the Church property as the point of reference, in the west is Kitanglad mountain and in the south is Kalatungan mountain. The heads of the Manupali, Muleta, O-ota and Linabo rivers lie on the top of Kalatungan mountain. The Manupali flows eastward cutting a chasm through the Kalatungan mountain until it meets the rushing waters of Timago river at Basak, Lantapan. From here it leaves the Kalatungan mountain, but it continues its course eastward dividing the municipality of Valencia and Lantapan. At Bancud the flow of water heads southwards until it joins the waters of the Pulangi to Omonay in Cotabato. Muleta also has its head in Kalatungan, but the direction of the flow of the current is southward. It passes through Pangatukan, Maramag, Kitao-tao, and Kibawi until it joins the Pulagi in Omonay and on to Cotabato.

O-ota is a small river that joins the Manupali right up in the mountain. Linabo is also small but flows westward down the mountains to the Mambo-aw river. Mambo-aw is a tributary of Taludtud canyon (Cagayan river). Another river four kilometers south of barrio Miarayon flowing westward until Taludtud canyon is Sagayon river. Many deep canyons originate in the mountain of Kitanglad which is about two kilometers from barrio Miarayon. These are all deep canyons but Taludtud is the deepest of them all. All the waters that originate from Kitanglad mountain in these parts, flow southward until they all join the Cagayan river.

### The Odyssey of Dr. Kikuchi

On August 27, 1978 Fr. Rafael Borromeo, S.J. of Xavier University introduced me to Fr. Leo Bryne, S.J. from Sofia University in Tokyo, Japan who was visiting Xavier University at that time. I told Fr. Bryne about my new parish in Miarayon, Talakag, Bukidnon, and showed him some colored pictures of the natives there. Since he was interested to know more about the tribes, we sat down on a wooden bench on the covered walk between the buildings to talk. Just then a Japanese couple coming out of the University museum approached us. Fr. Bryne introduced them as his former students at Sofia University. They were Mr. and Mrs. Louis Kikuchi. Louis is a Catholic, but his wife is not. Fr. Bryne told Mr. Kikuchi about my work among the Tala-andigs in Miarayon. I showed Dr. Kikuchi colored pictures of the Tala-andigs in their colorful native costumes. Being a social anthropologist, he expressed the desire to visit Miarayon.

To brief him further on the Tala-andigs I brought him, together with his wife, daughter, and Fr. Bryne, to the Panamin main office in Cagayan de Oro City. There we met the Supreme Datu of Miarayon, Datu Patroceno Eniceto (Datu Laglaran). I told the datu of the desire of Dr. Kikuchi to visit Miarayon and suggested that the best time would be the Tala-andig festival on October 12, 1978. So Dr. Kikuchi and I agreed that we would leave Cagayan de Oro city on October 10 to attend the Tala-andig festival on the 11th and return to Cagayan de Oro city on the 12th.

Early in the morning of October 10th we left for Masimag, the village which serves as a take off point for those bound for Miarayon. That day was very windy, but there was no rain. So it was an ideal weather for the five-hour hike to Miarayon. We reached Masimag ahead of the *Cargadores* porters for Miarayon. When they arrived we had lunch first before starting for it was already noon. The *cargadores* ate rice and sausages, while Dr. Kikuchi and I had bread, cheez whiz, and Milo. A little before noon we were on the move. After an hour of hiking, a bee passing by stung Dr. Kikuchi just below the right ear. We stopped and let a little blood out where the sting was and applied anti-insect bite ointment. I remarked, "the bee welcomes you to Miarayon."

When we reached the muddy parts of the trail, Dr. Kikuchi's white tennis shoes were no longer white. As an anthropologist working in the Philippines he had done a lot of hiking in Mindoro, Palawan, Zambales, Infanta, Quezon, and the Mt. Province. Now, he was on the muddy trail to Miarayon. After three hours of hiking, he remarked that we should have brought some softdrinks with us. I replied that I was intending to take along some cans of pineapple juice, but I forgot. Instead of softdrinks, I decided that Milo, bread, and cheez whiz would do just as well.

When we reached Donga-on we stopped at a house, where I and some companions spent the night the August before, to ask for hot water. We rested there for half an hour while we were taking our snack. I gave the *cargadores* some Milo too, but for their snack they drank Tanduay rum instead of Milo. We arrived in Miarayon fifteen minutes past six in the evening. Supper was ready in a short while.

At supper, a dish of gabi leaves was served. When Dr. Kikuchi took some of it, he remarked, "Very good!" but after a while he tickled his throat and said, "It is a little . . . itchy." I took some myself and found out that it was so. I pushed it aside and attended to the other dishes that were not itchy.

I asked Dr. Kikuchi how he felt after the long hike through the muddy trail. He said, he felt as if he had played tennis for two hours. In the house I bought, I occupied a room two and a half feet long and seven and a half feet wide. When I thought that it was time to rest for the night, I told Dr. Kikuchi to sleep on the only bed in the house. He asked me, "Where would you sleep?" I said, "Here in this room where we ate." He demonstrated saying, "I am an anthropologist, I can sleep anywhere." I told him that it is a Filipino custom to give the best to a guest.

That day should have been the Tala-andig festival as enjoined by Mr. Marcos to Miarayon Datus in Malacanang when they were given amnesty for their rebellion in 1975. However, we were informed upon our arrival in Masimag that the festival would be on the 14th and 15th of October that year. So Dr. Kikuchi spent the day taking pictures, and he managed to interview some people. We tried to contact the chief Datu Masicampo, but he was on the farm.

I went to sleep on the night of the 11th with the hope that there would be no rain during the night for on the morrow we would take the long trail down to Masimag. Some time during the night I heard the pattering of rain on the roof. The trail will be slippery tomorrow, I thought. Getting up early at dawn I was glad to see that the sky was clear, and there was no sign that it would rain. Hurriedly, I stuffed what I would bring down into my duffel bags. Then we

fortified ourselves with sandwiches and coffee. We mounted the carabaos and off we went. The trail was muddy as usual, but the carabaos were equal to the task. We reached Masimag before noon. When I saw the Toyota land cruiser, I really felt glad.

We loaded our baggage into the Toyota as quickly as possible because we were in a hurry to reach Cagayan de Oro for Dr. Kikuchi wanted to proceed to Butuan. When I started the engine the battery was very weak. The men gave it a push, and the engine came to life, but it died soon. We pushed again; the engine roared. I thought everything would be fine from then on. We drove away waving to those left behind. About a kilometer or two the Toyota bounced, got stuck in the mud, and the engine died.

I tried to start the engine again, but the response of the starter was clunk! No more. I got off to size up the situation. The wheels were buried in the mud; the ground behind was elevated. The two of us tried to give it a push. It would not budge at all. We were stuck in an isolated place with no house nearby and no one in sight. It was 12:30 p.m. I decided to walk to the nearest cluster of houses to a place called Gahiton three kilometers down the road to ask for assistance. After walking for about 30 minutes I met two boys, each one with a sack of betel nuts on his head. I asked in Binukid, if they were strong enough to help us push the Toyota. The boy ahead answered, "No." But they had two companions following behind who could help. I gave the boys some crackers, and I walked back with them to the Toyota.

When the two men arrived we were able to extricate the Toyota from the mud and start the engine, but only for a short time. The main trouble, it seemed was that the gas would not go up to feed the carburator. I decided to leave the Toyota behind, hire a man to watch it, and walk to Tikalaan, 10 kilometers away. (I paid the man who was supposed to guard the Toyota, but he didn't). Some of the potatoes were stolen from the Toyota.

As luck would have it, a man and a boy came driving a carabao slightly loaded. We piled up our baggage up on the carabao, and we walked behind non-chalantly. The party was travelling only up to Gahiton. We were told that Tikala-an was still six kilometers from there. When our packs were unloaded from the carabao we sat down to rest. I asked one of the men present if there was a carabao we could hire up to Tikala-an. He replied, that they were sending two young men to help us carry our packs. "*Ay salamat kaayo!*" (Thanks a lot) When the young men showed up we resumed walk. At first I could keep up with Dr. Kikuchi, but after a while I was left behind. He was 39 years old, I was 64 at that time. He complimented me for being a good walker. It was harder to walk with rubber boots on than tennis shoes. He did not notice the pains in the joints of my knees and in the soles of my feet.

When we arrived in Tikala-an we went to the PC check point to tell the soldiers we wanted to take a ride in a logging truck going down to Cagayan de Oro City. In a short while, a truck loaded with logs arrived. We boarded it at 5:30 p.m. and after a pleasant trip in the evening we were in Cagayan de Oro City. We got off at Carmen, and took a PU car to Xavier University. From there Dr. Kikuchi went to his hotel, while I remained at Xavier because in the next morning I would have to look for a service car and a mechanic to go to Masimag to recover the Toyota.

### The Bukidnon

My short sojourn in Miarayon was very pleasant because of the exhilarating climate and charming people. I learned to speak the language well enough to be able to write a conversation Binukid and to translate the Visayan catechism into Binukid. During my years of living among this mountain tribe, I learned much about their manner of life, i.e. about their culture.

The Bukidnon tribe in Miarayon call themselves by that name. They were given that name by the Maranaos (natives of Lanao) because when the Maranaos visited them, they noticed that these people built their shelters against the tree and moved the roof against the wind and rain while they leaned against the tree. So the Maranaos called them Tala-andig (tree leaners).

It seems that they were not the original inhabitants of the plateau of what is now called Bukidnon. *Bukid* in Visayan means mountain, a mountain dweller is called *tagabukid* or *bukidnon*. Some theorized that the so-called Bukidnons were formerly occupying the sea coast of what is now called Misamis Oriental and the island of Camiguin. There are words that have Binukid significations, *salay* (necklace), *gusa* (noise) *kagayhaan*. Some residents in Talisayan, Kinogitan, and Initao towns in Misamis Oriental can trace their ancestry in Bukidnon. In the island of Camiguin, those who are native of the place speak a dialect very similar to the one spoken in Bukidnon. In the Bukidnon folk epic, where Agio is the hero of the narrative, the Bukidnons sing about Kalambagohan (Cagayan de Oro) and Aroman (Cotabato) as their ancestral home.

The Visayan migrants drove the Bukidnons away from the sea coasts, and the Maguindanaos from Cotabato in the south pushed them to central Mindanao. This explains why the Bukidnons are now occupying the plateau of Bukidnon province. During the war against Japan, an American bomber crashed in Kitanglad mountain in the center of Bukidnon. American soldiers ascended the mountain to investigate the crash. They went up with an altimeter instrument and measured the altitude of the highest peak of the mountain. They discovered that the highest peak in Mindanao is not Mt. Apo, but Mt. Kitanglad. Since this was a private survey it was not published. I learned this from Fr. Edward Haggerty, S.J., who was then Rector of Xavier University, who spoke with the American G.I.'s who went up to the crash site.

The Bukidnons have light brown skin, straight black hair, and an average height of about five feet. The nose bridge is not flat, and their eyes are set close to each other. They are reserved, respectful, and shy. They are excellent balladeers, chanters and singers. They observe word of honor based on their *bansa* (*amor proprio*).

In most cases, men wear their hair long. Oftentimes the length reaches below the ear. This long hair is kept in place by a head band. Among the women the favorite hairdo is one with *sabong-sabong* or *tinamban* (bangs) at the forehead. The rest of the hair is neatly notted at the back of the head.



Clothes and Personal Adornment

The people of Bukidnon regardless of tribe can not be found naked. They are modest. Their dresses and shirts are generally called *pinaksoy*. Pants are called *saol*. Mats are *ikam*, bags are *kamuyot*. A kerchief is worn as turban and known as *palikat* for ordinary use and *tangkulo* for the *bagani* and *datu*. The traditional Bukidnon clothes for women are made up of a billowy skirt with patchwork of red and white triangles at the hemline, and red and white stripes running vertically from waist downward against a background of black, or in a few instances, navy blue. Sometimes the skirts are made of authentic *batik* or printed cotton.

In places with higher degree of religious acculturation, the blouse has bell-shaped sleeves with patchwork in triangular designs or red and white cloth placed from the shoulder to the elbow. Beside the triangular patches are red and white stripes sewn down from the shoulder to the elbow. The blouse is short. In some places, the young women at times leave their midriff bare, but not the elderly ones who wear chemise to cover it.

Traditionally, the men wear tight-fitting pants in bright red and white stripes. Those who are recognized as brave (Baganis) and have proven their prowess and skill in the art of *paghusay* wear the *tangkulo*, a symbol of authority. Men and women wear embroidered (*sinulaman*) belts called *bagkus* around their waist. The recognized braves among them wear the *talian* (brave man's belt

loaded with amulets). Men wear either a turban or a band around their head. The band can be made of cloth, rattan or vine. It serves to keep their long hair in place.

### Dwellings

The typical Bukidnon house differs from region to region. The houses in the mountains are different from the houses in the lowlands because of availability of materials. Usually the house in the mountain is a one-room affair. The walls and floor are made of bark. The roofing is made of rattan leaves called *kutos*. The stove is made of a low platform framed by four round timbers secured together with rattan. This structure is filled with soil, and on it the fire is built. Its place is a corner of the house. Next to it the inhabitants eat and sleep to keep themselves warm.

The typical lowlanders' house is usually made of bamboo and roofed with *kugon* grass. This is usually a three-room affair. One room is the *sulod* (bedroom) and another the *lawang* (living room). An extension called *sibay* is a kitchen. The lowlanders' stove is made like that of the highlanders', only it has posts and is elevated from the floor. They call this *atang*. Both lowlanders and highlanders have tree houses *batangan*. The post of this house is a living tree. These houses are high to avoid *magahats* from spearing the sleeping occupants, but it is dangerous during storms.

In the hinterlands, like the Kalabugao area, they prohibit the use of anything made by outsiders for they believe that the use of things made by "intruders" will cause diseases and bad crops because of the anger of their guardian spirits (*tumanod*). The product of technology which they appreciate very much and is widely used and found in almost every Manobo or Bukidnon home is the transistorized radio. They love the thing and keep it as their prized possession for it is their only contact with the outside world.

### Food, Drink, and Kitchen Utensils

The dietary staples are rice, corn, and camote through the year. After harvest time some rice is kept for religious ceremonies. These people cook their food. They never eat anything raw. The special dishes are the *linotlut* (cooked compressed inside a bamboo node) and the *binenganan* (cooked wrapped with thick banana leaf). Their kitchen utensils are wooden ladle called *luwag*; grid-iron called *sugba-anan*; and the *caldero*. Their drinking cups are called *ba-ong*; the container for fetching water is called *sakura* (bamboo tube).

The Bukidnons have an indigenous fermentation agent called *tapay* which is made from rice flour, ginger, and pepper. The other native drinks are: the *pangasi* made from rice placed in Chinese jars; the *langkega*, from fermented ground corn meal; and *kalugmanis* made of fermented rice pudding which is often eaten after 3 days of fermentation. This is very sweet and pungent with a piquant taste and is highly intoxicating. Oftentimes this is converted into wine.

The natural juice of these three preparations is generally called *lihing*. This has a sweet taste, is very delicious but also highly intoxicating. The *intus*, a ladies' drink also fermented with *tapay* and is made from sugar cane juice.

Other stimulants are betel nuts (the *mama*) which include tobacco, *piper betel* leaf (*buyo* or *oreca* leaf) and a dash of lime. Non-alcoholic drinks are boiled ginger (*ginaga ha luy-a*) and coffee (*burat*, black and boiled with sugar). As for their source of livelihood, they make a living by slash-and-burn (swidden) agriculture. They do occasional group fishing and hunting and also seasonal honey gathering.

The Bukidnon family is extended. It takes into its fold uncles, aunts, grandparents, and cousins. The Bukidnon male practices polygamy, and he is allowed to take more than one wife if his finances will allow it and of course with the consent of the senior wife. When Dr. Louis Kikuchi went with the writer to Miarayon some women were interviewed. A woman, Mrs. Luisa Ciervo, was asked by Dr. Kikuchi if polygamy was practiced by the Bukidnons. She said yes, but it is considered immoral for one woman to have many husbands.

The Bukidnons trace their kinship bilaterally. The consanguineous relations of both father and mother are highly esteemed as *suled* (brothers or relatives). They usually live in matrimonial communities but the acknowledged head is the father who lives among his wife's kinsmen.

### Kinship Terminology:

Father	— <i>amay</i>
Mother	— <i>inay</i>
Brother	— <i>igma-ama</i> or <i>suled ha ma-anu</i>
Sister	— <i>igbahi</i> , <i>atubay</i> , <i>suled ha bahi</i>
Son-in-law	— <i>lagawas</i>
Daughter-in-law	— <i>lagumbay</i>
Brother-in-law	— <i>gati</i>
Sister-in-law	— <i>eya</i> (to sister-in-law) <i>hipag</i> (to brother-in-law)

### Social Stratification

#### First stratum:

*Datu* — or the ruling class, exercising preferential marriage and the arbiters.

#### 2nd stratum:

- a *Baylan* — Shamans have direct contact with spirits.
- b *Talambuhat* — ordinary priest who officiates at rites.
- c *War leader* — who avenges a right that is trampled upon or avenges a wrong.
- d *Sulohane* — a medicine man

## 3rd stratum:

*Oga-op or Sakop* – who follow the Datu's decisions and practice preferential marriage.

## 4th or Lowest stratum:

*Ulipon or Magdul* – only captives are considered slaves.

One shares with those who need it. One gives his property to save a relative or a friend from embarrassment and hunger. Property is acquired by barter, purchase, or receiving a giveaway. Inheritance is divided among immediate siblings, or if there is none, among the nearest consanguinous relatives. Property boundaries are land and water like rivers, hills and mountains.

## Religious Organization, Beliefs and Practices

The Bukidnon religion is animistic. They believe in one supreme god called *Magbabaya* with demigods under him doing specific jobs or specific things. *Ibasok* is goddess of the farmers; *Bulalakaw*, goddess of the waters; and *Alimungkat*, goddess of the sea. There are guardians called *Tumanod*; the other demi-spirits are *Dumalongons* and the *Ti-um*. The Bukidnon cosmology imagines that there are seven layers of heaven and that the earth and the heavens are hanging suspended on the wings of a big hawk called *kambanogabanega* and that the lower floor joints of the earth are made of *bakusan* (pythons). When these pythons move they cause earthquakes. *Intembangol* is the keeper of the underworld and is also known as *Tumpas manapiyaw*. The Bukidnons have priests called *Talambuhat* or *Mamumuhat* and the highest priests are known as *Baylan* because they can go into a trance and can communicate with the spirits. The highest religious leader is the *Baylan* because he is the community oracle. He can pacify spirits, and at the same time he is also a medicine man. He is a doctor, priest, and judge all rolled into one

## Customs and Traditions

The Bukidnons educate their children with love and actual demonstration of affection. They very seldom use the rod. They give their children what they want, and in return, the children obey them in an unquestioning way. Formal learning of songs, chants and prayers is called *pani-ib* and a fee is asked and given. Child toilet training is as follows: the child is made to sit on the stretched legs of the mother; as soon as the child learns to move its bowels by sitting down, then a hole on the floor is made for him; when the child is old enough to walk, he is told to hide behind the bushes.

Diseases are incurred from angry spirits, one of which is called *agkagaba-an* (punishment).

Few Bukidnons can afford modern medicine but they have effective folk

## methods of birth control:

<i>Paunda</i>	– complete sterility
<i>Pabata</i>	– fertility
<i>Palihang</i>	– spacing
<i>Patat-og</i>	– aphrodisiac

Birth is welcome for a child is another addition to manpower, and if a girl, then another potential source of wealth because of the bride price. Courtship and marriage are brought about by parental arrangement. They marry at the age of 11 years and up. Men are allowed to have as many wives as they can afford. Marriage is done by exchanging betel nut or rice.

Death to the Bukidnons is a very sad thing. Just as it is for other people. Their oral literature speaks of death as lonely. "*Aleyan kawiliyan*" (upstream of lonely death), and "*He baya kabalingay-ngayon*" (of death so lonesome). The people believe that a person has a *gimukod* (soul) who leaves the body after death and goes to "*gumogunal*," the keeper of souls in Balatukan, a mountain in the hills of Balingasay, Misamis Oriental.

Before the soul can reach Balatukan it has to pass several places: the *pulalan* where the *pulala* play their flute; the *sayawan* dancers will dance their special dance and the last is the *panigbasa*. There are two conflicting theories about the *panigbasa*. Some informants say that it is a limestone in the river of Aleyan, soft enough for cutting. Others say that the *panigbasa* is a tree. Somehow the purpose is the same for records purposes so that every soul may leave its imprint on it with the use of a bolo or its finger nail. This is done as a registration process for the admittance of Balatukan where *Gumogunal* reigns among the souls.

The dead man's personal belongings like bolos, unfinished woven artifacts and spears are buried with him. If a person is a *bagani* (heroic warrior) his spears are buried with him because he will present these things when he goes home to *Gumogunal*. There are two conflicting theories of the soul. Informants say the soul goes home to the place where his *tumanod* lives after death, so that if his *tumanod* lives in a cave his soul would be there too; or in the rocks, hills, or source of springs, the soul would be there depending on the abode of his *tumanod*. The other theory is that *Gumogunal* is in Balatukan. Both schools of thought agree that man has a soul who leaves the body when death occurs.

Mourning the dead varies according to the age of the deceased. For an old person, the period of *kagmalolong* (mourning) is seven days, for a young child three days only, and for people between these extremes the number of days will depend on the family tradition. During the *kagmalolong* all handicraft-making is suspended. No weaving of any kind is done. No musical instruments are played. Nobody sings a *limbay* or *idangdang*. No hunting and planting are done. You will know when the *kagmalolong* is over for you can hear somebody singing a *limbay* or playing any musical instrument; when a sister, brother, husband or wife sings for the first time after the death of his/her loved one he/she says a *pamara* (permission) to the soul of the departed that he should not be sad because he/she sings.

When a Bukidnon dies the cadaver is bathed by the surviving relatives. The corpse is thoroughly washed with soap and water after which his clothes are

changed. They would let the body lie to rest for one night; that is called the *lantang*. The site of burial is either at his *onayan* or in his *lama* (yard). They bury the dead with his *bolo*, then they build a fire just like the other tribes do. They do not welcome visitors for a few days. After the third day they do the *kag-hukong*, all the members of the family go to the river to take a bath and wash themselves and almost all their clothes. When they return from the river they sweep the house clean, beat the walls noisily so as to drive evil spirits away. Afterwards, they would abandon the house for it has bad luck in it. Usually they abandon the house for it has bad luck because somebody died in it.

### Music and Literature

The Bukidnon folk music are instrumental, songs, and chants. Their musical instruments are the *pulala*, a long bamboo flute with four holes; the *kulaing* or *kabing* (bamboo harp); the *yayang*, a short bamboo flute with five holes; the *dayuray* or *tayuday*, a one-stringed violin with snake skin cover; the *saluray*, a bamboo with four strings; and the *kutyapi* or *kudyapi*, a boatshaped guitar. Their songs and chants are also their oral folk literature. These are either sung or chanted. They are also recited so that when they are sung you can call them songs, when chanted they are chants, and when recited in *mantakaw* (prose) they become oral literature.

The names of the Bukidnon oral literature are the following:

- Olaging* – folk epic, e.g. the epic of Agio (in many versions)
- Limbay* – lyric poetry
- Idangdang* – ballads
- Sala* – love songs
- Kaliga-on* – religious songs
- Bayok-bayok* – verses
- Antoka* – riddles
- Basahan* or *Basahan* – proverbs
- Dasang* – debate in verses when settling the bride price
- Nanangon* – folktales
- Tutulanon* – folk narratives or folk tales with abrupt endings

Their beautiful and graceful native dances are:

- Linibang* – the "immortalized" dance
- Dugso* – religious dance
- Lagoras* – a variant of the Dugso
- Binaylan* – dance of the priests
- Tinambal* – farmers' ritual dance
- Inagong* – courtship dance
- Binaklaran* – a ritual dance
- Binanog* – hawk dance
- Binakbak* – dance of the frogs
- Tinaktak* – a mimotic
- Tinigka* – tiptoeing

### Art and Handicrafts

The art of these people is not only expressed in beautiful verses and haunting instrumental music. Their art includes color arrangement and designing exemplified in their mat weaving and basketry. They have intricate geometric designs generally called *lugo*, according to motifs. Their basic lines are *matul-id* (straight), *kinayog* (curve), *tagtiyarog* (vertical), *taghiruga* (horizontal), *binaligyas* (diagonal), *balugko* (crooked) and *sinurigaw* (zigzag). The shapes are: *liron-lirong* (circle), *tatulo sa suyok* (triangle), and *haupat sa suyok* (square or rectangle). Their descriptions of length are: *mababa* (short), *malugayad* or *malayat* (long); their descriptions of height: *matangkaw* (high for things), *malangkaw* (tall man), *mababa* (short for things), and *mayampok* (short person); their idea of width: *malapad* (wide), *malig-ot* (narrow); their idea of size: *aragi*, *dagidagi*, *adagi* (big), *atiyo*, *atiyo-ay* (size, quantity), *mayantok* (tiny, cute).

Their products are mats, hats, bags, fishtraps and woven cloth (*pangabol*). One aspect of their handicraft worth enhancing is the bag making. The *kamuyot* is made of special abaca fiber stripped from the outer bark of the abaca. The stripper (*lagitan*) used for stripping the abaca bark into fiber is toothless (*hura tadtad*). Before the bark is stripped it is first crumpled into a mass to make sure that only the strongest and the finest remain after the stripping. When the stripping is done the clean fiber is dried under the sun. After drying, it is dyed. Since there are only three known native dyes used for dyeing cloth namely – *kalarura*, *igagama* and *kalawang*, the natives use commercial dye. After dyeing and when the fiber is dried, the fiber is again softened by crumpling it with the hands. The weavers have several color arrangements in cloth weaving. Weaving is done in a crude beam. The finished cloth is made into blankets, but in most cases into knapsacks called *kayumot*.

One of the quality handicrafts made in Bukidnon is the native mat made of *sudsud* or *tikog* grass. This grass or weed grows in watery places, which the Visayans call *awog*. The *sudsud* is gathered by the women. It is divided into small bundles (*bagkus*) right in the field. It is cleaned and dried under the sun without being pressed. When the grass is thoroughly dry it is folded into shorter bundles and boiled in water diluted with dye.

The native dyes are *kalawag* for the yellow and *kalarura* for the red. The violet (indelible) pencil is always a part of their favorite dyes. Aside from the two native dyes all the other colors are taken from commercial dyes. After boiling the grass in dye-diluted water it is hung to dry under the house or inside the house, never under the sun. When the grass is dried after several days it is cleaned and pressed by a bamboo press called *agit*. The process is called *pangagit*. The grass is *agagitan*. When the grass is already pressed and cleaned, weaving starts. Usually, the kind of weaving commonly used is the twill weave and the one-over-one. Their mats are decorated with *lugo* if the weaver knows how to make one.

The Bukidnons use different color arrangements in their mats. The *pinasalngas*, the *binaligyas*, and the *binalintawak*. The mat that is made of *unayod* grass is called *hayas* meaning plain. Their geometric designs, generally known as *lugo* have different motifs: the *binabangon*, the *kinabuka*, the *binitu-on*, and the *sinurigaw*. Bukidnon mats are less colorful than the Lanao mats; but the former

are stronger than the latter because the latter are pressed against the ground, and the fibers are broken while they are green. The Bukidnon mat is pressed after the fibers are already dry and pressing is done only by the fingers against a high bamboo piece called *agit*.

### Wars and Weaponry

A tribal brigade is organized by a datu to avenge a dead relative or to recover a wife who has been abducted. When the others agree to join the *pangayaw* (head hunting) they perform a decimation ritual by slaughtering a pig. When the omens are favorable they right away go on the war path. Bukidnon weapons are mostly made of cast iron. There are three types of spears: the *huklap*, the *budyak*, and the *kulawit*. The *huklap* is a double-bladed spear with two small canals parallel to each other. The canals start at the base of the blade and end at the center. It has a light wooden *doldol* handle. This kind of spear is meant for throwing at the victim from afar and is ideal for ambushes. The *hudyak* has a wide blade. This is the spear used for close-range fighting. The *doldog* is also made of wood. The third type is the *kulawit*. The blade is attached to the *doldog* by three pieces of rope but may be detached. It has a point which looks like an anchor. This rope is for hunting, that is why the blade is detachable from the handle. When a game is hit the blade goes deep and holds fast to the flesh because of the anchor-like tip. The wooden handle is pulled and in so doing gets detached from the blade which is deeply imbedded in the game's flesh. However, the handle and the blade are connected by three pieces of rope, thus making it impossible for the animal to run away.

Their domestic bolos are *bari* or *badi*, the *tag-i* (small bolo), the *dayumpak* and the *sangi*. The Bukidnons have an implement which is made of bone, usually horse's bone called *lumit*. This is used in slitting the outer bark of the abaca before it is stripped. They also have a curved knife for harvesting called *kayog* or *longgaman*. The bow and arrow are seldom used now.

The Bukidnons have two kinds of shields. One of them is the *taming* which is circular and made from strips of bamboo closely woven together in the twining style. The other shield is called *kalasag*. It is made of wood and like the *taming* has a handgrip at the center. In most cases it is decorated with tufts of hair and beads, in some with a mirror called *bulan-bulan*.

For hunting and trapping:

1. *Kalawit* — a spear with an anchor-shaped spearhead for hunting
2. *Takupan* — fish trap exclusively for eels
3. *Buo* — fish trap
4. *Katal* — for hunting chicken; with a decoy
5. *Pugis* — trap for wild pigs
6. *La-is* — sharp pointed bamboo to impale pigs
7. *Balatik* — a trap for pigs or deer
8. *Balad* — a trap for rats which they eat

They fish along rivers, lakes and streams. They look for crabs (*kayumang*), tadpoles (*bita*), and shrimps (*olang*). They go hunting and fishing in groups.

Their fishing gears are:

1. *Saklag* or *suloy* — made from abaca fiber nets
2. *Baling* — big abaca fiber net for communal fishing
3. *Duyog* and *lagtang* — poison from plants

### Concluding Remarks

These are my reminiscences of my stay in Miarayon: some personal experiences as well as descriptions of the place and the people, the Bukidnons. When I first came to Miarayon I had hoped to stay there for the remaining years of my life; but illness forced me to leave after only three years. I had wished to be with them much longer. A diocesan priest followed me there but only stayed a short time. The M.I.C. sisters who had joined me soon after I had arrived in Miarayon remained for about one more year; but since there was no longer a priest there and because of illness, they also left. So, the people of Miarayon await the coming of another priest. How I wish I could be back with them.