

PREFACE

This writing on the Waray culture is a response to a need and a challenge. The dearth of a systematic body of knowledge to understand a people who are the fourth largest ethnolinguistic group in the Philippines and who occupy the third largest island in the archipelago pressed the author to respond to that need. The unconsolidated data from various sources here and there and the absence of venues for discourse pose a formidable challenge for any writer. The changing landscapes and seascapes in the island worlds of Samar and Leyte islands are compelling. The cultural worker is bound to get to work – retrieve and document and advocate for the conservation of the natural and cultural wealth there are. But these cannot be frozen in a time warp. Time moves on and life goes on. Generations past are gone and generations now will produce and raise the next ones. How do we bring them to the world of the next millennium? We are limited by our own lifeline. As the Jesuit chronicler Father Francisco Alcina did in the 1600s, the necessary act is to write. Write or things would be forgotten. Write or else nobody would know of how people in this part the world made meaning of their lives. Write or else nobody would know of us at all. Write so our children would know and understand themselves. Write of what is, has been and could be so they would see the paths that they could take, not just to survive but to live happily.

This monograph on the Waray is an ordering of the seeming helter-skelter information, written and oral, recollections and reflections, memories and current meanderings of thoughts on the savoring of Waray food as the pristinely fresh kinilaw or of a moment of ringing laughter over a friend's funny anecdote over a sip of tuba.

The narratives written here is a portrait composed out of primary field data, published materials and interview conversations, observations of the daily life of the Waray in the market, in the church, in school, in jeepneys, in the streets, at the farm, at the beach, on a boat a sea, underwater, during parties, fiestas, funerals and weddings, onstage, backstage, in various homes and at home. It is a recollection and reflection of the unfolding of the author's life in this ancient fertile land that arose from the sea eons ago. This record is by no means complete as it is uneven. Only distinctive Waray traditions and readily accessible information have been included here due to lack of data and limits of space and time. This attempt at consolidating

Waray cultural information can perhaps serve as a springboard for a more appropriate framework and for setting other possibilities in the study of Waray culture, its conservation and advocacy.

Magellan came to Samar and Limasawa, sailed on and was killed by Lapu-lapu in Mactan. Bankaw of Limasawa and Sumuroy of Palapag and others fought the cruel colonial masters for freedom. In humiliation for the U.S. army's "single worst defeat" in the annals of their war history, General Jacob Smith retaliated and massacred the people of Samar, left, got court-martialed and is unknown to the present-day Waray. The stories of the Waray people's courage, sacrifice, heroism and wisdom must be told, written and retold. Their weaknesses as well as their strengths, too, must come to the fore of knowledge so that lessons would be learned and better choices would be made for the future.

This book is a way of thanking the Waray whose contentment in a world of abundance and whose love for their family, kin, friends and homeland kept them rooted. There has been no massive Waray diaspora in the history of Philippine in- and out-migration as there were Ilonggo, Ilokano, and Cebuano migrations to Mindanao in the beginning of the 20th century. Waves of Ilokanos, the quintessential adventurers, have ventured to foreign shores. But, the Waray stayed. For how can one leave one's home where the land and sea are blessed with plenty and where one wakes up with precious family? Only either Mother Nature's wrath and human rapacity could destroy this haven. And only one with innate wanderlust would leave it. The Waray have stayed and have shared the blessings of their island home with Cebuanos and Boholanos who now comprise a large part of Leyte. The Waray welcoming warmth is disarming. Life here, among and with the Waray is, as Edilberto N. Alegre puts it – "... as subtle as a soft drizzle in the early morning light".

THE WARAY CULTURE

Chapter I

Land and People

The Land

Legend of Origin and Geological History

Long time ago, the universe was divided into two worlds. Each was ruled by a giant. Amihan governed the land in the northeast and Habagat took charge of the one in the southwest. Food became scarce in Amihan's land that his children and kin went southward to fish in Habagat's realm. Habagat was offended and in his anger, he challenged Amihan to a battle at sea. The two giants and their forces fought at the middle of the sea between their domains. They destroyed each other's ships but these were too huge to completely sink into the depths of the sea. In time, these vessels formed into two masses of land which eventually became the islands of Samar and Leyte (Sugbo and Zafra 1994: 454).

Archaeologists have established that the Philippine islands were mainly connected as a group of large islands during the Pleistocene period (2 million to 8,000 years ago). Luzon, Leyte, Samar and Mindanao extended as one long island. Panay, Masbate, Negros and Cebu comprised one chunk. Palawan connected with Borneo and the islands farther south were a series extending to Indonesia. The Ice Ages of the Pleistocene were characterized by the fluctuations of the water levels so that in the recent Holocene period, the waters rose and the Philippines became archipelagic - an ecosystem of numerous islands. Thus, what was once the whole long island of Luzon-Leyte-Samar-Mindanao differentiated into smaller and separate islands.

Geographical Location and Topography

The two main islands, Samar and Leyte, and the island province of Biliran now comprise the Eastern Visayas region. The region is bound by the Pacific Ocean in the East. It defines the eastern boundary of the Philippines. To the west is the Camotes Sea which marks the boundary between the Eastern Visayas region and the rest of the Visayas. At the north is the San Bernardino Strait which links Eastern Visayas to Luzon. At the southeast side is the Surigao Strait which separates it from the northeastern part of Mindanao.

The water body between the islands of Leyte and Samar is now the San Juanico Strait. The terrains of these two islands are different. Leyte has high peaked mountain mass and Samar has low rugged hills interspersed with valleys.

Land Use

Primarily an agricultural region, Eastern Visayas produces rice, abaca, corn, coconut, sugarcane and banana as major crops. It has a total land area of 21,431.7 square kilometers. Of its total land area, 52% are classified forest land and 48 % are alienable and disposable land.

Natural Resources

Eastern Visayas land and sea teem with the abundance of endemic flora and fauna. Endangered species found in the region are the **dugong** (*Dugong*), **mago** or tarsier (*Tarsius syrichta*), the Philippine brown deer, **kaguang** or flying lemur (*Cynocephalus volans*), **baboy ihalas** or Visayan warty pig (*Sus cebifrons*), **amo** or Philippine monkey (*Macaca fascicularis*), kulaknit or giant flying fox (*Pteropus vampyrus*) **kalaw** or rufous hornbill (*Bucerus hydrocorax*), the Philippine eagle (*Pithecophaga jeferryi*), **tikarol** or silvery kingfisher (*Alcedo argentata*) and numerous other endemic birds. The rare and ancient giant flora **Rafflesia** still thrives in the forest here.

Forest reserves are substantial in the interior hinterlands. Mineral deposits include chromite, nickel, clay, coal, limestone, pyrite and sand and gravel. The National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) include four natural parks in Eastern Visayas as components being proposed for establishment. These are MacArthur Park in Palo, Leyte; Kuapnit Balinsasayao National Park in Baybay and Abuyog, Leyte; Mahagnao Volcano National Park in Burauen and La Paz, Leyte; and, Sohoton Natural Bridge Natural Park in Basey, Samar. The national list of

proclaimed/declared protected areas include five protected landscapes/seascapes: Guiuan, Eastern Samar; Cuatro Islas in Inopacan and Hindang, Leyte; Biri Larosa in Lavezares, Rosario, San Jose, Biri and neighboring islands in Northern Samar; Calbayog- Pan-as Hayiban in Calbayog, Samar and Calbiga Caves in Calbiga, Wright and Hinabangan, Samar. Four natural parks are also protected: Jicontol Natural Park in Maslog, Dolores Can-avid in Eastern Samar; Mahagnao Volcano in Burauen and La Paz, Leyte; Lake Dana in Ormoc, Leyte; and, Samar Island Natural Park of Samar, Eastern and Northern Samar. The Taft Forest Philippine Eagle Sanctuary is the only wildlife sanctuary in the list.

The People

Population

The total population of the region is 3,912, 936 (as of August 1, 2007). It is inhabited by mostly Waray or Waray-waray, known to be the country's fourth largest ethnolinguistic group. Cebuanos who migrated from the adjacent island of Cebu have descendants who now live in Ormoc City (western part of Leyte), northwest part of Leyte, central part of Southern Leyte, western part of Biliran and in some communities of Northern Samar. Most of Southern Leyte are of Boholano ancestry.

Provinces and Municipalities

As a political aggrupation, the region is now composed of six provinces of Leyte, Southern Leyte, Biliran, Northern Samar, Eastern Samar and Samar with four cities: Tacloban, Ormoc, Maasin and Calbayog, 139 municipalities and 4,390 barangays. (NEDA RO 8 website) Samar Island has three provinces: Eastern Samar (with 23 towns and Borongan as the capital); Northern Samar (with 24 towns and Catarman City as capital), and, Samar Province (25 towns with Catbalogan as capital) in the southwest. Leyte Island has the provinces of Leyte (41 towns with Tacloban City as capital) and Southern Leyte (18 towns with Maasin as capital). Biliran is an island province in the Leyte Island group (8 towns with Naval as capital). (Official Websites of the Provinces)

Origin of the People

Legend has it that Leyte and Samar were once one large island and that the people of Leyte and Samar descended from one ancestor. Eduardo Makabenta, a Waray writer recorded this legend. Once upon a time, Leyte and Samar were one island joined together by an isthmus. It was ruled by a chief named Dimatakdol who had two sons, Danglay and Bagahupi. One day, Dimatakdol fell ill. He called his sons to his bedside and told them “I bequeath the island to both of you.” Then, he died. Soon after their father’s burial, the sons quarreled over the government of the island. They decided to divide the island into two. The older and bigger Danglay took the bigger northern portion and younger Bagahupi contented himself with the smaller southern part. Peace reigned for some time until the brothers fought again, this time over the fertile isthmus. They engaged their forces in a bloody battle and both got killed. The god, Bathala, angered by the senseless fight struck the isthmus with thunderbolts. It broke into fragments. These became tiny islands at the bay where once the isthmus lay. Two mountains rose on each side of the strait -- these are Danglay and Bagahupi standing guard over their respective territories. Thus, the separate islands of Leyte and Samar came to be (Makabenta 968:270-271).

Human existence in the Philippines dates back to 28,550 B.C. This is the dating of the stone flake tools found in the Tabon Cave, Palawan. The earliest human fossils in Palawan are dated 22,000 B.C. In the chronology of evidences of human existence as constructed by the late eminent historian and Filipinologist William Henry Scott, the second earliest date recorded is 8,550 B.C. This is based on the stone flake tools found in the Sohoton Caves in Basey, Samar. Stone flake tools, as articulated by Scott were “chips off the stone” which could have been used for “cutting wild plants and fruits, for constructing raw foodstuffs, and a kind of crude butchery”. Scott states that Samar hunter-gatherers continued to use such tools in the caves along the Basey River until the 13th century.

Cultural historians say that the early Visayans were Negritos (of negroid stock, dark skin, curly hair, nomadic, jungle survival experts with extensive knowledge of traditional medicinal plants) and Austronesians (Malays bearing rice, pig and taro for sustenance and pottery as craft) who migrated to the Philippine islands about 4,000 to 7,000 years ago. The latter were migrants of South Chinese origins who settled in many parts of South East Asia and

down to New Zealand, the Pacific and reaching as far as Madagascar in Africa. Since they inhabited the islands of the Philippines, they in-migrated to the different parts of the Philippines. There is another theory that says that it is likely that the Visayans came to be populated by migrants from down south moving upward from Indonesia through Mindanao.

Archaeological and historical records and cultural studies reveal that the Waray had a flourishing and highly elaborate cultural system with their own language, form of writing, socio-political organization and belief system before the advent of Spanish colonization. Trade between the Chinese, Borneans and the Malays had already been established. In 1521 when Ferdinand Magellan came, his chronicler Antonio Pigafetta documented the social and cultural practices of the people who met and received Magellan's crew as guests. He noted the rituals of welcome and reception, the food, dwelling, mode of dressing, music and dances and the language. Noteworthy was the offering of rice, bananas and tuba upon their initial encounter at sea near Suluan Island.

In Homonhon, Pigafetta noted the stages of preparing coconut milk from the coconut as well as gathering and fermenting **tuba** (coconut wine), the way of extracting milk from the coconut flesh, and the sparkling gold worn by the tattooed natives. In Limasawa, Magellan showed off the armory and arsenal in his ship which terrified Datu Kolambu and his men. They then held the first Mass and the *conquistadores* converted the people to Christianity. Friendship was forged between the Spaniards and the people of Limasawa through the **sandugo** or **kasi-kasi** blood compact, a ritual of hand gestures and drawing blood from Magellan and Datu Kolambu of Limasawa.. They cut their wrists and their blood was collected in one cup. Each drank from the same cup of their mixed blood. "Sandugo" literally means one blood. This symbolized the initial contact of the early Filipinos with the Europeans. It was a supposedly friendly gesture between two peoples, two cultures. But this was perhaps only from the point of view of the native Kolambu since Magellan established ties with clear agenda – to find spices for Spain's market in Europe and for the glorification of the Spanish empire.

The Language

The term "Waray" refers to both the people and the language of Leyte and Samar. It literally means "nothing". How it came to be the name for the language, nobody now seems to know. The formal name for the Waray language as qualified by the Waray *literati* elders of the

Sanghiran sang Binisaya (Council for the Visayan Language) is **Lineyte-Samarnon** or **Binisaya**. Its colloquial name “Waray” has become an official term now. The Waray language is prevalently spoken in the whole of Samar Island, except specifically in the little island communities of San Vicente and San Antonio in Northern Samar; and, Almagro and Santo Niño in Western Samar where Cebuano is spoken. Cebuano is also spoken in some barangays of San Isidro, Northern Samar and Calbayog City, Western Samar. Spoken Waray has distinctions in vocabulary and nuances of tone and accent between those spoken in each province. Thus, the Waray spoken in Eastern Samar is called *estehanon*; that in Northern Samar is *nortehanon* and that of Samar in the west is *westehanon*. In terms of origin and local identity the people may also be referred to with those terms.

Waray is the medium in the northern part of Leyte Province. Municipalities in the northwestern part of the province speak Cebuano. At the southwest end, Binol-anon is spoken. The dialect spoken in Babay is Baybayon which is slightly different from Waray and Cebuano. . Cebuano and Binol-anon are spoken in Southern Leyte. Biliran Island, people in the eastern towns and Maripipi Island are Waray speaking and the rest are Cebuano. The people of Capul Island uniquely speak Inabaknon which is largely different from Waray or Cebuano in terms of vocabulary.

Physical Appearance, Mode of Dressing and Ornaments

The early people of the Visayas which included the Waray, as described by Father Alcina, were relatively fair in complexion and corpulent in built compared to other Filipinos at that time. However, exposure to the sun, wind and water in the coastal land would make them, especially the children and the men, darker. There were “markedly fair” women called the **binokot** who were kept indoors. They were kept by their families as precious daughters who were wedded off to wealthy men. They were “...just as fair as Spanish women...(Alcina in Kobak 1969:23).”

Generally, men and women had round and well-proportioned faces with small eyes and flat noses. They filed, blackened and covered their teeth with gold pyramidal caps. The latter was called **bansil**. This was a form of body adornment. The women spent so much time caring for their black hair which they grew very long so that some had hair reaching the ground. They washed their hair with tree bark and scented it with sesame oil which also killed the lice. They

took great care combing and washing their long tresses and adorned them with flowers and fragrant leaves. The noble women put on amber, civet and musk as hair scents. Most women shaped their hair into a big rosette or inserted a bunch of purchased hair to make more rosettes. Women loved their long hair so much that having it cut was an expression of extreme sorrow. Men did not grow their hair long but there were those who did.

When Magellan was received by Rajah Kolambu in Limasawa, Pigafetta noted that he and his men wore G-strings. So did other Visayan men. The G-string, made of abaca, was called a bahag. It was "...a piece of cloth 4 or 5 meters long and something less than a meter wide. The ends hanging down were called **wayaway** – **ampis** in front and **pakawar** behind. To put the G-string on, one end was held against the chest while the other was passed between the legs, pulled up between the buttocks and wrapped around the waist several times, thereby binding the front which was then allowed to hang down as **ampi**; the other end was then knotted behind and let fall as **pakawar**. Care was taken to see that one end of the wayaway was longer than the other; wearing both of equal length was considered ludicrous. The word *watid* was for a G-string dragging on the ground, a deliberate sign of mourning (Alcina in Scottt 1994:28)."

Ordinarily, the men, as did the *datus* who received the Spaniards, had on only their bahag over their tattooed bodies. Tattooing was a rite of passage for young men. Tattoos were symbols of male valor and community identity. Sugbo and Zafra wrote: "The male body served as the broadcloth for the tattooing of an exquisite design, which ran from the groins to the ankles, and from the waist to the chest. The design on the chest looked like a breastplate, but the more daring had their necks, temples and foreheads tattooed with rays and lines that gave them a fierce countenance. The women had their hands and wrists tattooed with flowers and knots, an embellishment which enhanced the sheen of their gold rings and bracelets."

Understandably, in the tropical heat, the children until ten or twelve years went about their houses naked. But when visitors would arrive, the bigger girls would cover themselves modestly. The boys do not do so until they begin to wear the bahag (Alcina in Kobak 1969:34.) In the privacy of their homes, men and women were also naked. The men would only wear their bahag when they would leave the house or go to cultivate the field. The women wore mantle gathered at the waist leaving the upper torso bare. At their modest best, they wore a lambong – a long skirt that extends down to their feet and nothing else on. The lambong was mostly worn by old men to protect themselves from the cold and from insects.

To complete their clothing apparel, the men also wore a headdress or turban called the **pudong**. The common man wore the **pudong-pudong**—of rough abaca cloth and wrapped like a headband. The **magalong** was a red pudong of brave warriors who have killed an enemy.. The **pinayusan** is the most prestigious pudong which was worn only by the most valiant. It was made of white fine-gauze abaca fibers, finely tie-dyed a deep scarlet and “...burnished to a silky sheen” (Scott 1994:31).

When clothed, the women wore short skirts. The wealthy women had theirs about knee length. The slaves wore theirs shorter. It was ordinarily of abaca. The ruling elite had linen with silk and cotton colored threads. They also wore midriff jackets skimpily so that when they raised their arms their breasts were revealed.

Gold was worn profusely by the ancient Waray. Both men and women had three holes on their ears for gold earrings called *panicas* or: *pamarang*. In the lowest hole which was also the biggest, the women wore round earrings called *pamarang* or *barat* which had design variations of spokes and a central golden flower; the second hole was for another round earring that was also round but hollow at the center so that the only the gold and not the earlobe was seen. *Caiong-ciong* or golden spangles hung from the second hole. The third hole above the other two was set on a thick membrane or cartilage of the ear wherein a golden rose called *palvar* or *pasoc* was inserted.

Gold necklaces, bracelets and anklets adorned the Waray male and female bodies.. The gold beads were alternated with garnets and glass beads. Burnished gold cords were called **camagi** which was a popular favorite among men and women. **Pinarogmoc** was a square of solid gold. Golden loops covered the women’s breasts while the men wore them loosely. This necklace was so long that when the men looped it once around the neck, it would reach the ground.

Upon the Christianization of the Philippines, the friars imposed the wearing of “modest” clothes that covered the body the way Europeans dressed in their own temperate countries. But the local clothing materials were commonly made of abaca and cotton; the “high born” had imported silk and linen. When the Americans came, Filipinos followed the fashion fad in the U.S. However, there were old folks who wore the *kimona* and *saya* for women and the *camisa* for men well into the 1970s. At present the typical outfit consisted of T-shirts and jeans for men and women. At present, the middle and low socio-economic classes bask in the “Oks na Oks” or

“Ukay-ukay” bargains of used imported clothes and shoes which include name brands and haute couture from Hongkong, Japan, Italy and the U.S. Affordable casuals and cocktail dresses are brought in from Cebu, Manila and imports come in from Indonesia, India, Thailand and Korea. The Waray sense of fashion now is influenced by the movies, fashion magazines and newspapers featuring European couturiers as Yves Saint Laurent, Versace, and Christian Dior among others. Despite these influences the Waray dress sense shows the preference for the colorfully bright and light fabric – for a summery fresh feeling in the hot and humid island air.

The traditional wear generically referred to as Filipiniana has become a costume for special occasions. The common **kimona ug saya** (traditional loose and light blouse and long A-line skirt) ensemble and the Balintawak gown with butterfly sleeves were popularized elegantly by the famous or infamous former First Lady Imelda Romualdez Marcos, who is quintessentially a Waray. Abaca and tikog are now being embroidered, patched and beaded to become exquisite materials for gowns worn for cultural fashion events and beauty pageant.

The magnificently sensual Waray in ancient tattoo and golden fineries is a vision of the past. With an almost naked body adorned with pre-Christian animistic glyphs of identity and bravery, this mode of dressing was relegated by the friars to the dustbin of the forbidden, as taboo, for being “indecent and evil”. Contemporary clothes are a reminder of Philippine colonial history of which the Waray has not been spared. The beauty of the body form and artistic expressions of identity and exemplary inherent were suppressed. The indigenous look no longer figures in everyday wear. The tattooed body has recently become the official look of the Ginoo and Binibining Pintados-Kasadyaan Festival of the Province of Leyte. Through current efforts at heritage advocacy, the history and meaning of the **yunal** or tattoo symbols have been studied and disseminated (particularly by visual artist Prof. Dulce C. Anacion of U.P. Tacloban College). It is now appreciated as a special outfit that is a cultural symbol – displayed or worn during public social events. Nevertheless, as such, it inspires the nationalist fervor as it visually defines a people’s history and cultural identity.

Housing and Settlement Pattern

An aerial view of the communities in both Leyte and Samar shows dense settlements along the coasts. Historical records are not clear about how the ground plan of pre-Hispanic settlements were designed. It is noted, however, that the Datu or political leader has the largest

house which was not just for dwelling but also functioned as workplace, storehouse and as community center for religious and civic affairs. The ordinary folks “lived in cottages built of light materials ready to be moved every few years to be near shifting swiddens ... Much time, and many nights are spent in a variety of field huts and temporary shelters convenient to their labor ... Travelers, farmers, hunters and fishers even seamen beaching their boats for the night, put up so many of them that they could usually be found already standing along well-traveled roads or river fords (Alcina in Scott 1994: 60)”. This gives us a picture of permanent clustered dwelling areas with a focal center and temporary structures for mobile people in convergent zones.

Under the Spanish regime, the *poblacion* or town proper were laid out in the *reduccion* plan which remains until today. At the center of a square or rectangular ground glyph is the Church with an adjacent plaza. The plaza would have a *glorietta* or gazebo or a stage. The municipal hall may be across the plaza or within the perimeter of the plaza. Houses of the political and social elites stand along the main streets. The houses are along the streets emanating from the center. The market or trading place may be away from the plaza center but is accessible by walking or by a short ride on a pedicab or tricycle..

Barangay communities often have the chapel and the barangay hall which are in the main thoroughfares. A basketball court may be adjacent to the barangay hall if not in the plaza. Peripheral to these communal activity venues are the residential neighborhood. The *tabo* or evanescent market is located along a river bank, or where the sea and the river meet or where roads meet.

In the upland **uma** or farms of Calbiga, Samar, the multi-nuclear housing lay-out follows the traditional kinship structure. The clan owns a *puyong* or ancestral land. Nuclear families live in separate houses. Any one among the children who marries and can fend for herself/himself and his own family and is ready to leave the parents’ household may identify a spot in the *puyong* where to build a house of his/her own. It is definitely outside the parents’ physical abode but within social reach thus the settlement is multi-nuclear. This traditional concept is retained in modern times in the *poblacion* or in urban areas. Even in smaller residential areas and if space would allow, married children tend to build their homes adjacent to their parents’ own in one compound. Communities by the river or by the sea tend to be linear – houses stand alongside each other on the bank or shore for easy access to fishing (Sumagaysay 1996).

There are some barangays with houses which are dispersed owing to the "...multiple economic activities ranging from services, trade and commerce, home industries, farming and fishing which may not consist the major source of income. Wherever the place of work and household heads and the able-bodied members of the families are, so are the houses conveniently located (Sumagaysay 1996)."

Life Cycle

The life cycle of the Waray is punctuated with rites, rituals and feasts. Life stages from birth to death are marked with feasting complete with prayers, food, music and elaborate expressions of the Eastern Visayan élan vital. The ubiquitous tuba (coconut toddy) is generously poured with much laughter, banter and song among hosts and guests. Dancing enlivens every joyous occasion.

Love, Courtship and Marriage

In olden times, love's first stirrings used to be commonly expressed by a man to a woman through the *harana*, a serenade sang with a guitar in the evening. The man with his friends would visit the ladylove's house and they sing below her window. If he is accepted by the woman and her family, they are invited to enter the home and the woman is allowed to face the man and his friends. If the woman is too shy to accept him on the first visit, the men may just leave after singing and return on another occasion. It is a way of conveying admiration and intent to court the woman. This is no longer practised in the urban areas but remains to be so in the hinterlands of Samar.

Another courtship song-dance form is the ancient **balak** now known as **ismayling**. Both man and woman improvise a dialogue on poetic verse about their feelings for each other as they sway to the melodies they themselves create. The lovers' passions are contained by the subtleties of the traditional codes of conduct.

Courting or **panguyab** (root word: "uyab" refers to boyfriend/girlfriend/ sweetheart) or **pangunswelo** (root word is "konswelo" derived from the Spanish "consuelo" meaning "loved one") was done by the suitor through formal visits. The man must visit the woman in her home and face her parents and other members of her family. This was the measure of the man's sincerity and seriousness about his intention. The woman's parents make sure that they would

know about the man's family background. It was an advantage for the man if the woman's parents know his parents or some of his relatives.

When love has blossomed and when the woman has accepted the man, they are both referred to as **mag-uyab** (sweethearts or lovers). After a considerable period of their steady sweetheart relationship and they decide to marry, it is the man's duty to inform the woman's parents about his intention to marry her. But first he must inform or seek the permission and blessings of his parents. This phase in the marriage planning is called **pasabot**. When the man's parents agree to the proposed marriage, they will have to do the **pamuhang** or **pag-guhang**. They pay their respects to the woman's family by visiting them along with their son. A member of their family or a trusted and close friend may be assigned as the spokesperson. This role is called **tagumbaba** in Alang-alang, Leyte. Food and drinks are brought by the man's family. They will have to bring their own kitchen utensils and serving ware and must not use those in the woman's household. This signifies that the man will take up full responsibility as a husband. The woman's parents may or may not accept the proposal at this visit. If the man is not acceptable, they may even refuse the man's family entry into their home. If they accept him, they may not express it immediately during this visit and may only send word to the man's parents that they may return for the next stage in the preparation.

The succeeding stage after the pamuhang is the **pamalaye**. Again, the man's family brings food and drinks along with their utensils. Wedding plans are discussed. Often, conditions or demands drawn by the bride's parents – such as a dowry, the scale of the wedding reception whether simple or **grande** (grand). Church and reception venue, and the dwelling for bride and groom after the wedding. Traditionally, the groom and his family are responsible for all wedding expenses. If this is not possible, they must at least provide for the Church wedding ceremony, food for the reception and the bridal dress. The **ninong** and **ninang** (principal sponsors) and generous relatives may contribute to the success of the wedding in cash or kind over and above their spiritual roles as godparents or counselors.

On the eve of the wedding in Bubon, Northern Samar, the groom-to-be's family hosts the **sada-sada**. It is a social dance event. The traditional dance, **kuratsa** is performed by the guests. The dancers offer money bills thrown into a scarf spread on the ground. This part of the dance is called the **gala**. The fund raised is to help the engaged couple start a new life together.

Fiesta food and the ubiquitous tuba (coconut toddy) are served. The dancing and drinking may last until dawn.

The Waray Church wedding ceremony is similar to other Filipino Christian weddings – the complete entourage includes the principal sponsors, secondary sponsors, bridesmaids, grooms men, flower girls, Bible bearer, coin bearer, ring bear, maid of honor, Bet man. At present, the processional through the aisle from the Church entrance to the altar is led by the groom and his parents. The principal sponsors follow. And so on until the Bride’s march with her own father or both parents. The members of the entourage are chosen on the basis of closeness to the bride and groom and their families. Principal sponsors may include the parents’ choice of celebrities or political personages and people of high social standing. They are chosen for prestige or social connections and sometimes for favors. In contemporary times, couples assert their own wishes for their choice of sponsors and members of the entourage as well as in making decisions about the ceremony and other details.

What is remarkably Filipino about the church ceremony is the role of the secondary sponsors — for the veil, candles and cord. This is an official part of the Filipino wedding ritual in the Christian church. Local Waray traditions are most manifest in the wedding reception. In a barangay setting after the church ceremony, the bride and groom may march from the chapel to the bride’s house where the reception is usually held. At the threshold to the house, the bride and groom are met by elders bearing some cotton, a bowl of water, leaves of **kalipayan** (Sc.n. *Codiacum variegatum*) and **kilala** (Sc.n. *Taetsia fruticosa*) and rice grains. The newlywed couple hold the cotton – that their hearts be as soft as cotton, that they be gentle towards each other. The kalipayan and kilala leaves are dipped into the bowl of water. Then these are shaken over the heads of the newly weds so that they are showered with the water and are blessed. The water will cool their tempers when they would quarrel. The **kalipayan** leaves (literally, “kalipayan” means “joy, happiness”) would bring joy into their marriage. The **kilala** leaves (literally, “kilala” means “to recognize”) leaves would make them recognize their origins and always honor their ancestors. They would throw the rice grains to the ground or feed the chickens if there are around to represent the bounty of life to be shared with others. Upon entry into the bride’s house for the reception in Samar, the newly weds kneel before elders (who are married or have been married) from each side of their family. These elders would give them advice for a successful marriage. Most typical is the admonition: “*Kun nag-aaway kamo,*

siguraduha nga kun kalayo an usa, tubig naman an usa.” (When you quarrel, be sure that if one is fire then the other should be water).

During the reception, the newly weds would be seated at the dining table with their parents and the principal sponsors.. Widows and widowers may only go into the reception venue after the newly weds have entered it lest the newly-weds would have the same fate as they had.

The Kuratsa is a favorite Waray folk dance. In Eastern Samar, the newly-weds dance the Kuratsa at least three times. In between their dance, the principal sponsors are requested to dance, too. As the sponsors dance, there would be a moment when they would cast their **abwag** or money bill offered to the newly weds into the air or into a scarf spread on the floor. There is much rejoicing watching the dancing of the elegantly- dressed elders in fine gowns and Barong Tagalog while they gracefully throw the bills to the air and onto the dance floor.

Then the **paado**, the traditional wedding dance is performed by the bride and groom. They may just be a simple waltz or an elaborate kuratsa depending on the dancing skills of the couple. Their relatives and friends would approach them to pin peso bills on their garments while they waltz. The bride’s relatives and friends pin bills on the groom’s shirt while the groom’s supporters do it on the bride’s gown. This act signifies their acceptance of the bride or groom to their clan or social circle and also their support for the union. The money raised in the dance is intended to help the newly-weds start their life together.

Pregnancy and Birth

When a woman anticipates, she is expected to **pangipa** or to crave for a particular food. Her craving must be satisfied. The husband must go all the way to find whatever it is that will satisfy her desire or she or the baby would suffer. It is believed that if a pregnant woman craves for a fruit which is still on the tree, she must be given that fruit otherwise the tree would not bear fruit the next season. The folk belief is that qualities of the food that the pregnant woman craved for would be inherited by the child. Thus, the expectant mother must avoid seeing ugly people, pictures and terrifying scenes. She must surround herself with the pleasant and the beautiful for the baby to be so too. She must also beware of the **aswang** (witch-vampire) which preys on babies in the womb. Some rock salt, **buntot han pagi** which is a stingray tail or a Palm Sunday frond blessed with holy water would shoo them away.

At the time of the baby's birth, the poor Waray couple who cannot afford a hospital delivery opt for the village **partera** or **komadrona** (midwife). A folk talisman for delivery is the **luno han halas** (skin shed off by a snake in molting). It is held or touched by the expectant mother for easy delivery. After the baby is delivered and the umbilical cord is cut, a portion of it is kept. This will protect the child from illness. The **inunlan** (placenta) is buried in the ground. Some would let it float away in the river or sea.

The mother is advised not to bathe until after seven days. The first post-natal bath is with water boiled with herbal leaves – **aslum** (Sc.n. _____), **lakdan** (Sc. n. _____), **clabo** (*Tynanthus* sp.) and **kalipayan**. While steaming hot, the recuperating mother sits over the steaming pot to let the steam heal her vaginal wound. The water is then pored over her body. This will restore her energy. Doing this traditional bathing will protect her from **bughat** or relapse.

Baby Keepsakes and Baptism

The baby's nails are trimmed after at least a month. After a year, he/she would have her hair trimmed. Both nails and hair are mementoes to be kept. Keeping the hair would ensure that the baby would grow to be intelligent. Keeping the nails would make the baby learn to write well. The baby is christened or named at any age of her/his growth when there are enough funds to pay for the Church services. If money would allow, a child's baptism would be a festive celebration. Godparents are selected from among close friends or kin. Gifts are given by the godparents and the guests to the newly baptized child. Waray children now are named after departed ancestors usually with Spanish names, biblical names or American names – Eduardo, Gerardo, Kenneth, John, Paul, Maria Paz, Asuncion, Mary Jane, Christine, Jacqueline. There are also names now taken from Hollywood or English romance novels Ava, Rhiana and from pop celebrities Britney, Celine or Rick. There is now a trend of giving two names to a baby – Anna Marie, May Anne, or John Michael. Giving Filipino and Visayan names to babies is a new consciousness among nationalistic young parents — Gasa (Cebuano term meaning “grace”), Sadjá (derived from Visayan “sadya” meaning “joy”), Uhay (old Tagalog and Visayan for “rice stalk”). However, the babies are called with nicknames such as May-may, Ling-ling, Kaykay, Bongbong or Dodong reflecting the endearing qualities of the growing child. The nicknames are indigenous rather than foreign in origin.

Birthdays

The first birthday is the grandest of all celebrations of the Waray child. Although unmindful of the hoopla of preparations, the birthday party has all the party trimmings as much as funds could afford. Relatives and friends, young and old are all invited. Living grandparents are always present. Cousins in the nth degree join in the fun. There are games and party favors of candies, toys, masks and balloons for the children – and the traditional Filipino breaking the pot (a pot is filled with candies and coins and is broken by a blindfolded guest) and **pabitin** (bamboo frame festooned with goodies) for the children to grab. The children go home with a bag of goodies handed by the celebrant who is assisted by a parent. And true to the Waray spirit, the adults settle with drinking tuba, karaoke singing and dancing until they drop drunk or exhausted.

Birthdays celebrations begin with thanksgiving prayers or attending Holy Mass or religious service. A humble party at home among family may be prepared. There are always the ever present **pansit** (sautéed Filipino rice noodles) and the obligatory cake. A bigger party may be thrown by the middle class or upper class for friends and other guests. Surprise events for important personages are organized such as a harana or the **mañanita**. The latter is a group serenade to greet the celebrant before dawn. The serenaders bring breakfast food like **puto** (rice cake), **tsokolate** (chocolate drink) or **salabat** (hot ginger ale), **arroz caldo** (thick rice-chicken casserole) or **pan de sal** (traditional Filipino breakfast buns). Most heartwarming for the Waray is to be greeted through a song especially when accompanied by the guitar.

Death

When someone dies, relatives and friends immediately come to the side of the bereaved. Funerary rituals and arrangements for the vigil are planned and are carried out by the relatives and friends. These practices could be very elaborate depending on the sense of tradition and economic status of the family of the dead.

The soul's journey to heaven begins upon death and lasts for nine years when the soul would be at its ultimate state of purity. The rituals for the dead are temporally marked — the **tapos han linusaran** or nine days after the day of death; **tapos han ika-kwarenta** or forty days after the day of death; **tagmo** -- the completion of the one year cycle since death which is first

death anniversary; and the **tapos han ika-siyam** nine years death anniversary. Novena prayers are offered to help the soul be purged of sins and be lifted up to heaven.

It is traditionally believed that during the first three days, “nag-aalang pa an kalag”. The soul/spirit is awkward and is dis-oriented - not knowing how he/ she will behave without a physical body. It is during this period that he/she tries to interact with his loved ones as if he/she were still alive. But they could no longer see him/her. On the third day, it is believed that the spirit manifests through an apparition, a dream or some other form of contact. The ninth day is commonly called the **tapos** (literally meaning, “end”). During forty days, it is believed that the spirit remains among the living but his or her state is gradually elevated to a higher realm of being especially when prayers are offered for his/her eternal rest. The fortieth day is also called a **tapos**. After one year, the spirit is detached from the earth plane. The yearly death anniversary is called **pasulit** in Northern Samar. The ninth death anniversary is the final stage of the purified spirit’s journey. The beloved dead believed to be completely apart from the world of living is definitely in heaven.

Upon death, members of the family are given time to be with their beloved dead before it is embalmed. For the Catholic Waray, a priest is called to administer the blessing of the dead. The corpse is bathed and clothed with formal wear or whatever was the favorite outfit or one chosen by the dead when he or she was still alive. The **mamaratbat** or traditional prayer leader is called for to begin prayers on the day of death. Novena prayers begin on the second day and continue on for nine days. Masses are offered. Sympathizers offer **abuloy** (cash contributions) which is either handed over to the family leader or dropped into the abuloy bowl. Food offering to the dead is set up at the altar. The dead is lovingly cared for and always has company all throughout the vigil or wake. The dead should not be left alone during the wake. At least one person should stay awake to guard the dead at all times and especially through the night lest evil spirits would take the dead away.

Upon their arrival at the wake, sympathizers stand before the coffin and say their prayers orally or silently. They have the option to view the corpse. Then they approach the members of the family of the dead to console them through touch, embrace and conversation. Snacks and meals are served to all who visit the wake and pay their respects to the dead or console the family. Narratives about the cause of death and the last moments in life of the dead are shared by the members of the family.

Taboos are observed in Waray funerals. Visitors must not take their leave from the bereaved family when they end their visit. The bereaved must not conduct their visitors to the door when they leave. Members of the family must not bathe in the course of the wake. Sweeping the floor must not be done. Melted candles must be completely removed before another candle replaces it.

Pagtubas must be done before the coffin is removed from the venue of the wake. This is done by immersing leaves of aslum, kilala, kalipayan and malunggay (*Moringa oleifera Lam.*) in a basin of water. The leaves are squeezed by hand so the juices would blend in the water. Then the leaves are held and shaken so that the venue would be sprinkled with the water. When the coffin would be transferred to the church or to the burial site, members of the family must leave the house or the vigil venue before the coffin is brought out. The coffin must be so positioned so that the feet of the dead would lead the way and not the head. This will ensure that the spirit of the dead will no longer return to the house as if he/she were alive. But before the coffin is brought out, the children of a dead parent must **suhot** or pass underneath the coffin. The baby is made to **lakbay**, to jump over the coffin. This will protect their children from fear of the dead. When they leave the Church, the family members must not follow the coffin upon exit. They should take another exit path. A mother whose child died and will be buried must not attend the burial. Clothes, blankets and pillows used by the dead may be buried along with the dead. Flowers are thrown into the grave by sympathizers attending the burial to send off the dead and to free them of pains and problems. It is believed that the dead can help the living bring all these to the grave. Snacks are served to those who attended the burial.

If the family could afford it, sympathizers are invited to partake of food with the bereaved at their home or in some chosen venue after the burial. At the door, the basin of water with the leaves is prepared for the guests to wash their hands with. This is an act of purification – negative elements such as illness, bad luck, misfortune or death would be cast away.

In case the surviving member of the family who is closest to the dead (e.g. the wife in the case of a husband's death) would be left alone at home after all have returned to their places of residence, the concerned family members would make sure that the lonesome bereaved would have a companion at home. For instance, with the death of the father, a married daughter who leaves in her own house would join her mother in their ancestral house or the mother would

transfer to the daughter's new home. The Waray cannot stand being alone at the loneliest of times.

Although death is a sad occasion, it is a time for relatives and close friends to converge and have a reunion of sort. While they cry their hearts out in grief over their loss, they recall and reminisce the past and also update each other with their lives. Those who reside out of town or abroad would come home to pay their respects to their dead and console the immediate family and are themselves consoled. In this rare gathering of family and clan, sometimes old conflicts are resolved but there are times when past resentments re-surface and ill will would aggravate and at worst, family ties are severed. Generally though, there is convivial warmth, shared laughter and love expressed with each other. Reunion picnics at the beach and outings are held for those who have been away for long. Death becomes an occasion for renewal and re-affirmation of family identity and of life especially for the future generation.

Colonial History

After Magellan was killed by Lapu-lapu and his men in Mactan, Cebu, the Spanish Crown sent Ruy Lopez de Villalobos in 1543 for another expedition. In search of food, Villalobos landed in Leyte which was then called Tandaya and gave his host islands the name Las Islas Filipinas, in honor of Felipe II, king of Spain. In 1565, Miguel Lopez de Legazpi who established the first Spanish settlement in Cebu, passed through Abuyog and Limasawa. In 1580, the Augustinians, particularly Father Alonso Velasquez started the conversion of the Leyte inhabitants by instructing catechism, consoling the sick and administering the sacraments in Carigara, Barugo, Leyte-Leyte, Palo, Dulag and other coastal settlements. In 1595, five Jesuits namely Fathers Pedro Chirino, Juan del Campo, Cosme Flores, Antonio Pereira and Brother Gaspar Garay set foot in Carigara, Leyte and carried on the evangelization of the Waray (Leyte 400 Years of Evangelization). Three other Jesuits who were Fathers Francisco de Otazo, Bartolome Martes and Brother Domingo Alonso arrived in Tinagon, a village in Western Samar and founded the first mission in Samar (Panublion webpage). The Jesuit mission bore fruits in Leyte and Samar. They established several *cabeceras* or seats of administration in Tandaya (Leyte) and in Ibabao (Samar). As historian Reynaldo Imperial summed up, "Essentially, the Jesuits played a major role in the evangelization and conversion of the natives. Aside from giving religious instructions, they supervised the construction of stone churches and plazas in the

various pueblos where the missionaries resided. (Imperial 1996:18). When they were expelled in 1786 and ... finally left the island province... they had established strong local government units and parishes which were potent mechanisms for the conversion of the natives. In the same year that the Jesuits left, the Franciscan Order took over the missions that the Jesuits established. Imperial qualified the role of the Franciscans in the social transformation of the Waray then:

The Franciscans were largely responsible for the primary education of the people. They wrote and translated materials and books of the schools that they established. With their usual missionary zeal, they penetrated the interior towns to spread the gospel and to encourage the people to leave their mountain hideouts and hamlets and to establish their towns in the coastal pueblos. The priests felt that the people's proximity to the centers of the pueblos would make their teaching of the gospel a lot easier.

(1996: 18)

However, the Franciscans, being critical of their predecessors' business activities with the people, stopped the trade and commerce system put up by the Jesuits. This consequently halted the income generation activities previously enjoyed by the business elites and the producers in the interior areas.

During the Spanish regime, the Muslim pirates continuously raided and plundered the settlements in Leyte and Samar. Terrified, the people sought solace from their new leaders – the friars who have usurped the role of the datu as community leaders; but these men of the frock could not provide military leadership. In Leyte, Mancao, then datu of Limasawa who was a Christian convert, reverted to his animistic ways and resolved to stop the Christian mission among the Waray as this caused trouble with the Muslim raiders. These wars caused death of his people and destruction of their dwellings. Mancao fought with his high priest, Pagali, and with the alliance of neighboring towns, the Spanish mission fell in Leyte. Reinforcement of 50 guardias civiles and a thousand Cebuano fighters conscripted by the Spanish authorities quelled the rebellion. The heroes died fighting valiantly.

Another local hero was Captain Venancio who successfully led his people against the Muslim raiders through an organized defense strategy involving men, women and children in battle. Upon sight of the Muslim vintas (sailboats), the sentry signaled by rhythmically striking the **karatong** (bamboo tube) and the people released their arrows and poisoned darts which fell

like rain, thus, defeating the invaders. Such organized valor minimized the Muslim attacks. Relative peace was achieved except for an organized anti-friar movement known as the **Dios-Dios** and **Pulajan**. This grew out of the people's protests against the decrees so they fled to the mountains and formed an armed resistance which consisted of bolos, spears, prayers and **anting-anting** (amulets). Their talismans were believed to render their warriors invisible and invincible. With crescent shaped bolos, they decapitated their enemies and their battle cry was "tad-tad" which means "chop to pieces" (22).

The Spanish response was fierce and the friars assumed all powers – religious and political. The *encomenderos* (land grantees) opposed the friars who insisted on resettling the population in the towns and became their bitter enemies. The economic system was centered on the towns where cash crops and trade burgeoned under the control of the friars. Thus, the efficacy of the traditional structure of community interdependency with the *datu* as leader diminished (22).

In 1622, Leyte was formally recognized as a province under the Spanish Crown. The *residencias* (jurisdiction of authority beyond the pueblo and independent settlements) administered by the friars were put under the supervision of the bishopric of Manila. By the first Royal Decree dated May 7, 1841, the first general government of the Visayas was created under which Leyte, Biliran and the Camotes Islands were made as one district (23).

Sporadic revolts characterized the Spanish rule over the Filipinos. In 1649, Sumuroy of Palapag, Samar led a rebellion that began as a personal vengeance against a Spanish friar. The rebellion spread as a protest against the forced labor in which Samarenos and Leytenos were conscripted to work in Cavite shipyards in Luzon. The revolt spread to nearby towns and Mindanao (Sugbo and Zafra 442) .

In 1860, another decree placed the supervision of Leyte under a *corregidor*, a military officer. This was unlike in the other provinces which was supervised by a civilian- an *alcalde*. But like the *alcalde*, the *corregidor* filled his coffers by exploiting the people. By the late 19th century, Leyte, was pacified and would have the same government structure of being ruled by an *alcalde* as the rest of the provinces in Spanish colonial Philippines (Imperial 23).

The Philippine revolutionary and nationalistic spirit was sparked by Andres Bonifacio who founded the Katipunan (the secret Philippine revolutionary society) and inspired by the Jose Rizal's exposé through his insidious novels *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*. The

revolutionaries persisted under American rule. After the treacherous murder of Andres Bonifacio by his rival Emilio Aguinaldo, the independence of the Philippine Republic was proclaimed on June 12, 1898. Aguinaldo, a young military general headed the Philippine Revolutionary Army against the Spaniards and the next colonial masters, the Americans whose commercial and political interests in the Philippines were boundless. Aguinaldo re-organized the Philippine revolutionary army for war against the Americans. He appointed Antonio Luna as Director of War. Two of his brilliant strategists were General Vicente Lukban who was assigned as the politico-military head of both Leyte and Samar and General Ambrosio Mojica who succeeded Lukban in Leyte. Both generals officially and morally primed up the people for civilian participation in governance. In Leyte, Mojica resolved internecine squabbles between Lukban's men and the locals and elections resulted with civilian officials from among the people led by respectable individuals like Jaime C. De Veyra, Daniel Romualdez and Ciriaco Lucente. By the time the American troops arrived in 1900, the towns of Tacloban and Palo were prepared for battle – guns and cannons were set up in trenches, bolomen were lined up ready for attack – but the American war machine overwhelmed the crude armory of the Philippine army of newly-trained zealous soldiers and courageous indigenous warriors (55). Despite this defeat, the fight for freedom sustained and expressed through the wits and guts of the Filipino guerrillas would wound and humiliate the U.S. army in later battles.

The U.S. imperial design was to annex the Philippines to the United States so it would serve as market for U.S. technology in agriculture (sugar mills, steam plows, portable threshing, pearling and winnowing machinery) and water transportation (light craft vessels, steam launches and tugs) and as importer of American goods such as canned meats and vegetables among many other trade and commerce opportunities. Sugar produced in the Philippines was imported by the U.S. (110,000,000 to 300,000,000 pounds until 1890) in a grand scale. Abaca, which was plentiful in Samar and Leyte, was the commodity for which the U.S. was the biggest importer/exporter in the world (27). The American troops were to superintend the trading of abaca and copra in Leyte. People were coerced to stay within the training centers of Baybay, Carigara and Barugo. The guerrillas butchered the American troops with their bolos through surprise attacks in the home terrains that they mastered. The local civilian leaders maintained diplomatic faces to the foreign invaders and supported the guerilla army. Those who did not engage in fighting helped in the production and storage of food for the guerillas. While there

were those who connived with the foreign enemy, the guerillas generally enjoyed solidarity with the people. Guerilla warfare consisted of unconventional and ingenious use of indigenous materials like bamboos and rocks as traps and weapons, the forest cover and small surprise ambushes that outwitted and subdued the enemy. Out of fear and anxiety, the U.S. employed more brutal and indiscriminate ways of killing Filipinos whether men, women or children; and whether young or old (101-107).

General Lukban consolidated the Waray forces with the revolutionaries and so the province of Samar became the “hottest spot of the revolution” (Sugbo and Zafra 1994:442). On April 15, 1900, local militia men of Catubig led by Domingo Rebadulla with reinforcement from General Lukban’s revolutionaries defeated Company H of the U.S. Army 43rd Infantry. On April 30 of the same year, the guerillas attacked Company F of the same infantry in Catarman, Samar but with heavy casualties, they failed to recover the town from American military control. September 28, 1901 is remembered as a tragic day for the U.S. Army when the men of Balangiga, Samar wiped out the seasoned American soldiers of Company C. The Balangiga band of warriors was under the jurisdiction of General Lukban through the Samar command of Captain Eugenio Daza. Organized by the town’s police chief, the warriors armed with bolos and spears raided the American garrison. The unknowing soldiers had their weapons down as they were having breakfast. This attack inflicted severe damage on the U.S. military might. Imperial dubbed this as the “single worst defeat“ of the U.S. Army in the Philippines. Out of humiliation, the U.S, Army retaliated. Captain Jacob Smith ordered his men: “Kill and burn! The more you kill and burn the better you will please me. I want no prisoners, do you understand? “ (Schott: 1964: 76) Thus, the systematic killing of civilians young and old, men, women and children was committed by the American forces. Villages were razed down to ashes that military historian Schott pictured Samar at that time as a “howling wilderness”. The revolutionists continued to fight even after the surrender of Gen. Mojica in Leyte. The freedom fighters of Samar and Leyte persisted so that the revolutionary forces in these two islands “...represented the last remaining stand against American rule in the Visayas as the Muslim south was in Mindanao (Imperial 1996: 144).”

The revolutionaries continued to fight until Lukban was captured in 1902. With the capitulation of the local elites and the enlistment of other Filipinos in the American-organized Philippine Scouts and Philippine Constabulary, the U.S. pacification campaign

weakened the people's support for the guerillas. U.S. war technology proved mightier over a divided people. Some of the revolutionists joined the **pulahanes** in the mountains and together they scourged the American military. Reputed as superstitious bandits and quasi-revolutionists, the pulahanes did not have the people's support and were easily conquered by the U.S. reinforcements that in 1907, their leader Faustino Ablen was arrested and imprisoned (34).

The American authorities established the provincial government of Leyte under Act No. 121 which was enforced in April 1901. Its first military governor was an American, Henry T. Allen. It had its first Filipino governor, Jaime C. De Veyra in 1906.

The structures of American governance were in place by 1934 with the classification of municipalities in 1928, the five congressional districts in 1931 and delegates who were sent to the Constitutional Convention in 1934 (Sugbo and Zafra 442).

Amidst an atmosphere of relative peace, the American system of education was adapted by the Philippine Commonwealth government. In lieu of Spanish, English was made the medium of instruction. Public and private schools were established, roads built, and transportation and communication facilities improved.

The inherent valor of the people once again manifested at the outbreak of World War II. When the Japanese invaded Leyte in 1941, 1,968 soldiers and 98 officers of the Leyte Provincial Regiment of the U.S. Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) under the command of Col. Juan Causing defended the province. However, even with civilian support, this U.S.- led army had to surrender after the capture of its American general by the Japanese forces. On May 25, 1942, the Japanese landed in Leyte and were received by its officials Pastor Salazar and Jose Veloso. Japanese military stations were set up in Ormoc and Tacloban and minor garrisons were erected in nearby towns. The guerilla army was re-activated into organized units with the following leaders: Capt. Glicerio Erfe, Alejandro Balderian, Blas Miranda and Col. Ruperto Kangleon.. An alliance was formed with American intelligence system and the Free Leyte government under the governorship of Salvador Demetrio but Japanese forces suppressed this effort. Since then, the Japanese employed violent methods of conquest (443).

The guerillas continually relayed intelligence data to the U.S. military. On October 20, 1944, General Douglas MacArthur, commander in chief of the USAFFE landed at the beach in Palo, Leyte. The battle against the Japanese in Leyte gulf which signaled the end of World War II was dubbed as "the greatest naval battle in history".

Post war rehabilitation with food production and education as priorities was undertaken by the Philippine Commonwealth and later by the Philippine Republic. The war slowed down agricultural production, damaged school buildings and increased inflation. The region has been known to be one of the most depressed regions in the Philippines for decades.

In July 1973, the San Juanico Bridge was built to link the two islands of Leyte and Samar easing, thus, eased the way for the transport of goods, services and people. The bridge also effected movement from north to south of the entire archipelago as it paved the way for connecting transportation by land from Manila to Mindanao through Samar and Leyte.

Currently, as a developing region under a modern republic, the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) regional office reported that the region is besought by high incidence of poverty (43% - which is higher than the national average of 30%), high prevalence of malnutrition, unemployment, low participation and increasing drop out rate in education, inadequate public infrastructure, weak political will in the enforcement of laws, graft and corruption, weak participation of civil society in governance and lack of peace and order agenda (Eastern Visayas updated Regional Development Plan 2006-2010: 2- 48). In addition, the media has reported incidents of extrajudicial killings and the government conflict with the New People's Army (armed group of the Communist Party of the Philippines). However, these problems and challenges have been articulated and are in the process of being addressed by the concerned sectors.

Significantly, the region has positive records of development. In the agricultural and fishery production, the NEDA noted: "Palay production increased by 5.3% (2006). Rice sufficiency is now 110% while white corn sufficiency index is 104%. Aquaculture areas expanded by 2.31 thousand hectares. Sufficiency index in pork improved from 52% in 2005 to 61% in 2006 (2)". Substantial accomplishments have also been achieved in the area of information and communication technology with the establishment of an ICT (Information and Communication Technology) Park in Leyte with the alliance of the academe and the industry sectors. Tourism performed well with the establishment of new resorts. The support services in the local government units showed remarkable progress in planning, tax collection and spending (2 - 3).

The national development agenda in the Central Philippines Super Region 2008 Plan identified the region as an ecotourism zone. This is an opportunity for the Waray to revisit their

history and heritage – both natural and cultural – to preserve, protect and promote them and to meaningfully develop them into creative industries for posterity and for progress, or purely for the enhancement of knowledge and understanding of their identity as a people.

Chapter II

MATERIAL CULTURE

Waray Food

Blessed with the bounty of land and sea, the Waray has a wide range of resources for sustenance. The sea and rivers are abundant with fish, shells, crabs, squids, shrimps, edible seaweeds. More than two hundred species of fish abound in the shallow and deep layers of the bays and in the lawod, far out at sea. The currents carry prized blue marlin from Guiuan, Samar to Abuyog, Leyte. The scarce but expensive **tipay** or white fleshy scallops are available daily in the markets but run out before noon due to the high demand by local restaurants and exporters. The ordinary mussels or tahong of Jiabong, Samar are sold by sacks along the road almost daily. The land is so fertile that papayas and bananas (of more than a hundred varieties) are known to sprout even without being cared for. The less fertile ones like the rocky hills of Samar bear the toxic giant taro called **talyan** which when detoxified are made into the famous **binagol** (grated talyan with coconut milk caramel filling contained in coconut shells) of Dagami, Leyte

The shores of Tacloban City used to teem with crabs so that the crab has been immortalized in the name of the city. The basket trap used to catch a crab is called **taklob** (literally, “cover”). And the place where this is used is called **takloban**. Thus, the official name (the indigenous sound “k” is spelled with a “c” in the Spanish and English version), Tacloban. Tacloban retained its name although crabs now are aplenty only in the wee hours before dawn.

A typical way of cooking crab is simply to heat it in a pan until the purplish-blue shell turns orange and until it exudes a rich aroma of the sea that is distinctively the crab’s own. For the Waray, the richer crab dish is the **hinatukan nga masag** (crab cooked in coconut milk). Boil the crab in coconut milk with sliced onions and ginger. Garnish with pako (riverine fiddle fern). The crab is a gift from the sea while coconut and fern are floral blessings from the land. This is a dish where land and sea meet.

Such island grace -- of the Waray.

Everyday Food

Ordinarily, the complete Waray meal consists of **kan-on** (rice), **sura** (protein viand) and **utan** (vegetable). The **panara** or dessert is an option. Sura may be of fish or meat. Utan could be a singular vegetable ingredient such as **ganas** (camote tops) or an elaborate one such as **lawot-lawot** (a mix of various indigenous vegetables). **Hinog nga saging** or ripe banana is the typical panara that closes a main meal.

Viand and vegetable can be traditionally prepared in various ways, from the simplest to the most elaborate dish. Philippine culture theorist E. N. Alegre wrote of kinilaw (derived from “kilaw”) which he defines as something fresh that is cooked in vinegar and without fire. What Edilberto N. Alegre articulated as the Filipino’s preference for prime freshness is exemplified in the Waray taste. Fresh fish or shellfish, fruit (e.g. half-ripe papaya) or vegetable (e.g. lato or sea weed, eggplant and bitter gourd) is made into kinilaw by the Waray. Often, calamansi or vinegar is used for dressing. Kinilaw is just a step away from the natural state of the fish, fruit or vegetable. For the Waray, it is more often than not, prepared with coconut milk. It could serve as viand but it is often served as the Waray favorite **sumsuman** dish – food that goes with drinking tuba or any other kind of alcohol.

Sinugba is a Waray term which means to broil in charcoal. Fish, shells, shrimps, squids, octopus, meat, plantains (bananas and rootcrops like camote) are broiled by the Waray. These main ingredients are always at their best when fresh. **Tinuom** is a dish in which the main ingredient is wrapped in banana leaf and broiled such as when done to fish or shrimps. **Hinatukan** is cooked in coconut milk. This can be done with fish and with vegetables. The typical Waray **hinatukan nga utan** (vegetable in coconut milk) is of hilaw **nga langka** (unripe jackfruit flesh) or **karubasa** (squash). **Sinabaw** (cooked as soup) could be **tinola** (boiled). The Waray tinola (fish broth) is mildly flavored. The tinge of sourness is given by the subtle juice of two or three small tomatoes or a dash of calamansi juice or the tangy bit of one or two pieces of batwan. Tanglad (lemon grass) gives aroma and zing. **Linubihan** is mixed with grated coconut flesh which is done with the bland riverine crab meat.

Catch from the river are taken by the Waray as less tasty than their marine counterpart. To render its taste flavorful, the Waray mixes the sweetish and textured coconut with the main ingredient. Such is done with the **urang** or freshwater shrimp when cooked as **inutok**, which is a

rare dish now but is still prepared in Carigara, Leyte. Grated young coconut and spices give it character. All wrapped in banana leaf, and steamed, the flavors seep into the shrimp flesh and subtly, voila! -- give character to the otherwise tasteless riverine creature.

Fish, meat and vegetables (e.g. kangkong or watercress, and stringbeans) are prepared **inadobo** (as adobo) –boiled in vinegar, soy sauce and spices. Pork-and -chicken adobo is every child's favorite. It makes an ordinary meal special...

Lomo is originally a farmer's breakfast dish. It is a meat stew of carabao meat slivers and blood. For texture, **tauge** (mung bean sprouts) or pechay leaves may be added. Lomo is often prepared before break of dawn... It soothes the body from the nippy cold of the pre-dawn air, and perks it up to meet the sun and the day's work.

Fiesta Food

As in much other Filipino standard fiesta fare, the Waray have on their banquet consisting of pansit, beef kaldereta, and rugo-dugo (dinuguan). Humba is the quintessential Waray popular favorite. It is a regular in any fiesta or ordinary party menu. Pork pigue is boiled with soy sauce, coconut vinegar and sweetened with **padak nga kalamay** (solid brown sugar mounds). Peanuts and dried banana blossoms add to the texture. Black beans enrich the spiced flavor mix of peppercorns, laurel leaves and oregano. This is perhaps the tastiest meat dish of the Waray. The tongue sensually luxuriates with pork fat melting in the mouth.

Tamalos is an elaborate Samar pork dish. It is a perfect blending of pork and finely ground peanuts wrapped in banana leaf, indeed a very rich and very risky venture for the frail of health.

Litson (or lechon -- roast whole pig) is the ubiquitous fiesta fare all over the Eastern Visayas. A feast is never truly complete without it. Lechon lends ultimate prestige to the host family or community. Tanauan, Leyte is well-known for the tastiest lechon in Leyte. The pig is marinated for long with lots of salt, pepper and garlic. Skewered in a bamboo pole, it is carefully and slowly turned over the embers to cook its skin toward crispness. Borongan, Eastern Samar boasts of their litson being better than Tanauan's and, supposedly, the best in the region. The Boronganons fill up the pig with layers of laurel leaves. The Waray dipping sauce for lechon is coconut vinegar with pounded garlic. That cuts the grease. But the real padis (partner) for the Waray lechon is a chunk of boiled gabi rootcrop -- carbohydrate rich **duma** that brushes off the

grease from the inner lining of one's mouth. That way, the **luwad** (greasy, oily taste) is removed and one is ready for the next bite.

Ritual food

Fishing and farming begin with thanking the ancestral spirits, nature spirits (of land and sea) and the Christian God not only with animal sacrifices but also by offering food. Healing rituals for illnesses caused by displeased nature spirits are done with offering ritual food and other goodies such as candies, cigarettes and tuba or other alcoholic beverage. Chicken or pork is simply boiled without salt. Salt offends and scares the nature spirits away. Some communities offer all of the food to the spirits, others share half for the spirits and the other half for humans -- the family or community.

. Suman (steamed non-glutinous or glutinous rice) is a constant all-occasion offering for Christian deities and spirits of the beloved departed). There are myriad means of preparing suman. Budbud is basically just rice and salt wrapped in hagikhik leaves. The plain suman of glutinous rice is boiled in coconut milk. When almost cooked a little salt is added. It is wrapped in banana leaf then steamed. Suman nga tinipa is a mix of white and purple glutinous rice sweetened with brown sugar. Suman latik is plain glutinous suman flavored and yellowed with lye. It goes with latik, dark syrup made from kalamay and coconut milk. It is distinctively wrapped in triangular shape with hagikhik leaves.

The ground glutinous rice takes various shapes, names and tastes all over the region. Northern Samar's sarungsong which is made of ground glutinous rice and shaped as a pyramid with a coconut frond wrapping has reached Tanauan, Leyte where it is offered to tourists and served in food fairs. The most distinctive Waray suman is the moron of Abuyog, Leyte (minoron in Catbalogan, Samar). It's a particular favorite of locals and visitors for its chocolate layer.

Breakfast, Desserts, Snacks, and Sweet Delicacies

“Sweet” is “matam-is” in Waray. There are light and heavy Waray sweets. The range of main ingredients varies from coconut, rice, peanuts to the various duma or plantains like camote, cassava, gabi, talyan and bananas. There is also the special and rare ingredient like the aluro

(arrow root). The well known ones (mentioned earlier) which are really filling are the **binagol** of Dagami, Leyte and the **moron** of Abuyog.

Salukara is a rice pancake cooked and served for breakfast daily in Eastern Samar. It is fluffy and thick, and has a delicate sour tinge given by the tuba the ingredient that makes the rice batter grow.

The town of Carigara which was the center of the Catholic evangelization during the Spanish regime takes pride in their sundry Spanish sweets of **pastillas de leche** (of carabao milk), **rosas** (pastries leavened with pork lard), cookies in varied shapes, and the now rare and precious **mazapan de Toledo** – rich bars of sugared ground pili nuts punctuated with candied red **lemonsito**, **kundol** and raisins.

The **sagmani** of Basey, Samar and Tacloban is a mound of gabi flesh cut in the mid section and filled with a thick caramelized grated gabi with coconut milk and peanuts. **Iraid** is either grated balanghoy (cassava) or camote sweetened with sugar and cooked in coconut milk. It is rolled and wrapped in banana leaf and steamed. It may be filled with **bukayo** (sweetened grated coconut). Iraid is best cooked the ancient way of **linot-lot or binia-as** – in bagakay bamboo tubes and charcoal broiled.

Bokarillo (sugared grated coconut shaped in balls) is a simple and economic dessert served during fiestas. If the host can afford it, the prestigious **buko salad** is the luxurious finale that cheers up the palates of guests and hosts alike – fresh young coconut strips dressed in cream and condensed milk and brightened up with canned mix fruits (fruit cocktail), kaong and peanuts. Sweet corn and cheese may be added. Buko salad is best served when chilled.

The Mild Waray Taste

In his analysis of Waray food, E. N. Alegre articulated that the Waray taste is mild. He based his finding from the Waray tinola, lawot-lawot, lechon, and, carindaria, fiesta and everyday dishes that he relished as a field researcher and eventually as a resident of Tacloban. The Waray tinola, basically fresh fish broth, is “soured with batuan or tomato -- milder than the Tagalog souring.” The Tagalogs of Bulakan prefer the juice of a bowl of boiled tamarind as tinola or sinigang flavor. That taste would wrinkle a Waray face!

One Herb, One Dish

For everyday meals, the Waray typically prefers a hinatukan (cooked in coconut milk) -- either dagmay (gabi leaves), karubasa, langka, tarong, or the distinctive lawot-lawot. The flavor of each is enhanced with one just strong herb or spice—thus, the general rule is one herb, one dish. The hinatukan nga dagmay is perked up with ginger. Hinatukan nga langka is ordinarily spiced with garlic. If sangig (sweet basil) is preferred, then there has to be no other herb. Dulaw or yellow ginger gives character to a hinatukan nga upo or isda. The veggie mix of lawot-lawot is completed with the fragrance of sangig and no other. The multifarious juices and textures from the various flora of a dish like lawot-lawot can be unified by the coconut milk but there must be no extremes that do not quite blend with the rest - nothing too salty nor too sweet, nothing bitter and absolutely nothing pungent for the Waray.

It's All in the Texture

The binagol and moron exemplify the Waray principle of palatability. The grated talyan slightly sweetened with sugar and made pasty by coconut milk is thick and sticky. It is the main bulk of the binagol mound. At the core is the small portion of the very sweet caramel syrup – the arnibal. The way to eat the binagol is to cut through the whole mound so that one gets a wee portion of the sweetest core. Those tempted get a generous scoop of the sumptuous sensuous core. But that is being sinfully rapacious for the Waray ethos. And much too sweet for the Waray sense of glucose. The plainer, thicker and pastier layer is paired with a bit of the sweetest, syrupy section. Sweet isn't very, very sweet. The less sweet talyan layer cuts the scathingly sweetest sweet. The syrup cuts the boredom of the less sweet portion. One complements the other. It is therefore a balanced mix within the same band of sweetened talyan taste, a subtle of contrast of its own texture and flavor— solid versus liquid, rough versus smooth, not so sweet versus very sweet all blend and seep into the tongue and play in the mouth as the last bit melts gradually away with the lingering taste of the detoxified and enriched talyan.

The moron follows the same principle of the pairing of close opposites. The pure rice portion is layered with the chocolate-flavored. One bites through this black-and-white roll of delight. When formally served, the roll is sliced into small circles of enticing chocolate spirals on white. A perfect balance of chocolate and not-chocolate. Pure chocolate suman is rare and would be an extreme -- rather repulsive to the mild Waray.

The Waray House

As in other Visayan languages, the house is called “balay” in Waray. The traditional typical Waray house is “elevated off the ground on posts” and has a steep roof – features appropriate for the tropical climate. Since olden days, a balay that is small and basically made of bamboo and nipa is called “payag”. The bamboo is for the posts, beams, flooring and also for roofing. The nipa is woven into a **sulirap** for the walls and roof. Other roofing materials are cogon, anahaw and sawali. At present, traditional materials may be replaced with stronger materials such as galvanized iron, aluminum, tile, concrete, brick, stone, asbestos, and wood. The house is made more durable but unbearably warm during summer or hot days.

Father Alcina documented the 16th century Visayan dwellings which included those of the Waray. There were grand town houses owned by the datu, light cottages for non-datus which were movable so as to be near shifting swiddens and tree houses occupied only in times of war (Alcina in Scott : 61-62.)

Sugbo and Zafra write of the contemporary Waray houses classified into four types:

...the payag-payag, the simplest house, with one room, one porch and one hearth; the payag, a larger house with a porch a sala, a dining area, a sleeping room which doubles as a storage room, and a kitchen area; the kamalig, a rice granary constructed on the farm or near the rice field, which has small sleeping room, a porch, and an improvised hearth; and the balay. The modern house of concrete and wood, with galvanized or nipa-thatched roof, which usually has two or three sleeping rooms, a porch, a sala, a dining area, a kitchen and a toilet.

The house stands on a **solar** (term used in Eastern Samar) -- the ground defined for dwelling. It is clearly apart from the **kalibungan** which is the wild or uncultivated and undwelt space of the land . The solar may be fenced. The front yard is called **natad** in Calbiga. In La Paz, Leyte, natad refers to the yard surrounding the house.. The staircase is **hagdan** or **hagdanan**. A step on the stairs or one rung of ladder is a **balitang**. The **suyab** (term used in Calbiga) or **deskanso** (term used in Leyte, derived from the Spanish “descansar” which means “to rest”) is the porch. **Ruwang** or **sulod** (Calbiga) or **guwa** (Catubig, Northern Samar) is the

interior space that could be a one-room affair or divided to provide space for bedroom and living room). The **karaunan** is the dining area. The **kusina** or kitchen has a **lutuan** or **abuhan** (cooking area) and **hurugasan** or **panhugasan** (dish washing area). The **banggerahan** is an area for food preparation and dishwashing. The **sirong** is the space underneath the house which is utilized as chicken coop or in farms, even as pig pen. Sometimes it functions as play space for children, a place for social drinking or where one can set up a hammock for siesta.

Basically, the Waray house is "... a one room structure.." The entire ruwang or interior space may be utilized as sleeping area when the house is full with guests, relatives and friends especially during fiestas and other occasions like funerals and weddings.

When there is just one bedroom, it is usually given to the daughter when she reaches teen age. The boys can very well sleep in the living room. When relatives or guests stay for the night, even the kitchen can serve as bedroom. As for the toilet, the latrine is in a small hut detached from the main house. In farm areas, one traipses on a bamboo bridge to reach the toilet. In the lowland and coasts, the toilet is leveled on the ground. As for taking a bath at home, it used to be so that bathing was done either at the kitchen area or by the well even without walls. The children bathe naked, the men half-naked but the women, in all their modesty, would wet themselves in their house dresses or shirts and shorts. One can only guess how they get to fully wash themselves up. But they really do as they manage to find private space in the kitchen or at the back of the house when there is no one else around. Houses on riverbanks have toilets built directly above the water. It is a traditional structure which pollutes the river and should therefore be changed.

A house must be oriented with the morning sunlight reaching the door, therefore it must be directed towards the east. The kitchen is also best exposed to the eastern sun. Like many other Filipinos, the Warays utter "oro, plata, mata," (Spanish for gold, silver and death respectively) for every step repeatedly until they reach the last step. One utters each word in succession for every step of the stairs so that the last step must be either "oro" or "plata". Never "mata" for it forebodes death or bad luck for those who dwell in that house.

An Panday

Panday is the Waray term referring to a person skilled in wood/stone/metal-working and covers the areas of house construction, sculpting, boat building and blacksmithing. But the

panday's main occupation is house building as there is a regular need for it by newly married couples and those couples who want to separate from their parents' panimalay and start a home they can call their own. In the early days, a Waray panday has alternative livelihoods to occupy his time and earn income to sustain his family in between building houses. It is not unusual to find a panday fishing or farming. Not all fisher and farm folks though can be a panday. It takes skill and experience to become a panday.

Depending on their affordability, a couple may choose to build either a payag-payag, a payag or a balay. A couple is fortunate and can save a lot if the husband or a relative is a panday. Only one panday and an assistant are needed to build a house. If the couple is limited financially or need to build a house immediately, they **makikialayon** (request the assistance of immediate family, relatives and friends). Kinship and social ties save the day and everybody pool in their time and skills – **burugligay**. It is the house owners' obligation to provide the meals during construction. At the end of the day when the house is finally built everybody celebrate with food and the ever present tuba.

Today as in the early days, the professional panday is compensated with a **suhol** (cash payment for the service) which may be paid either **adlawan** (daily basis) or **pakyaw** (project contract) by the houseowner or a building contractor hired by the owner. And as practised by the pandays of their ancestors' time, pandays end the weeks' laborious work with a round of tuba.

An Panday's Tools

A Waray panday will not be caught without the tools of his trade. The basic tools for building a payag are: **bolo** – for clearing the selected site and slicing off the protruding nodes or, **sundang** - for cutting bamboo trees and pole, **martilyo** (hammer) - for **pagsumpat** which is done by hammering and joining the bamboo post, beams and joists together; **tigib** (chisel) – for carving and chiseling holes in poles and **sapyo** (plane) – for smoothening the surface of the **soleras** (wood joists unto which the bamboo slats is attached to make an even surface for the floor).

Materials for Building the Payag

To build a traditional payag, the panday gathers together the materials he gets from the immediate environs. He may directly source it himself or buy from traders. During pre-hispanic

times especially when the land's flora and fauna are bountiful and free for the indigenous Waray's sustenance and nurturing, the panday would go to woods and forests and cuts the **tangnan** and **patong** bamboos and hard trees for use either as poles, posts, joists, beams, floor slats and frames. Prior to construction, the bamboos must first be submerged in the sea or river for at least three months. This would strengthen the bamboo and prevent its fast decay.

Bamboo strips can also serve as the basic material for weaving sections of walls called **siniko**. **Nipa** from the coconut tree is conveniently available along the coasts of Leyte and Samar and can be woven into **pawod** (nipa shingles) for the **atup**. **Paglara** (weaving) of the pawod or the siniko is mostly done by women kinfolks and friends of the owners or the panday. The **uway** (rattan strips) is used for tying most of the materials together - from the post, beams, joists, roof, walls to the floors. Bundles of uway can be purchased from traders as the rattan (*Calamus*) is not readily available. The panday's kaurupdan (kins) and kasangkayan (friends) may also do the stripping to make the uway. **Raysang** (iron nails) are also bought from the traders but its use is limited to hammering parts unto wood. Bamboos tend to crack when a nail is hammered into it.

Building Rituals

When a couple decides on the place where to build on their payag, the most important consideration is its distance to their place(s) of work. Once selected, they or the panday go to the site on a Friday morning to perform the **panarit** to ask permission from the nature spirits of their intention to build at the site. The panday does ascertain the suitability of the site by performing the **pag-ugba** as the farmer does before planting. If the pag-uba foretells of a favorable life for the owners, the panday will then proceed with the **halad** (offering) ritual to appease “an mga diri sugad ha aton” (nature spirits) and to protect the panday from any spirits' wrath if he so unintentionally disturbs their space. If the place selected is known to be the abode of evil spirits, the panday calls for the tambalan to perform the **pag-ugba**. The tambalan recites incantations to drive the evil spirits away. A chicken is also slaughtered and left as halad. When the panday is assured that the site is free of evil spirits that is when he starts to clear and clean of unwanted bushes and trees. Wood from felled trees, if any, are then gathered and cut for use in building the payag.

Once the tambalan has given the clearance for the start the construction, the house owner(s) with the panday visit the **kagubaan** (cleared site) and determine the lay-out of the payag. This also must be performed on a Friday morning any month of the year except February and March as these are considered lean and difficult months for Warays in Jaro, Leyte. It is the Waray's belief that the suyab and main entrance of the payag should face the east, the rising sun, to bring good fortune and prosperity for the family. When the right lay-out is determined, the owner or the panday then performs the **pag-usok** to welcome and bring in good fortune, health and happiness to the owners, their family and friends. This is done by digging six holes unto which the main posts of the house are to be erected. The owners then drop coins, kilala and kalipayan leaves into each hole. When through, the panday then starts to sink into each hole the bamboo poles which will serve as the house main posts. The construction of the payag may now commence.

Steps in Building the Payag

The steps in building a bamboo and nipa house a la Waray is well articulated, thus:

The typical traditional Waray house is built with six **harigi** or (main posts) made of bamboo poles or timber. The roof has a **baybayan** (beam) as its main support, and is reinforced by the major posts of the house. From this beam, the **pagbon** (rafter) is attached, its center supported by a pendulum (king post). Small **paut** (minor rafters) are added just beneath the **pagbon**. A small **kurbata** (small piece of bamboo) is also attached to the rafter. From the center of the roof frame, two **tuklang** (supports) are attached as major supports of the **kumatin** (ridge beam). The **katsaw** (purlins) are the pieces of bamboo attached to the ridgebeam and the beam. Sometimes, besides the purlins, additional **barakilan** (small purlins) are attached laterally and mounted so as to reinforce the **pawod** or nipa.

The ridges of the **atup** (roof) are covered with halves of the bamboo pole to serve as **taklub** (cover); the tops of these are supported with long bamboo poles called **datug**.

The **suliras** (floor frame) are the basic support beams of the **salog** (floor). Traditionally, the so-called **lahos-lahos** type of floor is used, for this allows the air to pass freely through the floor. Bamboo splits, about 5 cm. in width and cut according to the length of the floor of the house, are commonly used as flooring materials.

There are three types of **bungbong** (walls); the **inalpag**, the **siniko** or **sinapak**, and the **hinopila**. Square window shutters of nipa leaves or bamboo, the tinuklang type, are tied to the upper frame of the window with rattan strips.

Two doors are built, one at the front and one at the back. The ladders usually made of bamboo are not permanently attached to the doorway, in some areas especially in remote places, they are detached and pulled inside the house in the evening, and brought down again the morning.

Sugbo and Zafra : 450

Nails need not be used to join ends of beams and frames. Instead of nails which may cause bamboos to crack, the uway or rattan strips are tied around joints which have been holed and attached to each other. This method of fastening supporting beams in the bamboo- nipa house is typically Filipino as it is also done in other areas. The uway is also used to tie bamboo slats together for the flooring, and the nipa shingles to the bamboo frames to make the roof and walls.

The indigenous Waray system of house construction shapes the materials into what E. N. Alegre refers to as “air and light friendly”. It is suffused with the brightness of the tropical light and the freshness of the sea and mountain breezes. The nature of bamboo, nipa, cogon and rattan and the design as well are so that the walls are permeable. The interior and exterior spaces, interconnect, and, interpenetrate. The space inside the house is a ...

...see-through space enclosed by walls. Inside those walls, in that space, we interconnect with each other. The Waray house is, as other Pinoy houses, is not segmented into rooms that are completely sealed off from the other spaces of the house. Its distinctive feature is its being inter-, intra-connected with those other spaces. And within those “spaces,” resiliency of use, permeability of sound and movement of self. Not that the Pinoy house is an open space, it is not. It is an enclosed space within which there are no walls.

Alegre 1994: 166

Pagbal-in (Moving Day) Rituals

When the panday and his team has finished construction, the house owners do not move in immediately as they have to make sure that they move in on the next eve of a full moon or on the day of the full moon itself.

On moving day, the couple or a member of their family go ahead to the new house before the rest of the family and close friends to perform the **pagtapon**. This ritual is done to ward off evil spirits and prevent them from entering the house. The couple must bring **anahaw** leaves and **palaspas han dahon han pitugo** (pitugo leaves blessed by the priest during the last Palm Sunday of Lent). These leaves are hung unto the katsaw of the roof. It stays there until it dries up and be blown away by the elements. After hanging the leaves, the couple then brings in three basic household items in their respective containers: **tubig para diri uhawon** (water so as not to go thirsty), **bugas para diri gutumon** (rice so as not to go hungry), and, **asin para waray kawarayan** (salt so as not to be empty-handed).

When all the **pagtapon** rituals are done, the rest of the relatives, friends and new neighbors are invited inside and partake of the food prepared by the family. And as is customary of Warays, the celebration's finale is the – tuba. This then is the final ritual for moving in – the **panaka**.

Spanish Influence

When the Spaniards came, wealthy families built two-storey houses with stone walls on the first floor and wooden posts and boards on the second. Although bigger and grander, these houses maintained the design principle of the tropical payag. There are elaborations such as intricate decorative woodworks and grillworks for arches, railings, windows and eaves. There are sliding ventanillas and lattice walls that allow for optimal indoor ventilation and psychological inter-connection among the dwellers – children with parents, siblings and cousins with each other and with those outside the nuclear family and kin -- with friends and the community.

Contemporary Waray House

Contemporary houses now vary according to socio-economic class. The traditional payag has come to be the house of the poor in contemporary Waray society. In urban slum areas, the payag materials diversified: salvaged G.I sheets, plywood, tarpaulins and cartons.

With the American introduction of the bungalow house, concrete houses mushroomed in the urban areas. These had low-roofs, low-ceilings, one or two bedrooms and small windows. The middle class families occupied these houses and made them into livable dwellings by planting flowering plants of bougainvillas, orchids, gumamelas and euforbias, and the colorful kalipayan around. When funds would allow, they would break down a wall and build a lanai to allow more air into the house; or extend the small kitchen with an abuhan called the “dirty kitchen” for grilling fish or cooking for the fiesta. The garage is transformed into the porch where the family could cool off when the season is hot. Otherwise, a table is set up outside the house by or in the street for a drinking-singing spree on a summer night. When the heat is intolerable and there is no option for a wall to give way, middle class families install air conditioners which have become affordable.

The houses of the wealthy are patterned after neo-classic and modern Western models. These are basically concrete houses with high fences. Sliding glass windows and door panels are popularly used. Rooms, if not the entire house, are air conditioned. Wide grassy lawns are landscaped with stately palms or pine trees and lined with elegant lamps.

Recently, some families in Tacloban renovated old houses and creatively developed them for adaptive re-use as heritage houses. The Montejo family enhanced the 1930s character of their ancestral house which is now the Hotel Alejandro. The Asturias residence has been refurbished as a popular homey coffeeshop and restaurant. Rosevenil Pension house arose from the Quintero ancestral home where the family still resides. Perhaps one of the oldest houses in Tacloban, the Sugbo house has an art-deco- themed bookstore, Libro, in its ground floor.

Furniture, Furnishing and Home Implements

In pre-Hispanic times, the use of furniture was minimal in the Waray home. Bamboo benches may be “attached to the walls below the windowsill” (Agung 2009: 7). For privacy, a biyumbo (divider) made of amakan separates a space from the rest of the house so that “one can

change clothes or store clothes, pillows, mats, ..." and other intimate possessions (7). Generally, there were no chairs, tables were low, and there were no beds. Even to this day, people in rural areas and in urban poor communities, typically sleep on mats spread on the floor by night and rolled up by day.

The Spaniards introduced beds, tables, chairs, and elaborate niceties with intricate design themes and motifs. Baroque furniture entered the Waray home aesthetic. Elegantly carved wooden dining tables, chairs and canopied beds, altars, shelves filled up the homes of the well-to-do. In the 1960s, upholstered modern furniture became the fad. Current trends of modern Italian, American and Indonesian origin are now part of the range of choices for the middle and upper class Waray home.

In 1521 Pigafetta recorded the serving of food in porcelain dishes (traded from the Chinese) offered to Magellan and his men by the Datu of Limasawa. In 1668 the chronicles of Waray life by Father Alcina reveal very minimal furnishings as noted by Sugbo and Zafra: "two to three pots, 2 to 3 drinking coconut shells called **ongates**; 2 to 3 plates made of coconut shells called **paia**; and crude plates made of clay. Gums of trees or myrrh-like resins called **anime** served as fuel for lamps. Some used coconut oil." (449) However, there still are extant traditional implements kept and are still used in homes today. The **sundang** (all-purpose iron sword) and **bolo** (garden knife) are ubiquitous tools for the kitchen, the garden and for self defense. Mats made from grass were and still are being slept on everyday in many poor communities. Earthen ware like the clay water jar called **biso** keeps the drinking water cool; the **daba** or cooking pot remains as the best vessel to cook **paksiw** and **humba** in; the **moronilyo** or chocolate jar is still being used to melt chocolate tablets in for the thick chocolate drink and is stirred fine with a wooden **batidor**. Farmers and their wives have the **bayo** and **lusong** (wooden mortar and pestle) to separate the chaff from the rice grains, to make **pilipig** (rice flakes) and **lupak** (pounded rice, cassava and or banana cakes).

Some implements made of bamboo are still in use to this day. Rice eating communities are certainly not without the essential **nigo**. It is made of bamboo strips woven into a round flat tray with raised rim lined with split bamboo used for separating the unwanted grit, dirt and empty husks from the rice grains prior to washing and eventually cooking. The nigo is specifically used for rice and no other. With the introduction of well-milled "first class" rice in the last quarter of the 20th century, the process requiring the use of the nigo is eliminated

especially in urban households. Farm households also have the larger and round nigo called **lidong** for **pagpalid** (winnowing) and as receptacle for newly harvested farm produce.

Common house implements of the basket type are the **bayong** -- to carry fish, fruits, meat, vegetables and rice from the tabo or market; **alat** -- for storing and transporting miscellaneous items; and the **sanika** -- round tray of woven **gihay** or coconut ribs with raised rim used as container for herbs, fruits and vegetables and for serving food.

Rarely used now are some implements displayed in the Carigara Municipal Museum. The **ayugan** or basket to trap birds, **balalong** (a wooden container for pig's feed), and **molino** (stone or wood rice or corn grinders). The coconut shell was used to make a **luwag** (ladle), or a **sara** (strainer), or a **kabo** (water dipper).

The Waray until the last century use the **salud**, a bamboo pole of about 4 feet long with a curved wooden handle attached to the top open end and hung unto the shoulder, to carry water taken from burabod (spring) or bubon (well). On reaching the payag, the water in the salud is then poured into the **biso** (water jar) located at the banggerahan. When thirsty, one uses the **kabo** to dip water from the biso and pour it unto the **hungot**, a drinking cup of coconut shell.

Perhaps the most essential implement to the Waray who loves hinatukan dishes and delicacies is the **kaguran**, a low wooden bench unto which is attached a coconut grater of iron about 4 to 6 inch in length with one round end flattened and serrated with small sharp incisors. One sits on the bench astride as on a horse and grate the inner and meat-lined side of a halved coconut against the sharp iron incisors. Even with the availability of grated coconut in the market, a true Waray cook still prefers the slow and laborious kaguran at home as the **kinagud nga lubi** (grated coconut) in the market lacks moisture and wanting of **hatok** (coconut milk). This is so because the centrifugal force of the motor-driven kaguran causes a waste of hatok.

Waray traditional life was sufficiently sustained by materials readily available in the physical milieu – bamboo and wood for furniture, stone for rice and corn grinders, grass for mats, clay for kitchen and garden vessels, coconut shell and bamboo for kitchen implements. They are appropriated for the tropical hot and humid air in these islands. Today, however, these are relegated to oblivion with the onslaught of new and contemporary creature comforts provided by smoothed and sleek iron, aluminum, leatherettes and plastic.

Chapter III

TRADITIONAL LIVELIHOOD

Pangisda

(Fishing)

Boats

Fishing communities thrive in communities by the river or sea. Since ancient times, the Waray have been building boats. Boats serve as means of transportation for fishing and for transporting people as well as goods. Pigafetta wrote that the early Waray in Homonhon, Eastern Samar met Magellan and his men on the first day of their arrival in the Philippine island world and brought them food and drink while on boats. When there was yet no bridge over San Juanico Strait, only boats connected the people of the islands of Leyte and Samar across the bays that separate them. Boats brought Cebuanos and Boholanos to Leyte and vice versa. Boats carried pirates from the south to raid the coastal communities and take Waray captives. Rice, fish, fruits, pots and people were brought from island to island on boats made by the ancient panday's muscular hands. Today, boats still carry goods and people downstream and upstream of the river if not to the distant depths of the sea for prized fish or shells or for sheer adventure.

The simplest water craft is the **tabaw** or **gakit** -- a bamboo raft. It is used to transport crop harvest. Marine communities refer to it as **balsa**. **Sakayan** is the generic term for banca or boat (motorized or non-motorized). Its basic form, a carved whole log like a canoe, is called **hublas** in Catubig. It is also known as **baloto** or **dalamas**. It has no outrigger. It is used for fishing and transporting farm goods downstream of the river to the market. The **sampan** and **lanseta** are flat-bottom-boats without outriggers; they carry heavy load. The former carries sand and stone while the latter bears abaca, rice and copra. A boat with a solid wood for its base frame but has **sinalapian** or plywood finish for its sides is called **bugsayan**, **lunday** or **subiran**. It is used for short distance trips. When the bugsayan is set up with a **layag** (sail) it is then called **layagan**. Carigara in Leyte has **sampana**, a row boat which uses huge paddles called

rimo or **ga-od** which are attached to the boat. A **pambot** or pumpboat is so called for the pumping action of the motor. This term is widely used. The motorboat is also called **di-motor**. With its size and speed, the pambot is used for fishing farther away from shore and to transport people and cargo between distant places on river or at sea. Roofs may be built to shelter the goods and people.

The **katig** or outrigger is usually made of bamboo. All boats for the sea have katig to maintain balance over huge waves. Without an outrigger, the boatman or boatwoman of a baloto can only rely on the **bugsay** -- the wooden paddle -- for balance and for accelerating the journey over the waves and against the currents.

Rituals

To this day, fishing rituals are performed for the following purposes: 1.) to bless new boats, implements and sites for good luck and protection from malevolent spirits; 2.) to thank, revere or appease the sea spirits; 3.) to assure abundance 4.) to cast off bad luck, 5.) to restore the efficacy of boat and fishing tools; and, 6.) to heal the sick. All are accompanied with uttered prayers. A tambalan (shaman) usually officiates over these rituals.

Upon the completion of a new boat or implement the fisherfolks in Gandara, Samar, do the **hadang** for good luck and good fortune. It is believed to ensure plentiful catch. They offer cooked chicken (black or white), pork, gin and cigarettes to the river spirits. . The padugo (literally, to let blood) is a way of blessing a new implement.

Fisherfolks offer white chicken as animal sacrifice. It is slaughtered and boiled without salt. Half of it is placed on a raft and left at sea for the spirits. The other half is eaten at the shore. No left-overs must be brought home. Only the tambalan can lead in performing this. In Pastrana, the fish trap called **ansag** is blessed by offering a fresh egg (the first egg laid by a native chicken). The egg is cracked in the ansag. Burning incense is then poured over the ansag... This is called **panghi-on**. The **pagtubos** may also be done in the ansag. Some fragrant leaves (panhiuli, tanglad and aslum) are soaked in the water and this fragrant water is sprinkled over the ansag.

Tubas or **tikos** is a Carigara ritual performed by fishermen to bless newly made or newly-bought implements. Leaves of particular plants such as clabo, burubayasong, kaliayan,

kalongkogan, kinding-kinding and aslum are soaked in water. This water is then sprinkled over the implement. The fisherman uses this special water to wash his hands.

To bless a new construction site for a dike or dam, the padugo is observed. Pig's blood is dripped over the construction site. When a net or implement loses its efficacy in attracting fishes, the **paghuwas** is done in Catubig to restore its potency by simply soaking it in water with **panhiuli** leaves. When the ansag yields few fishes, the **batog** is performed to ward off malas or bad luck. A live chicken is set free near the ansag, a fresh egg is cracked and prayers are said.

The **pagdiwata** in McArthur, Leyte is an elaborate freshwater lore. A white chicken or live pig is offered. Its blood is scattered around the boat or it is made to drip over the fishing implements. This is then placed on a bamboo raft in the lake. The **tubignon** (water deities) and **kahoynon** (forest deities) are invited to partake of the food offering. The spirits of the dead who drowned in the lake as well as other spirits are likewise summoned.

In Oras, Eastern Samar, the pagdiwata or **pagtubas** used to be performed by the tambalan. Now the priest can also officiate the pagbendisyon or blessing of a new boat or net especially those used commercially. The first catch is to be shared and should not be sold.

Permission to fish in a certain area in Basey is sought from the water spirits. Three eggs are dropped in the area. If these eggs reach the bottom, this signifies that permission is granted. If the eggs are carried away by the current, the fisherman will have to spare the area from fishing and move to another site. This is also performed to appease angered spirits. These invisible water beings are believed to be displeased when their abodes are transgressed.

The **tamoy** and **batog** of Carigara are de-hexing rituals – to cast off evil spells. Both require animal sacrifice. In the tamoy, the chicken is boiled without salt and offered with seven cigarettes, seven glasses of tuba, and seven candies. These are placed on a raft which is made to float at sea. In the latter, the chicken is set free at sea. If it is found, it should not be eaten lest bad luck overcomes the one who ate it. However this chicken can be kept and bred. While performing the tamoy, the tambalan must not speak with anyone. He invokes the sea spirit. His invocation may go thus:

Kamo nga mayor han dagat, han bukid
Pagsasagro kamo hini nga pagka-on
Ngan upaya niyo an iyo gin-aataman

Translation:

You guardian of the sea and mountain

Partake of this food

And take very good care of those

Who offer this

The performance of rituals reveal a basic indigenous assumption about the Waray waterworld – that spirits inhabit spaces within and beyond the reach of humans and that they animate objects in the physical world. Should humans penetrate the spirit territories, there is protocol to be followed. Permission must be sought and only when the spirits grant this can humans proceed with their activities in consonance with the rhythm of everyday life. Otherwise, the cycle of daily life stops due to illness or misfortune. Fisherfolks therefore conduct their quotidian lives in recognition of the spirits who grant favors, good luck, good health and prosperity. The water environment is a sacred space that requires respect. It is a source of life. Its power knows no bounds as it can exact a formidable price -- even life itself. Misfortune is a disruption of this naturally harmonious co-existence which can be restored by ritual acts of deference, reverence and good will.

Implements

Pukot refers to fishing net in general. The Waray have various nets distinguished by the natural behavior and size of fish to be caught, the depth of the water, intensity of the water currents and the season.

Riverine fisherfolks in Catubig use the **sihod** (a cylindrical handset with bamboo poles) for small fish. The **sudsod** is a pushnet for shrimps and small fish in shallow river. The **pabbas** is reinforced with bamboo poles for shallow river fishes. The **biyahos** is similar to pabbas but is designed for deeper areas and strong currents. Therefore it is installed with coconut trunks for reinforcement. For the lake in MacArthur, Leyte, a fine conical net called **supot** catches shrimps in the tributaries. The **panti** (gillnet) is used for shallow areas. The **sikyup** is for deeper portions. For big fishes, the **baring** is appropriate. To catch a school of fish, one encircles them with a **likos**.

Bamboo traps for freshwater fauna are designed according to the following factors: the type of fish to be caught, its size and shape, its peculiar characteristics, the characteristics of the river or lake and the state of the water. There are traps for crabs, eels and other fishes.

Crabs are caught in a cylindrical basket trap called **panggal** (Catubig) or **bobo** (Gandara). This is appropriate for still waters. During high tide and wary waters, the **bestal**, a device with a net framed with bamboo is best used. Gandara has **tusok** (stick with framed net) for shallow water and **tunod** for the deep. Eel traps are of three kinds: the **takupan**, the **barongbong** and the **taon**. The **takupan** in Pastrana is an elongated and cylindrical bamboo basket perfectly suited for the long and slender eel. The **barongbong** in MacArthur is made of **patong** bamboo measuring 2 ½ to 3 feet long and 5 to 6 inches in diameter. It is big enough for the eel to enter. The smaller version of this is called **gugya** (2 to 3 feet long) – the length of the bamboo holes. The **taon**, the spindle-shaped bamboo basket of Pastrana, catches all sorts of fish.

The fence trap called **bunu-an** in Dagami is now obsolete. Dagami River has become shallow due to siltation which people say resulted with the building of the water reservoir in Pastrana, a neighboring town. With this deterioration, the fish had become scarce and the water less; and the **bunu-an** was reduced and became useless.

The **ansag** in Pastrana is a distinctive river structure. It is built in the river and it covers the entire width of the river. The elevated flooring is constructed by a series of bamboo poles joined together. This is supported by wooden posts. The **ansag** is especially designed for the **baha** or flood. Fishes are washed downstream and are thus trapped in the **ansag**.

The **ansag** makers are sensitive to the wonders and mysteries of nature. Even the flood is particularly regarded as a possible resource. There is now just one family who continually lead in building an **ansag** – that of **Mr. Ruben Lobrego of Lourdes, Pastrana**. Although the total cost of investment is formidable compared to the profits earned, Mr. Lobrego rationalizes this devotion to the **ansag** as a way of continuing a family legacy. In this case, the preservation of a traditional technology is motivated not by economic gains but by the dutiful perpetuation of ancestral memories.

The use of metal in freshwater fishing technology is nil. It is limited to being a material of the spearhead of a spear gun called **tapang** in Gandara and the arrowhead for **pana** (arrow) in Dagami and Catubig. At most, it serves as material for the blade of a bolo used for **panulo** (catching fish by hacking the fish with a bolo) in Pastrana. At the very least metal is commonly

used as **kawil** (hook) for the hook-and-line device for the **kitang** (multiple hook-and-line) in Catubig.

Paghilo is the term for the process of poisoning fish with toxic chemicals. Rice pesticides like Decis R and Thiodan are indiscriminately used. These chemicals do not only kill fish, they also pollute the water. They are harmful to people who eat contaminated fish and shells. **Panguryente** is the process of electrocuting the water in the river. This is done by holding two poles attached with electric probes on each hand and dipping one in the water. If by accident both probes are dipped in to the water, the fisherman could be electrocuted. This is very dangerous. Despite the danger that these practices pose, fisherfolks have extensively employed these methods apparently due to the depletion of the abundant resources in the rivers.

For marine fishing, there are numerous and various **pukot**. A net may be named after the fish it is designed to catch such as the **pamalanak** to catch a **balanak** (*Balamugie sp.*) or **panuray** for **turay**. The **patuloy** which is a basic net with floaters and sinkers (Carigara,) is commonly used. It is called in sundry names in other areas , **panti** or **patitig** (Laoang, Northern Samar) or **paanod** (Oras, Eastern Samar). The **pamo** net of Basey is a black nylon net with bigger eye. It catches big fish in the deep. The **kunay** is similar to amo but is of white nylon. It is also used in Basey for big fishes. The **palubog** (Taft, Eastern Samar), or **pasalad** (Sulangan, Eastern Samar and Oras) is cast for the bottom of the sea. It reaches the sea bed. For shallow waters there is the ancient yet extant **laya** (Basey, Laoang) or **raya** (Taft). These terms refer to the same kind of conical net. It is especially used when the water is not clear as during flood since the fish would not perceive its presence in the water. The **bitana** or baring , used in Taft, Oras and Sulangan, is a dragnet with very fine mesh. . It is good for shallow areas and is used especially to catch shrimps and small fishes. The **agahid** is also a finely meshed net used by hand. It scoops small **bulinaw** (Anchovy) which thrive close to the water surface.

Some indigenous nets are destructive. These have been categorized as illegal by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources as well as by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. However, they are still used, albeit surreptitiously, in some fishing communities. These are the **sudsud**, a net framed in bamboo and is pushed in the water. It somehow hits and destroys the coral reefs and collects the fingerlings and fry which shouldn't be caught. The **hulbot-hulbot** or **bira-bira** is a net with a very fine mesh and uses a big rock as sinker. As it is dragged, it destroys the sea bottom. The **likisan** is similar to hulbot-hulbot or

bira-bira but it is pulled in with the use of a machine pulley. It also reaches the sea bed and thus destroys the underwater ecology.

Trawl fishing and superlight are banned but are being practised surreptitiously by commercial fishers. The latter is of a very fine mesh and is used with a powerful halogen lamp to lure the fishes. It includes fingerlings among its catch and is therefore destructive.

Marine bamboo traps address the size, shape and behavior of its prey, water depth, presence of currents and the tides. The **bubu** or **panggal** is a cylindrical and roundish basket trap, usually a meter long and made of bamboo strips. Both ends are open and the bait hangs out at the center. It is commonly used for crabs. In Carigara it is also used for squids. The **timing**, also a bamboo basket trap, is for crabs and fish. The **pundol** is similar to but is bigger than the timing. It also catches crabs and fish. The **taklob** is a flat round basket trap with a hole in the center. It is made of finely woven bamboo strips and uses a rock as a sinker. With **lumot** (green algae) as bait, it catches **balait** (rabbit fish or spinefoot). The **bintol** is also a crab trap. Bamboo is used as frame for the square net. The **tangpo** in Basey is made simply of large **patong**, a bamboo (2 feet long pole). One end is open with lumot as bait inside. It welcomes fish like the lapulapu. The tangpo is positioned in spaces among rocks and coral reefs where the lapulapu inhabits.

Bamboo poles support the net for the **pabhas** which is a fish corral in Laoang. The **bunuan** is commonly built in Sulangan, Taft, Oras and Basey. It is a bamboo corral. From aerial view, it is a funnel-shaped fence with a semi-circular center. It is good for shallow areas. The **bintulan** of Basey is similar to the bunuan in structure. But since it is for the deep, its posts are made of coconut trunks which can withstand the currents underwater. A lamp is set up at the center to attract fishes.

The use of wood and metal for marine fishing is sparse. Wood comes in the form of **palutaw** or **pataw** (floater), **bulu** (a pointed stick to gather shells) or **arong** which is a tree branch used as artificial breeding base like a coral reef. The use of metal is minimal. It is material for **kawil** (hook), **tingga** or sinker, **pana** (arrow), **tapang** (spear) and bolo blades.

The hook is generally called **kawil** in Waray. It is also used to refer to the hook-and-line implement using one or two hooks. The word for the hook-and-line implement is called **balatang** in Basey. Hooks are also used for **puropasayan** (shrimp-like bait). The undag in Carigara is a vertical hook-and-line with more than two hooks. It uses hook no. 570. The

tinatina is for squids but its hooks are arranged and held by a wooden stick attached to a line. The marine **kitang** – multiple hook-and- line -- is a series of hooks in a single line with one meter interval between hooks. A **pataw** (floater) is used as it is set in the deep. The **bulwat** (Carigara) is a series of hooks in a line used to catch squids.

The easiest fishing method is the sole use of hand. Shells may be picked up and gathered by hand as in **pamurot** (Laoang) or **pamangti** (Basey, Carigara). A bolo or stick may be used in Basey to dig out the sand to reveal the shells. This is also done in Carigara with the aid of a **luwag** or ladle. **Panulo** is hitting the fish with a bolo or hand spear.. This is done at night with the aid of lamplight. It is believed that fishes are weak during this time so it is easier to hit them. The **pugita** or octopus is caught through the **pamugita**. This is simply done by baiting an empty shell of a **camelo** or **orang** (crab) to which the octopus is attracted. The octopus grabs the artificial camelo with its tentacles. And as it does, the line with the outwitted octopus is pulled up.

Most fishing methods apply fish psychology as fishes are outsmarted by humans with various lures and traps. However, some fishers use violently destructive methods like dynamite fishing which is locally called **badil**. It a homemade bomb done by putting salt in a bottle. This is then layered on top with **pulbura** (gunpowder usually composed of **asoge** or phosphorus). Many a limb and life have been taken but this practice remains rampant in some fishing areas of the Eastern Visayas thus threatening the bounty and beauty of the waters.

Pag-uma (Farming)

Farming in traditional Waray communities involves a step-by-step process marked by a ritual in every stage. These rituals are **turumanon** (to be fulfilled) as thanksgiving and appeal for bountiful harvest. Through these rituals, the farmers and their families acknowledge the Christian God or Supreme Being, the nature spirits who inhabit or guard the land, and the spirits of the farmers' ancestors who tilled the soil before the present generation. The Christian religion does not conflict with the old animistic and anito or ancestral spirit worship traditions. The ritual liturgy in the form of prayers and incantations is a mix of Christian and animistic invocations.

The implements used are also a mix of traditional and modern technologies. The traditional implements, however, are more widespread in use than the modern ones. Farmers of olden times used effective tools like the **hasok**, **arado** and **kayog** that remain useful today. Upland farms use more traditional technology, e.g. by hand and stick in **pagpugas** or planting. In contrast, the lowland communities are more open to change – now using tractors -- especially in paddy agriculture. Lowland rice has gone through a lot of hybridization so that the new varieties need modern technology. Most of the time paddy agriculture depends on modern science for yield while upland farming turn to the spirits to eliminate pests and to be assured of good harvest.

Clearing the Lot

Kaingin or the slash and burn technique is usually employed in upland farming. In Calbiga, Samar and Catubig, Northern Samar, the farmer must first seek the permission of the spirits in clearing land. The farmer buries three pieces of **silot** or young coconut fruit in the lot where they intend to farm for the first time. The coconut is not dropped but carried down from the tree. The farmer carrying the silot goes around the area three times and buries the silot at the center of the field. The farmer checks the silot on the third day. The farmer shakes the coconut and when he hears the sound of water inside (**magkiloligo**) this means that the spirits do not allow the clearing to be done. However, if the farmer does not hear the water when the coconut is shaken, this indicates that the spirits are granting him permission to clear and till the land. In Calbiga, this ritual is called **pagdiwata**; in Catubig it is termed **paggamit**. In Catubig, after the farmer is permitted to clear the lot, he warns the spirits before starting the clearing. He goes around the fields uttering a **panmuga** or incantation addressed to the spirits: *‘Mga mano, mga mana, kasangkayan, kun aada kamo sa sulod san akon gintatrabahuan, gawas kamo. Gawas, kamo kay bangin kamo diri makagawas. (Elder brothers, elder sisters, friends, if you are inside this area where I will be working in, please leave. Leave as you might not be able to leave)’*.

In Borongan, this ritual is called **patikang** or **pag-ugba**, This is the first thing that a farmer must do if he wishes to till the forest land. The ritual must be done on a Friday. A **balagonbaging** (vine) is placed at the middle of the field (**an titikangan**) together with the food offering of chicken or meat (without salt), candies, **karan-on** (breads or pastries), tuba and cigarettes. After three days, the farmer checks on the vine. If the vine disappears, it means that

the spirits do not give their blessing. If this is the case, the farmer must perform next ritual called **paiway**, or pabaya or **paiwas**. This is an **orasyon** (uttered or chanted prayer) to convince the spirits to allow one to farm or dwell in the area. This is to be done continually until the vine no longer disappears.

After the **paiway**, the next step is the **pagkahoy**. The more traditional Waray term for the cutting of trees or for kaingin is **pagpanaw**. The first tree identified for cutting should not immediately be felled. After the first strike, one has to remove a piece of the bark and set it aside. When the other kaingin workers get thirsty, the bark is placed inside the **biso** (earthen jar) or water container and everyone is allowed to drink from it. Every worker, especially the family members must drink the water. The farmer also has to offer a pair of chickens (magtiayon nga manok) to the spirits. After the chickens are offered, the farmer, his family and the other workers may have the chickens for lunch.

When the kaingin is successful and the field is ready for planting, the first thing to be planted is a variety of banana called **talud**. This will protect the area from being inhabited by spirits. The locals call this practice as **sumpa han mga umurukoy** (literally, curse of the resident spirits).

The other terms for the clearing of the land are **pagdurok** (Catubig) and **paghadhad** (Buraen). To cut the trees, sharp bolos called **sundang** are used. Other implements are the axe called **atsa** (Catubig) or **arakol** (Borongan) or **ali** (Buraen). After the trees and shrubs are cut, they are left for about a week to dry. The next step is the burning of the branches and twigs called **pagsunog** (burning). The field is then cleared of the burnt branches and twigs. These are piled in one corner to be gathered and used as firewood. The field is then ready for planting.

Rice Farming

Upland Rice Farming

Planting Upland Rice

Rice may be planted in an upland farm called **banika**, **bunghanan**, **bulod** or **baul**. It may also be cultivated in irrigated paddies called **hagna** or **basak**.

Pagpugas or upland rice planting is an age-old practice in Calbiga. It is widely done at present. If funds would allow, it is held as a festive event with ritual, food, music dance, drinking and merriment.

On the day before the planting, the farmer installs a **bintangan**. The bintangan is a bamboo structure basically made of four-split **bagakay** bamboo, planted at the center of the field with its four bent strips stuck into the ground so that it becomes a beautiful bamboo lamp. Long ago, an extravagant two-storey bintangan called **kinastilyo** (like a castle) was erected. It was like a tower supported by only one pole which rotated when blown by the wind.. The bintangan has four corners representing the four corners of the world and the four monsoon winds. It is decorated with young coconut leaves and ritual plants. The farmer gathers twenty-four kinds of plants and objects each representing a positive trait: **kalipayan** or San Francisco for happiness; **balasbasan** or blessed palm – for ease from negative elements; **buyon** grass for graceful swaying with the wind; **tanglad** or lemon grass for lushness; **tagurabong** or spring onions for lushness and **tabog** fern for keeping evil away; **bagakay** bamboo for stout trunks, lushness and protection from worms; **panhiuli** for abundance of grains next season; **malawmaw** for the plant to thrive well; **langkuwas** ginger for protection of the farmer from evil; **harang** or chili pepper for keeping grain-eating insects away;; **lukay** or blessed palm leaf for blessings; **kilala** for everybody to recognize ownership of the farm; **rapak** fern for the fruits to be aplenty; **dagom**, a needle for the early germination of the seedlings; **gapas** or cotton for the lightness of the planters' bodies; **sudlay** or comb for every grain to germinate;

Pagpugas begins with **langgan**, the act of bringing the seedlings out to the field before dawn. This is done before dawn to avoid detection by the grain-eating insects and animals. The farmer brings the **gahi** or seedlings to the bintangan as soon as he arrives at the banika.

To start the actual planting, the farmer makes six holes called **hasok** with a dibble stick also called hasok.. The hasok stick is made of a tree branch or a bamboo pole about five to six feet. The holes, approximately half foot apart, should be near the bintangan. He puts grains into these holes while uttering the panmuga or incantation. He names the plants and objects that he gathered. He plants the flora beneath the bintangan and puts the objects inside the sack of seedlings as he names each of them. The panmuga must be completely done at the sixth hasok. The Catholic farmer recognizes the Blessed Mother Mary as the symbol of grace and fertility. The farmer asks her for **paray** — that he be known as having abundant harvest. After that, he

moves fast or runs around the bintangan while doing the paghasok. This signifies happiness and merriment in the course of the pagpugas.

The farmer continues doing the paghasok until people come to help him. They would come even if not formally invited. They are expected to help voluntarily. The farmer and his wife prepares breakfast and lunch for everybody. If they can afford it, a string band may be hired to provide music. But this is rather rare now as band musicians charge expensive fees.

The **paraghasok** (those who make the hasok holes on the ground) are mostly men but some robust women do this, too. Following closely behind them are men, women, teenage boys and girls and children who do the **pagbudbud**. It is the act of putting rice grains into the hasok. The paraghasok and pagbudbud joke, laugh, share stories while working. After the day's work, they eat, sing, drink and dance until dark.

Since many neighbors help, the pagpugas is a fulfilled social event. The same people are expected when another farmer does the pagpugas in his own farm.

Growing Upland Rice

When the leaves of the rice plant bend (**paglawi**), young chicken called **lawihan** is offered to the spirits. The chicken is dressed and offered raw in the field. A small portion is left while the bigger portion is brought home to be eaten by the family. This ritual is called **paggamit**.

Harvesting Upland Rice

The pagmayaw, a thanksgiving ritual for harvest, is first done before the actual harvest of upland rice. Food is offered to thank the nature and ancestral spirits. A dressed chicken, rice with **dulaw** (yellow ginger), **pinipig** (pounded rice flakes) **linupak nga pinipig** (rice cakes) are placed on a makeshift table. A portion of each food is left at the field for the spirits to partake of. This is done in Calbiga.

Three days before harvest in Catubig, the farmer employs a **tambalan** (shaman) to do a ritual to drive away the spirits that may partake of the harvest. The farmer may do this himself. The tambalan installs bamboo poles around the field. This will serve as passage way for the spirits to depart from the field. This also serves as demarcation line of the ownership of the farm.

Farmers claim that some spirits get trapped inside the rice field if this ritual is not done. They believe that the harvested grains would be consumed faster when the farmer fails to do this ritual.

Kayog is the T-shaped metal tool with a wooden handle used for harvesting upland rice. This is called **kugtol** in Catubig. With the kayog, the grains are cut at the base of the stalk. In Borongan this act is called **duwal**. The act of separating the chaff from the grains is called **pag-giok**. This is done by feet.

Sharing system

In the **banika**, the sharing system is three-to-one (3:1), meaning for every four handfuls of harvested grain, three are for the farm owner and one for the laborer.

Lowland Rice Farming

Planting Lowland Rice

Pag-ugba or **patikang** is done before actual planting lowland rice. The farmer plants kalipayan (for happiness), kilala (for others to recognize the owners of the land), panhiuli (for good traits and habits) at the center of the rice field. He also invokes his ancestors who first tilled the same land and the spirits around the place and requests them to guard his plants and ensure a good harvest.

For rice paddies, some farmers use new technology such as tractors for land preparation. The first plowing of the land is called **pag-arado**. The second plowing is called **paglutak**. This is done to loosen the soil. **Pagsagalong** is the smoothening of the land surface to be ready for **patiprak** or direct seedling. Patiprak is a recent technique introduced by a farmer who learned it from Bulacan in Luzon. With this technique, the newly germinated grains are scattered directly throughout the field. This contrasts with the traditional **patanum** (planting) wherein the seedlings are sown in the seedbed and after two weeks are transplanted to the paddies. Patiprak is not time-consuming and therefore, cuts cost. A one-hectare field can be done by one person in half a day while in the patanum, one hectare needs at least seven persons in three to four days of planting.

In pag-arado, the farmers use the **arado**. There are two kinds of arado: the traditional one which has an all-wood body with metal blade and the all-metal plow. After the pag-arado, the

pagtagaytay is done – this is the fixing of the paddy dikes to contain water.. Two persons may do the pag-arado and the pagtagaytay simultaneously. The **sundang** (a sharp metal bladed sword) is used in pagtagaytay. The **tagad** which is a double-bladed machete is also used. This can also serve well in planting coconut and banana.

Farmers in Catubig paddies employ the **payatak** system. Instead of plowing with an arado pulled by one carabao, many carabaos are used to soften the soil. The carabaos are simply allowed to walk through the soil. This is done in paddies with water the whole year. When the soil is done in this system, other implements like the **pakaras** and **surod** need not be used. Since most farmers own only one or two carabaos, they would borrow carabaos from other farmers. They are expected to return the favor when the others do the work in their own farms.

To uproot the weeds after plowing, the pakaras is used. This is a tool, square in shape and made of wood with metal arrows, which is dragged by a carabao. After the pakaras, the **pagsudlay** or **pagkalagkag** (harrowing) follows. This process further loosens the soil. The implement which is like a giant metal comb, is known as surod, kalagkag or **sudlay**..

Pagulong literally means “to roll”. To smoothen the land surface before planting, a banana trunk or a whole log tied with ropes at the ends is dragged across the paddy. This is called **ligad-ligad** in Borongan. In Catubig, especially with the payatak, the smoothening of the land surface before planting is done by hand.

The process of uprooting the seedlings from the seedbed is called **pag-gani**. **Pagtanom** (to plant) is done by hand. The **gani** or seedlings are cleaned and tied with other seedlings. The seedlings are planted on soft mud with two or four seedlings for each cluster and about four to five inches in between each cluster.

Growing Lowland Rice

To grow lowland rice, farmers use urea and other kinds of fertilizers and spray insecticides over the rice plants. Where weeds could not be pulled out due to the very little space in between plants like in the field where patiprak was practiced, the farmers use a weedicide. In the practice of patanum, weeds that grow along with the rice are removed.

Work Arrangement and Sharing System

The **pag-ambo** arrangement is practised in Burauen. Laborers are hired to take care of the rice. Their work mainly involves weeding. Usually, one person is in charge of one paddy. The **parag-ambo** (those who participate in the pag-ambo) are also the ones who will help in the harvest of palay. The sharing is called linima – four parts for the land owner and one for the parag-ambo.

In Borongan, the sharing for rice harvest is 3: 1 wherein three parts go to the farm owner and one part goes to the one who harvested the rice. This is called **malon**.

Pahoy, the Scarecrow

To shoo away grain-eating birds and animals like maya and crows, farmers install scarecrows called **pahoy**. They make a human figure out of bamboo and wooden sticks formed into a cross. Then it is dressed in rags. It is erected in the middle of the field. Another way to drive the birds away is to set up strings of empty cans tied to tree branches. The main line is tied to a small hut or shed at the center of the field where the overseer stays. When the main line is pulled, the tin cans rattle to scare the birds.

Harvesting Lowland Rice

Harvesting in Calbiga begins by thanking the spirits through the **pagburong** or **patikang** ritual. The farmers offer a dressed chicken, **pinipig** (pounded rice flakes), **linupak nga pinipig** (rice flake cakes) and rice with **dulaw** (yellow ginger). The rice is taken from a small portion of the harvested grains. The chicken must have a large crown (**madlaw** or **dagko an surang**) or short tail (**tukong**). The feathers may be of any color but must be plain. The food are placed on a make shift table at the center of the field. A glass of water or tuba, **mama** (betel nut) and cigarettes may go with the food.

This ritual is done at dusk on the eve of the actual act of harvesting and should not fall on a Tuesday or Friday. These days are believed to be “**sinyalado**” (literally, “marked”) because evil spirits abound on these days. The farmers thank the Mother Mary for the healthy grains because they believe that these are drops from her milk. They also thank the nature and ancestral spirits.

Patikang is also done in Burauen. When the rice grains are ready to be harvested, the farmer cuts a handful to signal the harvest. The grains are separated from the stalks and are sun-dried. The rice grains are pounded and cooked on the day of the harvest. The cooked rice is served to the people who helped in harvesting. According to the old folks, the practice would make the harvested rice last longer and wouldn't be consumed fast. Ritual plants such as kilala and kalipayan are placed at the dike of the paddy to ward off evil spirits and bad luck. Sand and stones are laced beside these plants as they are believed to make the rice grains healthy.

Burauen farmers also do the **pagdamit** ritual. According to old customs, the best time to harvest is on or before the full moon. The farmer hires a mamaratbat (prayer leader) to pray the novena in honor of San Isidro Labrador, the patron saint of farmers. The novena prayers are done three days before the harvest. Another variation of the pagdamit involves a food offering for the ancestors and other spirits in the field. Food offered includes ground rice, fish and chicken. These are shared with neighbors and friends.

Borongon farmers perform the pagdiwata ritual on the day of the harvest. A chicken or an egg is cooked at the field. After it is offered to the spirits, the farmer may bring it home to be eaten by the family.

The term for harvesting rice is **pagbari**. To cut the rice stalks, farmers use the scythe called **garab**. **Ringgi** is another term for garab in Burauen. Rice paddy farmers now use new technologies like threshers and blowers. Farmers also hire laborers who are paid with rice. The sharing in Calbiga is so that for every eight cavans, the farmers gets seven and the laborer receives one. In Burauen it is **pinito** ("by seven"), six parts are for the farmer/land owner while one part is for the hired harvest worker..

Aside from the traditional **pag-giok** which is the act of separating the grains from the hay by feet, farmers also use **lapdusan**. This is a structure of triangular wood and bamboo slat where the rice stalks are smashed to separate the grains from the hay. It is enclosed in a mosquito net and installed in a shed or dry paddy. This is a relatively new technology introduced by the government along with the introduction of new varieties of rice. The process is called **paglapdos**. With this, the rice stalks are cut near the base to make long hay. Short hay cannot be smashed in the lapdusan. This bundle of short stalks will then have to be processed through the pag-giok.

Newly harvested rice is dried. The term for drying rice is **paghumlad**. When dry, the **humay** (rice grains) may be stored or traditionally pounded to remove the hulls. The term for pounding is **pagbayo**. Farmers, farmers' wives or their children use the wooden **bayo** (pestle) and **lusong** (mortar). Otherwise the faster and more convenient way is **pagmolino** (milling by machine).

Rootcrop Production

Planting Camote

Kamote, camote or sweet potato is endemic to Samar and Leyte. The Spaniards brought in other varieties from Mexico but Father Alcina, in his 1668 chronicles, recorded that the indigenous varieties were sweeter. Camote is eaten boiled, fried, and carameled or candied. The ancient **linotlot** way is to cook grated camote inside a bamboo tube over charcoal. As camote cue (carameled in brown sugar and skewered in bamboo sticks), it is a popular merienda fare especially of school children...

Camote is planted during wet months (September to December) and harvested after four or five months. To plant camote, the mature stalk is cut about a foot long. This cut stalk is called **bulkas** (in Calbiga) or **salana** (in Burauen). The lower end of the cutting is buried in a hole. The hole is referred to in various terms: **libon** in Calbiga, **buho** in Catubig, **lamong** in Burauen and **bubon** in Borongan. The distance between holes is about half a meter. Another way is to plant them on furrows or **tudling**.

It is best to plant camote sometime towards full moon so that the crop would be as big as the moon... The **pagtadok** ritual is performed. Flora and other objects are buried in the soil while a wishful prayer or **pamulong** is uttered. Calbiga farmers bury **tarayatay** (a kind of grass with many roots), **mga bunay** (eggs) and **kalamay** (brown sugar mounds) into the ground. The farmer says "*Magpareho ka unta han banwa nga tarayatay nga nagtatarayatay an unod bunay para magmahamis ngan kalamay para magmatam-is* (May you be like the grass tarayatay which spreads its roots in the soil, be smooth as egg and be sweet as sugar.)". In Catubig, **tubo** (sugarcane) and **bato** (stone) are used. The sugarcane is for the camote to be sweet and the stone, hard as it is, would protect the crop from wood borers called **bukbok**. Borongan farmers put in three eggs, three pieces of charcoal (so as not to be seen by the **kumaraon** or pests, birds

or rodents) and three pieces of sugar cane. Four pieces of camote are placed in each of three holes. The eggs, charcoal and sugarcane are added into each hole. The farmer says this pamulong: “*Magmadamo ka unta, sugad han bituon ha langit, magdagko ka unta sugad han bulan* (May you be numerous as the stars in the sky and may you be as big as the moon)”. While planting, no member of the farmer’s family must use sundang; otherwise the camote would be prone to woodborers.

In Burauen, this ritual is called **paghangod**. Camote is planted when the sky is very blue and clear. This pamulong is said: “*Himulong ka la hit akon kaluwatan, haliputay it gamut, dagko it unod* (May you be likened to my joints, with short roots but big crops)” .

Weeding is required during the camote’s growing period. A bolo with a dull and wide-end blade and wooden handle is used. It is called either **bulo** (in Calbiga and Borongan), **parang** (in Catubig) or **guna** (in Burauen). Weeding is referred to as **pagdalos** or **pagkiwa** (Calbiga), **pagguna** (Burauen), **paghawan** (Catubig), **paggiho**, **paglimpyo** or **paglinis** (Borongan). To harvest camote, one says “*Pangamote kita!* (Let’s harvest camote!)”. . Burauen farmers use the word **pagbukad**, thus “*Pagbukad kita!*”

Other than the bolo, a pointed tree branch called **pika** or **tusok** may also be used to harvest camote. The pika is good as it would not cut the camote crop. For the first harvest, farmers leave a portion in the field for the **tagtuna** (spirits of the land). In Burauen, when they boil the first harvest, they would line the bottom of the pot with sugarcane leaves. This way the farmers believe that the camote is “...*ginbubulong hin dahon hin tubo* (...cured with the sugarcane leaves). They reason that this is done “*para diri kalasan an tanom*” (so that the plant does not get shocked).” The same is done for other **duma** or rootcrop and plantains. While in Borongan, two boiled eggs are placed at the center of the field as a thanksgiving act, and these words are uttered: “*Aanhi an pliti han amon tanom*“ (Here is the rent for our plants).

Planting Gabi

Gabi (*Calocasia esculenta*) is **gaway** in Waray. Planting season is from June to July. Young shoots called **hopi** are planted. Like planting the banana, gabi is planted by inserting the shoots in the buho (holes) which are one meter apart. In Calbiga, the **pagtadok** is performed with an offering of eggs and a water jar. The farmer says: “ **Mapareho ka unta han bunay kahamis ngan sumubad ka han biso kadagko** (May you be as smooth as egg and as big as the

water jar)”. The farmers in Catubig also does the pagtadok but instead of eggs, coconuts are offered so that the crop would not be itchy.

Borongan farmers refrain from scratching their body itch or insect bites when planting gabi as this would make the tuber itchy. Spitting is also prohibited lest the flesh turn out **malagay** or **tubigon** (watery). **Pagbukad** (Catubig, Calbiga) or **paggahok** (Borongan and Burauen) or **paggabot** (Borongan) means “to harvest” gabi.

Planting Apari

Ube (*Dioscorea alata*) and **apari** are planted differently but harvested similarly as gabi. Instead of shoots, the chopped raw flesh of these vine root crops are planted. The chopped pieces are air dried or **panhuhuwason** for at least two weeks. The chopping process is called **pinipiri** or **tinutungol**. **Pagtadok** is also done before actual planting. **Apog** (lime) and sugar are buried with the few pieces of the crop so that it would grow sweet.

February is the best time to plant ube or yams. After eight months, the leaves dry up. This stage is called **agtulag** in Borongan. This indicates that the ube is mature and is ready for harvest. .

Planting Talyan

Talyan, a giant taro, is a large tuber cultivated in large scale in Calbiga. The young shoot called **sula** is used for planting this crop. Planting season is during April and June. When talyan is planted off season, it would bear flowers and would be itchy. Although the plant does not need so much water, it prefers very fertile soil. Weeding must be done regularly for talyan to thrive vigorously. The biggest talyan tuber could grow as big as twelve inches in diameter and about six feet in height. For marketing talyan, it is measured by **dangaw** (handspan). The bigger and longer tubers are priced higher, of course.

Talyan matures two to three years after planting. **Panguha** or **pagbukad** refers to harvesting talyan. The tuber is dug out by hand from the ground using a sundang. A huge bulk is sold to businessmen in Samar who deliver the supply to Tacloban City and the towns of Dagami and Burauen in Leyte.. It is the main ingredient for the special and popular delicacy called **binagol**.

Planting Cassava

Cassava is known as **bilanghoy**. It thrives even in not too fertile land. Just like planting the other crops, planting cassava is best done before or during the full moon (**subang-subang** or **kadayaw**). The cuttings called **paka** or **paklang** are planted. These cuttings are five-inches long and one or two of these are enough for one hole. The cutting is buried in a slanted position into the ground. As with other crops, farmers perform the **pagtadok**. For cassava, though, the farmer would say: “*Sumugad ka unta han banwa nga duol, nagruol-duol la an gamut* (May you be like the grass duol that spreads its roots in the ground. On the first harvest, boiled cassava is offered to the spirits.

Banana Production

Saging or banana is planted all year round in Eastern Visayas. **Pagtanum** is a generic term for “planting” or “to plant”. For planting a banana, the term **pagluho** in Calbiga means “to dig a hole where the shoot is to be planted. The synonymous terms are **paglumong** (Buraue) and **pagbuho** (Catubig). The young shoot for planting is called **saha**.

Like planting camote, **pagtadok** is also performed in planting banana. This is true in Calbiga. The farmer buries a kabuwasan plant into the ground and says: “*Mahimulong ka kunta hin tanum nga kabuwasan, adlaw-adlaw namumunga* (May you imitate the kabuwasan plant that bears fruit everyday).” In some areas, bananas are planted during full moon so that they would bear big fruits. Some plant them during noontime “para kusog mamuso.” In Borongan, farmers believe that when planted in the afternoon, the banana trees would bear big fruits.

The main branch of banana fruits with several clusters is called **bulig**. Each small cluster is referred to as **sipi**. One piece of banana is called **buro**.

Harvesting banana is particularly referred to as **pagpilay** (Calbiga) or **pagtuba** (Catubig, Borongan and Buraue). In banana producing farms, several bulig of unripe bananas are harvested and brought to the market where they are made to ripen and are sold. It is such a marvel to behold mountains of bulig as cargo in boats going downstream of the Calbiga and Basey Rivers on market day.

Coconut Farming

Coconut is called **lubi**. The lubi fruit has several names depending on its stage of growth. The young one with thin, transparent syrupy flesh is called silot. A more advanced fleshy **silot** is good for buko salad. **Butong** has a thicker but still tender flesh. It is best for soft bukayo (sweetened coconut) dessert. **Lahing** is thicker and harder and best grated and squeezed for coconut milk. The dried out flesh which has been extracted of its milk is called **sapal** – feed for pigs.

Coconut fruits are carefully selected for planting. These should be big ones. They are hung on a bamboo pole suspended three to four feet above the ground. After two weeks, the **ugbos** or sprout would be visible. This stage is called **tumos** or **pagtumos**. The coconut seedlings should be planted before the roots are visible. **Tagad**, a double-edged machete is used to dig holes for the seedlings. In Calbiga, the plant **kabuwasan** is planted along with planting the coconut. The farmer would say: “*Himulong ka la han kabuwasan, timprano nagbubunga ngan adlaw-adlaw nagbubunga* (May you be like the kabuwasan plant that bears fruit early and does so everyday)”.

In Borongan, farmers plant coconut with the sprout facing the east . By doing so, the coconut would grow well and would bear fruit sooner. The sprout should be visible and the coconut must be completely covered with soil. The slow growth of the coconut plant is referred to as **magungoy**. When it bears very few fruits, this condition is called **tangdaw** Normally, the coconut bears fruit after seven years.

Paglugit **(Copra Production)**

Coconut is made into copra -- major product of Eastern Visayas. **Paglugit** or **paglukad** is the general term for processing coconut into copra. The **paraglugit** (copra makers) climb the coconut trees and pick the mature coconuts. Mature fruits are identified with their dry husks. The shells are hard and black in color. The gathering of coconut fruits is called **panaka** or **pagsaka** (“to climb”). The husks are then removed – **pamunot** or **pagbunot** (root word: “bunot” meaning “husk”). **Pagbagtak** is to cut open the shells. **Pagkamada** or **pagsalangsalang** is to arrange the coconut shells (flesh facing down) in the **luonan** (shed with bamboo flooring which is fired underneath). This shed is also called **dalagdagan** in Borongan. **Pagluon** is the firing of the coconut. This is done until the flesh has dried up. **Paglukad** or **paglugit** are also particular terms for the removal of the dried flesh from the shells with the use of **lugit** – a scooping tool shaped like a spoon with sharp blade and wooden handle. **Pagtadtad** is the cutting of dried copra into small pieces with the use of a **sundang**. The copra is contained in sacks and brought to buyers within the town. **Pagpisar** is the weighing of copra. It is measured and sold by kilograms.

Pananggot **(Tuba Gathering)**

On March 16, 1521, the day when Magellan first arrived in the Philippines, some men in a banca met him and his crew at sea off the coast of Homonhon, an island in Eastern Samar. The men offered bananas, coconuts, fish and a jar of palm wine. The palm wine was of course none other than tuba. Pigafetta would later chronicle how sap was gathered from the coconut tree and made into wine. That was almost 500 years ago when tuba was part of the reception and good will menu for the Spanish guests. After three centuries of the Spanish regime and also past through the American and Japanese colonial periods, tuba had been and still is the beverage that perks up the Waray social life whether in an ordinary day or on a very special fiesta holiday.

Sanggutan is a coconut tree exclusively identified as a source of tuba. The root word is **sanggot** which means “to gather tuba”. Once identified as a sanggutan, it will have no other use but that. None of its fruits nor leaves should be taken. It should be at least eight years old before the first tuba is gathered from it. The **mananggiti** or **parasanggot** (tuba gatherer) climbs up the coconut tree carrying with him the tools of his trade. With a heavy and thick knife called **butod**, he deftly pries off a portion of the side of the trunk to make a little ledge on which to step on when he climbs. He brings the **lakub** — a bamboo tube that would catch the sap from the petiole. Hanging from his waist is his **sarad** or **bandala** which is a small curved knife to cut the petiole. He cuts the petiole and fastens the lakub so that the sap would drip into it. He leaves it there until his return to gather the tuba. After about a week, he hooks the **kawit** on his shoulder and climbs again. The kawit is a long bamboo tube usually made from patong bamboo; this is the vessel that would contain the newly gathered tuba when it is taken down from the tree to the glass jar. There would be sap in the lakub. The fresh tuba is treated with **barok** (mangrove bark) for color and taste enhancer which he or his children have cut into pieces with a **sundang** (a long multi-purpose knife). The mananggiti carries the barok in a pouch called **puyos** or a coconut shell called **matabya**. He pours this into the kawit. He tops the kawit with a **gunot** -- gauzy sheath of the leaves a piece of which is used to strain the fresh tuba. Through time, the lakub would need cleaning. He brushes off sediments off the lakub with a **sudo** or **hugas**—made from coconut husk attached to a branch. To sharpen his sarad, he uses the **baritan**, soft wood with **buga** (pounded limestone).

In his book *Inumang Pinoy*, E. N. Alegre succinctly describes the process of **pananggot** (gathering tuba) as done by Bienvenido Solitana, Burauen, Leyte:

When a flower stock (raceme) has produced its third flower, its petiole can be cut (*pagpuato* in Waray). From the cut petiole, the sap flows out. Had the petiole not been cut the sap would have flowed to the raceme to produce eventually the coconut flowers then fruit. A bamboo tube (*lakub*) attached to a firm wooden hook or handle (*kawit*) is placed beneath the cut petiole (*pagsangga*). The sap flows into the tube, which already has barok (*bakhaw* or mangrove) bark in it – this is the tuba.

Initially the lakub stays there for a week. If the process is done prematurely the tuba is pale and sour. The timing has to be perfect to produce good tuba. Before the lakub is placed beneath the cut

petiole, a fistful of barok is placed inside it so that as soon as the tuba falls into the bamboo tube it mixes with the barok. A fistful is good for half a gallon of tuba. The petiole is cut a few millimeters each time tuba is gathered, i.e. twice a day.

Freshly gathered tuba is white, very sweet and “kicks”! At one day to three days old, it is called **bag-o**. Barok minimizes the sweetness and gives the white sap the reddish color. At four days to several weeks thereafter, the tuba is called **bahal**. **Bahalina** is several months to many years old – thus making it rare and expensive. Bahal is popularly referred for its moderate and sweetish taste. Bahalina is smooth but less sweet.

While all newly gathered tuba have the same taste and quality, the deliciousness and refinement of taste vary depending on how it is tended in the **pagbasya** or decanting process. Decanting is done twice daily for the first week. Then it can be reduced to once weekly. The tuba jars must always be filled to the brim lest air sets in and makes the tuba tart and sour. If not decanted tuba eventually turns sour and becomes vinegar.

Mr. Bienvenido “Bening” Solitana of Burauen, Leyte has only one sanggutan. He attached three lakub to three petioles in this one tree. It gives him half a gallon of tuba in the morning, another half in the afternoon. He would be gathering tuba from that tree as long as he lives. And he knows that the tree would outlive him (1992:35). It is a lovely, stately tree, well cared for, thus, very clean – without fruit nor dried branches. “*An pananggot sugad hin pag-ataman han asawa* (Tuba gathering is like taking care of the wife)” – so goes this common aphorism coined by the Waray mananggiti. The sanggutan requires constant tender loving care so that it would yield the eternally invigorating tuba.

Paglara **(Mat Weaving)**

Basey, Samar is the second oldest site of human habitation in the Philippines, next only to the Tabon Caves of Palawan. Located on the western coast of Samar island, this ancient settlement is 40 minutes away from Tacloban City by land transportation via the San Juanico Bridge, or 15 minutes by pumpboat across the San Pedro Bay. While Basey’s past remains a

mystery even to native Samareños, the mat weaving tradition for which it is famous still rises above past generations' cloud of lore. This is perhaps because, in many barangay communities in Basey, **banig** (mat) making is not just a means of livelihood but a way of life for the community.

The Hardy Grass, Tikog

The best medium for Basey mat weaving is the **tikog** (*Fimbristylis globula*). This hardy plant grows naturally in rice fields, but competes with rice seedlings so they are cultivated in village outskirts in far-flung marshes. Tikog can be distinguished from other grass in the field by its smooth round strands tipped with radial anise-like flower tufts. Tikog is cultivated in many Leyte towns and is always available by the bundle at the Tacloban City market. When made into mats, tikog strands are durable, smooth, pliant and dye-absorbent. Aside from these virtues, tikog mats remain cool against the skin even during the hottest days.

The Village of Weavers

Tikog preparation is often a social affair for the family or the neighborhood. The simple processes involved provide a wholesome pastime, if not a lucrative exercise, for family members, friends, relatives and neighbors to participate in and enjoy. Literally, everyone contributes to the evolution of the banig.

The best time to weave is when the air is cool such as early morning, late afternoon and evening. There are certain places, too, that are conducive to weaving like inside the Basiao cave where the atmosphere is moist and cool. The tikog becomes soft and pliant in such atmosphere.

Weaving can be done alone but more fun when with some one else or with a group. It can be a social event where tuba is served. On a full moon, when girls and women would gather for weaving, the men would approach and hold a harana. They serenade the weavers with songs. The tuba is served around and there are jokes shared and much teasing. Although many men know how to weave, it is the women who specialize in the craft as the men have to fish or farm. Both boys and girls learn to weave at a very young age. It all begins as play – braiding three or more colored tikog strands and making necklaces and bracelets out of them.

An elaborately designed mat is an outcome of many workers – **paraglara** (weavers), **paragbadlis** (designers) and **paragpahut** (embroiderers). There are weavers who organize themselves into a *tiklos* which is sort of a cooperative venture. One weaver asks her colleagues to help her with an ordered or commissioned work. One of them who gets an opportunity to work on a mat or a set of mats would ask the rest of them to help out, too. They all share in the payment for services with the bigger share for the one who got the deal. They also engage in **bubo** in which each weaver takes her turn in getting the full payment for a joint weaving effort.

The Banig Life Story

The life story of the banig begins with *tikog* harvesting, called **panmugto** (to cut). It may be done by teenage girls and children who do it as a mix of chore, social pleasure and game. The newly cut strands are then left to dry under the sun -- **pagbulad**. During this season, it is a common sight to see a small mat weaving village carpeted with the wilted plant. Dehydrated, the strands undergo **pagsusu**, are cut into uniform length and then bundled up for the **paghulbo**. While fingers comb through the bundle, removing the base sheaths and evening out the strands, a pot of water is heated to near boiling.

This leads to the **pagtina** (dyeing). At that precise moment before the water starts bubbling, the dye is poured in. Although Baseynons today use the commercial Venus dye, older weavers recall a time when they used *dulaw* (yellow ginger) and *barok* (red bark of a mangrove tree) to color their *tikog*.

The same water may be used for dyeing all the colors of the *tikog*. The trick is to follow this order of coloring: yellow first, then red, and finally green. These three are the weavers' primary colors and the traditional preference for the **sinamay** (interweaving colors) mat. Never begin with green since neither red nor yellow can overcome the dark pigment once it is absorbed by the *tikog*. While blue mats are a rarity – *tikog* is only dyed blue for specially commissioned mats—the natural hue is flesh. Commonly referred to as **pleyn** (plain or colorless), the naturally colorless mats have become a favorite among tourists.

The newly dyed *tikog* is dried on a clothesline or over a fence. When dry, the *tikog* is ready for the **pagbayo**. Using a wooden pestle, children have fun pounding the strands flat and wide against a wooden board. The **paglagot** follows, wherein a flat piece of bamboo called **lagot** is used to smoothen the strands. The *tikog* is ready for weaving.

Weaving an Island Culture

Pagpugo is to begin to weave. This time, with the task at hand much more complex, the tikog is turned over to the experts. Adeptly, two strands against two are interlocked; the strand after strand is connected to the **pinugo** (initial weave). One can begin with more than two, if this can be managed. When one has completed a whole panel of about 3 feet by 6 feet, this unit is called **pikas**. To come up with a bigger banig one simply connects a pikas with another or just a section of it. This process of weave-connecting is called **pagbilit**. The size of a pikas varies depending on the length of the available tikog. A **singgol** (single mat), the size of single bed may be comprised of only one pikas or it could be one-and-a-half pikas, if the pikas is smaller.

An average weaver can finish a single mat in half a day. The bigger sizes are **dobol** (double-sized bed) and **pamily** or **munyal** (derived from the family or matrimonial bed). When the weaving is done, the ends of the strands stick out from the sides of the mat, and they have to be tucked and trimmed off. This finishing touch called **pag-otap** makes the banig neat and tidy.

The weaving technique provides the design. The most basic traditional design is the **sinamay** – samay meaning to “intermix”. Here, the most basic strand combination is that of **pula** (red), **dulaw** (yellow) and **berde** (green). When interwoven, there is an intersperse of the **kampo** (a large square or rectangle area) and the **katig** (narrow bands between the squares and rectangles). A Spanish derivative term, **kampo**, literally means “field,” while katig means “outrigger”. Interestingly, when taken together, these two terms join land and water – poetically, we see both land and water on the sinamay mat. This pattern reflects the island’s culture, where the resources of both land and water are utilized by the community. After all, the major livelihood of Basey townsfolk are farming, fishing, and, of course, mat weaving.

There are sinamay pattern variations, particular to Barangay Bacubac: **binagaybay** generates as many colors as one wishes with the alternating colors of single strands so that the banig is imbued with the subtle play of pastels; **dinamadama** exhibits chessboard squares to come up with a dazzling contrast of hues and shades by varying the size of the squares and color combinations.

The most painstaking technique is the **linabra**. This requires the weaver to skip strands such that the skipped portions result in complex motifs such as the burubitu-on (star-like) and uru-antiyuhos (like eyeglasses). However, quality-wise, weavers do not recommend the **linabra**

because skipping make the mat fragile. Another complicated technique is the **kinawid**. The kinawid is similar to the cotton eyelet design and results to a delicate and lacey mat. This old technique is now as rare as its weaver.

Pinahutan: Embroidery as Design

Pagpahot (root word: **pahot**) is to insert a free strand of buri into the tikog weave for decorative purpose. This is akin to embroidery. Before the pagpahot proper, the design is sketched with a chalk on a plain colored mat. **Sumra** (white powder) on a **butay** (coconut twig) or chalk may be used. Once the sketch is done, the embroidery can begin using a rib from an old umbrella as needle. An area of the mat that is not fully embroidered is called **rangkada**; and **binalos or binalusan** if the whole sketched portion is filled up with the buri so that no tikog weave shows.

The traditional **pinahutan** motifs are flowers and birds. Flowers such as the rose, walingwaling orchid, cadena de amor, dahlia, sampaguitas are often enhanced with elaborate vines and tendrils. The birds are, at best, exquisitely embroidered pheasants and peacocks. The elaborateness of a design style can be seen in the gradation of color of the buri stands. Visible only upon closer inspection, a petal or a leaf can have two shades or more of the same hue, or of three or four contrasting hues! There can also be a juxtaposition of rangkada and binalusan in one detail. There is always a pair of borderline patterns to every embroidered mat. The outer border pattern is called **rubiti** and the inner one is the **pontas**. The **puru-panyolito** (like a handkerchief) is the common motif for the **rubiti**.

The traditional bird and flower designs have been revitalized by the influence of classical Chinese cards and poster calendars. Design Center Philippines introduced modern, abstract and pop art which are usually embroidered on place mats for export. Touristic designs for current popular demand are called the **pintados** and the **multikolor**. (The Spanish term “pintados” was ascribed by the Spaniards to the ancient tattooed inhabitants of Leyte and Samar. The Spaniards perceived the people as having painted bodies when they were actually tattooed.) The pintados mat is a combination of Filipino ethnic symbols appropriated for the mat, plain or natural monochrome or variegated mix of colors. Mr. Lilio P. Adona, an innovative mat and furniture designer and proprietor of the Basey Handicraft Shop claims to have originated this design. The multicolor is in colorful geometrics. One variation is the **siete-siete** (literally, seven-seven),

where there are repetitious motifs in the shape of the numeral 7. There are patterns based on the Yakan table runners and scarves and the Tausug pis (scarf) of Mindanao.

Samar Mat Aesthetics

Good quality weaving is one that is **pino** (fine), **mahamis** (smooth) and **susu** (tightly woven). The tikog grass had been well-tended and the weaving diligently done. The tightness make the weaving lines go crooked. When raised against the sky, the mat would not show holes nor gaps between weaves. Such mat is durable.

The traditional sense of the beautiful colored mat is one that is **malamrag** (bright); and therefore, there would be yellow-dyed tikog or buri among the materials used for weaving or embroidery. Also, the red and green mats are made bright by mixing in yellow dye. The result would be a more exciting red or green. The natural and sombre earth tones are rather new and have been dictated by commercial tourist demand. Balance and composition in traditional mat aesthetics are rather formal. There are layers of borders close to the edge of the mats – which could be purupanyolito (like a handkerchief) or **uruantiyohos** (like eyeglasses). The central space is then filled up with desired figures. First, the design is sketched on the mat with the use of a piece of chalk. When drawn on the mat the **paragpahut** (embroiderer) would start the embroidery. Several paragpahut can embroider simultaneously. The **paragbadllis** (designer or sketcher) orients them of the design concept then they proceed to embroider on their own. Sometimes they make variations on the design with changes in the color scheme and other little details.

Although currently in vogue and in demand for its sophisticated simplicity, natural colorless mat is dull for the traditional Baseynon weaver. Blue is dim and grim. Vibrantly colored mats in green and red also serve as the best grounds for colorful embroideries. Pinahatan mats must have well woven base mats. The lines can not go straight for a tightly woven mat. Thus, the wavy lines speak of the sea and the natural curves of flowers, leaves, trees, birds, hills, mountains and clouds. The geometric abstractions can go pompous in zigzags and multi-linear mathematical crystalline bursts.

The dance of sunlight in the Eastern Visayas is reflected in the textures of the tikog mat. In the Waray language, one says “Mahusay na, may gamit pa!” Beautiful and useful! Such is the nature of the tikog mat of Basey, Samar.

Tikog Mat Bags and Bric-a-Brac

The tikog mat has diversified into many artistic designs and practical functions. Now, there are mats made into wall décor, curtains, throw pillow covers, place mats, bags, lamp covers, baskets, trays, floor center pieces, furniture cover, and even long gowns like those worn by the candidates for Miss Basey on their town fiesta. New design patterns have emerged through innovations and influences of other Philippine mats (Laminusa) and textiles (T-boli, Tausug or Yakan). The popular favorite is the Pintados design which comes in monochrome geometrics or splash of optical pastels of ethnic symbols. The mat is cut into myriad shapes and sizes to make these as objets d'art with practical use for every day life. The tikog is a tropical sedge that becomes brittle in temperate zones. Lacquer is applied to the tikog mat-based wall décor to keep it from crumbling away in winter. As mat, it belongs to its home in the sunblest islands of Leyte and Samar.

“**Kalipayan**” is the Waray word for “joy”. The Waray mats reflect the joy of life visually expressed in bright tones and happy flowers, birds and playful symbols. The light of day from sunrise to sunset – of lush fields and mountain forests, glimmering waves, shimmering waters and painterly sky.

Tabo – Evanescent Market

Tabo is an old Visayan word for “meet”. **Taboan** is the place where the tabo is held. It could be by the sea or by the river; or where rivers, roads or people meet. It has become the name for the traditional market event where and when farmers, fishermen, potters, mat weavers, tinsmiths, lamp makers, merchants, vendors and buyers meet to exchange goods – to barter as in ancient times and to buy or sell as in modern time.

It is defined by E. N. Alegre who did extensive research and wrote on the Philippine tabo as the “evanescent market”. It is an event that lasts for a few hours starting before dawn and until the sun is up when there are buyers still. Specially, primary producers like farmers, fishermen and mat weavers themselves bring their goods to sell. The townsmen and women offer medicines, clothes, accessories and kitchen utensils among other items. The most basic of

necessities -- food, in its freshest best is the prime target of those who market at the tabo. And goods are supposedly cheapest there.

The tabo is held in many barangays and towns of Samar and Leyte. Palo, Tanauan and Burauen in Leyte have it every Sunday at the permanent market. The Carigara tabo held twice weekly, Wednesday and Sunday, has its market by the sea. That of Calbiga, Samar every Sunday is also at the town market which is distinctively located at an estuary – where the river and sea meet. There is the Saturday tabo by the roadside in Santa Catalina, Jiabong, Samar which disappears towards noon. In his article “Tabo in Samar”, E. N. Alegre noted: “When the tabo is about to end, the fish vendors barter their fresh goods for less perishable *gabi*, rice, *saba*, *pinipig*, which they can sell in the town market. ... the tabo expands the horizon of the farmer who lives in the mountains; it becomes part of his social life.” This is the rudimentary tabo – “...used to be held on riverbanks then at roadsides accessible to sellers and buyers...became institutionalized in towns – one day, mostly morning, in a fixed space...” (1988: 121)

Other than the array of bare necessities as rice, fish, vegetables and fruits and some luxuries like curtains, tablecloths and “...an ice drop in the sultry summer”, the tabo is a feast of the locality’s natural and cultural bounty. The Waray tabo grounds radiate with rows of rootcrops and banana plantains of **sab-a** and **inaldaba** – categorically, all together called **duma**.

Camotes of variegated species and quaint names: **karingkit**, **kalaob**, **binutatik**, **tinampay**, **kabangkal**, **kapungko**, **minaryanas** and many more. Multifarious and curious looking tubers -- **balanghoy**, **gaway**, **apari**, **karlang**, **butig** and the giant **talyan** are laid on the ground. Tiny, rotund, long, short, plain, spotted, ripe, unripe, yellow, green or red bananas abound! Vegetables galore of the nutritious mounds of leafy lawot bundles, the colorful and rare **dayaw** leaves to brighten up the lawot soup with shades of fuchsia pink on coconut milk, occasional **tambalagisa** seeds as **pangontra** or protection against the **hilo** (poison) before one attends a fiesta, and the seasonal **bubunaw** fruit whose thin flesh tickles desire.

Delicacies of rice -- **puto**, **bibingka**, **suman**, **suman latik**, **budbud** (suman), **moron** (chocolate suman), **lupak** (cakes of either pounded rice, banana, or cassava) **salukara** (rice pancakes); and of rootcrops – **iraid** (grated camote or cassava or talyan), **binagol** (sweetened grated talyan in coconut shell), **sagmani** (boiled gabi or talyan with sweetened filling) and the crispy **kalingking** crackers made of cassava striped with calamay syrup. Lo! And there is the uniquely brown, surface smooth and bite-grainy suman-like **arasip** (made of lumbia or sago).

These are appetizing treats that one anticipates to eat right then and there or to bring home to the waiting beloved.

The thrill of the Waray tabo has been, is, and will still be, here.

Chapter IV

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SYSTEM

Waray social organization consists of two structures -- the kinship relations and politico-economic relations. Through almost half a millennium, ancient and contemporary kinship relations remain essentially the same but the politico-economic structure has changed. Traces of the past can still be felt but power domination has taken a subtle yet complex form of existence in contemporary Waray society.. Whereas in the past there was a clear categorization of population in terms of debt-dependence or master-slave relations, this power structure is no longer as overt in the public sphere today. However, class consciousness remains manifest in the conduct of social life, in the public availment of goods and services and in political praxis.

The Family and Kinship

An iroy nga tuna matam-is pagpuy-an
 Bisan diin siplat puros kasangkayan
 Aanhi an hingpit nga at kalipayan
 Aanhi hira Nanay pati kabugtuan

English Translation:

*How sweet it is to live in our Motherland
 Wherever you gaze you see friends
 Here is our perfect happiness
 Here are Mother (Father), brothers and sisters, too.*

In this stanza of a folk song entitled *An Iroy nga Tuna* (Our Motherland), the Waray lyricist defines perfect happiness as living in one's homeland together with one's parents and siblings. The song reflects the Waray's deep value for family and friends that it found resonance in popular sentiment and became some sort of an anthem. The persona in the song is the **anak** or child. The child's social milieu consists of family and friends. The phrase "hira Nanay" is not an exclusive reference to the mother. – it also includes the father as it is pluralized by the word "hira" meaning "they" which implies the other parent. It must have been a poetic decision to just mention the mother since the melodic phrase can accommodate only a limited number of syllables to fit in the musical line. However, the privilege of articulation is given to the mother. This reveals the special regard for the mother from the child's point of view. Well, the child is indeed naturally, biologically and physically closer to the mother than to the father. And in the Waray tradition of child rearing, it is the mother more than the father who nurtures the child. It is in the song where the nuance of the language for social relations is evident. The said is inclusive rather than exclusive. The unsaid is a felt presence. Depending on the closeness of the family and clan ties, the phrase "hira Nanay" could even include the other elders like the grandparents, uncles and aunts. Let us therefore look into the kinship structure as suggested by some Waray kinship terms.

In Waray as in other Filipino languages, the term "**anak**" refers to "child". The children are also called **bata**. These terms do not distinguish gender. So a son is called **anak nga lalaki** (literally, male child) or **anak nga babaye** (literally, female child) A more intimate address for a son is **intoy** or **ido** and for a daughter **iday** or **inday**. These terms when used to call a child assumes an endearing bond with him or her. It is a term charged with fondness and affection.

An only child is called **bugtong**. A set of an all-male children or all-female children is **buklid**. Salad-salad is a set of male and female children alternating in order of birth. The condition of wide age gaps among children is referred to as **laay**; **aligsunod** when the children's age gaps are close.

"**Kag-anak**" refers to "parents". "**Iroy**" is "mother" while "**amay**" is father. Children address their mother as "**Nanay**" and their father **Tatay**". The Spanish "Mama- Papa" and American English "Mommy-Daddy" for Mother-Father have become options now particularly among middle and upper class families. **Asawa** refers to spouse, whether husband or wife. Its

meaning extends to common-law live-in partners. However, the term **padis** which literally means “partner” (derived from “pares”, orig. Spanish which means “pair”) is a term of endearment for one’s life partner. With the current trend of gender sensitivity, **padis** is an appropriate reference to one’s partner as it is gender neutral, connotes equality and implies teamwork.

Siblings are **bugto** (sing.) or **kabugtuan** (Pl.). The first born is **subag** and the youngest is **pudo**. In Catubig, brothers and sisters are recognized in terms of seniority in the family. The eldest son is addressed by the younger ones as **manoy**, the eldest daughter **manay**. The second eldest brother is **ingko** while the second oldest daughter is **insi**.

Apo refers to grandfather or grandmother. Affixated as “**kaapuy-apuyan**” it becomes an all-inclusive term referring to all ancestors of past generations including those farthest back in time. In Catubig, the grandfather is addressed as “Baba” and the grandmother “Mama”. Grandchildren are called **apo**. **Apo ha tuhod** (literally, grandchild at the knee) is the great grandchild. **Apo ha rapadapa** (grandchild at the foot’s sole) is the great great grandchild. **Tulin** is the blood lineage from ascendants to descendants. Therefore to say “Tulin ka ni Jose” means “You descended from Jose” or “You belong to Jose’s branch of the family tree”.

Uncle is **bata** and Aunt is **dada**. Cousins are **patod**. The degrees of cousinhood have specific terms. First cousins are **patod igsiyapa**. Second cousins are either **patod karuwa**, **pakaruwa**, **patod igkaduha** or **patud pakaruwa**. Third cousins are **patod ikatulo**, **patod pakatulo**, **patod tagutlo** or **magpakatulo**. Relatives to the third degree are recognized as close kin therefore they are forbidden to marry each other. If they do, the relationship is considered incestuous.

In Catubig, when one is related to each of a couple (having relatives on each side of the husband and the wife), this phenomenon is called **buka-buka**. This happens in a small community where the members are kindred to each other. **Urupod** or **kaurupdan** is the generic term for relatives. Its root word is “upod” which literally means “companion”. The word **paryente** (derived from the Spanish “pariente” meaning “relatives”).

In-law relationships are specifically delineated, too. **Ugangan** is a parent-in-law, **umagad** is son-in-law or daughter-in-law. **Bayaw** can refer to both brother-in-law and sister-in-law. **Bilas** is brother-in-law. **Hipag** is sister-in-law. Spouses of siblings may call each other **bilas**. Parents of both spouses refer to each other as **balaye**.

In case the widowed spouses remarry, the family is extended to both spouses' families. Stepsiblings are called **naghi-urong** in Catubig and **maghirupo** or **hirupo** in Borongan. Stepchildren are called **ginsundan** in Catubig and **hinablusan** in Calbiga, Borongan and Burauen. Stepmother is **pinakairoy** (literally, assuming the role of mother). Stepfather is **pinakaamay** (assuming father role).

Kinship relations are established through ritual bonding. Godparents and godchildren become so through baptisms, confirmations and weddings. Godfather is called **ninong** and godmother is **ninang**. Godchildren of baptisms are called **kinugos** (literally, "carried"; godparents did carry the baby in their arms for the Catholic baptismal ceremony decades ago). **Inaanak** are the bride and groom whose union in marriage the principal sponsors or godparents witness. A godchild refers to his or her godparents' children as **igso**. Individuals who stand as godparents together address each other as **madi** if female, or **padi** for the male. The same addresses are used by a child's parents and godparents when they refer to each other.

Amyaw is the neighbor immediately next to one's home. **Kaamyaw** is two houses away and beyond. **Sangkay** means friend. The degree of intimacy in friendship is qualified by shared experiences in shared time and shared space. The plural **kasangkayan** is an inclusive term for those people within one's social circle—neighbors, playmates, classmates, schoolmates, fellow workers, colleagues in the profession, fellow members of one's faith, athletic club or socio-civic group and drinking buddies. They come together during special occasions like birthdays, baptisms, weddings, anniversaries, graduation blowouts, funerals and more often, during fiestas. The opposite of sangkay is **kaaway** -- enemy. The kaaway becomes one usually due to envy, jealousy, betrayal or misunderstanding such as petty conflicts triggered in drinking sessions or by deep-seated resentments since long ago.

The **pamilya** is the nuclear family composed of the **tatay, nanay ug mga anak** (father, mother and children) including the **kaapuyan** (grandparents) who are the **gintikangan** literally, "the beginning or origin"). ("Pamilya" is derived from the Spanish "familia". As of this writing, no indigenous Waray term for the concept of nuclear family has been identified.) The head of the family is the father. In case of the father's death, the mother takes over. The eldest of the children, whether male or female, is expected to succeed in the position of authority. However, trustworthiness, fairness and wisdom are major factors in earning the respect of the siblings.

Eventually, the sibling who exhibits these qualities somehow assumes the role of leadership in the family.

Other relations beyond the familia, say, the siblings of the father and mother are **urupod** or **partido**. **Panimalay** is the household and its members are all those living in the same house. This includes the **kaurupdan** -- aunts, uncles, cousins and **kabulig** or household helpers who share in the dwelling space. While the **kabulig** are hired helpers who do household chores, their longevity in service and loyalty earn for them closer ties with the employer's family. The **kabulig** can establish kinship ties with the employer through ritual bond as when the employer becomes a godparent of a **kabulig's** child. This cements the connection and could last until the next generation.

Generally, the Waray kinship relations are shaped by the nature of relationship in the bloodline, gender, degree of closeness, quality or depth of shared experience, the value for seniority (whether in the past, present or future generations) and ritual bonding. The preponderance of very specific kinship terms reflect a highly elaborate and finely defined familial and social structure.

The Ancestral Land

The **puyong** is an ancestral land owned by a clan. This is usually a vast farmland a portion of which every family member can cultivate as much as he or she can. This system is unique to Calbiga and Borongan. But Calbiga's **puyong** is more elaborate and strict in terms of system management. It refers to both system and the land which a particular clan owns. **Purupyong** refers to all who belong to a particular **puyong**. Thus, "Purupyong kami" means "We are of the same **puyong**",

The title of the land is in the name of the **tungayod** (Calbiga) or **tulin** (Borongan). **Tungayod** refers to the first owner of the **puyong**. The **puyong** is handed down from generation to generation and is not to be divided among member families. Member families though can cultivate any portion of the **puyong** as long as he or she wants to. **Puyong** is the central familial domain for sustenance and economic security.

Every member of the clan can rely on it as long as no one has claimed it. However, he or she must toil and soil his hands to work on the land first tilled by his or her own ancestors.

In Calbiga where fertilizers are not used by upland farmers, the farms are abandoned after three or four years and another portion is cleared for the new farm. The previous farm is allowed to grow thick bushes for about eight to ten years before it can be farmed again. This is to replenish the fertility of the soil. The puyong is so vast for the members to farm so that they can rotate cultivation. More affluent families do not farm and do not claim ownership in the puyong. So that those who farm do not really increase in number. In reality, member families in the puyong number about a thousand or more so that if they decide to divide the **kapuyong-puyongan** (the entire puyong) among themselves they may only take a palm-size portion from it. Most family members also reside in the puyong, so that most of them if not all do not have a title for their house and lot.

In Borongan, the main ascendant of a clan is the tulin who first owned the tract of land of the kapuyong-puyongan. The family of each of the tulin's children is now a member of the puyong and is referred to as **rawog-rawog** or branch. The family of each descendant of the children's descendants is another rawog-rawog.

When the puyong has not been divided among the children or their descendants, there is another system called **surusando**. Each child has a year to cultivate this and after a year, the next child takes over until all are able to plant and benefit from the land they inherited. This system is usually employed if the land is a piece of rice paddy. For coconut-planted land, the children take turns in **paglugit** or **pagkopras** (copra making).

Patiklos

Patiklos or **araglayon** is the help collectively given by farmers to each other in doing farm chores. Clearing, plowing and weeding usually require at least ten persons to make the job faster and convenient. Farmers help each other do the work in each of their own farms without monetary reward. The landowner or host serves breakfast, lunch and supper. After one's farm is done, the group will proceed to another farm until all the members' farms are done. After the work, the owner hosts a drinking party by serving tuba or gin and **sumsuman** (in Tagalog, pulutan; food that goes with the drink)

Pintakasi

Pintakasi is a barangay community's collective effort in cleaning up their surrounding before the fiesta celebration. The barangay officials initiate this activity. They inform their constituents through the bandilyo system or town crier. A portion of the barangay fund may be used for the food and drinks of the workers. Others may contribute rice, canned goods, rootcrops, banana or tuba. They drink tuba or gin while working. Drinking and dancing may follow after the pintakasi.

The Barangay, the Datu and the Politicians

Archaeology and history assert that the **barangay**, the basic unit of ancient Philippine society, conceptually arose from **balangay**, an ancient boat (dating back to 320 to 1250 A.D.) that carried families to the Philippine islands. But farther back in time, about 5,000 to 7,000 years ago there were people from South China who sailed away from their homeland southward bringing with them rice, coconuts, taro, pots and pigs and reached the Philippine shores (Diamond). These early Malay settlers spread in the Philippine archipelago. Visayan lore has it that ancient boat people fled from the cruel rule of the Sri Vijaya Empire in what is now Indonesia and settled in Panay and in other islands.. Did the Waray descend from the more recent boat people or from the earlier ones? There is no direct nor definitive answer until this is duly investigated. In any case, it is clear that Waray settlements are denser in the coast rather than inland which tell of their comfort zone being the sea. Notably, too, rice, coconut and taro cultivation as well as pottery and hog raising are very much imbricated in Waray indigenous

knowledge. As in any human aggrupation within the same milieu and accessing the same resources, a system of governance had to be in place..

The head of the ancient Waray community was the **datu**. The datu became the leader through inheritance, wisdom, wealth and physical prowess (Sugbo and Zafra 444; Scott 129). The datu governed his people, settled disputes and protected them from enemies. He was a working leader who could be a dexterous fishermen or blacksmith and a valiant warrior who led them in battle. He had his staff and supporters to assist him in the barangay affairs. For his responsibilities and services to his people, they in turn provided him with labor in tilling his soil, rowing his boats and building his house or offered him part of their harvest or catch (Scott 129-131).

The datu was of the ancient class of nobles. There were two other classes, the **timawa** (free) and the **oripun** (slave) . The timawa were the “free men” or “freed men”. They were “free” for being offspring of a datu’s commoner or slave concubine; or “freed” for having been granted freedom by the datu. Slaves could also be freed and rise to power as timawas for their special inherent or acquired qualities – “...by sheer hard work, physical prowess and a display of wisdom (Sugbo and Zafra 445).”

The root word of oripun is “udip” which means “to let live” -- as “...to spare life in the field of battle, to ransom a captive, or to redeem a debt equivalent to a man’s price (Scott 132).” They were legal slaves who could be bought or sold. Slavery was acquired “...by birthright, inherited or acquired debt, commuted penal sentence or victimization by the more powerful (133).” The **bihag** was an outright captive who could be sold; the **hayohay** or **ayuey** or **halom** lived in their master’s house and was fully supported in terms of food, shelter and clothing; the **tuhay** or **mamahay** lived in their own houses.

The datu’s community was his **haop**. Those who were in the datu’s haop and were not his slaves were his blood relatives. The datu’s personal security was entrusted to them. The villages where one or more haop lived were **bongto** or **lungsod** (135-136).

The Waray term “saop” is a cognate of “haop”. In contemporary parlance, **saop** particularly refers to the tenants of a farmland. Another related term is **sakop** which in Leyteño Waray refers to those people who are in one’s range of authority and economic responsibility – such as those working in one’s farm, business or household This includes one’s dependent blood kin , household staff and saop.

Appropriating these terms in contemporary life, the Waray social life may be drawn with concentric circles the innermost of which is the nuclear family for which no indigenous term is known so far other than the Spanish-derived **pamilya** (family). Beyond the nuclear family are the members of the household or panimalay and the land-based term haop or saop. The panimalay and saop together constitute the sakop.

Slavery no longer exists today but debt servitude continues within the context of employer-employee relationship in the panimalay, in the farms between tenants and landowner and in modern workplaces such as factories, stores, offices and schools. In contemporary everyday scene, the class divide still pervades. Catholic Holy Masses are distinguished by the language medium. The middle class educated in English attend the English masses while vast majority of the people, mostly the poor, prefer the vernacular Waray. Public means of transportation from buses, ships and airplanes offer first class and economic class which remarkably differ in comfort and services. Low income shoppers opt for the side street bargains of used clothes, home accessories and footwear from the expensive air conditioned boutiques which the rich cater. Fast food joints simulate the higher end Mc Donald's and Jollibee for burgers and spaghetti to be affordable for the poor. Child labor is visible in the streets and markets – boys drive pedicabs for a living, young ones, vend spices and plastic bags around downtown. Children beg for food and alms outside banks, restaurants and churches. Apparently, social services from the national agencies have been insufficient. Since the rise of the social action centers of faith-based organizations in the 1970s and civil society movements in the late 1980s, the private sector and non-government organizations have been active in the communities and have been advocating social empowerment for the marginalized sectors.

The value for “utang nga kaburuot-on” (debt of gratitude) strengthen ties which may be economic or moral such as when one lends money to another at a time of emergency or when one saves another from drowning in the sea. Acts of good will between the social and political divide, -- the wealthy and the poor, the powerful and the powerless do develop into long lasting ties of loyalty and friendship which are remembered beyond one's lifetime. This is true in the personal spheres of experience, in the immediate milieu of the Waray.

When the Philippines was subjugated by Spain as a colony, the colonial administration was systematized by establishing the reduccion – a physical lay-out that placed the church, plaza and municipio at the center surrounded by the houses of the wealthy. The authorities were the

cabeza del barangay as the barrio chief and the gobernadorcillo for the pueblo or municipio. The provinces of Leyte and Samar had alcaldes mayores who were under the central leadership of the governor general in Manila. Sugbo and Zafra underscored that “But, as in most pueblos of the period, the religious authorities often exercised more power over the natives than (sic) the secular rulers (445). Under the American rule, the political structure was streamlined into the barrio, town, and province and the National Assembly which had representatives from the provinces.

The present-day barangay is the basic unit of governance in the Republic of the Philippines. This structure was set up by the administration of President Ferdinand E. Marcos after he declared martial law in 1972 and set forth to build what he called the “New Society”. After Marcos was ousted by the “People Power” revolution in 1986 led by Corazon Aquino, reforms were instituted which included the devolution of power from the Office of the President of the Republic in the supervision of delivery of goods and services to the communities. The local government now is structured in four levels: barangay, municipality, city and province.

The barangay consists of not less than 1,000 citizens. Its leader is the barangay chairman or chairwoman who is duly elected by its constituents. The barangay chair heads the barangay council which consists of other elected officials – the Vice Chair, the Secretary and the Kagawad or Councilors. The conglomeration of barangays within a defined territory constitute the municipality or town. The municipal hall which is its seat of government is located in the town proper. The elective municipal officials are the mayor, vice mayor and Sangguniang Bayan members or councilors. The city has its elected mayor, vice mayor, Sangguniang Panglungsod member or city councilors and appointed city officials. The largest unit is the province with the following elected officials: governor, vice-governor and the Sangguniang Panglalawigan members. Other than these, the elective Sangguniang Kabataan for the youth at the barangay level has also been actively engaged in political and community leadership.

These government positions are hotly contested positions between old political families among themselves and against new challengers. Elections have been real battles between the candidates and their supporters who distribute cash bribes in peso bills of tens, hundreds and thousands. The kapanimalay, saop and sakop of the candidates are expected not just to support but to campaign and protect the master who is running for candidacy. **Batos** --a recent breed of social bond came to be along with the politicians. This refers to underlings who

unquestionable do the boss' bidding. The batos are valuable in carrying out campaign moves. And the campaign is most intense in the barangays outside the city proper or the poblacion since the barangay voters there constitute the majority of the voting populace. Direct and face-to-face contact with the voters is highly valued.. Favors are promised to barangay communities for street lights, water and drainage systems, roads and basketball courts but these are not necessarily always granted by winning candidates. The barangay chairs are courted and given favors by city and provincial candidates as they have more intimate interaction with the voters in the barangay. They can draw significant influence for their constituency.

Barangay chairs, mayors and governors seem to act like the datu of old in their leadership role. They provide support for the basic practical needs of the community -- providing financial assistance for the poor, the sick and the grieving other than their routinary administrative duties and obligations. But unlike the ancient datu who inherited his rank or acquired it through exemplary prowess and wisdom, these politicians assume the steadfast loyalty of kin but court and give favors to the more distant circles of their influence during campaigns to win their support. It is no wonder that circulation of money and gifts especially before elections is notoriously widespread. The coveted power opens the powerful to opportunities of accumulating wealth through what is commonly called "S.O.P." (standard operating procedure) or "kickbacks" down the line of authority. The Waray call this "buhay-buhay" (buhay means life in Tagalog which is "kinabuhi" in Waray; buhay-buhay is "like life" or "something for life" which could be taken as "something done to live"). If kinship and debt of gratitude ties are not that strong, the powerless whose votes make or unmake a candidate, typically, settle with the candidate who has given more – perhaps a thousand – than the one who gave only three hundred pesos. So, aspiring candidates without millions in their campaign chest opt out of the race.

In all levels of Waray society, the means of gathering of precious votes are complicated and largely undocumented – such as keeping groups of voters in a house and feeding them dinner and breakfast before transporting them to the voting booth. The handing of the bills is a matter of timing and requires the talents and honed skills of campaign strategists. Apparently, the dynamic nuances of the political praxis at work in contemporary Waray society have not yet been studied. This writer feels that these practices are rooted in age-old customs embedded in the traditional "implicit social knowledge" which remain still unarticulated beyond their practical ken but are deeply embodied by the practitioners of this kind of polity. Philippine

culture theorist E. N. Alegre critiqued the Philippine political praxis as a disjunct between traditional Philippine structures and the foreign notion of the democratic. Seemingly, Waray polity is no exception.

Chapter V

SPIRITUAL TRADITION

Before the Spaniards came and introduced Christianity in the Philippines, the Waray, as other Visayans, believed in unseen forces that animate nature and human life. They practised the worship of their dead ancestors who protected and guided them in their daily living and in nature spirits who guarded and nurtured the land, forests, fields, rivers, lakes and the sea. The spirits of their dead ancestors were known as **umalagad**. The nature spirits were referred to as **diwata** and the practice of invoking or deifying them was **pagdiwata**. The Supreme Being was called **Laon** which meant antiquity.

Humans were and still are believed to have the capacity to reach the spirit world and manifest powers of divination and healing but there are also malevolent others who opt to cause harm on and death of their fellow human beings. The **babaylan** (spiritual leaders) and **tambalan** (healers) restore and enhance life while the **aswang** (witch) and **barangan** (sorcerers) destroy life. The spiritual lore is replete with tales of struggles between mysterious forces.

While the traditional belief was of ancestors who were humans and in death became gods, Christianity brought in the belief in a god made man named Jesus Christ whose story of life, passion and death by crucifixion was accepted by the Waray through the evangelical missions done by the Spanish friars. In time, church history and people's lore teem with inspiring testimonies of miraculous interventions of saints and/or personal and communal redemptions from illnesses, epidemics, crisis and triumphs over the difficulties of life.

The introduction of Christianity by the Spaniards did not stop the Waray from acknowledging the diwata and the umalagad and practising age-old rituals. To this day the stages in their life cycle like planting, harvest, fishing, moving to a new house, weddings, births, deaths and healing, are marked with invocations to the spirits of old along with Christian deities. With the dominance of Catholicism, Waray communities celebrate their fiestas to honor their patron saint who is recognized as the community guardian. The Waray integrated

Christianity with indigenous animism and ancestral worship into a liberal and complex system of faith through concrete acts of devotion – expressed through prayers, sacrifices and exuberant and colorful pageantry of dance and music.

Ancestral worship

Since ancient times, the Waray traditionally believe in the **kalag** or soul that gives vitality to human life. In Tagalog it is called kaluluwa. “The kalag might separate from the body during dreams, illness, or insanity, or be carried off by a diwata for envy or desire ... The kalag of the dead ancestors were called umalagad and were venerated as personal guardians and companions... (Scott 1994: 80)” The umalagad were the main object of adoration which was done by **anito**, meaning, sacrifice or religious offering. **Pag-anito** was the ceremonial act of sacrifice held for the “...fertility of crops, newlyweds, domestic animals, for rain or fair either, for victory in war, recovery from illness or the control of epidemics, or the placating of the souls of the deceased .” These rituals were held in “...private homes or fields; at grave sites or sacred spots outside the community; or along beaches or streams where little rafts could be launched, aboard which were disease and bad luck, or live pests like locusts or rats. There were no temples though there were little platforms or sheds at entrance to the village where offerings were made. The ceremonies included the **halad** or food offering for the spirits. **Paglehe** (or paglihi) were a set of religious restrictions or taboo such as those in mourning and healing practices (Scott 1994: 77-86).

Even today, the annual **kalag-kalag** or **Piyesta Minatay** (Day of the Dead) is celebrated yearly and the spirits are believed to return to the world of the living to be with their loved ones. While the official Philippine calendar distinguishes November 1 as All Saints’ Day from November 2 which is All Souls’ Day as patterned after the Catholic calendar, the Waray people celebrate kalag-kalag on these two days. There are prayers said at home, masses offered in the church or chapel, food offerings at the altars and graves and songs are sung. In La Paz, Leyte several candles on banana stalks or wooden boards are lit and lined up in the houses as well as in the cemetery E. N. Alegre wrote of this as “an awesome sight”. Provisional altars are set up in front of the permanent altars of the houses. Sacred images are set up along with food and beverage, particularly the favorite dishes and drinks of the dead – “...fish and rice, chicken, alcoholic drinks, soda pop; and on graves of children – biscuits, chewing gum,

candies...” are placed on the provisional altars. Prayers are chanted by the **mamaratbat**. The dead are welcomed at home and are visited at their graves.

In most of Waray country, flowers cut from home gardens or roadsides and artfully arranged ones bought from shops brighten and freshen the graveyard. Conversations include references to the beloved dead as if they were alive. Through special prayers, food offerings, lighted candles, fresh flowers and festive sharing with relatives, neighbors and friends, the living remember their dead. They connect with their beloved departed. The supposed separate worlds of humans and spirits open up to meld as one in these two holy days for the dead.

Nature spirits

Young and old Waray folk, then and now, say “**Tabi, tabi, apoy!**” when they pass by the woods, a grassy field or knoll. **Tabi** means “to give way”. **Apoy** is a direct address to a grandparent or ancestor. It is a way of recognizing the presence of nature spirits and to seek permission to go through what might be their abode. Since they and their dwellings are usually invisible to humans, their home could be on a rock, a small hillock or in a tree. For protection, it is best to just utter “Tabi, apuy” whenever one is in such and strange places. If one misses to do so and the spirit has been offended for having been stepped upon, disturbed by noise or its house shaken, it could inflict harm on the offender in the form of some physical ailment. The spirit can **sabrag** -- throw soil over the human transgressor and cause what would manifest as a kind of skin allergy. Red itchy blotches could appear on the skin of the human victim. No other medicine but treatment by the **tambalan** or the traditional healer could heal the patient. Commonly, the **tambalan** would administer a **pagloon** or fumigation ceremony to cure the “allergy” and ask the patient to offer food to the offended spirit. .

Nature spirits are the **diwata** or **engkanto** which are of various forms, powers, traits and territories. According to apocryphal Christian lore, the diwatas were among the rebellious angels who fell out of God’s grace. Not all of them landed in hell. Some got caught on earth. They fell on trees, land and on bodies of water where they eventually settled. Those who dwell in the forest are the **kahoynon**. Those in the ground are the **tunan-on or tagtuna**. The water beings are the **tubignon**. There are more specific categories such as the **batangnon** who dwell in a forest clearing amidst felled trees or logs; the **tagabanwa** inhabit grassy lands and the **tagasalog** live the rivers (Villegas 1968: 221-222).

The kahoynon are believed to be white, fair and Caucasian-looking. Their women are exceptionally beautiful and wear fragrant perfume. Their men are handsome. They live in palatial houses and drive expensive limousines. Their modern-looking cities have smooth and white roads. The kahoynon can befriend humans whom they would take into their world. The human friend would lose his/her health, and behave crazy or strange. When the human friend is visited by the kahoynon, he/she stiffens and suffers a seizure. He/She physically struggles against those who would try to stop him or her from joining the spirit to the forest abode. He would be incredibly strong that five men may not be able to subdue him/her. When he/she loses consciousness, it is believed that he/she is in the spirit friend's world (222).

Once in their realm, the kahoynon are said to be gracious hosts. If you happen to have been befriended by one of them and you would visit their home, they would serve you a sumptuous feast. If you partake of their food, you would no longer be able to return to your real home. But if you ask for salt, you would be set free since the kahoynon abhor salt. Otherwise, they would transform a banana trunk to look like you and this which would take your body's place in your home. Your family would think that you are dead. They would then set up a funeral vigil and prepare for your burial. But if they believe that you were taken by the kahoynon and are determined to get you back, someone must hack your body's double in two so it would revert to its natural and real form – a banana trunk. Then you would return home from the kahoynon world, body and all.

Several strange tales about other kahoynon abound in Waray oral lore. The **kapre** and **tikbalang** are non-white kahoynon creatures well known in Philippine folklore. The kapre is a giant who lives in a tree. He is known to smoke a giant cigar. If he wills it, he shows himself to humans who are terrified upon sight of his huge size. There are stories of him having a human crush or a lady love. He is completely harmless. The tikbalang has a face of a horse and body of a human. Like the kapre, he scares people if he shows himself to them. Otherwise he, too, is a gentle creature.

There are **tunan-on** or earth spirits who are **madarahug** (malevolent beings who deliberately cause harm on humans). The **agta** are small, black hairy creatures who are mischievously harmful. They can cause a wound on a part of a person's body and it would putrefy. The **aghoy** is a little creature with a tapering head and upwardly curved feet. It is known to court a human and to impregnate her. When their half-human, half-aghoy child is

born, the agta takes the baby away with him. The **duwendes** are dwarfs which are of two kinds: the black and the white. The former are magdarahug while the white ones are healers and are generously helpful to people. They can bring good luck to their human friends if they wish to.

The **tubignon** or water beings rarely show themselves to humans. The **kataw** or **sirina** is “mermaid”. She is friendly and generous as she gives mutya (lucky charm or talisman) to whoever she befriends. When a fisherman possesses one, he is believed to catch plentiful fish. The merman is locally called a **siyukoy** (Carigara) or ukol (Basey).

The **barag-asaw** of Gandara is like a merman but is harmful as it drowns humans. **Sarimanon** is the weaver goddess who guards the lake in MacArthur, Leyte.

She is said to be an abaca weaver who weaves with a golden loom. If human intruders would disturb the quiet of the lake, she could cause the water level of the river to rise and drown her enemy or enemies.

The **kataw** in Laoang is said to be a male, as big as a human thumb and has blond hair. A strand of its hair is considered as a lucky charm. It is rarely seen and when seen, it is rather elusive. Scientifically, the **duyong** is the sea cow; but in Laoang, it is regarded as a sirina or mermaid. It is described as half-woman, half-fish. It has fins instead of arms. Its face protrudes, has gills and its teeth are like those of fish. The **baragataw** is believed to live in the estuary in Carigara. It is a hairy creature. It is said to be in the vicinity when one experiences severe body itch.

The Babaylan and Tambalan

The babaylan conducted the paganito and pagdiwata rituals in the life cycle of the individuals, families and the community. These rituals allow communication with the spirits through a séance in which the babaylan serves as the spirit medium. She would get into a trance and assume the voices, personalities and actions of the spirits. Divine messages were given to the people through the babaylan. The babaylan were mostly women but men and transvestites called **asog** also served as such. The babaylan could also heal and function as a **tambalan** (traditional healer).

Since the conversion of Waray society into Christianity, the role of the babaylan as religious leader was supplanted by the priest. Ritualistic séances are no longer practised but

prayers addressed to the nature spirits and ancestors accompany the Catholic invocations for Christ, Mother Mary and the saints or are offered in separate acts of worship. Other religious sects in contemporary Waray society have their own ministers and forms of worship vary according to the tenets of the denomination. There are now liturgy-based and non-ritualistic services appropriate for particular groups.

Until today, the Waray people, especially the poor who cannot afford treatment by western-trained doctors, medicines and hospitals, typically resort to the *tambalan* for simple or serious physical ailments or challenging spiritual illnesses.

The word **tambal** means “cure or heal”; therefore **tambalan** means “one who cures or heals”. The *tambalan* is basically knowledgeable of the use of medicinal plants especially for common ailments such as the cold, cough, gas pain and simple wounds.

The *tambalan* can be categorized as **paraghilot**, **paragmayaw** and the **sunahan**. The *paraghilot* can heal sprains, bone and joint dislocations, muscle strains and fatigue through massage. Fractures are beyond his skills so he/she would refer the patient to the orthopedic doctors. One who was born a **suhi** (breech) is believed to have the gift of **hilot**. Or even if he/she does not become a practicing *hilot*, he/she can remove a block in the throat caused by fishbone (*bukog*). The *paragmayaw* heals through the utterance of sacred words. He or she negotiates with malevolent nature spirits to release their victims from their spell. The *sunahan* is a healer of illnesses caused by snakebites and stings from sea urchin and jellyfish and other related maladies. The belief is that a baby born with an *umalagad* in the form of a snake (animal soul twin) would be endowed with the power to heal **tukob** or **sugod** (snakebites and animal stings) and this healing power would be passed on to seven generations after his/her own. To cure, the *sunahan* simply applies his/her saliva over the wound (healing research).

Spiritual illnesses like **sabrag**, **darahug** and **ginsangkayan** can be treated through the intervention of a *paragmayaw* by utterances and sacrificial offering of chickens. *Sabrag* is when a nature spirit throws some soil over the human enemy. Skin ailments would result out of this action of the spirit. While the spirit’s soil is invisible to humans, it appears when the patient is being healed. *Darahug* is physical or mental injury inflicted by a spirit on the human victim. *Ginsangkayan* is spirit possession -- nature spirits or *kalag han minatay* (soul of the dead) takes over the personality of a victim or brings his or her soul to their realm of existence.

In Guiuan, Eastern Samar, the process of healing conducted by the tambalan is called **paghuwas**. The paghuwas begins with a diagnosis through **pagtawas**. One way of pagtawas is to light a candle and to let its melted wax fall on water contained in a coconut shell or basin. The ensuing shape is interpreted by the tambalan. For instance, if the tambalan discerns a tree out of the melted wax, he would say that the offended spirit is a kahoynon.

The paghuwas of one who is ginsabragan (one who is a victim of sabrag) entails halad (food offering) and the pagloon fumigation ceremony. A friend of this writer undertook this kind of paghuwas. He was suffering from eczema-like itchy skin blotches. The tambalan said that he disturbed the spirits in his backyard when he swept it with a stick broom at an unholy hour for the spirits. The pagtawas determined that he accidentally hit two black dwarfs. The tambalan added that there were also souls of children needing his prayers. He was then advised to serve food to seven living children who are not his relatives. After he did as told, he then participated in the pagloon. First, the tambalan rubbed oil on certain points on his body – the crown of his head, points opposite his elbows joints, a midpoint on his spine, and at the points behind his knee joints. He was made to drink some of the oil. A piece of Manila paper was placed under his feet. He was covered with blanket under which was placed a coconut shell with burning *kamangyan*. The smoke filled the blanket and he perspired from the heat. This went on for ten minutes. After this treatment, the tambalan rubbed the palms of his hands and shook his clothes to release soil particles and hair which were caught by the Manila paper. After examining the paper with the dirt, the tambalan noticed two holes which he attributed to the two dwarfs. He then folded the paper and burned it. The patient claimed that he was healed immediately after the pagloon.

The paghuwas for the ginsangkayan by nature spirits is done through mayaw (sacred utterances) and sacrificial offering of **mag-asawa nga manok** as done by a tambalan in Guiuan, Eastern Samar. This tambalan is reluctant about healing the ginsangkayan if the spirits involved are **mga kalag han minatay** (souls of the dead). She finds it difficult to deal with these spirits. One case was when a twenty- year old young man was ginsangkayan by seven of his dead elders – grandparents, aunts and uncles. The young man had been truant and was causing problems for his parents. The tambalan hesitated to do the paghuwas. Instead, he advised the parents to talk to the spirits of the dead when they would manifest through their son. The son expressed that he could no longer endure his condition. The ancestral spirits communicated to the parents that they

are giving the young man his last chance. If he doesn't straighten up his life, they will take him away with them. With this message, the tambalan no longer had to perform the paghuwas. The family offered prayers to their dead ancestors. The young man reformed and the spirits never bothered them again.

Becoming a Tambalan

One becomes a tambalan through four possible ways: 1.) by a **panata** or pledge to a deity after one or a member of one's family has overcome a serious illness, 2.) through a dream or vision in which a saint or a benevolent nature spirit appears and commands one to be a healer, 3.) by inheritance from and apprenticeship under a parent who is a healer, and, 4.) by apprenticeship under a senior healer..

In any case, the tambalan apprentice undergoes difficult personal spiritual sacrifices before he/she could heal such as surviving the death of a loved one such as one's child or bearing physical pain through self-inflicted punishments in prayerful supplication. A middle aged tambalan narrated that he had to fulfill thirteen Fridays of visits to the cemetery alone at midnight and praying while kneeling and with arms outstretched in cruciform. A snake crossed over his body at one time and another time a man appeared only to vanish into thin air. He had to keep focused and to keep praying. Another tambalan intimated that he had to be submerged at sea in neck-deep water overnight. Strange beings appeared before him but he had to keep his calm and overcome his fear. It is believed that the sacrifices enhance the **birtud** or the power to heal. Failure to fulfill the discipline of prayer and sacrifices as prescribed by practitioners in the tambalan tradition would diminish the birtud. The birtud would be "lapsaw" or diluted. The potency for healing would weaken and the tambalan's paghuwas would be ineffectual.

Witches and Sorcerers

The aswang is the village witch -- the most feared creature of the night. It is believed to be a human being with preternatural malevolent powers. Sister Maria Villegas, a Catholic nun of the Religious Sisters of Mercy in Tacloban City wrote:

There are three types of aswang: the **tangso-tangso**, the **nalakat** (walking) and the **mananghilaw**. The tangso-tangso is the manananggal in Tagalog which detaches its torso from the body and flies to find its prey. The nalakat walks towards its victim and transforms itself to some animal – this is its **sinalipdanan** (shadow or guise). The former two both prey on the sick but the latter attacks sick, the dead, the healthy and babies, born or unborn..

At daytime, the witch appears like ordinary people but it has a very keen sense of sight and smell. People who have seen an aswang say that “her hair stand on end and points to all directions” and her eyes are “red and piercing”. She smears her body with magic oil and she transforms into the night creature with wings. It also makes her body slippery thus difficult to catch and enables her to squeeze through small openings of houses. This oil is prepared from roots of plants and the **mutya** (magic stone) taken from the caves of Samar.

Witchhood is inherited. It is believed that a dying witch cannot die unless she passes on her powers to someone. She may simply touch her successor and her evil powers are transmitted over. If she is touched back, the transmission fails. The witch “germ” may also be eaten. Any cold food can carry the germ. When eaten, the germ makes the person who ate it crave for freshly hatched chicken and later would later desire human flesh.

(Villegas 1969: 227- 230).

Witches can be kept away with salt, the acrid smell of burning carabao horn or rubber tire and shoes, a bamboo specie known as **bagakay nga makaranas** and the magic coconut oil prepared with mutya on Good Friday. There are other measures for protection which old folks know (230). Folk Catholics have the blessed palm of Palm Sunday and above all else, the blessed crucifix that wards off any form of evil such as the aswang.

Sorcery, an occult practice, is known to be an avocation of some Waray men and women. They are sought to secretly inflict injury or kill an enemy or object of one’s hatred, envy or jealousy. Villegas identified four kinds of sorcerers: the **boyagan**, the **barangan**, the **palakaran**, the **ban-okan** and **hilo-an**. The boyagan is a person with a “black tip on his tongue”. His tongue is so venomous that whether he utters praise or censure about someone that person falls sick. His curses are believed to be fatal. Wary of the boyagan, people commonly say “Puera boyag (spare from harm)” whenever someone praises another, especially a child. **Barang** is hex. The barangan, one who hexes, deliberately inflicts illness on and causes death of someone. He prepares a concoction of oil, minerals, herbs and roots like a tambalan. He spits

out this treated oil to the direction of his victim. The targeted body part becomes infected and this eats the flesh. The wound can be healed by a *tambalan*. The *ban-okan* in some way, puts mud into the victim's digestive tract which causes diarrhea and eventually, death. The *hilo-an* has the uncontrollable urge to poison people around him. This is the reason why the Waray are rather cautious when they attend fiestas as the *hilo-an* can easily drop some poison herbal mix tucked under his fingernail onto the food. Other sorcerers do the commonly known hex with the use of the doll. *Kamonay* wood is carved into a human figure. To cause pain on selected body parts, the corresponding joints are screwed tight.

Magical lore spells out the **pangontra** or anti-*barang* or shields from the sorcerer's hex. Jewelry of **bulawan** (gold), **brillante** (diamond), **diamante negra** (black diamond) ward off harmful energy. Holy objects like the **benditado nga lukay** or blessed palm of Palm Sunday and the blessed crucifix protect Catholic homes from evil forces. Fragments of the **Santo Ara** (altar where relics of saints were laid on), **carmen** (amulets) and **tango han kilat** (tooth of the lightning) and **tango han linti** (tooth of the thunder) are mysterious stones produced with the strikes of lightning and thunder are among many others believed to protect anyone from the sorcerer's spell.

Gaba

Evil, in any form or scale is, in the Waray language, **karat-an** (root word, *raot* – bad, or ugly). Its opposite is **kaupayan** (root word: *upay* – good in the aesthetic and moral sense). The *tambalan* restores the patient's body to good health **maupay nga panlawas** (good health of the body) or **maupay nga panhunahuna** (good health of the mind). The *barangan* does the opposite -- cause the **maraot nga panlawas ngan panhunahuna** (bad health of the body and mind). Both have acquired power. The dispensation of this power called *birtud* (for the *tambalan* in *Guiuan*) is what differentiates one from the other – one for good and the other for evil. There are *tambalan* who are believed to function both ways at times—causing harm as the *barangan*. When one does harm on others, the Waray believe that some time, it will return in worst form, to its doer. This phenomenon is called **gaba**.

Fiestas

Like most Filipinos, the Waray love fiestas. A fiesta is a celebration of faith and communal identity. Being predominantly Catholic, fiestas in Waray country are feasts honoring patron saints who protect, guide, bless and inspire the faithful. Thus, the current Waray term for fiesta is “**patron**”. **Pagsaurog** is the Waray term for the phrase “to celebrate”. Every community, whether a barangay or a subdivision neighborhood, celebrate with **pag-ampo** or prayer, the pomp and splendor of the **pasundayag** or musical and dance performance, **karisyuhan** (merry making or fun and entertainment), the **arog** or festive banquet and **irignom** (drinking of tuba). All these elements are combined in varying degrees of simplicity or grandeur as a family or community can afford. It is an event for sharing one’s blessings with relatives, friends, and, guests. Long ago during better times of peace and prosperity even strangers were welcome. It is a thanksgiving for good health, luck, success and for life itself.

Santo Niño

The Santo Niño is the most loved and most popular image of God in the Visayas. The first Santo Niño in the Philippines is historically recorded as the one gifted by Ferdinand Magellan to Cebu’s Queen Juana in 1521. Cebuano legend has it when Queen Juana’s court jester got ill, she went around the village dancing in prayer to the Santo Nino and that act miraculously healed the ailing man. Since then, the Santo Nino devotion became widespread and reached the Eastern Visayas.

Unlike most Santo Niño fiestas all over the Philippines which are in January, the Tacloban City fiesta is celebrated every June 30. This has to do with its history and lore. In 1889, the El Capitan (the name for the main devotional Santo Nino image) was shipped to Manila for repair. The ship burned at sea and the crate bearing the Santo Niño got lost. It was cast ashore in Semirara Island in Mindoro. It was then sent back to Tacloban by the Mindoro officials. At that time, Tacloban residents were then suffering from a cholera epidemic. It is told that when El Capitan returned the afflicted were miraculously healed and there was great jubilation in the city. That day was June 30.

The sacred core of its celebration consists of nine days of novena prayers, Holy Mass in the morning, fluvial procession on the fiesta day and procession from the pier around the city and to the Church. The Santo Niño image is perched on a boat-shaped karosa. As soon as it enters the Church, the congregation joyfully claps in praise and adoration. El Capitan is then carried back to its place in the main altar for the evening Holy Mass.

Other than the usual parades, beauty pageant, art and cultural shows, sports fest, trade exhibit, commercial bazaars, the secular activities for the fiesta now include spectacular entertainment given by festivals of street parades and choreographed stage shows depicting local cultural themes and history– the Pintados-Kasadyaan and the Sangyaw. Cultural performing groups and municipality-based groups join the competitions judged in terms of artistic choreography, costumes, performance discipline and staging techniques of themes and narratives of the respective local community’s history or legend. Contingents from other parts of the country also participate. Generous cash prizes are at stake. Both the Provincial Government of Leyte and the City Government of Tacloban produce popular entertainments nightly for almost a month for the local people and guest. The academe, the Catholic Church and lead non-government organizations ensure that educational, art and heritage events are also held.

The small barangay of Pangdan in an islet off the coast of Catbalogan, Samar honors the Santo Niño with a fluvial procession, picnic parties on bamboo rafts at sea and dancing in the churchyard. The arrival of the priest signals the start of the religious activities. The Hermano Mayor (the major sponsor) who holds the Santo Nino image leads the procession from the church to the beach where boats festooned with papel de japon banderitas (Japanese paper banners) are docked. At the tail end of the procession are people holding food wrapped in plastic bags – sandwiches, suman, pusu, pansit bihon, and adobo nga noos. The boats in procession go around the fishing area with passengers singing and praying the rosary. When they approach other boats and the children who are wading and splashing in the water, the passengers would throw the wrapped food to them, much to the delight of the children who sometimes have to dive for the food. From the sea, the Santo Niño is transferred to the Church and set up on a makeshift altar by the door. The women in the procession carrying food or a bottle of tuba on their heads would proceed towards the Santo Nino singing a hymn and dancing with hands swaying – offering the song, dance and food to the Child-God. They wear everyday clothes – men in t-shirts, shorts and slippers and women in skirts and blouses. The singing and dancing continue

but would change to the karaoke beat – cha-cha, waltz, kuradang, kuratsa. Tuba is served to those dancing. More people join in the dance and would drop coins or bills into the plate in front of the sacred image. The fund collected is for **kapilya** (chapel) expenses. Beside the collection plate is the food like boiled cassava, pansit and adobo nga noos which would be passed around as **sumsuman** (in Tagalog; *pulutan* - food to go with the drink). There is so much fun and laughter in the bantering, drinking and dancing that go on until sunset. The crowd would disperse and converge again wearing their Sunday clothes for the procession. The Santo Niño image is paraded around the poblacion in a **karo**. After the procession the image is returned to its place in the side altar inside the church. The people would then go home for supper. After supper, the benefit dance begins. It would last until dawn the following morning.

E. N. Alegre in his article on this event propounds that the Santo Niño fiesta devotional expression in Pangdan is distinguished by its social dancing done in front of the Santo Nino. Notably, the dancing takes place in the churchyard, a secular space, not in sacred space. E. N. Alegre theorizes:

There is no transgression of sacred space. Folk dance with each other and in effect share with the Santo Niño the joy of being alive – thanks to him. That happiness is accented with the community's sharing of tuba and sumsuman. In the merry making they express gratitude for the protection and love that the Santo Niño bestows on them. Music (cum dancing in this instance) is the dominant feature of Bisayan culture. It is the Bisayans' natural way of showing their joy. Music is interwoven, without marked rupture, in the day's fiesta activities. Most important, however, is the smooth glide from the secular to the sacred, from the profane to the religious, and above all the ability to contain both in one flowing festive event. This indeed is being truly rooted in one's own ways.

(1994:95-98)

Barangay Malitbog in Burauen, Leyte never had its own barangay fiesta until the Ormoc flashflood tragedy in 1991. Malitbog is located by the bank of the Dagitan River. When the torrential waters rushed down the mountain and hit their village, thus, causing a flood, the people began to evacuate. It is said that the barangay was at the verge of being completely underwater when an uprooted gigantic Dao tree trunk stood at the path from the river and caused more fallen

trees and cut trunks to pile up as a barricade against the flashflood. Word spread that a child who was on higher ground saw a child on top of the Dao trunk as the mountain debris piled up and stopped the floods from rising. The people believed that the mysterious child on the Dao trunk was the Santo Niño who saved their village from catastrophe. A well-to-do resident donated a Santo Niño image to the barangay. The people set it up on top of the Dao trunk. They installed a roof over it and built the barangay chapel. Their redemption from flashflood disaster -- a communal experience affirming life and the mystery of faith -- became a special event to be commemorated. This phenomenon is personified in the image of the Christ Jesus, the mythic icon well-embedded in the Catholic Waray spiritual consciousness. The people prayed in thanks to the Santo Niño and held processions around the barangay.

The Barangay Malitbog fiesta, thus, came to be. It is a new fiesta with a significant history, expressed in the traditional way and inspired by a traditionally Waray icon of joy, innocence and salvation, the Christ Child. It is celebrated every November 5, the day of the flashflood, the day they were miraculously spared from death and destruction.

Mother Mary

Guiuan, Eastern Samar celebrates two Marian feasts – Nuestra Senora del Rosario (Our Lady of the Rosary) on the nth Sunday of October and Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception on the eighth of December. Novena (nine-day) prayers daily for nine days until the fiesta day. The procession is held at the end of the day. The Nuestra Senora del Rosario image is set upon a boat-shaped **karosa**. It is believed that she saved the people from a flood long ago. Series of **pasundayag** (musical and dance stage performance) is held nightly at the plaza. A big social dance event is held at the plaza on the bisperas or eve of the fiesta. Fiesta menu served in homes includes regular Filipino fare of lechon, pansit, caldereta (beef stew in tomato sauce) and local dishes such as the **humba** (sweet pork stew) and boiled indigenous root crops such as the **palawan** and **gaway** (gabi). The local delicacy is a giant shellfish called the **Ganga** cooked as adobo (boiled in vinegar and soy sauce). Local sweets served are the **tambis-tambis** (cream candies in pyramidal shape like tambis or makopa fruit) and the pastry **sasima**.

Saint John the Baptist

Lake Danao in MacArthur, Leyte holds its San Juan (Saint John) Fiesta every June 24 as set in the Catholic calendar. Prayers begin in the chapel. The image of Saint John is then set upon a decorated boat. It is the biggest boat in a fluvial procession around the lake. People pray and chant during the procession. They bring food and drinks for a picnic by the lake. The sweet-sour **tilapia** fish (Sc.n. *Oreochromis niloticus*) which thrives in the lake is a major part of the fiesta menu. The lake's bounty is regarded by the faithful as blessings through the intercession of Saint John the Baptist.

Pop dance music would blare through sonorous loudspeakers at the plaza beginning in the afternoon. Children would play games and dance freely. Young people are joined by the old folks towards nighttime and they all dance the night away. **Karisyuhan** or merrymaking through music and dance complete the expressions of **pagsaurog** or celebration by the Waray; otherwise it's **waray upay** (no good).

Other Religious Feasts

Christmas and the Santacruzán are the two most popular religious feasts in the Waray country. Before Christmas day, children organize caroling groups and sing their Christmas carols with musical instruments made of metal bottle caps, coconut shells with pebbles inside for the maracas, wooden clappers, or cans which they strike with a stick.

They expect some coins or bills from the family whose home they visit and sing even just by the door. Some groups could be old folks singing the traditional **daygon** (Christmas carol). On Christmas day, children dress up and carry plastic bags or baskets to collect goodies from the neighborhood. They greet the families in their homes by calling out "Maupay nga Pasko!" or just "Pasko!" The children usually expect candies of various sorts. They may also be given fruits – apples or oranges which are imported and rather special.

Traditional Christmas dramas still exist but are fast becoming obsolescent. Much of them are still extant in Samarnon communities. The **Pastores**, (Spanish term for "shepherds") refers to the performance narrating Christ's birth in recitatives, dance and song. It focuses on the narrative of the angels' apparition to the shepherds in Bethlehem when they announced that the Savior is born. Children and teenage performers in white dresses with red ribbons and donning wide-brimmed hats visit homes and neighborhoods where they would perform. They sing and

dance with musical instruments such as maracas, tambourines, bamboo sticks, and tin bottle tops in a wire ring and guitar. People would give them cash donations of any amount or serve them snacks. The **Panarit** (literally meaning to ask permission) dramatizes Joseph and Mary's search for an inn. In Guiuan, the innkeeper (who is referred to as the **tagbalay** or homeowner) in the traditional Waray script) is played by the actual homeowner whose home is being visited for the performance. The homeowner responds to the sung dialogue and thus participates in the drama. Joseph and Mary sing their parts in plain vernacular Waray set to plaintive melody with guitar accompaniment. In olden days, the panarit starts off on the 16th of December and ends on the 24th which is Christmas Eve. Each day has an appropriate script based on the chronology of events in the Biblical narrative. In Tacloban, a group of elderly daygon singers still recall the songs related to the visit of the Three Wise Men to Baby Jesus. This used to be performed on the Feast of the Epiphany in January. This is no longer known to the Waray people of today,

The Panarit and Pastores have been revived and revitalized for stage performance every Christmas season by the U.P. An Balangaw Performing Arts Group. The group's artistic theatrical rendition and CD recording broadcast on the air have inspired the traditional daygon minstrels and performers to come out and sustain this precious religious traditional performance form.

The Santacruzán is celebrated in May. The month of May begins with the Flores de Mayo (Flowers of May), a ritualistic feast. In Palo, Leyte girls are brought to the church to pray in veneration of the Mother Mary. They offer flowers to the altar and join the procession. The singing of hymns is led by a choir of old women and girls. After the procession, the children receive treats of snacks and goodies. The procession is called the Santacruzán which venerates the Holy Cross. In Tacloban and nearby towns, the nightly procession of colorful lanterns includes girls assigned as sagalas (muses) or reinas representing Biblical characters as Judith, mythic figures and cultural icons. Each sagala or reina wears an appropriate gown. She is framed by a bamboo arch decorated with flowers. The much awaited finale in the procession is the Reyna Elena (Queen Helen – historically King Constantine's who is believed to have found the Holy Cross on which Christ died in Jerusalem) who is portrayed by the prettiest girl in the barangay or town. Children follow behind with flowers and candles in their hands singing the **Mangamuyo** (We will pray ...) this is a delightful sight to behold in every evening of May. In Tacloban, there is the grand Santacruzán which is the convergence of all barangay or district

Santacruzán. This spectacular event of glimmering lanterns and elegant queens are held every May 30.

While in Burauen, Leyte, other than the Santacruzán, there is also the Santa Cruz. The Santa Cruz is a novena prayer ritual done in the home of a *hermana* or *hermano* (Spanish, literally, sister/ brother). The *hermana/hermano* hosts the event. She/he sets up an altar with the Holy Cross as the main symbol. The hosting schedule is decided by a draw of lots. There are nine *hermanas/hermanos* as there are nine days to the novena. One can have as many Santa Cruz groups as one wishes-- a group may be composed of classmates from elementary high school, a neighborhood, a clan, a professional association or just a group of friends or *barkada*. There is chanting of prayers and singing of hymns. The *hermana* or *hermano* is privileged to throw flowers to the altar. Food is served after the prayers. Tuba is also served towards the end of the meal. The drinking and socials continue through the rest of the day, into the night and up to the next dawn as the group pleases. The social bond is cemented by the sacred ritual. Solemnity and mirth are inseparably intertwined in Waray spiritual life.

Chapter VI

THE WARAY ARTS

Waray country is a luxurious ambiance of the variegated shades of sunlight on green and cerulean, cycles of rolling whitecaps and splashing waves from sea to shore, and seasonal symphonies of birds, frogs, crickets and cicadas along with the rustling bamboo groves. Monsoon breezes, summer rains and moody clouds give way to the shining splendor of the sun, moon and stars against the sky in the bright of day or dark of night. The land and waters had been blessed with bounty and love keeps the bonds of family, kin and friends in life and beyond death. Heroes and heroines who fought the colonial masters, won and lost; yet the people endured and survived the vagaries of history. The Waray kept faith and stayed on. The Waray live celebrating life in these sunblessed islands. How do they express this *élan vital*?

Mat weaving Traditional Art

Lamrag is light. The land and waters in Samar and Leyte are suffused with the sun's radiance changing hues from dawn to dusk until the moon rises and casts its own subtle brilliance in the evening sky. Then the stars take their turns for the show of sparkles until the night darkens and until they and the moon fade in the rays of the new morning. The gradations of light wash the sky and splash over the waters and warm the floral green and earth brown. The homegrown mat weaver deftly blends in sunshine yellow into the quiet green and dynamic red for unified warmth and brightness. It is yellow, the hue of light, that gives Samar mats their innate radiance.

And the sheen and smoothness of these mats could only be rendered by the hardy and pliant tikog grass. The ancient pioneer weavers made wise choice of material. Tikog for the basic mat and as ground for embroidery; and buri as medium for embroidery. As tikog readily and evenly absorbs pigments of various hues, the paraglara or mat weaver conjures up colors in playful patterns of waves, rice fields and boat outriggers as revealed in their design vocabulary.

With buri strips inserted in tikog strands, the paragpahut or embroiderer gradually lays out the grandeur of Leyte-Samar flora and fauna – birds, butterflies, flowers, pheasants, mermaids, and new splashes of colorful glyphs. Photographic portraits and the man-made San Juanico Bridge memorialize a bond with people and place.

Basey mat weavers like Rosalia Fajardo and Aldoña Oquino of Barangay Bacubac have generously shared with researchers and artists their age-old knowledge in paglara (mat weaving). They have also participated in arts festivals in the Visayas and Manila to share the rudiments of paglara and pagpahut (mat embroidery). Lilia Badaran (paraglara [weaver]), Eulalia Galit (paraglara and paragpahut [embroiderer]) and mat product designer Eva Marie Adona were among the representatives of Eastern Visayas to the 2009 *Dungog* National Indigenous People's Festival held in Roxas City, Capiz. Their works, as well as those of other homegrown mat weavers of Basey, reflect the lushness of the land and vibrance of the sea in Samar and Leyte.

Music, Folk and Pop

The trill of a bird call thrills a sleepy eye or a weary heart and the day or night begins. Bird songs are melodic lines that most likely stirred up the Waray sensitive ear and creative soul to create a **laylay**. The laylay is basically a folk song. Lullabies, haranas, ballads, nursery rhymes, drinking songs, Christmas and patriotic songs are laylay. They used to be accompanied with **subing** (a bamboo Jew's harp), bamboo zither called **korlong** and the **koryapi** (carved wood with string) and the **agong** (gong). In time, these indigenous instruments gave way to the Spanish guitars and harps. The **rondalla** -- a string band of various guitars and tremulous guitar-like instruments – took roots and entertained barangay and school programs. Minstrels composed of violinists and guitarists made the rounds of fiestas. Eventually, the brass band of trumpets, trombones, saxophones, drums and cymbals filled the air on fiesta mornings, funerals and social balls.

The **sista**, Waray word for guitar, became the favorite instrument of Waray musicians. It is said that there is no village in Leyte and Samar that does not have a guitar. Music is ingrained in the Waray soul and the sista is the Waray man's best friend. Love is best sung with the guitar. Along with the guitar, the Waray lover could express **kasakit** (suffering), **palooylooy** (pity), and **kuri** (difficulty). Waray talents, even without formal training in music, created **composos** – long verses in measured rhythm – and were appreciated in their communities although critically, not

by those formally trained. The drinking spree or **ignum** is a fertile ground not just for bawdy songs but also for musical improvisations, original compositions and uninhibited performance until the present. (Sugbo and Zafra 455-456). Many a learned composer drank to his heart's delight and created songs which have been musically arranged for stage concerts.

Waray folk songs can be **panhayhay** or **pankisi-kisi** (for dancing). **Panhayhay** -- when they soothe the soul such as mellow ballads, haranas and lullabies. **Pankisi-kisi** -- when they move the body to sway and rock and eventually skip around in dance like the **kuratsa**. Whether slow or fast, Waray folk music has been identified by ethnomusicologist Felipe M. de Leon, Jr. as largely **balitaw** in form – plaintive but with a lilting beat. A music educator from Eastern Samar interpreted this plaintive quality of Waray folk songs as a reflection of the hardship of life in this region – of physically engaging in the traditional ways of subsistence— say, of the backbreaking fishing and farming. Yet, the sea teems with fish and the soil is fertile – thus, human struggle for subsistence is sublimated into celebratory song.

Formally trained musicians like Norberto Romualdez, Sr. and Agustin El O'Mora composed folk songs and arranged them in the Western musical scale and harmonics. Their original compositions and arrangements remain part of the repertoire of present-day live performing arts productions. Concerts of Waray music in classical arrangements and folk renditions have been staged rather often lately through art and heritage festivals and competitions mostly produced by the academe and institutions like the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the National Music Competition for Young Artists (NAMCYA). These are usually participated by church and school-based choirs. Waray folk songs have been popularized with the recording by the Mabuhay Singers in the 1960s but songs other than what they produced remain unheard over the mass media. Current popular media broadcast recorded music of Waray folk songs in pop beat done mostly by musicians from Samar like Joseph Uy and Art Ramasasa. Calbayog has sustained its Waray Pop festival featuring songs with Waray lyrics set to new and dynamic pop beats. Rockers among the young break the folk song into raucous rhythms to express social discontent and youthful restlessness. The neo-ethnic movement has inspired young musicians like the KULAHIG ensemble to revive the bamboo instruments of old and chant soulful lyrics lamenting the degradation of Mother Nature in this age of global warming.

The Visual Arts In Search of Roots

The male body served as the broad cloth for the tattooing of an exquisite design, which ran from the groins to the ankles and from the waist to the chest. The design on the chest looked like a breastplate, but the more daring had their necks, temples and foreheads tattooed with rays and lines that gave them a fierce countenance. The women had their hands and wrists tattooed with flowers and knots, an embellishment which enhanced the sheen of their gold rings and bracelets.

Sugbo and Zafra: 450

The writers summed up the look of the ancient Waray as chronicled by Spanish missionaries. Add to the tattoo the following accoutrement: gold teeth, jewelry, woven skirts, G-strings, headdress and kerchiefs. Their visual aesthetic had clear principles of design in relation to the contours of the human body, male or female. The ends of the G-string must not be of equal length otherwise it would look ludicrous, the skirt is gathered round the waist and pleats drop from the side and colors stood for status symbols red G-string for the brave, abaca turban for the poor and silk headdress for nobility (Scott 29).

Alas, the prestigious **tatu** (tattoo) was relegated by the Spanish friars to the dustbin of taboo practices. They were labeled “works of the devil”. The prestigious **tatu** became a forgotten art and was reduced to body ornamentation done by convicts behind bars. In similar vein, gold dentistry waned in practice and gold jewelry production notably declined. Abaca production became an industry for export. And fashion was dictated by Europe and America.

Other than the **panday** (carpenter) who followed a tradition of carving santos (religious imagery) and became sculptors, the visual artists of Leyte and Samar confronted a gap in their art history – after the tatu what then? The Church evangelization efforts included religious dramas and elaborate feasts with processions. Did the visual artist participate at all? Not much attention has been given to this aspect of art production. But yes, there were props for religious dramas. The **trono** of Balangiga, Eastern Samar was a star lantern that swung towards the enthralled audience. The Fourteen Stations of the Cross in Palo and other towns are depictions of Christ’s passion and death in paintings displayed in spots around town. **Karosas** (carrosas in Spanish or

carriages) were assigned to families to be decorated and the visual artist among them decks the karosa with well chosen and theatrically- arranged fresh flowers or meticulously folded paper ones. The santo's vestments are heirloom pieces donated by a family and much care and special attention is given to these holy garments by the artistically inclined in the family.

The fantastic komedyas, followed by the sarswela theaters, made use of painted backdrops. No systematic study has been done on this aspect of theater production which could have only been accomplished by the visual artists in the community. The Holy Infant College in Tacloban put up elaborate set designs which were painted by an elementary school teacher Mr. Emilio Posion of Palo, Leyte. His set designs of Philippine landscapes found their way to American stages when he accompanied the school's Leyte Filipiniana Dance Troupe on an American Tour in 1964. The Leyte Normal College had Mr. Paterno Tan set up breathtaking festive decorations for school events and theater productions in the city and towns.

The formally trained visual artist in the 1970s took the path of the *ilustrado* artist, Juan Luna – who learned from the European masters. The techniques were of Western origin—oil, acrylic, pastels – and styles followed the flow of Western art history –classicism, modernism, abstract expressionism, postmodernism. Until of late, when they began questioning their medium, form and style.

Dulce Cuna, lead visual artist in the region and founder of the Leyte- Samar Artists Association in the 1970s, began to look into local themes and media. Her early works included a portrait of a mat weaver and abstractions using local fiber. She continued to use conventional western medium in her works but recently played with colors akin to the splashy flowers embroidered on the mat. Her figurative works tell of the lushness of an inner life beyond the skein of daily practical struggles. Her colorful fantasies produced provocative portraits: a bee and a purple-haired woman in a garden and in another work, a woman rising with a red heart on her forehead over a garden where spirits are rising. Her recent chromatic abstractions are daringly explicit of an ageing woman's passions -- layered waves of warm colors surging like a tsunami For the 2008 Leyte Heritage Exhibit, Cuna presented her *Iroy Tendaya* (Mother Leyte). A portrait of a half-indigenous, half-Hispanized woman. Half of her body is naked, tattooed, decked with gold, with a pudong on her head; her other half is dressed in kimona with an alampay (kerchief) over her shoulder, an estampita (scapular) around her neck. She is framed with patches of tikog woven mat on which are inscribed ancient symbols. She is the Waray

woman of history, soul of the present. Although both halves are given equal space on the canvass, the tattooed self asserts her presence. Underneath the clothes, she is not naked, she is tattooed. This is the image that has been obliterated by colonial history, by systematic and imposed evangelization. Cuna brings this image of the past, of the Waray soul to the fore. Cuna's works have been exhibited in the 2009 International Visual Arts Festival of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts.

Waray visual artists have earned accolades for their works. Foremost among them is the nationally-recognized Raul Isidro of Calbayog, Samar who is known as the "Father of Calbayog artists". Leo Villaflor of San Jose, Tacloban City has been awarded by the Cultural Center of the Philippines as one of the 100 regional folk artists in 1998 for the centennial celebration of Philippine Independence. He is known as the tuba painter for using tuba as medium. He discovered the many shades that the barok (mangrove natural dye) in tuba, could be rendered in realism. Billy Pomida of Dolores, Eastern Samar is a recipient of a national award for his watercolor paintings which are quiescent scapes of Leyte-Samar country and urban life. Florence Cinco of Calbayog City is the 2002 Metrobank Awardee for Sculpture and is co-founder of the Maharlika Artists and Writers Federation in Manila. Francisco "Archie" Zabala of Palo, Leyte, recognized for his wood-carved sculptures, was selected as featured exhibitor along with mat weaver Rosalia Fajardo of Basey, Samar. Both represented Eastern Visayas for the *Atubangay* 2003 Visayan Islands Visual Artists Exhibit Conference held in Cebu, Iloilo and Manila.

Waray sculpture in Leyte and Samar is an arts domain that has traditional continuity with the proliferation of the **santos** or religious images. As commissioned by parish priests and bishops, the santos abound in the parish churches and barangay chapels. The santo sculptors are hardly known outside their community and the religious circle. They repair old santos and make new ones for new churches and chapels. Jeremias Acebedo of Palo, Leyte sculpted the Stations of the Cross in the Palo, Cathedral. His version of Christ suffering is a series of hard-carved portraits of the close-up faces of Jesus Christ in various expressions. Vicente Cartalla, also of Palo, sculpted numerous santos now spread in various parishes in the region. The faithful do not know the maker of the santos they pray to. Cartalla's santos and Acebedo's Jesus in fourteen dramatic countenances are now part of church heritage art.

Archie Zabala, also of Palo and a generation after Acebedo and Cartalla responded to the call of santo making. He was commissioned to do three Archangels – Gabriel, Michael and Raphael in cement at the Palo Cathedral’s Centennial Tower. One of his noteworthy works is *Kadayaw ngada han Pagsidlit han Adlaw (Full Moon to Sunrise)*. Carved in acacia wood, it is a commissioned two-door heritage panel for the main entrance of the U.P. Leyte- Samar Heritage Center. Spread over the five by six feet two-door diptych are figures of endemic flora and fauna in fluid curves -- tarsier, flying lemur, gabi plant, fern, rice grains. A young couple dancing the kuratsa hovers above them. Centrally-positioned is a pair of elderly people—the woman plays the corlong and the man plays the coriapi – both indigenous musical instruments. At a lower portion is a piece of unfinished woven mat, incredibly looking like real tikog weave, in wood! At the lowest section is a conflagration with figures of men in women’s clothes brandishing sundang (local swords). They defend a pot which one can guess is a symbolic vessel of treasures. A telling detail is that the sundang’s point meets a bullet. It is a historic scene from the Battle of Balangiga wherein men dressed as women attacked and defeated the U.S. Army. The figures are finely and carefully carved. They flow lightly unto each other like passing in time but contained in a circle of timelessness. It is a magnificent portrait of Leyte-Samar environment, history and culture captured as bas relief mural in acacia wood.

The contemporary visual artists in the region bonded together for heritage advocacy in 2007. Since then, they have been participating in heritage exhibits featuring installations and mixed media works using indigenous materials – bamboo, abaca, mats, rice grains, baskets and found objects. They organized tattoo symposia and competitions highlighting ethnic symbols with input from tattoo studies expert Dulce Cuna. After almost half a century, they are reviving and connecting with the arts tradition buried by colonization. Their determined collective brings hope that the lost treasures would be unearthed.

Subtle Beauty of the Language and Literature

Having heard conversations, songs, poetry and narratives orally said by the 17th century Visayans, Father Alcina observed that

.. ordinary Visayan speech was itself rich with metaphor and colorful imagery... A high proportion of the dictionary terms have both a literal and a figurative meaning,... Somebody who

is articulate and talkative is likened to luxuriant foliage, while one who speaks ill of his own relatives is like a big bat – because these creatures are believed to defecate in their own face while hanging upside down...Naturally, formal poetry had a special vocabulary of its own... but the essence of Visayan poetic skill lay not so much in a command of vocabulary as in the ability to use words figuratively to create subtle images.

Alcina in Scott : 97

In 1995, Samlito Abueva, a young writer from Guiuan Eastern Samar wrote the dialogue for Medying, the leading lady's mother in the 1995 sarswela *Kinasingkasing*:

Kun an sulhog han bulan duro an pawa,
 Sadhi an bintana.
 Kun naghahatag hin tun-og,
 sadhi an purtahan.
 Kun an tawo naungara hin kalipay,
 Abriha an kasingkasing.
 Pero kun an kasingkasing
 Pun-on hin kasakit,
 Gabay magdulom an kalibutan
 Ngan bulan di na sumirang.

*If the moonlight shines too bright,
 close the window.*

*If it gives cold evening dew,
 close the door.*

*If a man desires happiness,
 open the heart.*

*But if the heart is filled with pain,
 better for the world to darken
 and for the moon to rise no longer.*

Translation by J.Y.D.Alegre

The mother refers to the moon when she really means romantic young love. Her daughter's suitor visits their home for the first time. She airs her rejection through a *siday* or poem. She rejects him for she does not wish her daughter to go through the pain of possible frustration. She also worries about her daughter's fate with a mere fisherman. This indirect reference rather than a direct statement of one's feeling or thoughts is called **paaliday**. In Abueva's *siday*, it is so subtle that it can have layered shades of meaning. It is elegantly muted and thus so literarily beautiful for the Waray. An elderly musician – the late Alfredo Quintana, elderly leader of the Barugo Rondalla, affirmed this beauty of Abueva's poem when he watched this *sarswela*, *Kinasingkasing*, staged in Tacloban in 1995. After hearing this poetic verse delivered by the actress Miramar Palacio of the U.P. An Balangaw, he excitedly clicked his finger as he remarked in approbation: "*Pwerte hin kahusay!* (Intensely beautiful!)"

Alcina's observation remains true to the best of Waray language of today -- seemingly ordinary, meaningfully pithy and sophisticatedly subtle.

Ancient Waray literature was of various categories in length, purpose and mode and context of presentation. The **ambahan** -- was the simplest form of verse that even children could deliver. Consisting of unrhymed seven-syllable couplet, it used ordinary vocabulary figuratively. Its two lines could be used interchangeably and still make sense. The *ambahan* was the structure of the **balak**—the poetic joust between a man and a woman in courtship. The *balak* would be called **ismayling** or **ismaylingay** during the American period. The *bikal* was between two men and two women engaged in satirical dialogues about each other's physical or moral shortcomings. Audience would pitch in some puns and the exchanges go on with much fun and joviality. The noblest literary form was the epic called **siday** or **kandu** – “long, sustained, repetitions and heavy with metaphor and allusion” and was about “the heroic exploits of ancestors, the valor of warriors or the beauty of women or even the exaltation of heroes still living (98-99).” The *siday* now generally refers to any poem in Waray.

Other poetic forms were the **haya** which was a dirge chanted by women hired to sing praises for the dead, the **kanogon** - a poetic lamentation, and the **awit** which was sung by seafarers at sea to synchronize the rhythm of their oars (Sugbo and Zafra 452).

The **susumaton** is derived from the root word **sumat** which means “to tell”. These were stories in verse form which were filled with adventure and wonder, of myths, legends, fables and fairy tales. They were told in chant and the telling functioned as a manner of storing the Waray collective memory. Contemporary susumaton continue to be told by the folks in Leyte. Sugbo and Zafra wrote of one about Antusa, a rich, vain and beautiful maiden who becomes an agta’s wife. An agta is a black hairy nature spirit. Antusa punishes her suitors by tying every one of them to the tree trunk by the river to be fed to the leeches. One day, she meets the agta who poses as her suitor. She binds him around the tree as she did with her other suitors but he frees himself and captures Antusa. He brings and keeps her in his forest kingdom. It is said that the agta sucks his bride’s blood and her cries are sometimes heard in the forest (452-453).

The popular favorite among the narrative forms is the **posong**. It is a humorous tale of the adventures of Juan Posong – “a simpleton, a hero, or a homespun philosopher who outwits kings and even wise men in the villages.” While the ancient posong tales were told in verse, the present posong is broadcast on the air. The broadcasters of the 1970s gave Juan Posong a hip name, that is, Johnny Posong (454).

Publications in Waray flourished in the 1900s to the 1970s. the first newspaper *An Kaadlawon*, printed in 1901, was followed by several others. The Tagalog *pasyon* (Christian liturgical text on the passion and death of Jesus Christ) translated in Waray by Diaz M. Pascual was published in 1918. Other Waray newspapers of this period were *Katalwasan*, *La Voz de Leyte*, *El Eco de Samar y Leyte*, *An Lantawan* and many others. Occasional poetry found print in some of these publications. 1900 to the 1950s was a prolific period that produced the finest lyric poems by Iluminado Lucente, Francisco Alvarado, Juan Ricacho and Eduardo Makabenta; the best satirical poems were written by Casiano Trinchera; more poetry emerged from Agustin El O’Mora, Pablo Rebadulla, Tomas Gomez Jr., Filomeno Quimbo Singzon, Pedro Separa Francisco Aurillo and Ricardo Octaviano (454) .

In 1909, the Waray literati organized the Sanghiran sang Binisaya (Council for the Visayan Language) which aimed “to cultivate and enrich the Waray language”. Under the leadership of Norberto Romualdez, Sr., the Sanghiran led the new writing of that period with the efforts of Iluminado Lucente, Casiano Trinchera, Eduardo Makabenta, Francisco Alvarado, Juan Ricacho, Francisco Infectana, Espiridion Brillo, and Jaime C. De Veyra (455).

Since the 1970s, anthologies of Waray poems have been published. The Divine Word University produced Raymond Quetchenbach's *Lineyte-Samarnon Poems*, 1974, Gregorio Lunagco's *Waray Literature*, 1982 and *Kandabao*, 1982. The Cultural Center of the Philippines printed the Waray edition of *Ani* in 1990 (455) . The National Commission for Culture and the Arts awarded a grant to a young writer Voltaire Oyzon for his book *An Maupay ha Waray* in 2008. The finest of current Waray poetry is penned by Victor N. Sugbo in his book *Inintokan* (2008), published by the University of the Philippines Press.

In his review in *Businessworld's Pinoy na Pinoy* column, literary critic Edilberto N. Alegre critically appreciated Victor N. Sugbo's *Inintokan* collection of poems as: "...devoid of polemics and so I will honor his lead and keep to the artistry of his poetry that is seemingly simple. The tone is conversational and inveigles us to enter his everyday world. The subterfuge is arresting. ... The poems are celebrations of the ordinary, the everyday, the quotidian." Here is one of the *Inintokan* poems:

Hingyap

Maiha ko na nga hingyap itago inin nag-aasul
Nga dagat ha Cancabatoc ha akon bulsa

Maiha ko na gihapon karuyag ibutang
Ha akon mga komo an nagbuburusag

Nagbabalatbagat nga mga dampog
Maiha ko na nga iniinpan dad-on an bukid

Ha Amandewing didi ha akon mga butkon
Basi din a ako magliniyongliyong pamilyang ha imo:

Kun mahihimo daw la nga mabubutang inin
Ngatanan ha imo hunahuna.

Desire

*I have long wished to keep the blue
Cancabatoc sea in my pocket*

*I have long wanted to hold
In my hand the white*

*Flurry of clouds
I have long dreamed of carrying the hills*

*Of Amandewing in my arms
So I do not have to wander around looking for you:*

*If I can only place all
These in your thoughts.*

Alegre comments: “He looks at the blue waters in Cancabatoc Bay, the flurry of clouds, the hills of the Amandewing Mountain Range and wishes that he could put them all in his pocket, very much like small boy ... This is the first poem in the collection. He wishes us to see the colors, the feel, the view of his very ordinary, everyday world.”

An Akon Inuoli

Nag-aandam pala
Paglakat para Hindang
Masarit na ako ha akon bugto upod pasangil:
Nagkikigkita ako kan Na Talina
Kay hinin naninig-a ko
Nga abaga kinahanglan tuthuan,
Inin akon kabutlaw tarayhupan.

Ha pag-abot ko ha Magallanes
An balay hilarom an pagbuot
Kay hi Tata at nananagat pa.
Dayon ko pakadto kan Nanay humayan,
Mag-iininaw hiton mga talabong nga kalasan.
Kan Na Trining kalubian liliputon ko liwat
Rumbo an suba nga amon ni Okoy
Gintataboktabokan hadton isdaan pa.
Sirong han talisay igpupuruko ko

Inin dara ko nga mga ugmad
 Ngan atubang hinin naglilinaw
 Nga dagat han Hindang
 Akon inuoli an tanan
 Basi ako man maulian

Going Home

*As I prepare
 To leave for Hindang
 I tell my sister a reason
 To see Na Talina
 For the stiffness
 In my shoulders she needs to spit on,
 This weakness she needs to blow away.*

*When I reach Magallanes
 The house is in deep thought
 For Tata had gone out to fish
 So I walk straight to Nanay's ricefield
 To watch the wild herons.
 Round Na Trining's palm grows, I trace
 The path to the river we used to cross,
 Okoy and I, when it was still full of fish.
 And in the shade of the talisay tree I sit,
 Taking out these panic I brought with me
 And looking out to the clear
 Waters of Hindang
 I give back everything
 That I may recover.*

E. N. Alegre proceeds with his analysis:

Here is an ordinary enough vignette. ...The Waray word he uses in the last two lines is from the root word *uli*, meaning to return or give back something, but he conjugates it as *maulian* in the last line meaning to receive- to recover as he had returned. The story line is simple but as in many of his poems, be alert to the last lines for they are not as simple.

This is the subterfuge that I speak of . It is easy enough to enter his world because it is not fantastic or even a bit ‘otherly’. It, too, is our world, a familiar world: of vinegar stew, cold rice, gardenia, mats, stray cats, crickets, bats, ripening jackfruit, pommels ...but there is always a subtle turn at the end. ...

These poems pierce the seeming simplicity of the quotidian and reader comes through with a smile, a fleeting ring of laughter, a pithy wrap of the wit; always light, always buoyant with the lightness of being; never laughing at but always laughing with the everyday is the focus and as such gains attention, merits consideration, and the poems achieve the classic role of art: to please and to teach; to entertain and to make us see. The everyday is no longer just the ephemeral quotidian. It has gained value by being placed and seen in a different perspective. It is the angle of seeing, the viewing, that endows what could and usually does pass as simply fugacious with grace – and worth of our remembering: the everyday becomes, is more than just the quotidian.”

The siday as bearer of the muted elegance and subtle sophistication of the Waray language has come a long way. Efforts from the academe and the media revived its value and sustained its popular appeal to the young and old **parasiday** (siday poet) in the region. Through the U.P. Visayas Creative Writing Program, Prof. Merlie Alunan, U.P. Visayas *Professor Emeritus*, six-time Palanca Awardee in poetry and author of several anthologies of her own poems and of those of other poets in the Philippine south, spearheaded creative writing workshops, poetry readings, performance of poetry, national literary conferences and festivals in the region. Among the media, the DYVL Radio Station has been in the forefront of airing newly-composed siday by young and old parasiday from all over the region. Under its manager

Francisca “Babes” Custodio, the DYVL teamed up with the U.P. Visayas Tacloban College in publishing the DYVL broadcast siday through a grant from the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. These efforts have borne fruit with the workshops organized by the new breed of writers and literature teachers: Harold Mercurio in Calbayog City, Samar and Jethol Paanod in the Naval Institute of Technology in Naval, Biliran. More Waray publications are in order.

Pasundayag -- The Efflorescence of the Performing Arts

Pasundayag is the Waray term for musical performance. The Waray sense of a performance is usually related to music. Its basic function is **kalingawan** or entertainment. Related terms are **kurulawon** (Eastern Samar) or **kiritaon** (Leyte) which generically refers to shows not necessarily with music. Literally they mean “something to see or watch”. The common colloquial term is **pasalida** (derived from the Spanish “salida” – “show”) which includes movies. Kurulawon and kiritaon usually refer to staged shows. Music qualifies pasundayag. It is a total sensorial experience which the Waray utmosty enjoys more than with any other kind of show.

The Leyte-Samar region is vibrant with its rich performance traditions. The people express themselves through songs and dances. Father Alcina wrote that the people loved to sing and dance and that the only occasions that they didn’t do these were when they were asleep or during funerals (Alcina in Scott 109-111). At present, social gatherings are never complete without the traditional kuratsa dance. The ismayling (balitaw), a courtship duet in song and dance of Samar is still performed and revitalized in annual competitions during the fiesta in Calbayog City. The siday (oral poetry) has also been revived in Can-avid, Eastern Samar. There had been efforts in the revival and revitalization of these traditional performance forms through the works of critical artists and cultural researchers. For instance, contemporary sarswelas (derived from the Spanish zarzuela - drama with domestic themes and songs) with original Waray scripts were recently staged.

New phenomena such as the popular entertainment spectacles and tourist productions of street parades have become so hyped-up that communities all over the region have adopted their own version of the street parade with diverse motifs based on local history and culture. These have been spawned by the commercialized versions of the Sinulog and the energetic and

dazzling Ati-atihan. The political leaderships in the cities and municipalities in the region have been supporting these popular spectacles and government funds have been infused in to them. These tourist productions are supported by the government through the WOW! Philippines program of the Department of Tourism. The community fiestas are now highlighted with these entertainment forms although they are, critically, derivatives of the Sinulog and Ati-atihan in different dressings. Nevertheless, in this performance spectacle form, the **Buyugan** of Abuyog, Leyte won the National Champion Award for the 2009 Aliwan Festival Competition. It depicts the movement of bees or **buyog** after which Abuyog was named. At the provincial level, the **Pasaka** of Tanauan, Leyte won First Place for the Pintados-Kasadyaan Festival. It's a dance drama on the miraculous intervention of *Our Lady of the Assumption* in Tanauan's community and religious lore.

What have not been brought to wide public and media exposure are the traditional and the new and serious art works which find audience in small publics such as schools and barangays. Dynamism and creative energy for traditional continuity and original works based on tradition in the different media such as dance, drama, stage singing and or groups perform in their own milieu. Although opportunities of bringing these artists together had been nil in the past, recent festivals in which they participated have been organized through the support of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, local institutions and private individual sponsors.

Ismayling

Ismayling was originally the balak, "a poetic joust between a man and a woman" who sung or chanted the lyrics accompanied by musical instruments – the **coriapi** (a small wood garved guitar) for the man and the **korlong** (bamboo zither) for the woman. It assumed the ismayling during the American period. Ismayling is derived from "smile". It is performed by a man and a woman who alternately sing their courtship repartee to each other as they sway to the poetic melodies. Each performer tries to outwit each other through their improvised dialogues that tease and tickle not just themselves but the audience, too. (Sugbo and Zafra 451-452).

Ismayling performers Paula Saldaña and Lucio Calagos are senior citizens of Calbayog who have been invited to festivals in Tacloban in order to show this delightful staged romance especially to the young people of today.

Kuratsa

Kuratsa, the region's most popular folk dance is performed in small and grand occasions. Social gatherings like a family reunion, barangay fiesta **pasayaw** (dance sponsored by the barangay), weddings, all-occasion parties and political assemblies like the miting de avance are never complete without it. It has been written that the kuratsa was derived from “la curacacha” (the cockroach)” which is a Mexican folk dance. However, kuratsa steps do not suggest the movement of the cockroach. Instead, it is an imitation of the rooster and hen in courtship. The men exhibit their skill in the **sarakiki** step. Sarakiki is the term for the rooster's vibrating footwork. The women are appreciated for their **mabalud-balud** or wavy grace. Both are best if light and fluid and when the couple dance in seamless harmony. They dramatize the dynamics of romance – the man chasing the woman who reluctantly evades him, now the man turns his back and the woman follows him. He kneels, he rolls around as she keeps her gracious poise with hands swaying in the air until she accedes and dance closely with him. In Leyte, the dancers are tied with a kerchief at separate times. The one tied is not freed until the partner redeems the other by dropping money on the scarf laid at center ground. In Eastern Samar, the kuratsa is performed by the newly weds at least thrice while the guests, friends and relatives pin bills on their garments. This is the **paado**. The dance lasts almost the whole day as couples take their turns dancing in honor of the bride and groom. **Ninangs** and **ninongs** (principal sponsors) dance and while dancing, they throw to the air money bills which float and fall on the ground lightly as confetti. The money offered is the **gala**. The groom collects these at the end of the dance and offers everything to his bride.

The Kuratsa Champions of the 2009 Leyte Heritage Festival are Prima Gayrama and Glynis Sydiongco of Alang-alang. Lucio and Radi Albao of Tanauan are a husband-and-wife elderly couple who have performed in the 2007 NCCA Ani ng Sining Festival and the 2007 and 2008 Leyte Heritage Festival. .

Contemporary Performing Groups

Among notable performing arts groups that appropriate traditional performance forms are the Leyte Kalipayan Dance Company, Rahrah Rousers of Palo, Leyte, Balinsasayaw Singers of Tanauan, Leyte, U.P. An Balangaw Performing Arts Group, Odon Sabarre Ballet Company,

Leyte Dance Theater, Eastern Samar National Comprehensive High School Rondalla and the Kulahig neo-ethnic band. Educational institutions that lead in the advancement of the Waray culture in the region are Holy Infant College and the Leyte Normal University.

The Leyte Kalipayan Dance Company was founded in 1959 by its Artistic Director and choreographer Miss Teresita Veloso Pil as a small dance troupe of the Holy Infant College. Since then it evolved as a community-based company. Its repertoire of staged Philippine folk dances ends with a rural scene depicting the vivacity of the people and vitality of life in Leyte and Samar. Its finale is the tinkling dance of the tinkling birds in the rice field which, as noted in Francisca Reyes Aquino's Philippine Folk Dance series, originated in Tanauan, Leyte. The Kalipayan dancers display agile lightness in their footwork and subtle grace with their hands. Miss Pil's choreography and the dancers' artistic discipline have drawn rave reviews in international folklore festivals in the U.S., Mexico, Europe, Middle East Southeast Asia and China. Washington Post described the troupe as "fresh, spontaneous and appealing" and a Swiss critic commented on the choreography and performance as "... finesse a l'extrémité (finesse at its finest)" in *La Liberté*. The troupe was awarded the Silver Medal in the 1980 Dijon International Folklore Festival and continues to enthrall its audiences locally and abroad. Its performance record has earned for Miss Pil the 1994 GAWAD SINING for Regional Dance of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the Leyte Heritage Award for Dance from the Province of Leyte and the Sangyaw Award from the City of Tacloban. Ms. Pil has trained five generations of dancers from all over the region and continues to do so.

The Leyte Dance Theater is a community based-dance company under the artistic direction of Jess De Paz who hails from Jaro, Leyte. Its dance vocabulary is largely of modern ballet and jazz but it has neo-ethnic pieces in the vein of Alice Reyes' style. De Paz was a scholar in dance under the tutelage of Alice Reyes in the 1970s. He has taught ballet and jazz for four generations of dancers who have treated the Tacloban audiences with performances ranging from Broadway musicals to folk ballet portrayals of Waray cultural life. His choreography of the gabi harvest dance called **gaway-gaway** and the **mananggiti** (tuba gatherer) dance are playfully festive. Douglas Nierras (whose roots are in Tacloban) of Power Dance fame as well as Ballet Philippines' Alden Lugnasin (of Basey, Samar) started as De Paz' dance students. Many of his dance students now teach dance themselves in schools in the region and some have become

professional choreographers. The Leyte Dance Theater has performed in the U.S. and recently in Turkey where they garnered an award in an international dance festival.

Odon Sabarre's Leyte-Samar Dance Scholars (LSDS) was formed in 2002 with young dance enthusiasts whom Odon Sabarre trained in various genres. Within a year the group performed in major events in Eastern Visayas displaying their skills in classic, jazz, modern interpretation and stylized folk dances. The LSDS dancers are known for their lightness and technical acumen. One of the highlights of the LSDS repertoire is the ballet version of kuratsa. The LSDS dancers astonished their audience with their performance of kuratsa *en pointe* – on their toes and wearing toe shoes. The LSDS founder, trainer and director Odon Sabarre hails from Samar. In the 1970s, Sabarre was the first Filipino scholar to have trained in Russia as a classical dance scholar of former First Lady Madame Imelda Romualdez Marcos. Since the 1970s, he has been teaching dance to poor elementary and high school students in the provinces of Leyte and Samar. For more than two decades, this former danseur of Pittsburg Ballet Theater and New Jersey Ballet Company has dedicated his life to honing the dancing skills of raw, fresh talents in the Leyte Samar region.

The Rahrah Rousers started as a group of neighborhood serenaders and carolers from Palo, Leyte. None of the group members ever had any formal music lessons but all of them were gifted with fine baritone and tenor voices. Prof. Agustin El O'Mora, a highly esteemed musical genius, formally organized the group in 1963. In 1981, new and younger members were recruited including Nestor de Veyra, a musician and theater director. Under de Veyra's artistic leadership, the group's repertoire expanded, their distinctive singing style was honed and their performance quality improved. As an all-male chorale, the Rousers' song repertoire consists of Lineyte-Samarnon folk songs with arrangements which vary from classical to jazz. They authentically express the Waray spirit in their soulful harana and jocund irignum (drinking) songs.

The Balinsasayaw Singers, started in 1971 as a parish choir in Tanauan, Leyte under the musical direction of Daniel "Sarge" Basas. They had their first successful public appearance in 1973 when they performed in many key cities in the Visayas and Mindanao. The group assumed the name Balinsasayaw from a songbird endemic in the region. Their repertoire consisted of soft and poignant renditions of Tagalog, Ilocano, Waray and Cebuano love songs. Since then they became the official entertainers of Leyte. In 2003 and 2004, with second generation

members, they successfully recorded their first and second CD albums of original and traditional Waray songs sponsored by the Tanauan local government.

The Waray phrase **An Balangaw** means “the rainbow” which refers to the various hues of the rainbow signifying the different artistic talents and art forms converging harmoniously to create one showcase. It also refers to the different personalities who undergo the discipline of the performing arts. The U.P. An Balangaw Performing Arts Groups was founded in 1984 by Prof. Joycie Y. Dorado Alegre. Its mission is to revive and revitalize traditional Leyte-Samar performance forms and to create new and original works. The group is distinguished for its research and its system of processing traditional cultural data into contemporary performance as well as for its aesthetic interpretation which preserves the integrity of the folk form. In 1986, the group was awarded as the U.P. Visayas Most Outstanding Student Organization. In 1995, it received a grant from the National Commission for Culture and the Arts for the staging of *Kinasingkasing* (From the Heart) – a contemporary and original Waray sarswela written by Samlito Abueva, music by Jimmy Loro and choreography and direction by Joycie Y. Dorado Alegre. The sarswela successfully portrayed matweaving and fishing village life through poetic verse, song and dance. The *Pastores ug Panarit* (traditional Waray Christmas drama on the Shepherds to whom angels announced Jesus’ birth and of Joseph and Mary’s search for an inn) has been revitalized by the group since 1991. In 2007, the National Youth Commission awarded the group as One of the Top Five Accomplished Youth Groups in the Visayas and as national finalist in the Ten Most Accomplished Youth Organizations in the Philippines. Recently, it received the U.P. Visayas Performing Group Award for two consecutive academic years (2007-2008; 2008-2009).

The Leyte Normal University has been active in Waray theater productions with the cultural leadership and direction of Jose Lianza. In 2008, the university produced a contemporary sarswela on the history and lore of the Santo Nino Fiesta of Tacloban. The script was written by Victor N. Sugbo and the original music was composed by Rex Makabenta. This was the first time that the oral history and lore of Tacloban’s Patron Saint was ever dramatized. This was on the occasion of the 2008 national heritage month celebration through a grant from the Province of Leyte.

For the national arts month celebrations, the Holy Infant College produced the *Tulay han Tulin* (Bridge of Our Ancestral Heritage) Performing Arts Festival (2006), the *Ani ng Sining ng*

Leyte (2008) and the *An Bugsay ni Jayme* Children's Musical Theater (2009). *Tulay han Aton Tulin* brought together performing arts groups of traditional and tradition-based forms from all over the region. An octogenarian musician, the late Rosario Franco, who played kuratsa mayor on the piano amazed the youthful audience in this grand festival. Ten-year-old gifted singer Rosary Padilla astonished them with her naturally fine soprano voice in singing Waray folk songs. *Ani ng Sining ng Leyte* highlighted the environmental conservation theme and other millennium development goals embedded in the folk songs and dances of various participating groups from Tacloban and nearby towns. *An Bugsay ni Jayme* (Jayme's Paddle) was a spectacular production with children dancing as fishes, jellyfish, stingrays, turtles, octopuses, sharks, whales, mermaids and elves in the fantastic worlds of the sea and of Glaya, the **diwata** (*nature spirit*) guardian of humanity's livelihood implements.. It was a story of a Jayme, a fisher boy, who found the elf Badul's magic paddle which changed life in his community. Script, choreography and direction was by Joycie Y. Dorado Alegre, drama assistant direction by Ives Bajas and Jet Cañanes, musical direction by Marian Alapit and Jet Cañanes, set design by Arceli Cerro and Rex Diaz, and costume design by Marian Alapit and Jocelyn Dorado.

Eastern Samar National Comprehensive High School (ESNCHS) Rondalla of Borongan, Eastern Samar is a relatively young group. But in so short a time its story has become one of the school's pride. The group consistently reaps laurels for Eastern Samar province. Organized only in 2002, the group has already joined the National Music Competition for Young Artists as national finalist being the regional champion. In the later year, it was also featured as one of the region's best in the WOW! Philippines National Tourism and Trade Fair. Under the baton of Angela Villasin, a B.S. Music Education graduate of the Holy Infant College in Tacloban City, the group continues to work out a repertoire of Waray folk songs so they would live on.

Kulahig is a group of local artists in Tacloban bound by their love for nature, their people, culture and country expressed through Philippine ethnic music. Dante Enage leads the group as they create original rhythmic pieces in Waray with chants and Philippine bamboo instruments from various communities such as the **bungkaka** (Mangyan cracker), **gabbang** (Maranaw) and the **kubing** (bamboo Jew's harp). The group recently produced a CD music video that won in the U.P. Largabista short film competition. With the members' earnest dedication to uplift the Waray culture, they have done series of shows in the region and in other parts of the Philippines. In 2003 they were among other artists in the Philippines who

participated in the Maharlika Arts Festival of Boracay, Aklan. They sing of the river and sea, the flora and fauna -- of Mother Earth's blessings. As a neo-ethnic band, the Kulahig members are gently disciplined in their search for the possibilities of Waray music for the present generation.

Contemporary performance of the Waray traditional and the tradition-based forms connects present performers and audiences to their past and leads them into the future. The old and the new meet. The continuing tradition of the old finds new pulses, beats, steps and gestures as they are performed by the young of this generation. There are exciting juxtapositions and fusions of the traditional, tradition-based, contemporary and perhaps futuristic visions. The matrix of unity is in their roots – their history and inspirations, the sources of artistic imagination.

CONCLUSION

The Eastern Visayas region is known to be economically poor. Five of its six provinces, except one (Southern Leyte), are categorized in the list of the poorest in the Philippines by the National Statistics Board in 2000. Yet, the region is “one of the few remaining areas in the Philippines possessing a significant amount of biological biodiversity (Final Report- Biodiversity in Eastern Visayas).” Therefore the region has kept its rich natural resources. And culturally, the people exhibit an ineffable wealth of enduring and joyous spirit. Naturally and culturally rich but economically poor – that is the paradoxical reality of life in these sunblest islands.

The Waray people have tenaciously stayed on in their homeland. They survived the brutal cruelty of the colonial masters and the perils of natural disasters. They shared their land with neighboring islanders -- the Cebuanos and Boholanos who now comprise a large bulk of the population of Leyte. Despite the ravages of colonization, the Waray culture remains whole and hale. The people retained age-old traditions but accommodated new trends in technology, beliefs and practices.

The language is intact, widespread and spoken in practical transactions of daily living, in social and political engagements and in the practice of faith. The Waray language is unperturbed among the vast majority who do not speak English which is limited to the middle class and upper class and as a formality in schools and offices. Everyday food is basically indigenous. Spanish and American influenced food are prepared occasionally—during fiestas, Christmas *Noche Buena*, parties and outings— and the foreign taste has been adjusted to the Waray mild taste. Houses open up to sunlight and air and gardens teem with living colors. Fishermen and farmers keep their reverence to the unseen forces of land and waters. The mananggiti climbs regularly to tend his sanggutan coconut tree for the tuba supply of merry men and women even if beer is available in sari-sari stores. The traditional mats are back in the commercial market alongside the flashy Pintados designs.

Waray children are raised to respect their elders and they grow up with elders blessing them in every stage of their life the pleasures of which now include computer games and the internet. Annually, the living honor the dead and the revered dead are believed to give graces to the living. As has been the custom, fiesta celebrations that begin with solemn thanksgiving prayers reverberate with spectacular displays of parades, pasundayag shows and seemingly bountiful banquets serving lechon and tuba a-flowing even in today's economic hardships, karaoke singing fills the air nightly still. And in the plaza the band plays and the night is fully awake with the non-stop dancing of pop, rock, cha-cha and kuratsa plus this generation's hiphop. For the Waray, the cycle of life is a cycle of endless celebration.

Until today, the tabo market displays fresh fish from the surrounding waters and distinctive duma or carbohydrate rich plantains --camote, gabi, talyan, sab-a and inaldaba – in mounds of thick bundles. But the lawot-lawot bundles have less of the green agitway leaves. It must be the drought which is all over the whole country. Fortunately, rice remains sufficient for the region as reported by the Department of Agriculture Regional Office. It is hot and humid in these islands but never completely dry. A dry spell of two or three days would be broken by showers or a sudden downpour. The winds bring in the **madlos** – wind and rain -- to refresh the thirsty soil and the lonely, dull soul. It must be because of the geographic location or innate climate in this part of the world. The people attribute it to **grasya** (derived from Spanish: gracia) or blessing; or **parabut** -- the old Leyteño Waray term for grasya (as pointed out by Prof. Agustin El O'Mora, the late prolific composer of Palo, to this writer in 1983).

But still, the people are poor. Government and non-government leaders are supposedly addressing the problem of poverty. They have drawn up strategic plans and target goals for development as has been done in the Eastern Visayas regional development plan. How can these be successfully implemented?

A quick look at the Eastern Visayas Regional Development plan will reveal the absence of any cultural agenda. At the level of planning and policy formulation, cultural development is not at all factored in. This lack of cultural awareness is true to all levels of contemporary Waray society. Culture is generally understood as “singing and dancing”. While the Waray culture is rich, it is not at all clearly defined nor articulated by the Waray people themselves. When asked “What is Waray culture?”, the typical Waray would pause and respond: “Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! ...Ambot !...Ha! Ha! Ha!” The Waray reply is a ringing laughter capped with “Ambot” – one

word that means “I don’t know”. That is “Ewan” in Tagalog. The ease at laughter is typically Waray.

The educational system in the Philippines is such that it alienates the students from their own culture. The curriculum is biased towards the Sciences and the English language. The arts in which the Waray express themselves best is considered with very little academic value other than as an extra-curricular activity. The medium of instruction is English. The Waray language is not taught in school. In fact, there are no lessons in Waray grammar even outside school. The reality of Waray cultural life is not included in academic discourse in any level of education such that fishing and farming practices, matweaving, tuba gathering, parts of the Waray house, Waray food, the kuratsa and other Waray folk dances are not taken up as subject matter for deeper understanding of the young. This could also be a factor for the significant dropout rates in school.

Livelihood programs, however benevolent and laudable, have failed and would definitely fail if they are not integrated into the socio-cultural fabric of the community’s life. For instance, a non-government organization in Samar sometime ago introduced goat-raising to a barangay. While it takes very little effort to take care of goats, the market would be very challenging because goats are hardly eaten by the Waray. Well, there was simply no market for goats among the Waray who preferred fish daily and occasionally carabao meat, pork and chicken. So the project failed. Another anecdote is of a government agency conducting workshops on an unfamiliar art/craft. The lessons which are focused on technique were devoid of the cultural context and background of the art/craft being taught. A mat weaving community cannot easily learn basketry developed by another community. Each traditional form has a long history and different social value in the context of its producer community. A recent case is that of a German agency transferring the technology of solid waste recycling in a barangay in Tacloban. The German engineer assigned to the barangay was totally dedicated in training some of the people on the process. He lived in Tacloban for the project duration of five years. While the people he assigned learned the method that he taught, their interest in sustaining the project was short-lived and did not last within the project duration. At the end of the project, the German had to endorse the project to a local non-government organization. The German engineer failed to identify a local leader or liaison who would have both technical bent, social commitment and is trusted by the community. The same German group, however, were successful in a “rain

forestation” (rehabilitation of a rainforest project) in a farmers’ barangay in Baybay, Leyte where the community organizer was one who lived in the community and had a long background of interaction with the farmers. By the end of the project, the farmers and their wives had organized and sustained a cooperative and they would conduct trainings for other farmers from other communities themselves. Among other factors of success, a compassionate and respected leader or liaison whom the people considered as one with them was crucial to the success of the community endeavor.

History shows that the main economic and political structures and other state apparatus instituted by the Spaniards and the Americans in making the Philippines into a nation-state have largely remained in place to this day of the Republic of the Philippines. Thus, the Spanish *encomiendas* have become *haciendas* for crop industries such as sugar, abaca and copra owned and run by the landed gentry whose families trace their roots back to the colonial masters. The current system of ownership of land, for example, is antithetical to the traditional ancestral *puyong* which is clan-owned and not by an individual. As E. N. Alegre asserts, the disjunct of a foreign imposed-polity and the traditional cultural praxis creates tensions that disenfranchise the poor and powerless and engenders neo-colonial slavery up to the present times. Present-day elections with the primacy of individual votes run counter to the *sakop* or *batos* aggrupations and alliance system which are traditionally ingrained since the time of the *datu*.

With a stratified social class and power structure that privileges the moneyed and the political families now dubbed as “political dynasties,” the un-empowered poor are disenfranchised. The lack of opportunities and knowledge about the law and of their rights, and the sense of inferiority being in the lower stratum push the poor into aggravating their conditions and compromising the resources around them. Desperate fishermen opt for the easy way out such as dynamite fishing, *panguryente* (fish electrocution) or fish poisoning; farmers wanting faster and higher yields of rice use environmentally harmful fertilizers and pesticides. Children are made to quit school to provide extra farm hand or work as market vendors, pedicab drivers or beg in the city streets. Poverty also has been found to be a condition conducive for domestic violence against women and children. Men of low esteem are found to hit their wives and punish their children. The incidence of domestic violence including incestuous rape is high in Eastern Visayas.

The rise of the civilian society for participative governance since the mid-1980s effected livelihood and social welfare projects. In the Eastern Visayas, non-government organizations voluntarily supported barangay communities and people's organizations with success. Women's groups aided the Department of Social Welfare and Development in protecting women and children and in advocating for women's and children's rights. Partnerships between non-government organizations and government agencies along with some enlightened political leaders have been forged and have been fruitful. In Eastern Visayas, the Bantay Panimalay which was initiated as Bantay Banay by Lihok Pilipina of Cebu in partnership with local NGOs like the Runggiyan Social Development Foundation, has been instrumental in minimizing domestic violence and helped equip women and children with knowledge of their rights and the law. The local government units and national government agencies spearheaded by the DSWD and the National Commission on Women, and, the Runggiyan Social Development Foundation (RSDF) assisted a people's organization, the Barugo Roscas Producers' Association (BRPA) in capability building. The BRPA is a group of women in Barugo, Leyte who revitalized the making of roscas, a traditional delicacy of Barugo as a home-based industry. This successful collaboration bore much fruit as the Barugo municipal government identified them to represent their hometown for One Town One Product (OTOP) of the Department of Trade and Industry. Since then, they were accredited as women's sector representative in the local government unit's planning and policy formulation (Interview with Paulina Lawsin-Nayra (Feb. 7, 2010). As of today, the Bantay Panimalay strategy and the Barugo experience are being replicated in the three provinces of Samar Island under the aegis of the RSDF in partnership with PLAN International Philippines -- an international private agency concerned with the education and health of children around the world and the local government units. Their project sites are Catarman and San Roque in Northern Samar; Santa Margarita and Daram in Western Samar; and Salcedo and Oras, Eastern Samar.

At no other time is the role of the academe most needed in cultural education and advocacy. Leyte Samar Studies was initiated by the Divine Word University in the 1960s. A Leyte – Samar Museum was established to store and display a 6,000 year old neolithic stone adze from Basey, Samar and lifestyle artifacts such as a carved stone cacao crusher, sandstone water filter, rice corn grader, clay cup and religious statuary along other pieces were donated by teachers, students and priests from all over the region. Research and documentation of the

region's flora and fauna and traditional culture were done and published in the Leyte-Samar Studies Journal. The Divine Word University under the administration of the SVD Fathers hosted a national conference on *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino Psychology) in the early 1980s. However, the closure of the Divine Word University in the 1990s left a vacuum in this field of study.

In 1995, the U.P. Visayas Tacloban College established the U.P. Leyte Samar Heritage Center with the mission of conducting studies on the Eastern Visayas Regional environment, history and culture for the purpose of development. It has completed researches which informed heritage conservation advocacy programs in the region. In 2007, the center spearheaded the organizing of the Leyte Heritage Festival Committee which implemented the National Heritage Month Celebrations from 2007 to the present. The Committee is a network of heritage advocates from the various educational institutions, government agencies, non-government organizations, faith based communities, cultural workers and artists. These are the U.P. Visayas Tacloban College, Leyte Normal University, Holy Infant College, Department of Tourism Regional Office, Department of Trade and Industry Provincial Office, Philippine Information Agency, Leyte Provincial Tourism Culture and Arts Council, Runggiyan Social Development Foundation, United Architects of the Philippines Metro Tacloban Chapter, the Visual Artists of Leyte and the Archdiocese of Palo. The Committee organized heritage projects with valuable support from the Province of Leyte, Filipino Heritage Festival, Inc., and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. The local government units involved in this venture are Palo, Carigara, Tanauan, Dulag, Baybay and Hilongos, in Leyte.

The First Leyte Heritage Festival was organized in celebration of the 2007 National Heritage Month. This is part of the actualization of a republic act with Presidential Decree No. 439 declaring the month of May as National Heritage Month. Leyte was chosen by the Filipino Heritage Festival, Inc. (FHFI) as the site of the Opening Program of the nationwide celebration. Heritage Masses with church choirs from Palo and Tolosa singing beautiful old hymns were celebrated in Tacloban, Palo and Tanauan. A province-wide food festival serving local dishes, e.g. *hinatukan nga manok* (boiled chicken n coconut milk) of Jaro, *hinatukan nga pakla* (boiled field frogs in coconut milk) of Carigara and delicacies (pastillas, roscas from Carigara and Barugo), *bukayo* (sugared coconut strips) from Burauen among many others. An exhibit of church artifacts which included religious icons, vessels, and vestments was set up at the College

Assurance Plan Building, a neo-classical heritage house (c. 1930s). Heritage Awards were granted by the Province of Leyte to six literati-culturati elders – Norberto Romualdez, Sr. for Music, Iluminado Lucente for Literature, Eduardo Makabenta for Literature, Agustin El O’Mora for Music, Remedios Loro for Community Theater and Teresita Veloso Pil for Dance. An exhibit of installation art with bamboo and abaca as materials was produced by the visual artists at the U.P. Tacloban ground. The U.P.Visayas Tacloban College and the Leyte Normal University teamed up for the exhibit of cooking implements from Carigara and Burauen. The United Architects of the Philippines exhibited select heritage structures in Leyte. The same group organized the first Architecture Heritage Tour which was sustained by the Department of Tourism Eastern Visayas. The finale was a grand performance night entitled *Siday, Laylay ug Sayaw* with about two hundred fifty performing artists of various performance genres from different municipalities interpreting laylay (folk songs), sayaw (folk dances), siday (poetry) and folk drama at the RTR Plaza in Tacloban City.

The Linambay (Komedyá) Community Theater of Barangay Libas, Merida, Leyte amazed the audience with their agile torneo or sword fight skills and flying sparks of clashing swords of men and women warriors, young and old onstage. The sinugbuaon-speaking Merida group was honored to perform among the Waray who are their fellow Leyteños and to an appreciative Waray audience.

The Leyte network of heritage advocates carried on their mission of protection, preservation and promotion of Leyte heritage in the succeeding years. The 2008 activities extended from May to June to coincide with the Tacloban City Fiesta. The collaborations between the academe, government agencies, non-government organizations and communities were carried over to bigger publics during the Tacloban City Fiesta. After its show in Tacloban, the Paglara Exhibit of Samar Mats was brought by the FHF to SM Cebu City. The visual artists created new mixed media works using the tikog mat, rice grains, baskets and other indigenous materials. Prof. Dulce Cuna Anacion lectured on the tatu (tattoo) symbols as input for the visual artists who participated in the tatu art contest. Her knowledge was also imparted to the artists competing for the full body tatu of the Ginoong Pintados contestants. The RSDF produced the kuratsa festival with elderly Alang-alang dancers winning as champions: Prima Gayrama and Glynis Sydiongco. Prof. Merlie Alunan’s collection of susumaton tales retrieved from Leyte towns was performed by U.P Theater Arts majors in various spots at the plaza. The Leyte

Normal University produced the sarswela on the Santo Nino with a cast of about two hundred students and faculty. The Archdiocese of Palo conducted a seminar on church heritage conservation for seminarians, priests and parish workers with guest speakers heritage Architect Augusto Villalon, heritage advocacy pioneer Fr. Ted Torralba, Leyte church heritage advocate Fr. Gilbert Urbina and heritage documenter Nady Nacario. The *An Ladawan han Santo Niño ha mga Tawo* (The Image of the Santo Nino to the People) Exhibit of various Santo Niño icons lent by families was displayed for a month at the Montejo heritage house in Hotel Alejandro, Tacloban City. The heritage tour coordinated by the Department of Tourism expanded with the inclusion of heritage food as part of the module. In 2009, an academic forum was held at U.P. Tacloban and a media forum at the RTR Plaza Coffeeshop to clarify the history and lore of the Santo Niño de Leyte. Two significant papers were authored and read by church scholars Msgr. Ramon Aguilos and Rev. Father Gilbert Urbina.

In 2008, the Sangguniang Panglalawigan of the Province of Leyte with the governorship of Carlos Jericho Petilla approved the Provincial Ordinances Nos. 2008-04 and 2008-05, respectively, declaring the month of May as Leyte Heritage Month and institutionalizing the Leyte Heritage Festival. These ordinances were authored by Provincial Board Members Lesmes Lumen and Evangeline Esperas. The initiative came from the U.P. group of the Leyte Heritage Festival Committee with the draft ordinance penned by Merlie Alunan.

Cultural mapping is currently being done in Calbiga, Samar and Carigara, Leyte. The Calbiga Mayor Melchor Nacario and his staff at the Calbiga Municipal Hall initiated this project. He is personally assisted by his friend, Nonoy Froilan, former premier danseur of Ballet Philippines and the Cultural Center of the Philippines Dance Company who hails from Calbiga. They have brought in Dr. Eric Zerrudo, current Director of the Metropolitan Museum and this writer for the capability building of cultural workers, documenters, heritage planners and implementers. Calbiga is relatively the most advanced municipality in the region in terms of heritage development work. Carigara is the first site of cultural mapping in Leyte. Prof. Anida Batan Lorenzo is the lead researcher for the cultural mapping project of Eastern Visayas. She has been awarded a research grant by the U.P.Visayas. Other than developing an appropriate template for cultural mapping in the region, Prof. Lorenzo has organized a seminar on Leyte culture for the barangay leaders and LGU staff of Carigara. Ties for cultural development work

have been established with the U.P.Visayas Tacloban College heritage group and Carigara LGU under Mayor Anli Apostol through the efforts of Prof. Lorenzo.

In October 2009, ten Waray culture bearers represented Eastern Visayas to the Dungog National Indigenous People's Festival in Roxas City, Capiz:. Sergia Bagason of Jaro, Leyte who is a paragluto (cook); Maruja Merced – paragluto ug paragroskas (cook and roskas maker); Manuel Sebrano of Barugo, Leyte – manaranggot (tuba gatherer); Roy Mario Virtudis of Tanauan, Leyte – paraglitson (lechon cook); Lilia Badaran - paraglara (mat weaver) of Basey, Samar; Eulalia Galit – paragbadlis, paraglara and paragpahot (mat designer, weaver and embroiderer) of Basey, Samar; and Eva Marie Adona – tikog product designer of Basey, Samar; Joselito Nabaunag- panday (carpenter) of Carigara, Leyte; Julito Mendones – house designer and Waray House builder from Basey, Samar. They showed the audience (which was composed of children, students and families) how to cook humba, hinatukan nga manok, and lechon, how to gather tuba, how to weave a mat, and, how to build a house. The U.P. An Balangaw cheered the audience with lively choreographed Waray folksongs. This was a milestone for the Waray culture bearers as they shared their traditions for the appreciation of fellow Filipinos, especially the young.

The seeds have been planted. Some of those who sowed may not live to the time of reaping – to the time when the study of Waray language and culture are integrated in the curriculum; when every child could sing several Waray folk songs, dance the kuratsa, and deliver if not compose a siday; when every citizen could spontaneously answer the question “What is Waray culture?” And without second thought he or she would reply by expressing his or her being Waray. The answer could be something that conjures up the vibrant colors of the sea, sky and land under the bright sunlight or soft moonlight with the tingling textures of cicadas, crickets and birds in chorus to greet the dawn. Or, an eternal moment of praying, eating, drinking, singing, dancing and laughing together with all the beloved – husband, wife, children, parents, grandparents, relatives, friends -- and with the spirit guardians. All, in exuberant joyous celebration of life and beyond life!

