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The Culture of the Mamanua

Review Author: Eric S. Casiño

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THE CULTURE OF THE MAMANUA. Second Edition. By Marcelino N. Maceda. Cebu City: University of San Carlos, 1975. vii, 155 pages.

The second edition of Maceda's Mamanua study is a welcome event. Originally published in 1964, the study soon went out of print — a measure of its importance and popularity. More than a decade later, the book remains "the best and most handy survey on the Negritos of Southeast Asia in the English language (Rahman's introduction, p. iii). This is true, in spite of the publication (also in 1964) of John M. Garvan's *The Negritos of the Philippines* (edited by Hermann Hochegger). Garvan's does not have the comparative scope of Maceda, who includes the Aeta, Semang, and the Andamanese, "Aeta" being Maceda's usage for all other Philippine Negritos outside his favorite Mamanua.

The author's aim is simply stated: "to compare the Mamanua culture with that of other Negrito groups in Southeast Asia and, as far as possible, to help elucidate the problem of the genetic relations between the Mamanua and the other three Negrito groups" (p. 3). To accomplish this, he takes the usual ethnographic categories under the headings, "economic," "social," and "religion," distributed into three corresponding chapters. In chapter 1, he makes a comparative survey of settlements and houses, utensils and weapons, clothes and ornaments, means of livelihood, cooking, and food preparation. In chapter 2, he reviews the details of the family, marriage and children; local group and organization; and property rights. In chapter 3, which discusses religion and mythology, he presents interesting parallels on spirits, souls, origin myths, legends, rituals, and the various aspects of primitive art.

As a result of the early works of Vanoverbergh in Luzon, Warren's work in Palawan, Bennagen's and the Griffins' work in Sierra Madre, Fox's among the Pinatubo Negritos, and Garvan's and Maceda's in Mindanao, the picture of the Negrito culture in the Philippines has become clearer. But Maceda's contribution remains unique in having a broad comparative framework.

However, the original objective of finding genetic links among all the Negritos in the Philippines and Southeast Asia remains unattained. The next frontier may be to utilize direct genetic and linguistic comparisons to prove or disprove the hypothesis of genetic unity. If the Negritos are non-Malay, as seems obvious phenotypically, their early language presumably must have been non-Austronesian. If such was the case, it would be important to discover surviving evidences of this ancient language. But until such genetic tests and linguistic comparisons are done, Maceda's ultimate objective of helping "elucidate the problem of genetic relations" will remain valid. His pioneering work, insofar as it helps toward this end, likewise remains useful and justified.

Eric S. Casiño