

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

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Frank Lynch

Philippine Studies vol. 15, no. 3 (1967): 464–482

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Texts & Documents

The Bukidnon of North-Central Mindanao in 1889

FRANK LYNCH

Note: The letter translated here is the most complete single document on the Bukidnon published during the Spanish regime. Its author was a Jesuit professor at the Ateneo Municipal, Manila, and one of several colleagues who made a vacation-time "expedition" (the word is theirs) to North-Central Mindanao in April and May, 1889. When Father José Clotet wrote this report to his superior at the Ateneo, Fr. Miguel Rosés, he had been in the district of Misamis for more than a month. What he says in this letter is based on his own observations during that period, as well as on the testimony, oral and written, of veteran missionaries like Fr. Eusebio Barrado, and civil servants like Don Procopio de Alcántara, then judge of the village of Tagoloan.

The original of this letter is found in *Cartas de los PP. de la Compañía de Jesús de la Misión de Filipinas*, Cuaderno ix (Manila: Imprenta y Litografía de M. Perez, Hijo, 1891), pp. 170-84. There is a translation in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898*, Vol. 43 (Cleveland, Ohio: Arthur H. Clark, Co., 1906), pp. 288-309. However, I have freely departed from this version throughout. For convenience of reference, Clotet's original paragraphs have been numbered. My own comments have been enclosed in square brackets.

For those who have used the facilities of the Newberry Library, I need not add that Ruth Lapham Butler and her staff of the Ayer Collection made the research for this paper both profitable and pleasant.

LETTER OF FATHER JOSE MARIA CLODET TO THE REVEREND FATHER RECTOR
OF THE ATENEO MUNICIPAL

Talisayan
[Misamis, Mindanao]
May 11, 1889

Pax Christi.

My dear Father Rector in Christ:

[1] In my last letter to your Reverence, I mentioned that I was gathering some data on the religion, manners, and cus-

toms of the mountain people [*la raza montés*]. Now, during the days we are staying here in Talisayan, I am going to use my spare moments to write your Reverence what I have been able to find out in the various reductions and visitas of these pagans. But in this report I shall confine myself to items which are not only interesting and worth knowing, but also suitable for a personal letter.

[Clotet's last published letter to the Ateneo Rector had been written from Tagoloan, under date of April 30, 1889, and is found in *Cartas*, ix, 156-62.

At the time of these letters, and in this region, the word "reduction" refers to a settlement of pagans made at the instance of, and ordinarily in the location chosen by, Spanish authorities. By "visita" is meant a settlement which has no resident priest; the term is used even today in the Philippines.]

[2] To give a full description of the mountain people, I shall move from the general to the particular, beginning with their name and the territory they occupy. After saying something about their religion, false beliefs, and peculiar customs, [to p. 171] as well as about their occupations, and the progress they have made, I shall conclude with at least a brief notice regarding the fruit reaped by our missionaries in the short time they have been among these pagans. However, I do not propose to speak of everything, but merely of some of the most notable items which have come to my attention.

[3] The mountain people [*monteses*] are recognized in Mindanao under the name of *Buquidnons* (forest-dwellers), and are found in the district of Misamis. They can be divided into three large groups: the first group includes those who live in the mountains and fertile plains irrigated by the Tagoloan, Cagayan, and Iponan rivers; the second comprises those who live adjacent to the Manobos of the Agusan valley between Gingoog and Nasipit; the third is formed by those who live on the right bank of the Pulangui River, and along some of its branches. On the accompanying ethnographic map they are indicated by the number 6.

From the above it will be clear that the Bukidnon, distinguished as they are from the other peoples [*razas*] by certain characteristics, nonetheless are similar to their neighbors in

general religious and social orientation. I shall point this out in more detail in the course of this brief account.

Their exact number is not known, but it is estimated that there are more than 13,000 of them at present.

They are of good stature and graceful build, and even handsome. In character they are affable and frank, and some are so clever and polished as to measure up in every way to the most civilized Bisayans. If one judged by the openness with which they speak with the father missionary, and the ease in which they do business with the old Christians, he would hardly say they were pagans. Their mental capacity would make them (as Father Urios well remarked) kings of all the Manobos, because they surpass them so easily. However, you can always spot a pagan, no matter how advanced he may be: his understanding is obscured and confused by false ideas which have their effects in everything he does. In the people I am speaking of, they appear in recurrent lapses into selfishness, self-interest, and self-complacency. Blessed forever be the light of our holy faith, which enlightens us with the true knowledge of God and of ourselves, and fills us with the spirit of self-abnegation, and of supernatural love of God and neighbor.

[Blumentritt, in his "Las razas indígenas de Filipinas" (*Boletín de la Sociedad Geográfica de Madrid*, Vol. xxviii [1890], pp. 7-42), was among the first to stump for the spelling "Bukidnon" instead of the hispanized "Buquidnon." Since early American times this former spelling has been official and we use it throughout in our translation, though Blair and Robertson preserve the Spanish form.

Clotet's translation of Bukidnon as "inhabitants of the thicket," or "forest-dwellers" [*habitantes del bosque*] is incorrect. It means rather "mountain people."

In 1889 Mindanao was divided, for administrative purposes, into six districts, of which Misamis was the second. The territory comprised by each of these areas, as well as the locations of towns, rivers, and mountains mentioned in this letter will be found by consulting the "Mapa etnográfico" (dated 1887) which accompanies Vol. ix of the *Cartas*.]

[4] From what I have seen myself, or heard from others, I can state that the dress of the mountain people is, [to p. 172] in point of decorum and modesty, better than that of all the

other peoples of Mindanao. And when I say this, I include both men and women.

The women wear white shirts, tucked neatly at the waist into ankle-length skirts. Over this they wear another short and close-fitting shirt, on which they sew little bits of cloth of many different colors, in the manner of fine patchwork. The sleeves are short and full, and ornamented in the same way. They derive great pleasure from choosing colors and designs for their clothes. From the waist on the left side they hang rings [*zarcillos*] and bundles of sweet-scented herbs, along with glass beads and cascabels. On their legs are worn fine rings of copper, brass, or silver; they hang quite loosely, so that walking produces a sound which attracts the attention of one who is not familiar with the custom. The manner of dressing the hair is also singular and characteristic, for they twist and knot the principal lock of the hair, without braiding it, in the form of a large, high crown. All about the head hang very short locks of hair of equal length, which appear on the forehead as bangs which at times almost cover the eyebrows. They let the forelocks grow to excessive length, but the effect is admittedly pleasing. The entire hair-do is crowned by a beautiful comb of good workmanship, made of metal which is more or less precious depending on the wealth of the person wearing it.

Many women are actually laden with bracelets from the wrists almost to the elbows; some of these are of metal, others of tortoise-shell, others of *taclobo*, etc. To adorn their ears they generally wear a kind of wide ear-plug [*aretas*] (*balarang*), made of a cylinder of wood, generally soft, at the ends of which are fixed two round plates of engraved brass, silver, gold, or copper, of unequal size. To insert these ornaments [*aretas*], they make very large holes in the lobes of the ears, until the smaller sheet of metal can pass through, and let the cylinder itself rest on the inner surface of the orifice. They have necklaces and rings of several kinds, some of them of great value. They are often made of strings of beads interwoven in different colors. Clusters of cascabels and shells, or bundles of blue or red silk, are frequently hung from the necklaces. They have other

necklaces which they call *balucag*, made from wild boars' bristles woven into circlets and joined one to another in the manner of a net; these necklaces are then ornamented with bits of shells, glass beads, and other trifles of the same kind. I was especially struck by a necklace made of silver coins [to p.173] which were quite old, and which diminished in size successively from the center to the ends. The center was a duro of Charles the Third, somewhat flattened out, which formed as it were the medallion of the necklace. Besides being original, the necklace was also quite valuable, for it must have been worth about thirty pesos—a capital sum for someone from one of those mountain settlements [*rancherías*]. They rarely part with precious ornaments such as this, no matter how hard-pressed they may be; consequently, they are passed from parents to children for many generations. The rings which I saw among these people were all of brass, but I am assured that those of gold and silver are not scarce. It should further be noted that rings are worn not only on the fingers, but also on the toes.

When they receive the saving waters of baptism, they are relieved of all these vain adornment—ear-plugs, necklaces, and rings—like persons renouncing the world and all its pomp and vanity. These objects are taken away because they generally use them as amulets against the various sicknesses and injuries which they fear, or as a positive aid in getting what they want, and the like. In return, the father missionary gives them medals, rosaries, and scapulars, which they show off with great pride, wearing them around the neck.

[On the word "*taclobo*," Blair and Robertson (43:291) give this note: "Taclobo is the Tagalog name of a large snail; here used for the shell."

Charles the Third of Spain ruled 1759-1788, over one hundred years before Clotet saw the necklace which featured a coin made during his reign.

The sentence referring to the inheritance of precious ornaments reads, in the Spanish *y así se explica cómo pasan de padres á hijos hasta muchas generaciones* (*Cartas ix*, 173). Blair and Robertson incorrectly translate this as "and thus it is explained how they pass from father to son for many generations" (43:292). Instead of "father to son," it should be "parents to children."]

[5] The dress of the men is simple and is the same as low-land Filipinos [*indios*] usually wear. But they are very impressive when they put on their formal dress, for then they wear long breeches of European cloth, and many wear jackets of the same material, and fine beaver hats, and shoes and expensive shirts. The shirts are not worn outside the trousers, as by the other Filipinos, but are concealed except for the bosom, which is allowed to show especially when the shirt is well embroidered. Those who make a show of greater polish cut the hair, and take care of it, but the less adapted [*los más remontados*], and those who have little business with the Christians, let it grow without care. They twist it into a knot which they conceal with a kerchief, generally red, which is worn tied about the head in the style of the swains [*charros*] of Aragón.

Some consider it an important part of personal adornment to blacken the teeth, and to file them with flints, which take the place of a file with them. Although I have not seen it, I have been assured that the very rich cover their teeth with sheets of very thin gold, which they remove only when eating. It is amusing to see mountain people, just in from the forests, moving among the old Christians. So as not to be taken for Bukidnon, they appear in fancy dress [to p. 174] and walk the streets in such gingerly fashion as to seem hardly to touch the ground. Being so unnatural in their movements, they succeed only in making the Christians [*los demás*] laugh at what they themselves thought would please them. The attraction of naturalness is the best of all.

[6] A brief examination of the ways of these people, touching on the deities they invoke, their sacrifices, and their songs and traditions, will illustrate that they have some ideas of God, heaven, eternity, and of the first man. But these notions are so material, limited [*empequeñecidas*], and disfigured that it is only obliquely that they manifest the greatness of the primitive truths.

Polytheists that they are, they have four gods at the four cardinal points: at the North, *Domalóngdong*; at the South, *Ongli*; at the East, *Tagolámbong*; and at the West, *Magbabaya*. It is these who, with wisdom and power, rule and govern

this great world mechanism [*máquina*] in which we live. Who does not see in these four deities a perfect resemblance to the *Vazus*, of the worshippers of Brahma? For just as the gods of the Bukidnon expertly manipulate the machinery of the world from the four cardinal points, just so, according to the Brahmans, does *Vazu-Pulastia* govern the nations of the North; *Vazu-Yama*, those of the South; *Vazu-Indra*, those of the East; and *Vazu-Varuna*, those of the West. From the great order and concert existing among these four regions comes the harmony of the whole universe; and so it is that the people of India have a widespread cult to honor their *Vazus*, lest these beings take offense at the neglect of men, and upset the world order.

The god *Magbabaya*—that is to say, “the all-powerful one” [*Todopoderoso*]*—*has as equals in rank the god *Ibabásug*, and *Ipamahandi*. The former is invoked for a successful delivery; the latter takes care of carabaos, horses, and other cattle, large and small, and since there is hardly a Bukidnon who does not have some of these animals for his ordinary work, it follows that this divinity is invoked with great frequency and whenever one of these animals has some trouble. From *Ta-gumbanua*, or god of the fields [*sementeras*], they hope for a good harvest, and they hold the feast called *caliga* in his honor, after the crops are in. The *Tao sa súlup* or men of the woods (like the *anitos* of the pagan Ilokano) are invoked in time of war, sickness, journeys, etc. According to the Bukidnon, these deities are *genii* living [to p. 175] in the trunks of big trees, or in huge crags. They are said to interfere in the affairs of men, for good or for evil, depending on whether they are contrary or propitious. Once I passed under a leafy tree called the *balite*, and as I did, I noted that the Bukidnon who was with me lowered his voice and became very frightened. I asked for the reason, and after considerable coaxing he finally offered this explanation for his fright: “The Bukidnon say that the *balite* [or *balete*] is the dwelling-place of *Magtitima*, an invisible forest being, who must receive a sacrifice of white chickens if he is not to grow angry at men, keep them from cutting wood, and send sickness upon them. For myself, even though I do not believe this, I still experience some fear when I pass

near these trees." I urged him to cast off such superstitions and to trust in God, who alone can free us from all sickness and danger of body and soul.

Among the Bukidnon, the god [*Dios*] called *Tigbas* enjoys a very respectable position, and is looked upon with great reverence, for they believe that it came down from heaven. Only the chief *datos* among them possess this idol. It is of stone, as is its pedestal. The people preserve it with great care among the most precious of their heirlooms, and show it only to those to whom they feel closely bound by ties of friendship or kinship. *Talián* is another idol, which is supposed to be a monkey squatting on its haunches. It is made from the root of the alder tree. They generally carry it hanging from the breast by a little cord which poor *Talián* has tied about his neck. When they set out on a journey, and are afraid of an ambush, they let this idol swing freely on its string like a plumb-bob; when it stops swinging, the idol will be facing toward the place where the enemy is preparing the ambush. To escape the enemy, the original route is abandoned and an entirely new one is followed. Should they fall sick, they submerge the idol in a glass of water, which they drink at once, thinking that they will recover their health in this way. Sometimes, they say, it is enough just to touch the idol to the ailing member or the painful part to find relief and even a complete cure. Finally, they make use of it to locate objects and jewelry which they have lost.

They bend their efforts to keep *Busao*, the evil spirit, well disposed. To this end they offer him food and drink, while singing and dancing according to their custom, and reciting [to p. 176] some prayers for delivery from some calamity or other which they fear. Usually it is the old men who offer sacrifice, which generally consists in the offering of the fruits of the earth, and in the immolation of some pigs and chickens, to pay reverence or make amends to one of their deities. One of their most common altars consists of an upright [*columna*] with a plate on top containing some offering; the two wooden cross-pieces in the middle are there to hold the little idols.

[In the second paragraph above, beginning "Among the Bukidnon,..." the Spanish makes for difficult translation, and I have chosen to pre-

serve what appears a confusion in the original, the equating of *Tigbas* with both *Dios* and *idolo*. The source of this information about the idol could have been Don Procopio de Alcántara, who gave an idol of this sort and this name to Father Sanchez shortly before Clotet wrote his letter. Or it could have been Sanchez himself, who mentions the object in his letter to the Rector of the Ateneo, Fr. Miguel Rosés, under date of April 22, 1889 (*Cartas* ix, 139-49; 146). *Tigbas*, whether god or idol, has since been identified by H. Otley Beyer as the fragment of a "Middle or late Neolithic horned bark-cloth beater." ("Outline Review of Philippine Archaeology by Islands and Provinces," *Philippine Journal of Science*, Vol. 77, Nos. 3-4 [July-August, 1947], p. 315.)

Much of what Clotet says about *Tagumbanua* and the *Tao sa sùlup* seems to have come verbatim from Fr. Juan Ricart's letter of August 2, 1880, from Balingasag (*Cartas* iv, 82-92; 89-90). However, I should like to know why Clotet deleted the sentence in which Ricart says of the *Tao sa sùlup*: "They are invoked with the name *Apo* (grandfather), and the people offer them food and drink, singing and dancing in their honor."]

[7] We shall pass over many other superstitions which they have about their gods, beliefs which, like the ones we have just seen, give an idea of the pitiful state of these poor souls. We turn now to their marriages, which are agreed upon by the sole authority of the elders or the *Masalicampo* [see note, below]. The latter, who also directs all the important business of his subjects, determines by his own choice that the alliance between such a youth and such a maiden should take place, whether it be [proposed] by the insinuation of the sweethearts, or by the request of the parents. When some promises have been made between the parents of the bride and the father of the groom [*joven*], the relatives of both parties are summoned. They gather in the house, which has been made ready, and where everything ought to be in abundance, but especially a liquor called *pangasi*, which they keep in certain large jars [*tinajas*].

When the hour for the marriage has arrived, the bridal couple exchange some words and then receive from their respective parents a ball of rice. These they hold for several moments in the palm of the hand, and then the groom gives his ball of rice to his bride; with this ceremony, the marriage is effected. This act obviously symbolizes the obligation which they have, and admit, of mutual and familial support. While

they are eating, there is an animated discussion [*bichara*] among the guests. Foods, sauces, and beverages are served in abundance, and have been carefully prepared long beforehand. This kind of feast is followed by a solemn drunken revel, the effect of the brew which they suck up with long reeds stuck into the jars which hold it. [to p. 177] Unless they be *datos* or leading members of the community [*hombres principales*], few of them have two or three wives. Unfortunately, such polygamy is more common among certain other pagan peoples.

[Clotet gives this footnote to the word *Masalicampo*: "*Masalicampo*, or *Maestre de Campo*, is a title which the higher authorities used formerly to confer on Bukidnon who had distinguished themselves by some service for Spain or its government; for example, by fighting against the Moros for the Spanish flag. In an appendix to this letter one can read how such a title was conferred at the request of Father Ducós, S.J." In the appendix referred to by Clotet are three documents which witness to the fact that Sr. D. Joseph Romo, Governor of the Province of Cebu, had (under date of September 12, 1754) granted to Lingaon Binoni, Bukidnon *dato*, the title of *Maestre de Campo* of the pagan Bukidnon. The symbolic staff of office (an ebony, silver-topped cane) was also conferred. This was given in recognition of his assistance to Father Ducós, who led a force of Bukidnon in battle against the Moros who had been raiding villages in the vicinity of Dapitan, Iligan, Initao, Iponan, and Balao (*Cartas* ix, 184-87).]

[8] Father Eusebio Barrado, missionary to these people, once told me that they are extremely reluctant to pass through the territory of *datos* to whom they are not subject. To enable the traveler to make such a passage in safety, the head *datos* [*los principales*] have a spear called *quiap*, which is much larger than ordinary ones; the shaft is inlaid with silver, and the lower end is of metal. For a trifling recompense they give it to the traveler who must pass through the regions under other *datos*. It is given as a safe conduct pass, and the other *datos*, when they recognize the spear of the head *dato* [*datto principal*], grant the traveler safe passage. Not only do they let him go through without injury; they even show him consideration and deference. According to a completely trustworthy informant of mine, this is the case even in time of war.

[9] The head *datos* show their affluence [*grandeza*] by the use of enormous vases in which they keep rare and interesting

articles, and which serve as well for the storage of food. The agongs are equally valued, but rulers and subjects place the highest estimation on certain quadrangular, prismatic boxes. These are like small coffers, ornamented on all their outside surfaces with two-cuarto coins arranged in symmetrical and harmonious designs.

The most commonly used weapon is the *balarao*, which varies in value, and is obtained in trade from the Manobos of the Agusan River in exchange for cloth, corn, camotes, salt, etc. Equally common is the *bangcao*, the spear they use for hunting, for fighting with their enemies, and for their essays at foul play [*fechorías*]. One such bit of treachery is the capturing and enslaving of children whose parents they have murdered. These spears are ordinarily of excellent temper, as are also their bolos, and another weapon called a kris, which has been seen at times in the possession of the Bukidnon. The kris was undoubtedly obtained from the Moros; for, aside from the fact that everyone knows that the Bukidnon deal with the Moros by means of the Pulangui River, the krises themselves bear Moro inscriptions and seals. I had in my hand a bolo, the handle or hilt of which surpassed many krises in value, for it was made of a dark, very hard and heavy wood, which I took to be *manconó* [see note, below], and was [to p. 178] heavily inlaid with silver. From an inspection of places where some of the inlay had been lost, I discovered that it was not made with thin sheets, but of rather thick pieces of silver. The scabbard was of *baticulin*, worked with great skill.

[The *cuarto* is defined as an old Spanish copper coin worth three céntimos de peseta (*Diccionario de la Lengua Española* [Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1947], p. 376).

Blair and Robertson give footnotes on both *manconó* and *baticulin* (43:299). On *manconó*: "The *Xanthostemon verdugonianus*—Naves, of the family of *Myrtaceae*, allied to the Iron wood of Java. It is found in Luzon and Mindanao, and is a hard, heavy wood, exceedingly difficult to work." See *Important Philippine Woods* (Manila, 1901), pp. 65, 66. On *baticulin*, a longer note:

There is a species of tree called *baticulin*, which is the *Litsea obtusata* of Villar, and the *Olax baticulin* of Blanco, belonging to the family *Laurineae*. It is extensively used for cabinet making and

carving, and is not readily attacked by the white ant. Blanco (pp. 351, 352) describes a wood *Millingtonia quadripinnata*, which he also calls baticulin, and which is easily worked and extensively used for carving. It is called Ansohan in the Visayas Islands. The latter is probably the wood meant in the text. See Blanco, and *Important Philippine Woods*, pp. 31-33.]

[10] Father Barrado, whom I mentioned above, told me that he had seen among these pagans a coat of mail made with brass plates and thick, brass wire, trimmed with silver, and fashioned to cover the entire breast and back. It would be difficult to say from whom or how they acquired them; however, to judge from the way they are made, and from what else I could find out about them, they are apparently very old, and would make a suitable exhibit in any museum of weapons or antiquities [see note, below]. They have other more ordinary coats for this purpose, which they make themselves. They consist of cushions about three fingers thick and well quilted, made to protect breast and back not only from darts, but also from the enemy's spears. The petty rulers of this people [*Los reyezuelos de esta raza*] wear tied about their heads the *pinditón*, which is a crown of cloth having three points, the center being the largest and all of them decorated in mountain style. I shall have occasion to mention the junctures at which this crown is worn.

[Following the phrase, "museum of weapons or antiquities," Clotet has given this note: "Fr. Eusebio Barrado has presented this striking coat of mail to the weapons museum at the Ateneo Municipal of Manila, where it is found today" (*Cartas* ix, 178). As far as I know, it was destroyed when the Ateneo Museum burned down in the early 1930's.]

[11] Various objects which I have collected, including an interesting strike-a-light [*sacafuegos*] which I shall discuss briefly, proceed from the generosity of D. Procopio de Alcántara, judge of the village of Tagoloan. The strike-a-light consists of two cylinders of wood which are hard, and almost non-porous. One is hollowed out, while the other is solid. This latter piece is fitted very exactly to the inside of the other, and has at its tip a bit of tinder with some very fine grains of sulphur. This end of the solid cylinder is then introduced a short space into the hollow one; then it is given a sharp blow to make it go in all at once. If it is pulled again quickly and at

once, the tinder will be burning and is applied to the tobacco immediately. This apparatus is nothing but a small fire-piston of the same sort as those figured in physics books.

[12] They smoke tobacco which they grow themselves, and it is rated as top quality. They sell it in large quantity at Cagayán, in exchange for clothing or [to p. 179] other objects which they need. Since the people of this group [the Bukidnon] are somewhat more civilized than others, they smoke their tobacco in small pipes which they make of clay, wood, or horn, adding a small stem of bamboo as a mouthpiece. They chew tobacco without swallowing it, and buyo as well. The lime [for the buyo] is not kept in beautifully inscribed bamboo tubes, as among the Manobos and the Mandaya: instead, they keep it in carefully worked and decorated brass boxes of small size, each with its matching little ladle which is attached by a short chain.

[13] To be less encumbered when traveling, they use what they call the *salapa*, which is a brass, crescent-shaped box which they tie at the waist, in front. The *lotoan*, or pouch, is adorned with rich and varicolored embroidery, and is also used on their journeys. It is employed to hold money, tobacco, buyo, rice, etc. Although they can hike for long distances without giving out, and easily endure the discomforts of mountain trail and forest path, they are no less good as horsemen; no matter how steep the ascent, they never dismount. The horse is generally caparisoned with one or two strings of cascabels, after the fashion of the mule trains driven by the muleteers of Catalonia. They make the same sort of noise as these, announcing from afar the passing of a traveler.

[14] They engage in agriculture, and make extensive plantings of corn. Corn is not only their ordinary food, but their cash crop as well, for they sell it in the villages of the coast and obtain in exchange many articles they do not have in the mountains [*bosques*], salt above all.

Since they do not count by months or years, but by harvests, they watch the sky to know when to plant. They have named the constellations with very strange and completely arbitrary names, and when they see certain ones of these in the

firmament, which they know, for instance, to appear before the rainy season, they hasten to burn the trees and to prepare the ground for sowing.

For cultivating the soil, I have seen them use the plow, which is somewhat different from those we use in Spain. The plowman is never without his adze to cut the roots he finds in the path of the plow. For more delicate work, they use a small hoe with a short, curved handle.

There is hardly a Bukidnon house where they do not have one, or sometimes two mills for grinding corn. They are composed of [to p. 180] two discs [*cilindros*] of very hard stone. The lower one is fixed in position on a wooden stand, while the upper one is movable, with a hole in its center through which corn is poured. The circular movement which grinds the corn is produced by means of a handle securely fastened to one side of the disc which moves.

I was intrigued by an apparatus I saw in Jasaan for removing seeds from the cotton. It consists in the special meshing of the threads of two cylinders [*engranaje particular de las roscas de dos cilindros*]. The cylinders are set very close to each other, so that they let the cotton filaments pass but not the seeds, which are the size of small peas. Motion is produced by means of a crank which forms part of the upper cylinder. The entire apparatus is of wood, but it functions rather smoothly, even if it does cost the operator some effort and trouble.

Among the Bukidnon there is widespread interest in the harvesting of abaca, for they know the high price this fiber brings in the market. But the dreams of many are dashed to the ground, for they frequently fall in with Chinese traders who are cunning with that special Chinese cunning [*ladinos como ellos solos*]. They exploit the Bukidnon, cheating them in price and weight and, what is worse, they fill them with alcohol, enticing them to drink more and more. Finally, after wasting a whole week in the transaction, the poor Bukidnon return to their forests feeling the effects of their drunkenness, with no money, with no abaca, carrying perhaps a few miserable trifles as the derisive souvenir of the deceit which had trapped them. It would be a good thing to put an effective

curb on those exploiters—bad lots with worse deceits—so as to protect the poor Bukidnon.

During rice harvest time, they have the custom of singing in the early dawn, before beginning the regular round of work at daybreak. Men and women alternate in the singing of popular songs, or they may sing the history of their ancestors, or the prowess of one of their heroes, or an incident about our first parents, Adam and Eve, but corrupted and confused, presumably, with their false beliefs. The melodies of these songs are, for the most part, sad and monotonous. Their musical instruments are few and rudimentary, and include the following: the *pulala*, or bamboo clarinet, which has a very shrill sound but is their favorite; a kind of flute made of bamboo; an imitation of a guitar (*tiape*) with only three strings; and the *dayuray*, a very small drum, the frame of which is made with a coconut shell or a bamboo tube.

[15] Immersed though they be in pagan darkness, there are still some glimmerings of civilization among them, the vestige, no doubt [to p. 181], of an earlier Spanish control. For they have their laws and courts [*tribunales*] for the punishment of theft and other crimes, laws which pass from parents to children and are amended [*reformadas*] at the discretion, great or little, of the head dato [*datto superior*]. Those who suffered serious injury go to him for justice.

The dato is seated, his temples bound with the flaming-red *pinditón*. Holding the famous *quiap* in his right hand, he tells two subordinate datos [*dattos subalternos*] to take their places near to him; then the accused is brought before him. Those who bring him in leave their spears thrust into the ground beside the steps of that court, lest anyone should consider the crimes of which the accused is convicted a reason for taking justice into his own hands. When the arguments on both sides have been heard, there is a discussion, after which the head dato, together with the subordinate datos who are present, administers justice. The penalty which has been decreed is executed without delay, for the satisfaction of the injured, the punishment of the offender, and the salutary instruction of all. When the crime is not very serious,

the offender is let off if he pays a certain number of plates, large and small, sometimes adding a Chinese jar if the crime is of more substance. When the fine has been paid, offender and offended must, with single bolo blows struck at the same time, cut through a piece of rattan held by the judges. Should it happen that the rattan were not cut through at one stroke [*á un tiempo*], this is a clear sign that the opposing parties are still enemies, and must therefore still be looked upon with care and misgivings.

[Blair and Robertson have again (43:304; cf. 292) translated "*padres á hijos*" as "father to son." The correct meaning is "parents to children," or, more freely, "generation to generation." See paragraph 4, above, and the note at the bottom of page 468.

Regarding the translation of *datto superior* as "head dato": I am aware that in paragraph 8 (p. 473, above) I translated *datto principal* as well by "head dato." I take it that he is the same man in each instance, but that Clotet chose the modifier "*superior*" in the second instance because it contrasted better with "*subalternos*."

In a letter written from Bugcaon, southern Bukidnon plateau, under date of December 4, 1890, Fr. Eusebio Barrado mentions the cutting of the rattan as one of three sacramental actions (as he calls them) which follow the settlement of a feud. The other two are the extinguishing of a candle and the smashing of an egg (*Cartas ix*, 262-266; 265).]

[16] There is a common agreement among these pagans that the man who has murdered a dato has committed a crime which can never be expiated, and that both the murderer and all his descendants are to be considered as slaves, to be reduced to servitude whenever someone so desires.

[17] I shall mention now some of the strange fears, and a few of the superstitions of this people.

[18] Whenever they offer some food or drink to guests, they always try it themselves first, to relieve the guest of all suspicion of trickery or poison. Among the Bukidnon you show a lack of education and good breeding if you mention their names in conversation. If one of them is asked, "What is your name?" he will not reply, but someone else in the group will say, "His name is Colás." Regarding proper rest for a

man, they say it is best to imitate the birds, who go to bed at sunset and get up at dawn [to p. 182]. They say that the rainbow is the colored girdle [*faja colorada*] of two famous men, *Banlac* and *Aguio*, who jumped into heaven with a mighty leap from the hill called Balábag, and that is all that is known about them.

These pagans reckon by nights and not by days, so that they express themselves this way: "That voyage will last about six nights," or "After four nights we shall begin to build a house." I recall that the ancient Germans used to do the same thing, and apparently in days gone by some of the peoples of Oceania had the same custom.

When they are away from home, outside their village or *ranchería*, should they see that the moon has a halo, they are convinced that in the village someone is standing judgment. For fear that it might be someone to whom they are bound [*un allegado suyo*], they return home at once to see if they can save the accused.

They believe that if it rains, and the sun is shining on certain distant woods at the same time, it is because the *Bukidnon* are fighting at that point, and the sun wants to keep on lighting the scene to make them fight more bravely. Should they hear the song of the *limocén* bird under certain conditions, they will not leave their houses, for they say that some danger or ambush awaits them on the road. If the song surprises them on the road itself, in this or that recognized position, they go home immediately, refusing to go on for certain reasons. When they come across the worm called *labud* in the middle of the road, they go back, for they claim that some sickness or accident would overtake them if they did not do so. If they enter any house to visit those who live there, and a cock or hen should fly in front of them [*del forastero*] during the conversation, the owners of the house immediately kill the bold bird, and it is eaten in friendly union with the guest to rid him of his fright and to bring back the soul. For it is their belief that fright separates soul from body, while joy brings it back. I could mention other interesting lore of the same kind, but I shall not, for fear of tiring your Reverence.

[19] When speaking of the dwellings of these pagans, one must distinguish between those who live in settlements [*en poblado*] and those who live in the forest. The houses of the former are very spacious and comfortable, and it is considered indispensable that one have a projecting wing adjoining the house like a gallery, open to the air on all sides except that by which it communicates with the interior. To this gallery is fitted the stairway, usually of wood, of simple design and generally [to p. 183] without bannisters. The materials employed are not always bamboo and nipa. I have seen Bukidnon houses which have board walls excellently constructed, very strong, but needing no nails, hammers, or saws. How can this be done? I will explain. Here is the crux, as they say: the boards are simply *sewn* together. And here is a further wonder, to chase one surprise with another. All the boards have six holes along their length, three on one side and three on the other; placing the boards edge to edge, they pass a piece of thin, tough rattan through the holes, and with this the boards are so tightly bound together that nails are not missed at all.

Those who live scattered [*aislados*] in the interior of the forest, or in mountain passes [*quebradas*], build low-walled houses raised high above the ground for fear of the spears of their enemies.

[20] All of these pagans show very great respect for the dead. Thus they usually bury them in their fields, together with the lance, bolo, and other precious objects which in life were the private property of the deceased. Over the area below which is the corpse, they heap up the earth, forming a small mound. At short intervals they insert some tree trunks, [crossing them over] in the form of an X. On top of them they place the bark of a tree, which serves as a roof for the mound which they consider sacred. They never forget to hang from the upper end of a long stick a small sack of rice, which sustains the deceased, they say, while his soul takes the long road to Mount Bolotucan. Bolotucan is the highest peak in the area and dominates the entire region between Jasaan and Lagónlong. When the deceased reaches the peak, he jumps up to heaven [*sube al cielo*] with a single leap, reaching a greater

height or less, depending on the probity of his life. And he will remain there forever. All the relatives of the deceased, men and women alike, make great demonstrations of grief when death occurs. They let the hair hang loose as a sign of mourning, and do not bind it up again until after a more or less long period, depending on the love they professed for the deceased.

[21] I have given such a detailed account of all these matters because I wanted to make known the obscurity and darkness in which all these people dwelt before the coming of the fathers missionary. Reverend Father, the consolation which I have had at seeing the zeal and energy with which these fathers seek the spiritual and material welfare of so many poor creatures, is unspeakable.

And for the truth's sake, I should [to p. 184] tell your Reverence that their hopes and labors have not gone unrewarded: in less than four years more than 6,600 pagans who dwelt in the region of the shadow of death have been illumined by the torch of the faith, have renounced their false beliefs and ridiculous superstitions, and have been born again [*regenerados*] in the waters of baptism. Happy missionaries, to be engaged in such ministries, and happy converts who have passed, by the missionaries' labors, from so low an estate to so lofty a dignity!

[22] Objects which are described in this letter, but are not in my possession, I made sketches of from nature. These I shall give to your Reverence when I return.

[23] Please do not forget me in your holy sacrifices and prayers.

[24] Your servant in Christ Jesus,

José María Clotet, S.J.