

Analogous Customs, Beliefs and Traditions in India and the Philippines

Introduction

Research in the ethnological evidence of Indo-Philippine contacts in ancient times has proved comparatively difficult to handle. This may be due to the rather faint traces of Hindu culture in the Islands. Or, the "similarities" of the customs, manners, beliefs and practical arts of the peoples (including perhaps the tribal groups) of the Islands and India appear to be fortuitous. Moreover, these "similarities" appear more illusive to the ethnologist than he would expect. It is not, however, altogether too difficult to distinguish the native character of the Filipinos from the alien qualities which they may have borrowed from sources, like India.

Though evidently overlaid with the influence of Christian beliefs and Islamic customs and traditions,¹ the lives of the Christian Filipinos whose conversion commenced in the 16th century² and of the Muslim Filipinos whose conversion started in the late 14th century,³ still show faint traces of the influences of the Hindu way of life. For a great number of cases, notwithstanding the more than one thousand years that the two religious systems (Islamic and Christian) superseded the Hindu way of life, if they really had some amount of influence in the lives of the peoples from earliest times,⁴ this way of life appear rather pervasive even among these Christianized and/or Islamized Filipinos. Moreover, despite the overwhelming imposition of a western material civilization, the people, particularly those living in the remote villages, still possess customs, manners, and beliefs which appear strange yet explainable only according to some probable alien orientation.

These non-linguistic evidences⁵ may well be independent developments, yet they are apparent enough to merit attention at this point of ethnological research. Where probable direct or indirect influence can not be proved through the intervening localities, parallels on various points presented shall be drawn. It is nevertheless, significant that, too, these parallel elements may have a common source now unknown.

It must, however, be understood that the customs, manners, and traditions of the Filipinos shown to be Indian in origin had arrived to the islands at a time before and during the years of the coming of the Muslims and the Spaniards. Historically, Indian influences began to percolate into Malaysia as early as c. 2nd Century A. D. But, they did not become pronounced till the ascendancy of the Sri Vijaya and Majapahit hegemonies (c. 6th-early 15th centuries A. D.), whose cultural orientations had been shown to be of probable Indian provenance.

We may safely conjecture that, if the customs, manners, and traditions were of Indian origin, they may have percolated to the Islands from the 9th century A. D. till the coming of the Spaniards, and were brought by both the Hinduised and Islamized Malays and Indonesians (e.g. Javanese). Thus, the following discussions may be viewed in the context of this historical background.

Religion. One of the notices⁶ by a foreign visitor on the vestiges of a Hindu worship in the Philippines shows that in various parts of Luzon "not a doubt can exist that this was the prevailing religion all over the isles antecedent to the introduction of Islam..." Further on, the visitor remarked that "at Solon Solon in the province of Hocos (Ilocos?) I met several of the unconverted Indians,⁷ much in the appearance of the Hindus in their dress, ornaments, etc. The padri⁸ of the district informed me these infelices⁹ were of the Hindu persuasion and that neither force nor persuasion had as yet enabled the Spaniards to convert them from their idolatrous worship..."

Whether of not they were actually practicing the Hindu religion, it is difficult to affirm or deny, for no other evidences showing that they were Hindus except in the manner of dress and ornaments have been cited. Furthermore, judging from the citation above, even the dresses and ornaments were not described, thus giving no further basis for comparative study. The district of Solon Solon apparently is unidentifiable, although the province where it is supposed to be situated may phonetically correspond to the name of two provinces, the Ilokos (Norte and Sur), in the northwestern part of Luzon.¹⁰ However, the identification or equation of Hocos in the notice with the present Ilokos provinces is, on philological grounds, doubtful.

Betrothal and Marriage. Surviving pre-hispanic and/or pre-Islamic betrothal practices are found only among the early tribes that were pushed into the wilderness after their contacts with later migrants who might have lent the former some of their customs. A South Indian use of the tali¹¹ as a sign of married life tied around the neck of the bride by the groom and his sister at the marriage ceremony may be traced among or perhaps assumed to be an influence upon the Negrito tribes of Northern Luzon.¹² Although its use as a sign of married life has been prevalent among the South Indians, it may have had a significance as a symbol of betrothal in earlier times,¹³ which sign may have migrated to the Islands via the intervening localities, though it may be seen that it is lost among the more civilized groups, no vestige of which may be traced.

Morice Vanoverbergh¹⁴ writes in "testimony" of the use of the tali "...At Alagia... a Negrito girl of about ten years of age who wore a string around the neck from which dangled an ordinary ring. The Negritos told...that this meant that the girl was betrothed. Later on at Masi, I met a Christian Itawes (Malay) girl with the same kind of ornament worn in the same way, and the same explanation was vouchsafed ..."

One problem arises from this testimony. That of the ring dangling as a pendant. Could it be that the ring symbolized the engagement, or could it be a mere ornament to the real symbol, the string? It may be surmised that the latter is more probable.

Pre-natal betrothal, which seems to have been practised by the Hindus,¹⁵ had been practised by the early Filipinos as testified by a Spanish priest,¹⁶ who wrote an account of the Islands in 1604. "Si Apoi promises to marry Cai Polosin. These married persons make an agreement with another married pair while the wives are with child, that if the wombs of their respective wives should bear a male and a female, these two children should be joined in marriage..." Whether or not this was practised by a tribe or tribes or by any of the Christianized or Islamized peoples of the Philippines, the priest did not specify. It is, however, highly probable that this custom was found among the ethnic groups who have had contacts with the outside world.

Dowry, a system in the Indian socio-economic complex practised from time immemorial, is always given by the bride's family to the bride-groom at the time of the marriage as a capital for the newly formed partnership in life. In the Philippines, it is the

reverse of the Indian custom, which may have superseded a tradition similar to the Indian. (This is perhaps comparable to bride price practised among the people of the mountain regions of the Islands.) Before a marriage is consummated, a dowry is made by the girl's parents in the favour of the bride, with the understanding that it is not transferable to the husband upon the death of the wife, but must revert back to the parents in the event that the union did not produce children.¹⁷

This is significant in the fact that the society superseded by the introduction of the Spanish systems may have been matrilineal in its proprietary succession. If it was, then a possible South Indian (Kerala) origin may be assumed, although such systems may have been an independent development from the Indian.

Whether it is an independent development or a vestige of an old tradition of a society influencing another in the course of a long period of contact, it is difficult to say. For, it seems that where the dowry is not given by the bride's parents to the prospective husband at marriage, which is the reverse, whereby, if the prospective groom is poor, he must serve the bride's parents as a "catipod" or servant¹⁸ for more or less an indefinite period according to the whims and caprices of the parents. He has to do the most onerous of all the duties in the household. The bride's parents had to provide him a house, clothes, food, etc.¹⁹

Among the Ibanags of Cagayan in the Northeastern part of Luzon this is still practised, just as it was the Bulacan province, in Central Luzon.²⁰ In the province of Laguna, Southern Luzon, it was also practised by the people although the prospective groom is not required to live in the house of his prospective in-laws.²¹

This custom of serving for a wife is also in vogue in Java, in which when the consent of the relations concerned had been secured, the bridegroom is bound to serve the parents of the bride for a year,²² a service which is quite reasonable in contrast to that which is followed in the Philippines.

In the Hindu society, the practice of serving time for a wife²³ seems to be contrary to the age old system in which the daughter is given in marriage by the father only when he can provide for a large dowry to attract suitors of high birth. While this case may be an isolated instance, the custom seems to be quite widespread among the tribes inhabiting the state of Orissa.²⁴

In the Hindu society, as in the Philippines and Java, the prospective groom voluntarily enters into the service of one who has daughters to marry, while among the tribes of Orissa, the father of the bride-to-be solicits the services of a prospective groom and offers his daughter as compensation after serving for a time.²⁵

As late as the middle of 19th century, Sinibaldo de Mas²⁶ reported this custom among the peoples of the provinces of Bulacan and Laguna. It may have been practised by them from time immemorial. Since the turn of the present century, a new culture complex has been introduced, hence the custom may have lost its foothold in the people's culture patterns. But among the Ibanags of Cagayan in the Northeast Philippines, the custom is still a necessary step into the institution of marriage. No social or economic barriers are instituted against the suitor.

The marriage ceremony in the Philippines although having been greatly influenced by the Christian ritual manifests a custom that seems an adaptation of a native practice. It is the showering of rice upon the couple, while they are leaving the presence of a priest or minister who performed the ceremony. Among the people of the villages, after the ceremonies are over, the wedding party having arrived, the couple is made to stand on a mat spread for the occasion upon which they danced. While they danced, money, in coins or in notes, is thrown to them by the well-wishers, friends, and relatives alike. The procedure followed in the Indian society seems to be much different. It is of course understandable that the Indians have their own rituals. Abbe Dubois²⁷ records that "...two bamboos are planted in the centre of the 'pandal' side by side, and at the foot of each of them is placed a bamboo basket. The bride and groom then stand up, each in a blanket and two other basketfuls of rice are brought. They take handful of this rice and shower each other in turn." The bridal rice is also shared by the newly married pair in Malaya.²⁸

In passing, it may be remarkable to say that most wedding feasts in the villages are celebrated under the structures similar to the pandals²⁹ of the Indians and the Malay, whose marriage ritual is full of Brahmanical ceremonies.³⁰

The custom of showering rice upon the newly married couple in both the localities is procedurally different. However, the symbol in each is identical. Breaking off the bonds that bind each partner to the parents to start an independent life from a dependent existence, the couple must be started off in a situation fraught with hopes for

future prosperity. Hence, rice symbolizing not only its being the material manna that gives the physical puissance, but also from it emanates the soul-force that will make them cling to each other till death do them part, becomes the basic concept in the ceremony. Furthermore, rice being the staple food of both the communities (Indian and Philippines), it may not be taken for granted that its role in the lives of these people can not be over-emphasized. The shower of money upon the couple in the Islands may have the same symbolic significance as rice.

Desire for Children. It may not be entirely true that the object of marriage is mainly the procreation of children so that the family lines ascending and descending shall be kept unbroken. The desire for offsprings is admittedly universal; in order to obtain them, childless couples perform sacrifices and undergo ritual ceremonies. This fertility rite is incongruously practised by the Roman Catholic population of the islands particularly in Central Luzon, for in Obando, a municipality in the province of Bulacan, there is shrine of a Catholic saint, i. e., San Pascual Bailon, to which countless pilgrims desirous of progeny go to invoke the saint in a series of dance, prayers, offertory and propitiatory rituals under the guidance of the officiating priest. This must have been borrowed from the pre-Christian Roman fertility rites perhaps brought to the Islands by the Spaniards; or a survival of an ancient custom perhaps brought over from India and adopted by the Roman Church. The introduction of the Roman Catholic faith in the Philippines is far too late to regard a pre-Christian source of the ritual. It is even highly doubtful whether the Spaniards themselves had been responsible for its introduction.

However much doubtful its origin be, this ceremony may be an echo (?) of the fertility rites of ancient Indians, particularly in connection with the worship of the Siva-Linga. The most common means for the fulfillment of this desire among the Indians is the tirthayatra - the pilgrimage to a sacred place, to some shrine which enjoys the reputation of having the tutelary deity who grants the virtue of progeny to the supplicants (who have not been blessed with children).³¹

Evidences of the desire for and prolificity of progeny are

recorded in a number of verses in the Ayyen Songs of Sacrifice of the Lepanto Igorots in Northern Luzon.³² To quote a few of the verses:

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| <p>B. Ta enak busaysayan³³
 begas ay kinoldoan
 Ta iganak nan nanpangan³⁵
 Ya sumika nan makan.</p> | <p>B. So that I uncover the rice³⁴
 Which makes prolific the
 One that offered the sacrifice
 And increase the rice</p> |
| <p>W. Dalusyo idawisam
 Saponko ay kawitan
 Sik-a ay nan pinmangan</p> <p>x x x x x</p> | <p>W. Pray thou
 Over my contribution, the cock,
 You that (pray)³⁶ over the
 sacrifice,</p> <p>x x x x x</p> |
| <p>B. Yap-apagan
 Ay inayan si Bugan
 Ta walsiak bayan man
 San det an de pimangan.</p> | <p>B. Wigan passes the wine to Bugan
 I shall spill some
 On the floor of the one
 That offered the sacrifice.</p> |
| <p>W. Iganak nan pimangan
 Lalaki ya longayban.</p> | <p>W. Those that offered the
 Sacrifice become prolific
 Through it, man and girls.</p> |

Rice, wine, chicken, and other objects prescribed by the officiating priests are offered in sacrifice for the fulfillment of the desire.

It is well known that king Dasaratha in the **Ramayana**³⁷ had to perform the **asvamedha** (horse sacrifice) in order that sons may be born of him through his wives - sons who will succeed him on the throne and will perform the necessary oblations after his death. In the **Kathasaritsagara**,³⁸ a story is told of a king who was sorrowful that he had only one son in spite of his having one hundred and five wives in his harem. So that in order to obtain sons as many as his wives he was told to sacrifice the son (purusamedha, "human sacrifice") upon the fire. "By smelling the smell of that sacrifice all the wives will obtain sons."

Having progeny is also a means of salvation from hell. In the **Mahabharata**,³⁹ Jaratkaru, of rigid vows and asceticism, father of Astika was entreated to get married by his ancestors who had emaciated themselves for want of offsprings to deliver them from

naraka (hell). He sets his mind on obtaining a wife but upon a vow that his wife shall be obtained through alms. Vasuka of the serpent race offered his sister as alms to Jaratkaru, "... and he delivered his fathers...by begetting offsprings..." However, in the Soso (or Mourning) Songs of the Lepanto Igorots,⁴⁰ it is not the fathers who importune the sons to obtain progeny, but the spirit of the father is invoked to protect the children so that they may live to perform the necessary propitiatory sacrifices and prayer offerings for his blissful sojourn in heaven. What is heaven without bliss? Therefore, the object of all this is the final deliverance of the **pitaras** (ancestors) from hell! Soso No. 6 gives a lucid picture of the invocation to the father's spirit.

liwidam pay san anakmo	guard your children ⁴¹
bayaw ta tumingadu	so that they may live
inayan sin anakmo	your children
ta daida di matagu	So that they may live ⁴²
tawada di mamaypayko	So that somebody may be invoking you.

An interesting verse in the Soso No. 26 of the same collection of oral traditions⁴³ gives a very cogent illustration of the child-giving powers of a cereal:

et datngana san panuyapey,	And he gets at the panuyapey panicles (oats)
alana et yeyna ed baeyda,	He takes them and brings them to his house
inwajlasna san anakna,	He distributed them to his children
et daida di sumango, ya daida di matagu	And they live long, and they are alive
Ta mensanakda,	So that they become prolific
Ta wadu di mangibagbaga	So there be people to invoke you.

While the Lepanto Igorots are rice eaters, just like the other mountaineers and the inhabitants of the lowlands, the panuyapey may well be one of their staple food. There can hardly be any doubt that the ears of the latter may contain or possess the symbolic power of childgiving as it is used in the ritual.

Thus child-giving powers of the ears of panuyapey (oats) on being partaken of in ritual bear an undisguised resemblance with child-giving mango,⁴⁴ the child-giving drinks,⁴⁵ and the child-giving mixture of rice, milk, sugar, and spices⁴⁶ in Indian folk literatures.

The spirit of the two quarters of the world are believed by the Ifugaos to be the sources of children⁴⁷ just as the Indian believe in and invoke the *desapalas* (lord of the land) for the same gifts of progeny.⁴⁸ Hence, the Ifugaos invoke these spirits in their ceremonies so that children may be born to them.

To conclude this section, the desire for children and the means of obtaining them are found not only in the literature of both countries - both in oral and written - but also in their actual traditions. The analogies, between the two traditions however, may be independent developments. Or the Indian may have been underlying source of the Philippine tribal belief.

Birth Customs. In the Philippines, there seems to be no prenatal taboos imposed upon the enceinte, analogues of which may be found in the Indian continent.

On the natal day, among the Koragars of the western coast of India, the hut where the lying-in woman is lodged is deserted by the other inmates for a period of five days. The significance of this practice lies perhaps in the fact that childbirth carries with it the impurity, like that in the menstrual cycle. This delivery in seclusion has its parallels among the Bisayan islanders in the central Philippines who not only desert the house or hut, but also remove the fishing nets and fighting cocks from it, lest bad luck attend their fishing activities, and the betting in the cockfights.⁴⁹ Mantras are recited; offerings, prayers and recitations of charms are made to the *diwatas* or spirits (Sans. *devata*) in order to obtain easy delivery,⁵⁰ the practice of which is common among the Indians. But should the delivery be delayed, it is believed that, in spite of the precautions taken, the powers of evil are in ascendance. To avert such evil, the lying-in woman is advised to call on the name of the household god.⁵¹ The same prevails among the peoples in the Philippines unaffected by the teachings of the Christian religion. Moreover, even among the nominally practicing Christians they, in some or many cases, still follow primitive means in child-birth.

The after-birth practice still prevalent among the village folks

of the Islands which is similar to that which is described as practiced by Indians in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (vol. 11, p. 652-a) is worth summarizing here:

As soon as the child is born, it is placed in a grain sifting tray, in which has been put cow-dung, ashes, turmeric, and a few coins, and is sprinkled with water. The placenta is then put into a hole which has been dug in the corner of the room. While the placenta is being disposed off, the head of the lying-in woman is bound up, and she is fumigated with smoke of burning seed of *carumcopticum*, which has been thrown into a brazier. This is placed under the cot, and is kept there, however hot the season of the year, for ten days. The doors and windows of the room are kept shut, and the light is given by an oil-dip lamp, which is kept burning day and night. The woman may drink only a decoction of ginger, cloves, in which has been boiled some copper coins. Seeds of *carumcopticum* and *Helicteris isora* also are added to this decoction.

In the Philippines, with the exception of the cow-dung and the ashes put on the inverted winnow (instead of a tray as in India) more money is placed in it as a sign of future prosperity. Another exception is the burying of the placenta in a hole in a corner of the room. Since most of the early Filipinos were living in houses raised above the ground by means of piles (like most Filipinos today), the placenta is generally placed in a pot and buried under the house. All other details described in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* are identical with those which are practiced in the Islands: the fumigation with some other kind of incense, drinking of hot water with ingredients similar to those used among the Indians, etc. The first bath of the child administered after cutting the umbilical cord that joins it with the after-birth is an oil-bath, which may be reminiscent of the Indian habit of oil-bathing.⁵²

Connected with the after-birth practice is the ritual of name-giving: in the Philippines, the inverted rice winnow is raised and dropped three times - first, the name is asked; second, the name is pronounced; and third, the child is advised to be obedient and industrious. The third fall renders the name-giving ceremony complete.⁵³

There is an interesting custom among the Indians, which, if borrowed by the early Filipinos, particularly the Negritos, is practised in conjunction with a Roman Christian custom. Among the Negritos, the mouth of the new-born child is filled with salt, after this the women hasten with it to the nearest river or stream in which it is bathed.⁵⁴ The use of the salt occurs in the customs of the Roman Christians, and it is part of the baptismal ceremony of the Church. The washing of the child in the river or stream may be a lost "relic" of the Indian custom of ceremonially washing the child or dipping him in the sacred waters of the Ganga or some other sacred rivers.⁵⁵ The significance of the Indian custom (which is ceremonial in nature) may not have been caught or comprehended by the Negritos.

Analogies in the concept underlying the disposal of the placenta are also traceable, although its disposal is entirely different in both the countries. Among the Malas, a low caste in the Telugu region, the placenta in a pot with leaves is buried in a convenient place, generally in a back yard, lest dogs and other animals should carry it off; for if it were to happen they fancy that the child would be of a wandering disposition.⁵⁶ Corresponding to this, the fisherfolk of the Philippines believe that if the placenta is placed in a pot and thrown into the sea or river or any body of water the child will develop into an expert swimmer and fisherman. Similarly, a general belief is widespread that if again the relic of the after-birth is put in a pot and is hanged to a lofty tree, particularly the tall coconut, the child will become an expert tree-climber. Burying the placenta nearest the house or better under it is, however, almost significant in the belief that the child will not be of the roving type. In some cases, it is buried in a quarter under the house facing the east, which may have the meaning that he who is born will in the future be as the sun - bright and fresh, mild and tender in the morning. It may probably have had any another significance to the people, as it had to the Indians, who have the sun as one of their major deities in the pantheon of gods. The ideal of the all-encompassing power attributed to the sun in India is of great significance to the entire cycle of life, likewise though lost, if it had been an influencing concept, may have prevailed among the Filipinos in connection with the disposal of the relic of birth. The placenta being an "alter-ego" of the child while still in the protective confines of his mother's womb must be taken care of after separation from its "other-self" lest it will cause great grief to the latter.

Other beliefs connected to the relationships between the child and after-birth are perhaps explained concisely in the Tinggian traditions:⁵⁷ "the after-birth is put in a jar...A book or letter inserted in the jar will cause the child to grow like that lusty plant. If the after-birth is hang in a tree near the trail, the infant will not be afraid; if hung in the jungle, he may fear man, but will become an excellent hunter. Often the river is chosen or the jar is buried: the former will result in an excellent swimmer and fisherman; but it is ill-fortune for the baby if the pot is put in the ground, for he will be afraid to climb a tree or ascend a mountain."

In connection with the "alter-ego: other self" concept germane to the child-placenta relationship commented on above, the Indonesians have a very interesting idea of it, that is, "that the soul-substance is found in the placenta (and the umbilical cord)⁵⁸ appears from the connection which they see between the child and the after-birth"; the latter being called the older or younger brother. The placenta is, therefore, carefully preserved or buried.⁵⁹ But compare the Sumatran beliefs that the navel string and the after-birth are good spirits, a sort of guardian angels of the men who came into the world with them and who live on earth; they are said to guard him from all evil.⁶⁰

It is also worth noting the use of the pot in the disposal of the placenta. While the relic of the after-birth may merely be disposed off without being contained in a vessel, the use of the earthen pot as it is found in both Indian and the Philippines may have had significance that is already lost. May it be surmised here that the earthen pot may be a survival of the ancient practice of disposing off the dead in earthen pots, jars or urns?

Among the Indians, there is a general practice to tie the placenta of milk-yielding animals bound up in a straw to the trunk of milk-yielding trees, in the belief that it would give more milk. We are unable to find a parallel in the Philippines of this Indian practice and belief, probably because the Filipinos leave the placenta to be eaten by the same animal that has given birth in the belief that it shall again be able to give life to another offspring. May it be, however, that when the animal at a time when it will no more desire to give birth to a new life that its placenta is collected, bound up, and tied to a tree which yields milk?

Precautions Observed in the Birth Chamber. Although the various elements employed in the precautionary act in the chamber or room seem to be different, and the manner in which they are employed divergent, still the underlying concepts are similar. However, where an independent development of the practices and beliefs in the various localities to be referred to may not be entirely ruled out, it is also possible that they may have travelled from India, whose culture is admittedly older, eastward to the transgangetic India, down to the Malay peninsula and Indonesian archipelago, and thence to the Philippines.

In India, the iron and lighted lamps figure as objects used in the precautions observed in the birth chamber (in actual tradition as well as in the literature of the people). In the **brahmana** birth chamber, the scissors, which had been used to cut the umbilical cord, are put under the pillow on which the lying-in woman's head rests, and the iron rod, with which the floor has been dug up for the disposal of the after-birth, is left on the ground at the foot of the bed. Furthermore, the mid-wife, before leaving, secretly introduces a needle into the mattress of the bed in the belief that the mother will be saved from after-birth pains.⁶¹

Among the Majhwars in the hill country of South Mirzapur, an iron implement such as a sickle or a betel cutter is constantly kept near an infant's head during the first year of its life in order to ward off the attacks of ghosts.⁶² Among the Malabars of Southern India, a knife or other iron objects lie beside a woman after childbirth to keep off the devil.⁶³ When a Mala mother is in the throes of child-birth a sickle and some neem leaves (*Melia Azadirachta*) are kept on the cot.⁶⁴ In Malabar, pregnant women on journey carry with them among other things an iron in any shape to scare away evil spirits lurking in groves or burial grounds which they may pass through.⁶⁵

In Burma, when a child is still-born, an iron probably in any form, is placed beside the corpse with the invocation: "Never more return to the mother's womb till this metal becomes as soft as down."⁶⁶ Also among the Kachins of upper Burma, when a child is born knives are brandished over the mother to scare away demons that may cause evil upon her.⁶⁷

In Annam (Ancient Champa), parents sometimes sell their child to a smith, who puts an iron anklet on the child's foot, usually adding small iron chain. After the child has grown up and all danger

from attack of malignant spirits is assumed to be over, the anklet is broken.⁶⁸ Among the Malays, one of the necessary articles included in the defense of the infant against its natural and spiritual enemies is a piece of iron⁶⁹. Furthermore, the mother of the newly born child is also protected from evil by placing iron or steel on her bed.⁷⁰

In the Philippines, the use of iron in any form but more specifically the cutting knife or any instrument with a long blade to scare away evil spirits is widespread. The cutting knife is flourished violently at the time of the labour by the husband stripped naked standing on guard either inside the house or on the roof until the child is born.⁷¹ In some cases, other men are also employed and they take their stand on the strategic section of the house - one under, another outside, etc., and continually fence with the wind like the husband while parturition lasts.⁷² This is done to protect both the child and the mother⁷³ at the time of their helplessness.

It is interesting to note that among the Ilokos of Eastern Pangasinan who have settled there for generations, iron in the form of a large knife, called **buneng**, is not only used in the birth chamber as a means to avert evil falling upon both the child and the mother, but also for as long as the child is helpless. Thus, while the mother goes about her household chores, the knife is placed either by the side of the child or at its head, as guard against mal-intentions of the unseen spirits. Likewise, when a man is out alone in the fields or in the forests, he always has his trusted **buneng** at his side, and while he takes a short rest from his lonely task, he either sticks the implement on the ground near his head or puts it over his body.

Assuming that the Philippine Islands has a much later Iron Age culture⁷⁴ than India and probably even Burma, Malaya and Champa, it is possible that the Iron Age culture of the Islands was not indigenous but was brought by migrants carrying the metal. These carriers may have already developed the concept associated with iron in relation to the precautions observed in the birth-chamber. If it was, then the surmise that these migrants who come to the Islands might have had a much more advanced culture pattern may safely be accepted. It may be conjunctured furthermore that this culture may have had its origins in the land farther west, probably India, from whom many of the ascertainable customs and manners of the peoples of Malaysia may have been derived.⁷⁵

Concerning the use of light in the birth chamber as a means

of averting evil which may befall the mother or the new-born child, because malignant spirits can perform their incantations effectively in the dark,⁷⁶ a short remark to conclude this section is necessary. Light, particularly in the birth chamber where all the windows and doors are closed, has the power which renders the ascendancy of evil spirits futile.⁷⁷ There must have been a similar significance of light in the birth-chamber in the Philippines, since the room is arranged in practically the same manner as it is in India. Probably, in the course of time this may have been lost among a greater number of the people, although survivals of which may still be found in the remote villages less affected by the inroads of Christianity.

Death and Disposal of the Dead. When death visits the living, it is received with severe grief that denial of the self is made manifest in various ways. The earliest recorded notice of the severest manner of mourning or grief is found in the Chinese record, the **Tao-i-chich-lio**,⁷⁸ which relates that in Ma-i (Philippines?) when a woman mourns her husband's demise she shaves her head and fasts for seven days, lying beside her dead spouse. This record relates, furthermore, that there are some who even, to make manifest their wifely devotion, when the body of their husband has been consumed, get into the funeral pyre and die. In most cases, however, those who do not die in the pyre may not remarry during their whole lives. This, evidently, is an Indian way of disposing the dead, in which the sati is sacrificed, or if she is not, remains mourning throughout her life.

But, the custom could not have been introduced in the Islands earlier than the **Sung Shih** A. D. 971, otherwise it would have been noticed in this chronicle,⁷⁹ which described the Islands quite extensively. If it had, it would have been lost from among the customs and manners of the people even before Chao-Ju-kua's time as it has no reference to it in his work the **Chu-fan-chi**.⁸⁰ It is, therefore, evident that the custom must have been introduced later than the date of Chao Ju-kua which is 1225 A. D. Notice of this custom is also made of ancient Champa in as late as the XIVth Century A.D. by Frere Odoric de Pordenone,⁸¹ who wrote that "when a man dies in this country, the wife is burnt along with him because they say that it is right and proper that the wife should live with the husband in the other world." Those who did not die along with their husbands mostly lived like Hindu widows the rest of their lives.⁸²

Like the Indians, the Isnags of Northern Luzon discard all personal ornaments on the death of a loved one. He/She is not allowed to wear nice clothes or native jewelry for a certain period of time after the death of a kinsman. He/She must also fast.⁸³

The introduction of customs in the Philippines may either be through the Cham society whose maritime activities in the past are well known⁸⁴ and may have brought with them this custom along with trade goods; or through the Javanese and Malayan societies whose cultures are comparatively Indian in character.

It is a custom among the Hindus that the following day after the cremation, the un-burnt bones are collected, cleaned, and consecrated after which libations of water are offered to these relics of the dead.⁸⁵ Where cremation may, for the centuries of its being practiced in the Islands, have lost its hold in the traditions of the people, the Ifugaos, in Northern Luzon, on the occasion of their **binugwa** ceremonies, dig out the bones of the dead relatives from the grave, clean, and offer sacrifices of rice and oblations to them, after having been blessed by the officiating priest.⁸⁶

Perhaps before cremation became widespread among the Indian Aryans, the dead was buried, traces of which are found in the **Rgveda**,⁸⁷ and even appears that wives, attendants and horses were buried alive with the man to keep him company during his journey to the other world.⁸⁸ Survivals of this manner of disposal of the dead with his company of wives, attendants, etc., have been found among the pre-hispanic inhabitants of the islands, particularly among the royal families,⁸⁹ with the same concept as the Indo-Aryans had.

Some Indian tribes and castes south of the Vindhyas, like the Devanga, Kamabattu weavers, Kamamalans, Vellalas, Parayans, and Okkihiyans of Coimbatore; the Pisharotis of Travancore; the Yeruvas of the Coorg; the Irulas of the Nilgiris, and the Khadirs bury their dead in the sitting position.⁹⁰ In Northern India,⁹¹ the Oswals place the dead body on a canopied chair; the Banwars, in a reclining position called **padmasana**, a yoga posture. As would be expected, a dead **Sannyasin** should be cremated like any other Hindu, but he is invariably buried no matter what his rank or sect may be, in the **padmasana** position.⁹²

This practice of burying the dead in the sitting or reclining position is also very popular among the Ifugaos and other tribes in Northern Philippines.⁹³ The dead is propped against the wall of the

grave with saplings; arms and hands drawn and crossed over the chest, and the legs brought over the crossed arms. In cases where the dead man is the chief, or a distinguished person of the tribe, or a leading warrior, he is brought to the village burial cave where he is deposited in the same position, but smoked to preserve it for all time.⁹⁴ It is later taken out on various ceremonies to be blessed and worshipped side by side with the practice of digging up the bones, with the same object as it has been noticed above.

Urn and dolmen types of burial were also common among the people of Central Luzon and South India.⁹⁵ Whether the artifacts of strong affinities that were found (in both places) among these relics of the dead may give proofs of influence of the latter upon the former, it is quite difficult to ascertain.

Connected with death and mourning in the Philippines are various customs which have parallels in India. At the death of a relative all human activities cease⁹⁶ till after the third day when the ceremonial bath in the river is performed in the case of distant relatives and after the other rituals till the tenth day ceremonies in the case of the immediate survivors of the deceased. In India, every person who assisted in the funeral is ceremonially defiled, and thus after the ceremonies are over, the participants immediately hasten to plunge themselves into the water for cleansing, and no one would dare return home without having thus bathed.⁹⁷

Like the Hindu widow, the Filipino widow (noticed in the *Tao-i-chih-liao*) shaves her head as a sign of mourning. She keeps it shaven throughout her lifetime. It is not however mentioned in this Chinese record that the immediate survivors of the dead also have to undergo the disfigurement as the wife has to undergo, which was or is prevalent among the Indian widows.

The oblation of rice to the relics of the dead both in India and in the Philippines is worth commenting on here. In the Indian as well as in the Philippine custom, rice is showered upon the newly-married couple at the wedding ceremony, and again it is offered during the ceremonies performed for the acquisition of progeny. Is the offering of rice to the bones of the dead done for the purpose of acquiring certain powers has been practised? Or it is merely a means of honouring the memory of the departed? Apparently, it is the latter that is practised among the Ifugaos; it may also be the latter in the case of the Indians.

There is, however, an interesting parallel between another

Indian and Filipino custom. The **Brahmana** in his daily ablutions remembers his **pitaras** (ancestors).⁹⁸ He eats in silence, but he does not begin until he has carefully put aside for his departed ancestors a small portion of rice and other dishes prepared for him. Among the Ilokos in the North western Luzon, rice and other kinds of food are set aside for the departed ancestor to partake of during meal-time. It is performed particularly during the **palagip** (lit., "remembering") ceremonies in honour of the dead. It is also customary among this group of people that rice and other types of food are offered to the dead within a number of days immediately after death and burial; then the offering ceases. Offertory is resumed only during the "remembering" ceremonies, which is generally periodic.

It is undoubtedly admitted that in India assisting in funerals renders one ceremonially polluted, and that the pollution can only be removed by the ceremonial bath and sprinkling of holy water. Any person defiled in this manner does not go home without having thus purified himself in bath. Again among the Ilokos, three days after the internment, the survivors of the deceased whether they assisted in the funeral or not, and other relatives have to participate in the bathing ritual performed in the nearest river. They call this ceremony **gul-gol** (lit., "to shampoo or wash the hair"). This is done by sifting the water poured upon the burnt rice straw, which liquid is poured over the heads of the immediate survivors, followed by the other relatives as well as the others who had joined the party. The final step in this quasi-ritual ceremony is the plunging into the water. Then, they retrace their steps back to the home of the bereaved.

Does this **gul-gol** have any purificatory significance? It did have, its meaning and symbolism may have been lost through the centuries of usage, and superimpositions of other cultures, like the Christian, which is practiced side by side with the "seemingly" indigenous customs and traditions.

The beliefs that the dead person needs company and must have all his weapons, utensils, etc., in the life beyond does not seem to have been widely practised by the people of early Philippines, for apparently a belief in bliss in heaven exists side by side with the former. Heaven (**svarga**) was the rightful place for those who perished by the sword in battle, their souls ascended immediately in the presence of the heavenly gods and enjoy thereby the fruits of such merit.⁹⁹ Furthermore, only those who had moral virtues and who

had lived without harming any one in his life on earth went thither to that place as reward, which they call **kalangitan** (heaven).¹⁰⁰ They also believed in a place of punishment, pain or sorrow, which they called **casamaan** (k^o).¹⁰¹ Their belief in transmigration of souls does not, however, coincide with the concept underlying that of the Hindu or that of the Buddhist, for the metempsychosis of "souls of their deceased to other living bodies was sign of rest to them";¹⁰² while in the Indian, a person is born again to undergo the process of purification or if he has accumulated merits during his lifetime he goes to the abode of Indra and resides there for as long as his merits last, after which he is reborn into the world.

This doctrine of metempsychosis may have had its origins from India, but which was brought to the Islands by settlers or traders. Its significance, however, may not have been fully understood by the recipients of this belief. It is apparent that it had been quite complicated in all its aspects, for evidently only a moiety of the entire concept has been comprehended.

Spirits and Ghosts. In connection with the belief in ghosts, the early Filipinos had a common practice to strew ashes on the ground in order to detect by the footprints the visits of ghosts and/or demons.¹⁰³ Among the Isinai in the Northern Luzon, ashes are put on the stairs in order to detect if the spirit of the dead has visited them immediately after death.¹⁰⁴ This practice is common among the Javanese, Malays, and Chams. If this custom found in the Philippines, Java, Malaya, and ancient Champa were not independent developments, its probable origin may be the Indian sub-continent. Among the funeral customs of the Hos in Northeast India, ashes are spread on the ground in order to detect the return of the dead man's spirit.¹⁰⁵ This is also common in Mirzapur,¹⁰⁶ whose jungle tribes spread ashes on the floor and a mark generally like that of a chicken foot shows that the family ghosts have visited the house. Moreover, if any other animal footmark appears on the ashes, it is believed that the ghost had migrated into the animal whose mark appears on the ashes.

Another belief connected to the coming of the dead man's spirit is that it is believed to be wandering in the fields he once tilled, to stand on the banks of the streams or rivers in which he used to fish, and to come in and out of his dwelling place. This is as

widespread among the people of the Philippines as it is among the Santals of India.¹⁰⁷

Sacrifice. The practice of human sacrifice in India¹⁰⁸ had its parallel development in if not an influence on the Philippines. In India numerous legends relate that on the construction of an important work such as a palace, a bridge, an embarkment, or a city wall, the building repeatedly fell, until a living human being was buried in the foundation, or that such victim must be obtained to render a fortress impregnable. Generally, the victim is the master-builder's wife, but in the most piteous of all, an innocent child is walled up, often it is a beggar boy or a virgin, or a student. One legend tells that bridges built over rivers will not stand unless human blood is shed, as an offering to appease the demons living therein.¹⁰⁹

In literature, references to human sacrifice are widespread and go back to remote antiquity. In the *Ramayana*,¹¹⁰ the story of the son of Ravana, named Sunahsepa, who was sold by his father for a hundred thousand cows to Ambarisa, king of Ayodhya for sacrifice is related. An earlier version of the story is told in the *Aitareya Brahmanas*. In the *Bhagavata Purana*,¹¹² we hear of Jadabharata being carried away to a temple of Kali to be sacrificed. Bhavabhuti, in his *Malatimadhava*,¹¹³ presents a picturesque scene in which Aghoraghanta is shown about to sacrifice Malati to Camundi, when she is rescued by her lover.

In the 6th through the 8th centuries A. D., the Kapalikas, the Kalamukhas and the Pasupatas, the followers of the Vira Saivism or the Tantric and Sakta form of worship practiced religious rituals comprising the offering of wine and blood to Bhairava and Kali. Traces of human sacrifice are also found in South India from as early as the Pallava times from the seventh century onwards.¹¹⁴

We are not aware of any traces of human sacrifice in connection with building construction in the Philippines. However, there has been a practice among the Filipinos that when they build their houses, the first act done before sliding the posts into the excavations was to pour native wine, and to throw silver coins in each hole. There must have been an earlier custom of sacrificing a human being to render the house firm as well as auspicious. But such a sacrificial victim may have found a good substitute in the use of

wine and coins.¹¹⁵ Among the Batan Islanders to the north of Luzon, the shedding of blood of a living being, such as a domestic animal, so that its blood may insure the safety of say a new house or bridge is also practiced.¹¹⁶ Likewise, this animal's blood may be a substitute for human blood, if in earlier times there had been a custom of offering human blood for such purposes.

Moreover, there is a perfect parallel between the Indian and the Philippine custom. During *pujas*, when sacrifice of blood is necessary to appease the ill-disposed gods or evil spirits, the blood and flesh of the animals that have been slaughtered are offered to them.¹¹⁷ When someone becomes sick because the spirits have been displeased, and so that the sick will get well, they must be appeased. An animal - in most cases a domestic fowl or hog, its blood and flesh - must be sacrificed. Even in ordinary slaughter for domestic consumption, a drop of blood and nine pieces of meat from nine sections of the carcass are cut and thrown out as an offering to the spirits.¹¹⁸ This is very common among the Iloko people.

Miners believe that the quality and quantity of gold are dependent upon the sacrifice of (human) blood, particularly children's blood, in the pits. As a boy, stories were told us about men¹¹⁹ who roamed the countryside searching for children to be caught and brought to the pits for the sacrifice. Oblations of coconut, cooked rice and unsalted boiled chicken are also offered to the river spirits who guard the gold dust on the river beds.

Head-hunting among the northern Philippine tribes¹²⁰ as a means of acquiring heads for their regular sacrifices is comparable perhaps to the offering of the head(s) to a deity as in the sacrifice of Ravana¹²¹ to propitiate the goddess Durga in order to obtain lordship of the world.¹²²

Sacrifices before embarking for the purpose of war were frequent. This is testified in both the literature of the Islands¹²³ and India even without referring to the performance of such a sacrifice by the historic rulers of India prior to a declaration of war.

Omens. Omens derived from various signs are admittedly universal. Their similarities in the various localities are so striking that suggestions are hazarded as to their common origin or their percolation from one locality to another (from a common source?), although in most cases they are perhaps analogous developments.

As to the possible influence of the Indian signs upon the Philippines in regard to the Filipino beliefs in many omens, only three or four instances may be cited to show their striking similarities as well as their interpretations. The belief among the Marathas¹²⁴ in particular and among the Indians in general, that on stepping out of the house, if one sees a virgin or a woman coming towards him with a pot full of water, it is considered very auspicious. This sign is believed to be especially auspicious in connection with the pursuance of an important business. Meeting a widow, to an Indian, is very inauspicious, hence people avoid encounter with her. In the Philippines, a pregnant woman met on one's way to transact business spells success. Moreover, if she is carrying a head-load possibility of better success is enhanced. But the bad omen associated with the encounter with a widow does not seem to have a parallel in, or to have percolated to, the Islands.

The bad omen associated to the black cat's crossing one's way is found in both India and the Philippines. Disaster is spelled by an owl's alighting on the window pane. Bird omens, too, are also found in Java and Borneo.

In the Philippine literature, the bird of augury finds a place of influence in the actions of the heroes and villains. Lines 94, 136, 143 of the **Hud-hud**¹²⁷ give a very interesting description of the Idao bird's role in the entire orientation of the hero's actions.

94 Ta ek ibagay pangildonga hi bangun,
 Di Idao agapawanda te daanay maptok,
 Pangi-appitantaku

136 Hapit na, "Heake pummamikkon, Idao,
 Ibudum, ilogaymo hi Aliguyon,
 Tè manpen hungduwok dalindad, Daligdigan,
 Ta diket debdid tinanudan Iken;
 x x x x x

140 Ya pakainghonmih di minahlimi,
 Pumabanago di Payoda babanuda.
 Natinitikan di Idao,
 Kaphodan idao dinolyan di payoda,..."
 x x x x

94 I will ask which way to lead our force,
The Idao bird, I will consult,
As to (the) way we should go."

x x x x

136 Reaching the forest, (he said), "I am here, Idao,
Sing and give a sign to Aliguyon,
For I am on my way to Daligdigan,
To fight the son of my father's enemy

140 To measure our fighting skill
In the field of battle."
The Idao started to chirp,
The Idao darted from the field...

x x x x

In the preceding lines Aliguyon receives an assurance from the Idao bird that he will succeed. Thus in line 152: **Diket wada pumahiw hi Idao**, "The Idao crossed their way" which is interpreted as an augury of success. From which side the Idao crossed the way, it is not indicated. Nevertheless, the constant wheeling of birds on their way was enough to show that success is already theirs.

Birds also influence the characters in the Indian literatures particularly in the epic. "...vultures and hawks and cranes and kankas, and crows in thousands began continuously to fall upon the (Kaurava) troops. And jackals yelled aloud, and many fierce and terrible birds repeatedly wheeled on the left of the army..."¹²⁸ Even in the oral literature of the tribe Hill Saora, in Orisaa,¹²⁹ the cry of the bird on the left spells death, while on the right means life; and for this matter the belief in the signs of the right and of the left is wide-spread in the sub-continent, as well as Farther India.¹³⁰

While the **Hud-hud** does not specifically mention from which side the Idao bird wheels or crosses the path of the warriors, there is only one instance so far discovered in the chronicles of a Spanish priest,¹³¹ which distinguishes the signs of the right and of the left. Thus, when a sea voyage was undertaken, they rocked the boat to and fro, and is left to vibrate. If the vibrations on the right side were more pronounced the voyage would be good, but if bad, they were less. Whether the vibration on the left is more pronounced to be interpreted as bad, it is not specified. Nevertheless, it may safely be

said that the left side has also something to do in the prediction of a favourable augury.

Miscellaneous Beliefs, Traditions and Practices. The resemblance that the Bukidnon's belief in the gods of the cardinal directions of the world bears with the Indian's belief in the guardians of the four *desas* (quarters) can hardly be surmised as independent development. The gods of the four quarters are: at the North Domalongdong; at the South - Ongli; at the East - Tagolambong; and at the West - Magbabaya.¹³² These gods in their power and wisdom have control over the world. Harmony is maintained by them.

Although the names of the Hindu guardians of the four cardinal points - Pulastya, regent over the northern quarter; Yama, over the south; Indra, the east; and Varuna, the west - are totally different from those of the Bukidnon's, the conceptus in both is perhaps similar.

Nowhere in the Archipelago among the other groups of people is found the belief in the existence of regents of the cardinal points of the world, except perhaps in the rather primitive belief in the spirits of the two quarters - East and West - mentioned in the Ifugao harvest song.¹³³ Yet these spirits of the east and of the west are more or less without any power comparable to those of the Bukidnon regents.

Observations of various writers in the Philippines have been recorded with regard to the manner the early Filipinos kept their hair. From the Sulu Islands in the south up to the Luzon island in the north, it is shown how widespread the habit of wearing the hair long and gathering it in a low knot on the back of the head,¹³⁴ or near the crown, or just over the occiput.¹³⁵ In very rare cases, however, can there be found the knot drawn to the back of the head, and around the forehead shaven in the form of an even arch perhaps parallel to the eyebrows.¹³⁶ But, in cases that had been observed the frontal portion of the head is shaved to form an arch, the remaining hair from the center of the head to the back is kept loose.¹³⁷ The Negritos of Zambales in the western part of Luzon have also the front part of the head shaven, but the remaining hair is kept short, and ungroomed.¹³⁸

The custom of wearing the hair in this manner among both a few tribes and non-tribal groups in the Islands may indicate an

Indian influence, the significance of which does not seem to have been understood by them. However, it is certain that the Mangyans of Mindoro - traditionally known? as Ma-i or Ma-yi according to the Chinese records and among whom the practice of sati was observed - may have received from the Indians customs and manners other than the sacrifice in the funeral pyre.

If the use of the *potong*, a turban-like head-dress, among the men of the Archipelago¹³⁹ were a pre-Islamic introduction it could possibly be understood to be an imitation of the Indian turban. Nevertheless, it is likely that it could have been introduced by the Islamized Malays or Javanese whose culture has an Indian overlay.

An isolated but very striking custom is that which resembles the Hindu practice of *pradaksina* or *parikramya* (circumambulation of votive objects). It is found to be practiced by the Ilokos in the Northwestern Luzon. But, its significance is far more interesting as it occurs only in their literature. The custom is mentioned only once in the folk-epos, *Lam-ang*.¹⁴⁰ Perhaps a citation of the relevant portions of the epos where the custom is found would be interesting.

13 "Tapno ditanto mabiglaan
No madanon ti iruruarnan,
adda met saganan a balitang
A rumbeng a pagiddaan."

14 Nagrubbuat met a napan
Ni asawana a Don Juan
Ket idinto a nagtengannan
Linikmot na di kawayan.

"That we will not be caught un-awares,
When the time of his birth¹⁴¹ arrives
There would a bamboo bed be
Made fit for (thee) to lie on."
Thus to the bamboo grove he went
Don Juan, the husband, (full of joy)
Then arriving at the grove
Walked around the (sacred) tree.

It is rather difficult to confirm that his Iloko custom is probably a lost vestige of a tradition borrowed from India. The act is a sign of respect for the person or object circumambulated as well as

a sign that the object of respect is of sacred character. The difficulty is primarily due to its being an isolated case. Moreover, the literature does not say whether the circumambulation is to the right or to the left. The Indian always performs the act with his right-hand-side turned to the object or person venerated. In India, it is not only found in literature,¹⁴² but also in actual practice as prescribed in the *sastras*.¹⁴³

The houses of the Hindus are kept ceremonially clean and pure by the use of the cow-dung being made with water into a [semi]-liquid paste; then smeared on the dirt floor with a kind of brush made from paddy straw.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, it is a prerequisite in the preparation of the ground on which any Indian sacrificial rite is performed.¹⁴⁵ In a similar procedure, the early Filipinos use either cow- or buffalo-dung but more usually the latter to keep the ground "free" from dirt while threshing harvested paddy. The concept in the Hindu cannot be traced in the archipelago, although it may safely be stated that its significance is perhaps similar to the Indian and may have been lost in the process of culture change. It could have possibly been used as a preliminary act in the preparation of the sacrificial ground, on which their sacrifices were performed.

Although the stock-in-trade of the Indian and Filipino sorcerers are slightly different, the procedure which both follow presents striking similarities. In India, the sorcerer starts by collecting a quantity of mud from sixty-four filthy places. It is then kneaded with hair, parings of nails, bits of leather, etc., and it is moulded in small figurines, on the breast of which the name of the one's enemy is written. Certain words and *mantras* are then repeated over these figurines, which are also consecrated by sacrifices. No sooner is this done than *grahas* or planets take possession of the person against whom such incantations are directed, and afflict him with a thousand ills.¹⁴⁶ These figurines are sometimes pierced through and through with an awl, or are mutilated in various ways with the intention of killing or mutilating in the same manner the person who is the object of vengeance.¹⁴⁷ The object of vengeance recovers only when the piercing and mutilating or any other destructive act cease.

The Filipino sorcerer is rather "modern" in the sense that he may have graduated from the use of mud with all the other ingredients of the figurines like the Indian, if he had been influenced by the latter in early times, to the use of the small rag doll. His total

stock-in-trade is an **abubut**, a basket woven of rattan, which has a lid of the same material, a rag doll, and a small cushion stuck full of innumerable pins.¹⁴⁸

When the **mangkukulam** (as he is called in Tagalog; **manggagamod**, in Iloko) desires to do any harm to a person or when he is employed to inflict harm on the employer's enemy, he takes out his instruments and sticks the doll with pins on which part of the body wished to be hurt. Together with the sticking of the pins are pronounced spells or words uttered to effect evil upon whom the hurt is directed. Thus performed, the object of anger or vengeance immediately falls sick, whose cure is effected only upon removal of the pins stuck in the doll.

This may well have been an independent development from the Indian. The striking resemblances between the practices, however, are without doubt coming from a common concept-source, now untraceable.

The earliest notice on the habit of the early inhabitants of the Islands of greasing "themselves with coconut oil and with beneseed oil (olio de coco et de giongioli) as a protection against sun and wind (pa lo solle et pa il vento)" is found in the work of Antonio Pigafetta.¹⁴⁹ He, however, specifies the inhabitants to be those living in the island of Humunu (Homonhon), off Samar Island in the Eastern Bisayas, where the Spaniards had their first contact with peoples of Archipelago. It cannot be doubted that this habit is also Indian. An injunction is found in the sastras that the oil bath must be taken during festival days commemorating important events in the Hindu calendars.¹⁵⁰

While the custom of betel-chewing may be an independent development in the countries in the East, it is of interest that it has in the Islands¹⁵¹ other uses than just an item for entertainment both in folk- and kunst-literature,¹⁵² and actual practice. Morga,¹⁵³ as early 1607 wrote that in these **buyo**¹⁵⁴ poison has been often administered from which the persons chewing them have died..." and this was a very common occurrence. The kind of poison is not mentioned.

South-west of the Islands, in the Malay Peninsula, it is told "that in the old days Malays were in the habit of conveying poison to any one they wanted 'out of the way' in a 'chew of betel.'¹⁵⁵ The poison used in the process consist of the bile of a green tree-snake (ular puchok, *Dryophis prasinus*) mixed with that of a green water frog, and that of a jungle crow; and is smeared on the gambier used

in betel chewing.¹⁵⁶

This is reminiscent of the poison damsels in Indian literatures¹⁵⁷ who used as one of their stock-in-trade of destruction, the betel concoction offered in a friendly gesture. This idea of poison damsel, however, is not of an Indian origin but believed to be introduced from Greece through the coming of Alexander the Great.¹⁵⁸ Cockfighting is the chief past-time of the common man in the Islands, an amusement carried with passionate eagerness. F. Jagor¹⁵⁹ wrote "that the practice has been introduced by the Spaniards or the Mexicans who accompanied them." The game has been observed to have been common among the Malays, the people of Celebes, and the Balinese, the game-cock being such an object of interest and praises of it has been found in their songs and poems.¹⁶⁰

In a Balinese folk-tale,¹⁶¹ a story of a poor boy is told that when he died, his soul went to the realms of the dead. In one of the realms, he found himself in "... a large court, where all kinds of entertainment took place: lively cock-fighting was going on..." That the art of cock-fighting was introduced by the Spaniards or the Mexicans alleged by Jagor is not acceptable in the light of testimonies by earlier foreign visitors of the Eastern lands. As early as 1521, Pigafetta¹⁶² testifies that the game was in vogue in the islands of Palauan (Palawan) on the western part of the Archipelago. If this amusement were not indigenous it may well have been introduced from Java, Zabag to the Arab writers, for it was already practiced with passionate interest by the people. We are informed of this through the writings of the Arab, Ibn Hordadbeh, in A. D. 844-848.¹⁶³ This was in connection with the revenue of Java: "...Part of this revenue, say 50 manns a day, he gets in cockfights, one of the legs of the victorious cock belongs by right to the king, and the owner buys it back for gold."

Cockfighting could possibly be an introduction from India, since it is known that the game is one of the sixty-four arts (*catussastikala*) in which the ancient Indian was proficient. Like the dice,¹⁶⁴ cockfighting was not merely an amusement but likewise a vice. It is beautifully described in the *Bhanas*, Sanskrit dramatic monologues. It is also mentioned in the *Kamasutra* of Vatsayayana¹⁶⁵ as one of the arts that a lover must be proficient in.

Practical Arts. Studies on the practical arts, e. g., boatmaking, fishing, weaving, mining, etc., are apparently meagre, and for the purposes of the present research they are very insignificant. Rather interesting, however, are the few references about their origins, though doubtful in most cases.

On the assumption that there was a longstanding two-way trade between the Philippines and India¹⁶⁶ via the intermediate localities, in the early centuries of the Christian era, it is quite likely that the art of ship-building in the Islands may have been flourishing at that period. Moreover, it is highly probable that the methods employed in the art by the Filipinos were either autochthonous or borrowed or perhaps a combination of both. If the assertion of Ricardo E. Galang¹⁶⁷ that the "boats used by the ancient Filipinos were extraordinarily large and carried one hundred rowers and about thirty to sixty fighting men" and "were of East Indian ...origin..." were probable, there are yet difficulties encountered in the final acceptance of this proof. The most important of these is that no records of boatbuilding has come down to us. It is perhaps understandable that the art may have been handed down by tradition. Moreover, aside from the probable Indian origin of the art, there is a greater likelihood that the influence may have come from the Chinese or from Oceania.

From the Indian coast on the Bengal Bay eastward to the Pacific Islands there is a type of fishing appliance which is very common. This is the cast-net properly known as *laya*, in Cebuano; *dala* in Tagalog, *lala*, in Zambal; and *tabukol*, in Iloko.¹⁶⁸ This being the type so wide-spread in an area so vast, it is assumed that the processes in its production are analogous.

Comparing the processes through which the fishing net had to pass until it is a finished product, in the Islands and in India, to cite two localities separated by space and time, analogies are apparent: the spinning of the thread with the use of the top-like instrument, made of lead or any heavy metal, with an iron hook at the tip, and a wooden handle; the process of weaving with the use of a shuttle-like contrivance which is shot to and from and around the mess regulator (made of a piece of bamboo, or wooden strip); the attachment of a lead sinker, particularly the eastern type of the net, etc. These are more or less the basic processes in the production of the net.

Spinning and weaving is an ancient art among the Filipinos. Cotton, therefore, was the chief material used, judging primarily

from the evidence of language and the identical processes in the preparation of the material to the finished cloth. The art had its highest development in the Ilokos province, in the northwestern Luzon,¹⁶⁹ where the processes of ginning, carding, spinning and weaving were, in almost every step, identical with those found in Borneo, Java, the Malay Peninsula, Burma, and a large part of India.¹⁷⁰

The mining industry in pre-hispanic Philippines was well developed. It has been demonstrated that the miners, especially in the Island of Masbate, used the Indian quick-line method, instead of the Chinese gun-powder process, of excavating the rock.¹⁷¹

Resume. The foregoing study on the analogous customs, traditions, and manners in India and the Philippines does not have any pretensions at conclusiveness. For as it has already been mentioned in the Introduction, these parallel culture aspects may well have developed along the independent lines, though in the long period of contacts in ancient times between the two regions (via the intervention of traffic and trade), these culture aspects may have found distinctive identity and/or similarity. It must be stated, moreover, that these parallelisms may have a common source from which they drew their sustenance throughout the centuries, till they were cut off from the continuous flow of that sustenance by the inroads of a powerfully-backed intrusive culture in later centuries.

It is, therefore, with anxiety that we await the comments of workers - contemporary and future - in the field who might have been stimulated by the rather sweeping, albeit presumptuous assertions in this essay, thereby producing a much clearer view of the much suspected ancient Indo-Philippine contacts.