

## BUHID IDEOLOGY: "TRADITIONAL" AND "TRANSITIONAL"<sup>1</sup>

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In his essay, "Ideology as a Cultural System", Geertz points out that one of the minor ironies of modern intellectual history is that the word "ideology" has itself become ideologized. Yet, instead of rejecting the word for its numerous and often vague meanings, he proposes a redemptive working of its essence. Avoiding the strictly functionalist or psychological interpretation of the term, Geertz alternatively defines ideology as "cultural symbol-systems" or as "template for the organization of social, psychological and cultural processes" (1975: 216). Ideology, redefined as an attempt to render otherwise incomprehensible social stratification meaningful—as a people's "model of", and "model for" their physical, social and psychological reality, is an appropriate one for the focus of this essay.

An investigation of the Buhid ideology would reveal the persistence of traditional cultural symbol-systems. It is embedded in their "surviving past", as reflected in the wealth of their folk tales, rituals, beliefs and ethos. In a way, the Buhid interpretation of their present reality is framed within the language of their traditional ideal.

The Buhid are one of the six Mangyan groups found in the south-central region of Mindoro, the seventh largest island in the Philippines. Except for Conklin's cursory references to this group in his study of the Hanunoo (1955) and Miyamoto's sweeping survey, based on a few days' stay in different Buhid settlements (1974), the Buhid have remained largely out of the cognizance of social scientists.<sup>2</sup> It is for this reason that I have chosen this ethnic group for my ethnographic investigation.

For convenience in presentation, I have divided my discussion into two parts: the first half deals with their "traditional" ideology, the second

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<sup>1</sup> This essay is based on my one-year field research in Mindoro for my Ph.D. thesis, *Peasants in the Hills: A Study of the Dynamics of Social Change Among the Buhid Swidden Cultivators in the Philippines*. Funding for my field work was generously provided at various points by grants from the University of the Philippines-National Science Development Board Faculty Research Grant, the University of Toronto Doctoral Fellowship and the Altrusa International.

<sup>2</sup> Barry's recently published *Ethnographic Atlas* (1980) does not list the Buhid.

half focuses on the "transitional" ideal as reflected in their ethos for purposeful action within their contemporary society.

### *Subsistence Ideology*

The Buhid have a saying that work (*ibolon*) is as tall as a standing man; it never ends until he falls flat on the ground, dead. In practice, Buhid subsistence production which includes swidden agriculture, hunting and gathering activities, defines to a large extent their physical existence. From the time they are old enough to make their own clearing, to the time when they are bent with age and all they can do is to weed their *iyag* and dig for root crops, the Buhid are continually involved in subsistence work.

The prime value given to work may be traced to the Buhid's basic fear of *lunos* (hunger). To the Buhid, the worst thing that can happen to a man is to be *kalunos* (starved) and have no means of alleviation. This fear of starvation acts as some kind of inner dynamic which keeps Buhid in subsistence production.

The forest in its primeval state, untouched by loggers and miners, insured the Buhid a vast reserve of virgin islands, to exploit for their subsistence. That exploitation, however, was done with restraint and deference to the complex of spiritual powers that traditionally dominate the Buhid's universe. For example, while the land is considered mostly a free and unlimited good to be extracted from the forest, certain forest groves, unusual tree formations and burial sites, frequently in the densest part of the forest, are rigorously avoided both for swiddening and settlement. It is believed that human encroachment on these areas would unleash the malevolent ethereal forces.

The order of spiritual forces, believed to govern the Buhid's universe, may be classified between those that assume animal form, the *labang*, and those which take man's image, the *lahi*. The *labang* are seen as man's outright enemies, the *lahi* as potential allies and protectors against the *labang*. The *falad* or souls of the dead, belong to a third category of spirits which may act upon the living.

The *labang* is believed to manifest itself in various animal forms such as the wild pig and wild fowl. Interestingly, all of the *labang's* animal doubles are Buhid game. However, these same animal, when filled with the *labang*, are believed to turn into man's own predators. For just as man is always on the lookout for game, so the *labang* are continually on the prowl seeking human souls (*falad*) to "bite". The Buhid believe a *labang's* bite is potentially fatal because if becomes the spirit's entry

point through which it brings *sagit* or "sickness", which in turn may lead to death, if the spirit is not driven away. Thus the Buhid say that if you go hunting, you must strike first, otherwise, the *labang's* animal double will strike you.

In Buhid cosmology then, the *labang* and man stand in contraposition to one another. Man's successful hunt is a *labang's* loss; conversely, man's sickness or death, emanating from the *labang's* bite is the spirit's gain. To the traditional Buhid a dead person becomes prey to the *labang*, which thrives on eating human souls.

This belief is graphically illustrated in a myth narrated to me by a Batangan Buhid who was also the foremost *iglahi* in the area. This myth tells the origin of the malevolent *labang* and how they spread out throughout the island of Mindoro.<sup>3</sup> For this reason, he considers this as their most important *tultol-magurang* (tales or teachings of parents).

Long ago, there lived an old woman named Wada-wada. Wada-wada's grandchild is Yoyon. While Yoyon was out trapping river crabs, he saw that a *wiwi*<sup>4</sup> with many appendages was caught in his *balakong*.<sup>5</sup> Seeing this, Yoyon let go of the *wiwi* which bit him as he did so. Yoyon then returned home. "What have you got? You look like you're grievously ill," said Wada-wada who saw him enter the house said. Yoyon answered, "a *wiwi* bit me." "What kind of *wiwi*, is it long? Well if it is, then it is a snake, and if it has a narrow belly with nippers, then it is an *amtik*."<sup>6</sup> Yoyon replied, "Fofu, it is not as you described it." "Well, if you saw one with many nippers, hairy and looks very much like a small crab, that is a *talitago*.<sup>7</sup> By sundown, if you were bitten by it, you will die," said Wada-wada. "Oh that's the one that bit me Fofu," cried Yoyon.

True enough, at sundown, Yoyon died. Wada-wada wailed and lamented Yoyon's death. At night, she felt eerie. Suddenly she saw two *anak-labang* which look like the *balugbog* of bananas, by Yoyon's grave, underneath her earthen stove.<sup>8</sup> Wada-wada then ate her earshaped mushrooms. Said the child *labang* unto Wada-wada, "What are you eating?" Wada-wada replied, "my ears." Wada-wada then saw the child *labang* cut his ears and ate it. Said the child *labang* to Wada-wada, "Oh, there comes mother and father." At night time, Wada-wada saw one *labang* carrying her child by

<sup>3</sup> The Buhid like most Mangyans, hardly ever receive medical services from the state. During the course of my field work, the PPM (Program sa Pagpapalunlad ng mga Mangyan), an inter-Mangyan association of evangelical believers started a medical and health program, training "barefoot doctors." As the program has just started, its impact on the *iglahi's* role is yet to be seen.

<sup>4</sup> This is a term to refer to a class of creeping creatures, including arachmas in their environment.

<sup>5</sup> An archaic word for a crab trap made out of wild vine strips, tied into a miniature lasso and placed in strategic areas around river crab holes.

<sup>6</sup> A species of ants with painful but not potent sting.

<sup>7</sup> Possibly, a scorpion, the sting of which is believed to cause death within hours.

<sup>8</sup> That is, *labang* child.

her hip, another has a labang-child in *sabibi*,<sup>9</sup> others on piggy-back ride. Wada-wada was really scared. She climbed up on the roof top of her hut. At the back of the house was a large tree named *hayu-ayahak*. Wada-wada took one *biyagan*, lit it with fire, and jumped into one of the *ayahak*'s branches. When it was fully night Wada-wada heard many *labang* eating Yoyon's remains. At midnight, she heard one *labang* say, "I will count the stars." The smallest of the *labang* children had no stars to count and when it looked down, saw Wada-wada's fire. "The fire is mine to count," it cried. When morning came, Wada-wada saw many *labang* calling out, asking her, "Where did you pass going up the tree? We'd like to come up to you." Wada-wada dropped a rope as red as the big centavo coin, until it reached the ground. She then said to the *labang*, "here, I climbed up the rope, the biggest of the group going before the others. Then the other *labang* followed suit, one climbing after the other. When the biggest *labang* was close to the *ayahak* tree, Wada-wada cut the red-dyed rope, and down fell all the *labang*, except one family with two children, one mother, one father. Said the *labang* to Wada-wada, "let us play hide and seek. You hide first, then it will be our turn. If we win, we will then eat you." Wada-wada then hid herself in the *hugonan*. The *labang* also hid themselves from Wada-wada, but Wada-wada said to the *labang*, "I can see you," even when she did not actually see them. It was all a hoax, what Wada-wada said to the *labang*. However, when it was Wada-wada's turn to hide, the *labang* could not find her. As it was hard to find her, the *labang* set fire to the *hugonan*. Wada-wada would have surely been burnt alive but she ran to another *hugonan* and hid herself once more. The *labang* then hid themselves from Wada-wada inside the hole of a tree named *daha*. Wada-wada again said, "I can see you." But this time, the *labang* did not come out from their hiding place. Wada-wada then guessed that they had hidden themselves inside the hole of a *batang*. She quickly made two fire brands which she used to set fire to the log's hole and then continuously fanned. Said the wife, the mother *labang*, "we are soon going to die, once Wada-wada's fire starts to smoke." The male *labang* then started doing *iglahi* inside the *batang*<sup>10</sup> of the *daha*, chanting as he did, *Nangabang kasanduwan, nganaban kasanlima*.<sup>11</sup> The *batang-daha* then cracked, and the *labang* broke free. Inside the *daha* trunk, however, one of the *labang* children dies, leaving them only one child. They then continued with their hide and seek within the *hugonan*. The *labang* then hid themselves inside the *anagi batang*. Wada-wada then set fire to fire the hole of the *anagi batang*, and fanned it again and again. In the process, the remaining *labang* child died. Said the *labang* wife to her husband, "you should *iglahi* again, lest we die." The *labang* husband then chanted, *ngabang kasansadi, nganabang dik batang anagi*. Soon after that the *anagi batang* cracked and the *labang* couple passed through its crevice. They then said to Wada-wada, "you won in our hide and seek, we won't eat you now." Wada-wada then left the *labang* in the *furo* of Namugmuyan.

<sup>9</sup> A *sabibi* is a peculiar Buhid and southern Mangyan way of carrying their infants through the use of a spare *abol*, hung around the upper torso of the body, with the infant "pocketed" by the folds of the *abol* by their breast.

<sup>10</sup> Fallen trunk of a huge tree.

<sup>11</sup> This is a play of magical words, using old Buhid language which my informant is unable to translate in simpler Buhid.

In the olden times it is said that here in the mountains, there were no *labang*. That is our parents tales. Well, according to them, after a long time has passed, about twenty *fangaraw* (approximately 20 years) there were eight siblings, one named Kulinda, two named Kasinan, others Lokwit and Dumalogdog. These siblings set out to gather snails. They hiked up to Mahaligi where they saw Wada-wada. Wada-wada then warned them not to go to Namugnuyan, saying "that site is where I keep captured *labang*." The people who arrived in the mountains then went forth looking for snails. Suddenly, they saw three big monkeys which they shot with their arrows and caught. They said one to another, how are we to cook this without an *anglit*?<sup>12</sup> As they walked around the place, they saw an *ayahak* tree. By this three, they saw an *anglit* buried underneath it. They took this red clay pot. Inside it they saw that it has smears of fresh blood, leaves of *ilang-ilang* and *dalanaw*. When their pot of monkey meat was nearly cooked, one of them was suddenly taken ill and died. Not long after, death came simultaneously to the others, leaving only Dumalogdog and Kulinda. Dumalogdog then dug the ground until it was neck deep, with the bodies of his brothers in front of him. Then Dumalogdog saw the *labang*. He hacked all the *labang* with his bolo, right and left. When Dumalogdog was up the mountain, the blood of the *labang* stuck on his body and he died. All the others died, except one, Kulinda. Kulinda roamed around the full length of Mindoro and reached Hayakyan. He made a pig-trap in the forest with a sharpened wild bamboo. While sharpening the spear trap, he accidentally cut himself with the sharp edge of the bamboo. Kulinda tried to treat his wound but his blood had been licked by the *edu-labang*.<sup>13</sup> Not long after, his cut hand became really swollen and his body became very weak. As he was dying, the host of the *labang* gathered around him and ate him up. Where Kulinda died, the *labang*, whose name is Lidong Mata, stayed. It is really a host of *labang*. Even now, people say, there are times when light like the burning bush comes out of that site. In that place, no one dares to go up now.

While the *labang* are associated with the wild life, the *lahi* are related to human beings. Believed to be once human, the *lahi* are thought to have their own households and fields and perform swidden activities in the other world. Some of the *lahi* are called *afu-fungso* and others *afu-daga*. The *afu-daga* are thought to have a direct control of the Buhid universe and the host of *labang* that surround them. The acts of the *afu-daga* are manifest in physically observable phenomenon. For instance, soil erosion (*tibag*) is believed to be a result of *afu-daga's* own swiddening activities. Cataclysmic events such as earthquakes or floods are believed to be the expressions of the wrath of *afu-daga* over man's *sala*, or failure to uphold the moral order. A particular case of *sala* is *fayawan* or "incest", which is believed to immediately result in *tagandagaw*, water springing out of the earth of the *turok* or "post" of the guilty party's house, and in the water, there will successively appear a river crab, an eel and a

<sup>12</sup> The *anglit* is a native clay pot sought after by the Mangyan-patag and Bangon in their internal trading with the Buhid.

<sup>13</sup> A "dog-spirit", associated with the hunting dog of the *afu* of the forest.

shrimp. Unless the violation of the incest taboo is immediately remedied by an *iglahi*, a traditional ritual specialist, the Buhid say that the water will keep welling up and the earth will open and engulf the whole house. To stop this *tagandagaw*, the *iglahi* is supposed to immediately eat all the river creatures that come out of the pool of water and later perform a placatory rite, *fanluhod afu-daga*. This involves the piercing of the earth (daga) with an iron wire, followed by the slaughter of a pig.

The case of incest is often a hushed affair, until the threat of destruction it brings to the community has been adequately dealt with by the *iglahi*. During the course of my field work in Batangan, the incest committed by two teenagers was detected by their immediate kin when the dreaded signs of *jayawan*, earth cracking, was observed under the houses of both lovers:

Benito and Sanuhuan are *taginsan* (cousin) and the former's father, Gin-uman, and the latter's father, Siw-ay are brothers (same mother but different fathers). One day, the two were seen going together to the *singapuran* (taro swidden), obviously to dig for some *singapur* to sell. However, while in the *singapuran*, they did something else, for a week after they were seen together, a break in the ground was seen underneath their respective houses. Alarmed Gin-uman, Benito's father, called for formal talks with his *kaiban* (kindred) to determine what to do. Some of his *kaiban* were so enraged about the incest committed by the young couple, they suggested throwing them into the sea to abort the dreadful *tagandagaw*. The case eventually reached Yaom, and a *tultulan* was held with him as arbiter. It was decided through the formal talks that a *fanluhod* be held. Gin-uman, with the help of Siw-ay then looked for a pig which was slaughtered, its jaw and tail offered to the *afu-daga*, and the rest eaten in a communal meal by the kindred group members of the guilty couple.

Though the *afu-daga* may thus be enraged, the Buhid still conceive of him as their truck, literally "support post", the *afu-daga* is capable of dispensing good to man and withholding *duwat*, that is, anything that is bad, wicked, destructive or upsetting the balance of their physical universe, such as earthquakes, floods, starvation, war, sickness and death. To the Buhid, the *afu-daga* is the source of help, a steady support in times of uncertainty. To win its support or to appease his wrath, the Buhid observe the rite, *fanluhod afu-daga* performed by the *iglahi*. What follows is an excerpt from my diary describing a *fanluhod* in Batangan performed by some of its residents in response to the news of the sky-lab falling in the mountains:

Tonight is the predicted fall of the sky-lab. Having heard this over the radio or through the *Loktanon* who relishes spreading spectacular news from the towns to the hills, very few Buhid dared to go to their fields today. Somehow, the strong winds and dark sky managed to confirm their fears of the *imdagdag* (lit. that which will fall). Rumors greatly abound and tale-bearers had their field day.

At dusk, I overheard that a *fangalahiya* will be done in Yahiwan's house to drive the sky-lab away from the mountains into the seas. I half-ran across the barrio to Yahiwan's place when I heard this. By the flickering light of the *salong* (a light made of almaciga sap), I saw Sanyuan and Yahiwan seated on the bamboo floor, each holding a cock laid flat against the floor-Yahiwan with a red rooster, Sanyuan with a white cock. Upon seeing me, Sanyuan bid me in. I then noticed that all those present except one migrant Mangyan *patag* woman *iglahi*, are members of either Yahiwan or Sanyuan's households. No sooner than I have squatted on the floor, Sanyuan started addressing the *afu-daga* making excuses for the roosters but nonetheless enjoining him to accept it. In between his pauses, Yahiwan joined in the *fanluhod*, uttering petitions for the *afu-daga's* protection against the sky-lab. Pleas were made for the *afu-daga* to drive the *imdagdag* to where it belongs, away from the mountains and their habitation. Their alternate litanies includes the expression of *dayu* (fearful repugnance) of *tag-kalunos* (starvation), *katuno* (landslide), *mga sundalo* (soldiers), *balutong* (small pox), any and all that would make them *lumag-duwat* (see evil). After the *fanluhod*, Yahiwan cut the rooster's necks, allowing the blood to drip through the bamboo slats unto the *daga* (earth) as some kind of libation to the *afu*. When both roosters stopped struggling, they were singed over fire then cleaned of its burnt feathers. After the chicken were cooked, it was served in an *igsaduhan*, a joint-meal participated by all who were present.

The meal was followed by the *fangalahiyan*, a chanting to the personally known *lahi* of the three *iglahi* in the *fanluhod*. It went on through the night, intermittently broken by a consultation of the *iglahi* about their whereabouts in the *lahi's* "settlement", or some informal exchange of talks of news between the *iglahi* and others who were around. Chanting was individually done by the *iglahi*, while the members of the household gathered around to rest on the bamboo-floor and chat about the day's happening.

In addition to the *labang* and the *iglahi*, the Buhid believe that the *falad* (soul) of their dead kin also act on their microcosm. Though the dead must perforce go to the *daga-salad* (the Buhid believe they live there in much the same manner as they did on this earth). Thus, just as the living get hungry, so the *falad* also gets hungry and so need the support of the living. Neglect of filial duty on the part of the living may enrage the *falad*, causing them to bring illness and misfortune to those who have offended them. It is the Buhid belief that illness may either be the working of the *labang* or a punitive act of the *falad* to remind the living to "feed" them. In the event that a *falad* is thus angered, a *sagda* is called for. This requires the slaughter of a pig and the offering of its head and tail to the *falad*. Like the living, the *falad* are believed capable of envy and may be led by such emotion to bring about *lumag-duwat* or that "which is evil to see" upon a person or his family who, enjoying good fortune themselves, have selfishly forgotten the *falad*.

Upon the death of the family member, the Buhid would traditionally move their home to a new site within the territory of their *gufudan*. After the 10 days *igli* (taboo imposed in those who were in physical contact with the dead), the dead man's *iyab* is harvested of its root crops and non-permanent cultigens. Such root crops as sweet potatoes, yam and taro are cooked and eaten right in the dead man's field during a rite called *fangafuyan*.<sup>14</sup> After the ritual harvest and eating of the root crops of the dead, the field is abandoned, as it is believed that it will become *tigwanan*, the dead man's source of subsistence. The damage of the field by such pests as ground ants and weevil is believed to be a manifestation of the *falad's* claim to the field crops.

In deference to the *falad* of the departed kinsmen, the Buhid also observe the annual rite of *fangahawan*. Traditionally, this was held after the rice harvest season, or the end of the *fangaraw* — a full agricultural cycle roughly equivalent to one year. The Buhid believe that this is the time when the soul of their dead kin becomes hungry and therefore it needs to be fed with a pig slaughtered, singed over fire, boiled and then served with rice to the dead as well as the gathered living kin.

As rice cultivation had become less important, the *fangahawan* has been confined to the time when someone in the family gets sick or when one "dreams" of a soul of a kin becoming *kalunos* (hungry). One such case is cited below:

Uynan dreamt that Samanay, his *bay* (his father's sister), of whom he is the sole immediate surviving kin, and who died four months ago, is already *kasamok-baboy*.<sup>15</sup> Not wishing to offend her, Uynan immediately called for Agnipan, a distant kin who *imbuklid* (carried) his *bay* solely on his back, when Uynan fainted while doing so. Agnipan became Uynan's designated heir. With Agnipan's help, a *fangahawan* was immediately set, though it is only the third month of Samanay's death. For the hurriedly scheduled *fangahawan*, Uynan's *kaiban* (kindred) was mobilized, i.e., Daeng and Alaga (Agnipan's sister and her husband), Tanay (Uynan's wife-cousin), his Mangyan-*patag sandugo*, and a few of his *garakbangan* (swidened neighbor).

By the time most of the notified party were present, Uynan's last pig was slaughtered, singed over fire, cut to pieces, then boiled with salt and some green leaves. Rice, brought as a gift by Agnipan and Daeng were added to Uynan's own rice supply, then boiled for the joint meal. The parts of the pig, meant to be served to Samanay, was cooked separately in a pot. This consisted of the jaw, heart and tail of the slaughtered pig. As soon as everything was cooked, long banana leaves were cut, then set on the floor, neatly lined up with the steaming boiled rice. The cooked meat

<sup>14</sup> This is a compound word out of *afuy*, "fire."

<sup>15</sup> *Kasamok* is a Buhid term for "deep" of fervent longing or desire for something, which needs immediate satisfaction. It is customary for Buhid to share food or any good for which one is *kasamok* as they believe withholding it would cause illness on the part of the person who refuses to give.



was served in portions in polished coconut shell containers. Great care was taken to stretch the supply of meat to everyone who joined the *fangahawan*, and others, who though not present would expect a portion, a *huray* of the slaughtered pig. When everyone has thus eaten, the remaining portions were carefully divided to all the Buhid originally from Nawa and now residing in Batangan. Significantly, a sizeable portion was set aside for Yaom, the "mayor."

When everyone has partaken of the meal, Uynan and his wife brought out six *tayas* (polished coconut shell container), which they then filled with boiled rice. These containers were placed on a *nigo* (native flat winnowing basket and tray), along with the meat offering. Afterwards, Uynan called on Samanay and her *talalahan* (family/household- to come to partake of the food. While mashing the boiled rice with pig's jaw, he simultaneously addressed his petitions which he made, Uynan asked Samanay to keep sickness away because if he dies, no one else will serve her food offerings. In addition, he asked to be kept from *mga lunos* (hunger and starvation), *bagyo* (strong winds and typhoons), *tulisan* (bandits), *giyera* (war) and *sundalos* (soldiers). After uttering his petitions, Uynan poured a major residing in Batangan. Significantly, a sizeable portion was set aside for his house, and the rest eaten by members of his own household.

In some respects, Uynan's early observance of the *fangahawan* seems to tie with his desire to keep alive his kindred ties. Being old and without any living offspring of his son, Uynan is dependent solely on the support of his *gufudan* from Nawa, an aggregate of second-degree cousins, distant consanguineal and affinal relations. The early call for *fangahawan*, the major expenses of which he shouldered, was an attempt on his part to affirm his *gufudan's* support, especially as he was contemplating on moving to Batangan barrio, to avail himself of various benefits that accrue from his being Yaom's *sakup*. This motive also lies behind the setting aside of a sizeable portion of the slaughtered pig for Yaom, and the distribution of the other portions to the Nawa residents. Uynan is notorious for being *kwangit*, i.e., stingy, not predisposed to being "open" or generous, and this appeared to have kept some of his *gufudan* members at bay. Significantly, all of his potential sources of help, from his *gufudan* members to his Mangyan *sandugo* (ritual brother), were present during the *fangahawan*. Along with forging his *gufudan* support is his bid to become regular resident of Batangan; the invitation extended to his Mangyan-*patag* ritual kin may be an exhort on Uynan's part to keep alive his traditional source of extra labor help (he being childless), magico-religious services and goods customarily obtained through the neighboring group's internal trading. As a whole, the *fangahawan* rite occasioned a forging of his local and external group ties.

Upon the death of a family member, the Buhid traditionally relocated their home and swidden to a new site within the defined territory of their *gufudan*. After 10 days of *igli*, the taboo imposed on those who were in physical contact with the dead, the departed kin's swidden is harvested of

its root crops and non-permanent cultigens. The root crops consisting of sweet potatoes, yam and taro are cooked and eaten right in the dead man's field, in a rite called *fangafusan*. After the ritual harvest and eating of the garden crops of the dead, the field is then abandoned and declared as 'tigwanan', the field used by the departed. While the Buhid believe that the *falad* takes possession of the land from that time on, in reality the *fangahawan* marks the beginning of following or that land. The damage of the field by such pests as ground ants and weevil is believed to be a manifestation of the *falad's* claim to the field crops. Significantly, the Buhid believe that the soul of the dead, after one or two planting seasons, "becomes like a pig" in that they have no thought (*fangayufan*). They have no sense of honor (*kafiiyan*), or shame (*kaya*) and would simply feed on anyone's *iyab* (swidden) anywhere.

#### *The Lahi Mediator*

As with the neighboring Bangon and the Mangyan-*patag*, the Buhid have magico-religious experts who are believed to have special access to the *lahi*, buried underneath the earth (*daga*) in the *gunaw*, the Great Flood. These experts are called *iglahi* (lit. the one who does *lahi*), each of whom has a particular *lahi*. An *iglahi* knows the secret name of his *lahi*, which he uses in addressing the *lahi*. The supernatural power of this *lahi* serves as his own *turok*—the foundation, like a main post of a house, of his expertise in dealing with the *labang*, sickness or calamity. When he calls on his *lahi's* secret name, it is believed that his *lahi* rides in a *baloto*, a beam of light which, like an airplane, transports it to the *iglahi's* range of vision and control.

The special knowledge of the *lahi* and the manipulation of his powers are considered by the Buhid to be acquired through some form of inheritance, *it-faglagon* (lit. that which would be seen of them), to be handed down from one generation to other. In the absence of one's own children, the *lahi* may be passed on to a close or distant kin, or even a regular exchange partner like the *sandugo*, who has promised to provide for his daily subsistence when he can no longer work and *imbuklid* (carry) him to the grave upon his death. Whoever is the recipient, a would-be *iglahi* has to offer a *sanag*, a ritual offering of a white rooster or a pig bled over a *finggan* (antique chinese porcelain plate), which is struck several times with a *bay* (bow). This rite, along with the learning of the secret names of the *lahi* and the special chants to address him, are learned from a master *iglahi* over a period lasting in average seven to ten days, at the end of which period, the *sangkap* of the *iglahi*, the magical stones identified with a particular *lahi*, are passed on to his inheritor. With these stones come the knowledge of the magical chants which contain the personal name of the *lahi* his wife, their invisible settlement, the secret passage to it, etc.

A *lahi* may also be personally sought through an individual rite that calls for the participation of one with a *marigon-fag-fangayuhan* (lit. strong intestines). Such a person goes under a balete tree believed to be the habitation of some *afu*, or isolated springheads and make an offering of a whose rooster or a pig bled over an old Chinese porcelain plate. The belief is that after the offering, there will appear a stone which will be the token of a *lahi's* personal revelation, and that would be *iglahi's daniw* (chant). The stone is believed to have a particular *afu* (essence or being) who will make themselves known after one night through the seeker's dream. If one dreams of a Buhid or Mangyan-*patag*, then the *afu* is a good one and the stone can be kept, and the spiritual personage be established as one's *lahi*. However, if the *lahi* seeker dreams of a Bangon or one who is *burihin* (one covered with scaly ringworm), then the *afu* of the stone is *duwat* (bad). In this case, the stone should immediately be returned to its source. After the identity of the stone's *afu* is determined through a dream, a second *sanag* is done and the supplicant will determine whether he will use the stone of *iglahi* or *fangamlang* healing through finger-press, which is believed to remove sickness-causing foreign objects. If one desires to use the stone for *fangamlang*, the seeker will just have to bleed the chicken over the stone. If he desires to be an *iglahi*, then he will have to bleed the chicken over *bay*.

Apart from his expertise in dealing with the spiritual host, the *iglahi* as already mentioned in Section 4.3 also served as a *tahinan* or *gurangon*. This leadership function was more frequently observed before the incorporation of the Buhid into barrios. This quasi-leadership position, rather than being fixed is more of a situational or seasonal exercise of authority, as when the community is faced with puzzling events or circumstances that can not be explained away "naturally" or, any new, unfamiliar events that may disturb the community, as for instance the entrance of strangers in their (traditional) territory. A *tahinan*, however, need not necessarily be an *iglahi*, though he was usually one known to give wise judgments.

While the *iglahi* is generally associated with good (*fiya*), the Buhid also recognize the existence of some who may use their *lahi* against their enemies, particularly in the snatching of the soul of their enemies which may eventually lead to their death. This soul-snatching is called "*duwat-iglahi*" or "*evil iglahi*." However, reported cases of an *iglahi* harming others is rare. Among the Buhid in fact, a bad *iglahi* is generally associated with the *Bangon*. Hence, any *bangdan* (accusation) of an *iglahi* for the abuse of his powers is deemed a very serious matter. Any person thus accused will not let it pass unchallenged. The *bangdan* is formally contested in *agad-gaya'an*, on which occasion the person who made the accusation, may end up giving a *balan* (fee to placate an anger, or "hard feeling") to the offended *iglahi*, if the latter is proven innocent in the course of public talks partici-

pated in by friends and sympathizers of both sides. However, in the event that an uttered *salan*, i.e., a curse or a verbal threat made by an *iglahi* to anyone, comes true, the *iglahi* may easily become the target of a *fangayatan*, instigated by the aggrieved party. This was illustrated in a case which took place in Avufay, a Bangon settlement which serves as Yaom's non-Buhid *sakup*:

Tanay, an expert in *iglahi*, is a key competitor of Agaw for the leadership of a Buhid sub-group in Avufay. The Buhid actually refer to this community as "Bagon." Agaw, an appointed councilor of Yaom in this village has actively worked for the incorporation of their settlement as a ward of Batangan, and by extension, of the town government. This move was primarily instigated by a standing land dispute with some lowlanders.

Tanay served for some time as policeman of the community, having been appointed by Agaw, but this did not last long as he soon contested the latter's leadership. He spoke strongly against the rapid change in the ways of the village, and at point in the heated debate, threatened to kill some of his opponents by snatching their souls. Not long after, one of Agaw's children died, and the villagers of Avufay readily linked his death with Tanay's earlier threats. This suspicion of Tanay's unlawful use of his *lahi* became even stronger when Agrumay, Agaw's main spokesman in his verbal contest with Tanay, died suddenly of "unknown cause." His co-villagers took this unexplained sudden death as a result of Tanay bidding his *lahi* to steal Agrumay's soul.

### *Inter-Personal Relations and Conflict Resolution*

Paramount in the Buhid ideal of the world is the maintenance of *kahuwayan*—the absence of any rancour that figuratively causes "knotted entrails" (*funa*). In this generally non-violent society, any rancour of the mind, *kahuri-fangayuhan*, must perforce find a solution. Any delay in easing off one's *kahurian* (rancour) is dangerous, for a knotted entrail continues to trouble the mind, and may end up in one being *kapaong* (deranged), or in despair, and lead to self-destruction in the form of *gugot* (suicide by hanging). But among the Buhid, one's rancour rarely develops into open violence against others. Incidents of "running amok", a murder of vendetta, is virtually non-existent. In contrast, according to my informants, the incidence of suicide appears to be more frequent especially in the more interior areas such as Siange and the *Hayakyan* region, than in Batangan. In Batangan, I actually observed one case of attempted suicide by a wife desperate over her constantly philandering (*fabaywan*), non-providing husband.

An unrequited love, the threat of abandonment by one's spouse for another mate, a promise not fulfilled, an accusation that threatens one's *kafiyen* (goodly honor), an insult publicly made and which may lead to one's shame (*kaya*), and endless round of hardships (particularly the lack of food), all these may lead to *kahuri-fangayufan*. This mental state normally

leads a Buhid to *igfaangay*, to make publicly known and air his unhappiness in order to get the support of his community. Individuals who thus think that they have a strong case (after informally "airing" their grievances), may openly *tagayat*, or confront the source of his rancour in formal talks mediated by established *fangayatan* (advocates), known for their skill in verbal disputations and fairness in settling cases. Although a *fangayatan* may mediate trouble cases arising from particular individuals, the public discussion of the cases often serves as a pretext to open up old, unsettled disputes of the kindred members of the respective parties involved in the dispute. In this sense the formal talks held to settle a particular dispute, is also a time of "accounting" of accumulated wrongs, or previous unsettled grievances, by the respective *kaiban* (kindred) members of the parties. While litigations may spring from individual grievances, the formal talks which such personal wrongs do occasion, take place in the presence of *kaiban* members in attendance. The strength of one's case is thus also dependent on the strength of the support of the kindred and their participation in talks. The *kaiban* members of the aggrieved also have the right to demand the customary fine (*balan*) given to the aggrieved party by the individual publicly affirmed to be guilty as a result of the formal talks. A solution or settlement of a case is considered to have been attained when a consensus is reached among all parties involved in the formal talks, consisting of the respective *fangayatan* (advocate) of each party, the kindred group members of each side and the over-all arbiter of the case. In addition to the *balan*, the person publicly confirmed to be guilty is made to pay the *fangabaya*, a form of fine which goes to the *fangayatan*. Should the guilty person be unable to pay the *balan* and/or the *fangabaya*, his kindred are expected to help him by giving him some kind of a loan.

Up to fifteen years ago in Batangan, the *balan*, and *fangabaya* were given wholly in the prescribed amount of beads. Presently, this practice has given way to cash payments. In cases of wife-snatching or divorce (the frequent causes for filing of cases), the settlement fee, often asked by the aggrieved spouse, ranges from 100 to 500 pesos. The use of beads for settlement is now confined mostly to the interior areas, but even there, the *balan* has taken the combined form of beads and cash payments. In both Batangan and the Buhid frontier areas, wife-snatching or divorce is considered settled only when a pig is slaughtered and served in a joint peace-meal of the persons involved in the dispute and their respective kindred.

Closely intertwined with the idea of *kahuwayan* is the Buhid notion of *kafiyaon*, that is "just right", what "fits", one's felt need, or required taste, and want. In fact, everything that "pleases", or bring gratification to one's physical, aesthetic and moral sense is *kafiyaon*. Thus, a finely-woven,

two tiered indigo-dyed skirt is a *kafiyaon* as a meal of boiled white rice and pork, or a man winning his long-awaited lady's love.

The concept directly opposite to *kafiyaon* is *duwat*, anything which brings discord, or does not "fit" within the Buhid's prescribed sense of *kahuwayan* or *kafiyaon*. The Buhid consider an unsettled, constantly *ka-bangon* (lit. "awakened") grievances as *duwat*. This explains why they place such a high priority on settlement of cases, no matter how long it takes. By extension, the slow almost drooling manner of speaking typical of the Bangon, is *duwat*, so is a person who perennially wears dirty, tattered loin cloth, and whose tangled, coarse hair never gets washed.

### *The Nominal Catholic and Di-Binyagan*

The Buhid refer to their traditional way of life as *ugali-magurang* (lit. the ways of the parents) and contrast it with *bagong batas* or the "new law", which has been gaining in importance to those living in a municipality, incorporated in the administrative framework of the central government — the barangay. To these Buhid, the *bagong batas* represents the *Gobyerno* (government), whose force has come to bear increasingly upon their lives.

While the *ugali-magurang*, regulated by the spiritual forces, are based on the Buhid life in the dense forest, the *bagong batas* is oriented towards the lowlands and as the forest gradually dispersed, the force of the spirit world also waned. In their stead, the Buhid see the increasing force of the "New Order", providing a new model for social and economic organizations and the surplus that used to be applied to their ceremonial fund has been largely directed to the *Gobyerno*, through its agents, in the form of "tax."<sup>16</sup>

It is important to observe, however, that the Buhid appear to continue interpreting transition from *ugali-magurang* to *bagong batas* within the meaning complex of the former. This may be seen in the annual tax-paying event held in Batangan for the residents of the barrio and the surrounding settlements of Tauga, Matanos and Siange. The annual taxpaying now takes the form of *pista* (fiesta) and a grand market day. It is marked by the annual visit of town officials and tax collectors who are feasted with pigs, chicken and rice, contributed by the Buhid. Significantly, these are the same ritual food offered to the *afu-daga* to ensure their continued well-being.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with the Municipal officials including the town mayor has not quite cleared the official category of this tax levied on the Buhid. Receipts issued bear payment for "Real Estate Property Tax", which strictly speaking, does not apply to the Buhid because their cultivations officially fall in the government "forest reserve land". However, since the Buhid are desirous of having the legal title of ownership for their lands, the tax payment for "improvements they have made on their landholding" is, according to the town officials, "a good way of proving continued use of land for ten years," a requirement before one can apply for a land title on homesteads or forest lands.

From the perspective of their tradition, therefore, the Buhid seem to interpret the annual tax-paying event as another form of ritual where they pay tribute to a greater *afu* as represented by the Gobyerno, interceding for its positive action on their lives. For the Buhid, the need to pay their annual tribute in the form of tax money, is necessary to insure their continued hold on their land and to maintain the protection of the Gobyerno through its agents, the town officials.

Aside from spouse-snatching and divorce, land became a source of frequent disputes, partly as a result of the increasing pressure on it by the growing population of both the Buhid and the Loktanon and of the recent trend to regard the land as being under private control. A most frequent context in which land becomes an object of dispute, is when it is to be divided among the offspring of the Buhid who adopted the Loktanon practise of private landholding. In solving dispute, the Buhid have also adapted their custom of *imbuklid-natay*. The rule of inheritance sanctioned in the rite of *imbuklid-natay*, prescribes that the person who carries the dead kin to the grave and who ministered to all the needs of the dying kin by his bed, inherits all his *sangkap* (traditionally comprising his magical stones, bolo, clothing and plants). Because of the increasing importance of land, *sangkap* now includes the land, which thus becomes the object of inheritance on the occasion of *imbuklid-natay*. During this ritual, it is also customary for the dying Buhid to name the person who would carry them to their grave in exactly the same manner as they would carry their *buyugan* (swidden basket) full of daily subsistence from their *iyab*. Often the person so named is the closest kin, either the surviving wife or husband, a favorite child, brother or sister. The naming is often based on who, among the kindred, has most faithfully attended to the dying relative and came to his aid in his lifetime. This death mandate, however, is not readily accepted, as the Buhid fear the *labang* which have caused the death of their kin, may transfer to the living. The Buhid also believe the *falad* (soul) of their kin return and take their living survivor with them. Thus, only a devoted and closely attached in would have sufficient courage about carrying the dead. In the event that the land or other valuable properties of the dead is to be shared with an equally solicitous kin, the latter voluntarily joins the officially designated to carry the dead. Such a kinsman also joins the vigil on the dying and does not withdraw from physical contact with dying, before and after the event of death. The individuals thus inheriting the deceased's land and other properties, are considered "polluted" and undergo a ten-day *igli* (taboo) and prohibited from having any form of physical contact with others.

The following case illustrates the practice of *imbuklid-natay* which has become a major ritual requirement for a Buhid heir (or heirs) to the deceased's property including land:

The end came slowly for Ighay. Death for him was a gradual, but steady conquest of the *labang-baboy* (pig-spirit). This dread disease known to the outside world as TB has claimed many other Buhid lives. Ighay's own parents, brothers, niece and first wife all died from being stricken with virulent *labang-baboy*.

As his death seemed imminent, only two persons constantly remained by his side and ministering directly to his needs—his daughter Min-ay and wife of his later years, Hayuman. His two surviving brothers, An-iw and Tanay, maintained some distance though they were constantly at watch, along with their wives and other close kin. The frequent cry of *sabawon niyog* (coconut water) by the dying, was immediately heeded by those around, but the native drinking vessel was never given to him directly. All things handed to Ighay were passed to Min-ay and his wife, who never left his side. Except for these two women, all the others gathered in the small hut but avoided any form of physical contact with the dying man. Noticing this, I asked the Buhid woman seated beside me why they feared physical contact with the dying man. She pointed out that they feared the *labang-baboy* transferring to them, especially at his point of death.

Long before the worsening of Ighay's *labang-baboy*, a *tultulan* (formal talks) was held to determine who would be carrying him for his burial. Tanay, one of his two surviving brothers, who to my yet unenlightened mind, appeared to be the likeliest candidate because of his strong constitution, refused to volunteer. A relative close by, explained to me that Tanay already has two parcels of land, so no one thinks him qualified to be carrying Ighay. She pointed out that An-iw is a more likely candidate because he has many children and a small land. Though An-iw himself has a bad knee, he indicated strong willingness and had in fact been made by Ighay to carry him to his grave. However, Min-ay protested this arrangement and in An-iw's stead, presented herself and possibly her husband's Altang, to carry Ighay. All through the talks though, she has been convincing her husband to assist her in carrying her father, Altang however, remained reticent about Min-ay's request. When Ighay appeared to be nearing his end, Min-ay broke into tears and plead once more that her husband help *imbuklid* her father. It is at this point, that the other relatives of Ighay gathered around the hearth, started voicing their opinion. A common opinion was, if Min-ay is insisting to assume the burden of carrying her father to his grave, then she alone must carry him and not break their *ugali* (customs). If she is unable to do this alone, then Ighay's first preference, An-iw, must perforce *imbuklid* him.

The final decision on this issue became known to me the following day, when I saw Min-ay *imbuklid* Ighay's corpse. The body was wrapped well inside a mat, tied up with rattan and slung over Min-ay's forehead and supported with her arms at the back. Though surrounded by strong men, including her husband, no one dared assist her.

### *The Buhid Evangelicals*

Among the Buhid, who have been converted to evangelical Christianity, the ritual of *imbuklid-natay* is no longer important and from among one's *faduwasay-sas-fo*n ("brother in the Lord") are readily recruited volunteers to help carry the dead, even without the traditional share of the inheritance



from carrying the dead. Among the evangelical Buhid therefore, conflicts in land inheritance tend to center around the issue of equality of division among the surviving kin rather than around the issue of carrying the dead. The new-land based conflicts which face the evangelical Buhid may be seen in the following case study:

Daganay has three children from his two marriages—a daughter by his first marriage, Iba and two sons by his second marriage. While married to his second wife, Gaymay, Daganay acted as *Tahinan*, a kind of a leader to Gaymay's younger brothers and deceased sister's son. While he was thus acting as head of the kindred group in Madling, the Commission on National Integration initiated a survey of the Buhid swidden fields and clearing, which eventually resulted to the adoption of private landholdings in the area. Daganay, originally from *luad* (downstream) Batangan, had only small clearing in Madling. However, as his wife was one of the traditional residents in Madling, there was more than enough land to declare as their holding. Neither quite comprehending the meaning of land declaration nor anticipating divorce with Daganay, Gaymay did not object to the idea of putting almost all her father's clearing and traditional swidden site of some 20 hectares (including secondary and primary forest areas), under Daganay's name. However, when Daganay met an accident which permanently injured his knees and diminished his physical capacity to work in their field, Gaymay lost heart and decided to return to her first husband who, about the same, has just been left by his wife. Daganay, now a permanent resident of Batangan and a *tahinan* (elder) of the *Iglesiya* (congregation) refused to turn over the land, for which he has been paying tax, to Gaymay unless she returns to him. He further reasoned that the original clearing of Gaymay's father has been expanded and planted to permanent plants by him. Gaymay on the other hand, did not bother to press her claim to the land any further as she knew that the declared land under Daganay's name will eventually pass to their two sons, Yahan and Yaba.

After his children have all been married and have children of their own, Daganay burdened by the annual tax for his land-holding, decided to divide the land among his children. The division of his declared land, as he initially determined it in a *hampangan* (a talk witnessed by others) with his children, was 3 hectares for Iba, his daughter by his first wife, 7 hectares for Yahan, 7 hectares for Yaba, his two sons by Gaymay, 3 hectares for himself. No question was raised by his own children and the matter would have been closed, except for Gaymay's strong objection when she heard that Iba was included in the division of land. Her younger brother, Taras, and deceased sister's son, Gungon, also raised objections against the sharing of land with Iba, claiming that Daganay, having been divorced from Gaymay, no longer have a legitimate hold on their *kaiban's* clearings which was *insakup* (or contained) in his land declaration. Instigated by his mother, Yahan made it known among their *garakbangan* (neighbors) and *gufudan* in the *iglesiya* that Daganay's remaining 3 hectares will be his property upon his father's death. He also claimed a major portion of the land bequeathed to Iba leaving her only with 1½ hectares.

Recognizing the legitimacy of the claim of Gaymay's kindred, Daganay did not oppose Yahan's move. Iba was greatly displeased with the turn of events. Knowing that she has a little chance of success in her claim for a larger inheritance from her father, as the public opinion among the evangelical Buhid side was heavily for Gaymay's kindred, Iba turned to Yaom for intervention in her dispute with Yahan.

A *tultulan* was soon held, attended by the *konsehales*, Iba's *kaiban*, Gaymay's *kaiban*, the leaders from the believers side and other interested barrio folks. In this *tultulan*, Yaom acted as Iba's *fangayat* to advocate, while Hagan, an elder of the Iglesia spoke for Yahan's position. Each side took time to explain the legitimacy of their claims. Iba made strong her demand for a larger portion of Daganay's land on the ground that her father originally meant to give her a share of the land which he developed and in which he planted tree crops. Yaom backed Iba by pointing out that as Daganay's own child, she has a right for an equitable share of his fields. Yahan countered that Iba's present share of 1½ hectares is good enough as he has, apart from the price of land which came from Daganay, her own *mana* (inheritance) from her mother. After such a series of exchange of arguments and counter arguments the matter was finally resolved with the compromise move suggested by Yaom and agreed upon by Hagan, the church elder, which enjoined Yahan to add about 400 sq. meters more of land to Iba's *mana*, making up her total land claimed from Daganay to 2½ hectares.

From all the cases discussed above, it is clear that the Buhid live in two systems of social control: *ugali-magurang* and the *bagong batas*. This dual frame of reference appears to be subject to situational manipulation by those who are in the position of authority, and who take part in the decision-making processes, viz., the "mayor" and the *konsehales*. Take for instance, the case of the *fangabaya*. In traditional cases of divorce or wife-snatching for example, the "mayor" and other *konsehales* acting as *fangayatan* would demand the *fangabaya* (the traditional settlement gift) as a form of pledge, a constraint to keep the guilty person from repeating the same offense. However, in cases which deal with non-traditional offense, such as consistent failure to attend barangay meetings, the *fangabaya* is passed on a *multa* (penalty). However, it is interpreted, the Buhid who feature in dispute, stand to lose because mediating in their behalf need to be compensated for their service out of their stock of their surplus holding.

Secondly, with the intrusion of *bagong batas* into Buhid life, the traditional role of *fangayatan* (i.e., of advocacy and mediation) has increasingly been dominated by the "mayor" and the members of his local council. On the basis of the sanction represented in the "New Land", the local Buhid leaders have effectively established the "validity" of their judicial and arbitration roles not only among their Buhid constituents, but also among the Loktanon migrants in the vicinity of Batangan barrio. In particular, the Buhid "mayor" has not only successfully consolidated his role as *fangayatan*

but also his strategic function as the interpreter of the workings of the *Gobyerno* and the "New Law." In every respect, the institution of the *bagong batas* or the "New Law" has legitimated the Buhid "mayor" strategic role as a mediator between the Buhid on the one hand, and Loktanon on the other, including town officials and entrepreneurs.

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