

PHILIPPINE HISTORY

Pre-Colonial Period

**Arts & Letters
University of Santo Tomas
Manila**

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Pre-Colonial Philippines

A. Society

1. Mode of Dressing

2. Ornaments

3. Houses

4. Social Classes

5. Status of Women

6. Marriage customs

7. Mixed Marriages, Inheritance and Succession



Pre-Colonial Philippines

B. Politics

1. Government
2. Laws
3. Legislation
4. Judicial Process
5. Trial by Ordeal

C. Religion

1. Religious Beliefs
2. Burial
3. Divination and Magic Charms



Pre-Colonial Philippines

D. Economic Life

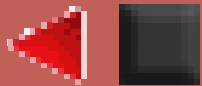
1. Agriculture
2. Livestock
3. Fishing
4. Mining
5. Lumbering and Shipbuilding
6. Weaving
7. Trade

E. Culture

1. Languages
2. System of Writing
3. Literature
4. Music and Dance
5. Art

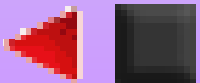


Long before the Spaniards came to the Philippines, Filipinos had a civilization of their own. This civilization partly came from the Malay settlers and partly from their response to the new environment. Many of these customs and traditions, government and way of life, have come down to the present day, despite the changes brought about by westernization and modernization. This is why it is possible to know about our distant past by simply observing some customs and practices that have resisted change and modernization.



Society

Philippine pre-colonial society is both different and the same as in the present. Some aspects of the pre-colonial period have survived into our time. The following is a description of the way of life of pre-colonial Filipinos.



Mode of Dressing



Bogobo man & woman



Kalinga & subuanon women

- male attire was composed of the *kanggan* (sleeveless jacket) and *bahag* (loincloth)
- the color of the *kanggan* indicates rank – red for the chief, black or blue for the commoners
- men also wear a turban called *putong*, which also tell the social status/achievement of the individual wearing it
- female attire consisted of *baro* or *camisa* (jacket with sleeves) and *saya* or *patadyong* (a long skirt); some women wore a piece of red or white cloth on top of their skirt called *tapis*



putong



Fernando Amorsolo, 1958
Ayala Museum



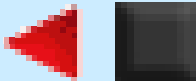
U. S. NATIONAL MUSEUM

BULLETIN 107 PLATE 20

BAGOGO WARRIORS OF SOUTHEASTERN MINDANAO

FOR EXPLANATION OF PLATE, SEE PAGE 52

Bogobo man





Ornaments

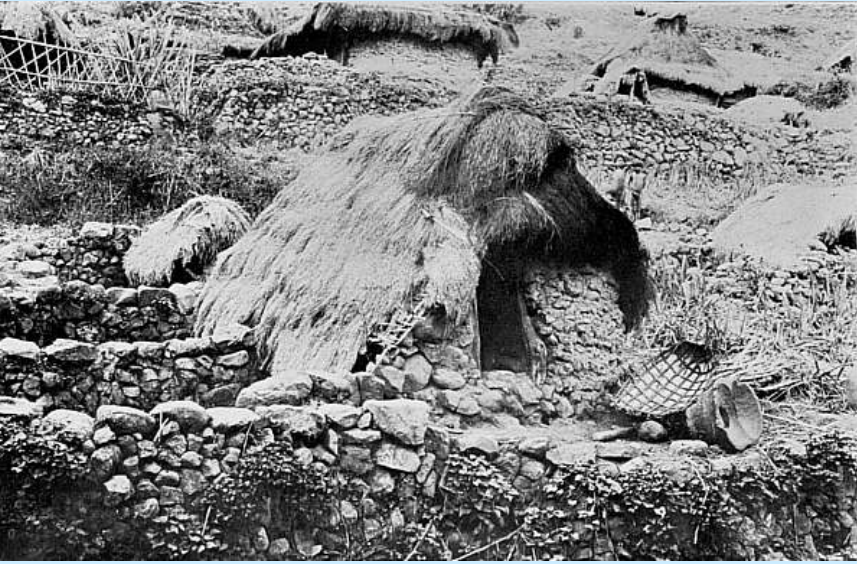
- men and women wore ornaments to look attractive
- both wear *kalumbiga*, pendants, bracelets, and leglets
- these ornaments were made of gold
- some wore gold fillings between the teeth
- tattoos were also fashionable for some pre-colonial Filipinos; they also exhibit a man's war record
- *Islas del Pintados* – term coined by the Spaniards for the Visayans





Bontoc men

Houses

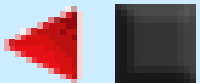


- built to suit the tropical climate
- called *bahay kubo*, made of wood, bamboo, and nipa palm; it was built on stilts and can be entered through ladders that can be drawn up
- some Filipinos, such as the Kalingas, Mandayas and Bagobos built their houses on treetops
- others, such as the Badjaos, built their houses on boats



Social Classes

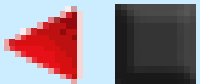
- the society was made up of three classes: nobles (made up of the datu and their families), *mahadlika* or *maharlika* (freemen) and the *alipin* (dependents)
- members of the nobility were addressed with the title *Gat* or *Lakan* among the Tagalogs



- *alipin* or dependents acquired their status by inheritance, captivity, purchase, failure to settle debts, or by committing a crime
- there were two kinds of dependents: *aliping namamahay* and *aliping sagigilid*
- in the Visayas, dependents were of three kinds : *tumataban*, *tumarampok*, and the *ayuey*

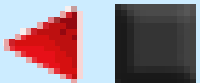


Maguindanao Sultan, nobles & Alipins



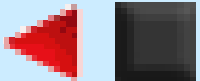
Status of Women

- women in pre-colonial Philippine society had the right to inherit property, engage in trade and industry, and succeed to the chieftainship of the barangay in the absence of a male heir
- had the exclusive right to name their children
- men walked behind them as a sign of respect

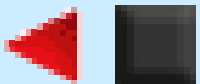


Marriage customs

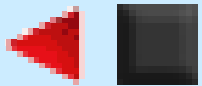
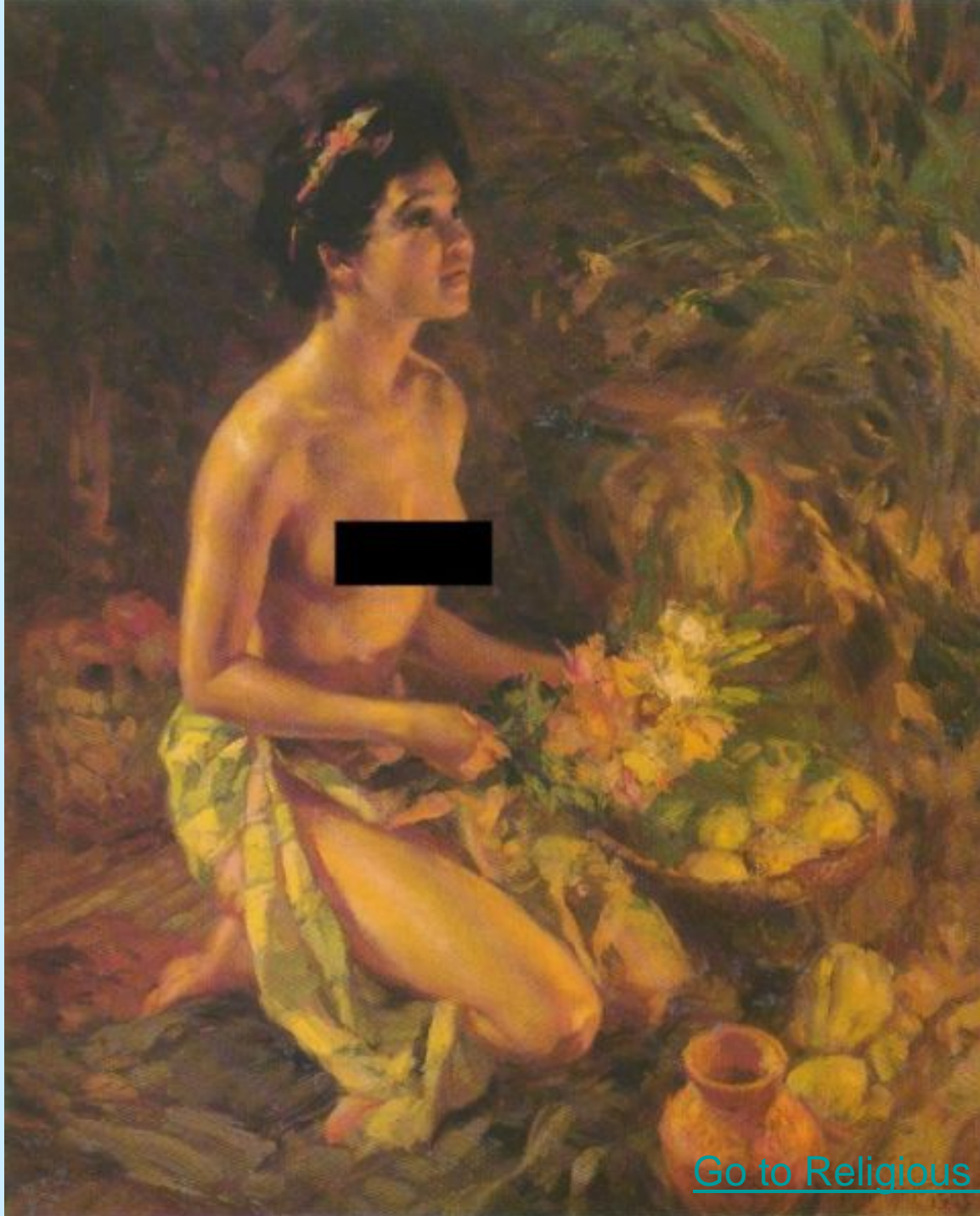
- men were in general, monogamous; while their wives are called *asawa*, while concubines are called “friends”
- in order to win the hand of his lady, the man has to show his patience and dedication to both the lady and her parents
- courtship usually begins with *paninilbihan*
- if the man wins the trust of the parents, he does not immediately marry the woman, but he has to satisfy several conditions:
 - give a dowry or *bigay-kaya*
 - pay the *panghihimuyat*
 - pay the wet nurse *bigay-suso*
 - pay the parents *himaraw*
 - bribe for the relatives called sambon (among the Zambals)



- once he had settled all of the above requirements, he brings his parents to meet with the bride-to-be's parents to haggle and make the final arrangements; this is called *pamamalae* or *pamamanhikan* or *pamumulungan*
- the wedding ceremonies vary depending on the status of the couple; but normally, those from the upper class, a go-between was employed
- weddings are officiated by the priestess or [babaylan](#)
- uncooked rice is thrown on the couple after the wedding ceremony



babaylan



[Go to Religious Beliefs](#)

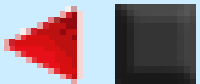




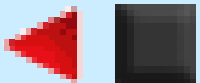
Marriage ceremony - eating rice



Tausog wedding ceremony



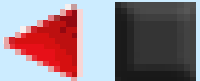
- Muslim Filipinos have similar marriage customs; the first stage was called *pananalanguni* or betrothal; it was followed by the consultation with the girl's parents, who relays their decision to the village chief, who in turn informed the suitor's parents of the decision
- dowry was also settled by the chief (*pedsungud*). This was of seven kinds: 1. *kawasateg*, money given to the bride's close relatives; 2. *siwaka*, brassware given to those who helped arrange the wedding; 3. *enduatuan*, brassware or animals for the village chief; 4. *pangatulian*, jewelry given to the bride's mother and aunts; 5. *tatas*, blade given to the girl's uncle; 6. *langkad*, money given to the girl's parents as fine for having bypassed the girl's elder sister if she had any; and 7. *lekat*, amount of money given to the girl's attendant.



- once everything is settled, the *pegkawing*, or the wedding ceremony follows
- the wedding ceremony is officiated by the *hadji*
- six days of festivities followed, and only on the seventh day could the couple sleep together

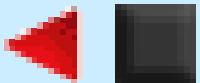


**Muslim
wedding**

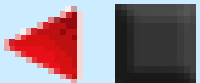


Mixed Marriages, Inheritance and Succession

- mixed marriages were allowed in pre-colonial society
- the status of children were dependent upon the status of the parents
- often, the status of children in mixed marriages is divided evenly between the parents
- single children of mixed marriage were half-free and half-dependent
- legitimate children inherited their parents' property even without any written will and was divided equally among the children



- natural children inherited only a third of the inheritance of legitimate children
- children of dependent mothers are given freedom and a few things
- nearest relatives inherit the property of childless couples
- in succession, the first son of the barangay chieftain inherits his father's position; if the first son dies, the second son succeeds their father; in the absence of male heirs, it is the eldest daughter that becomes the chieftain

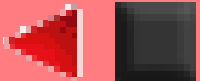


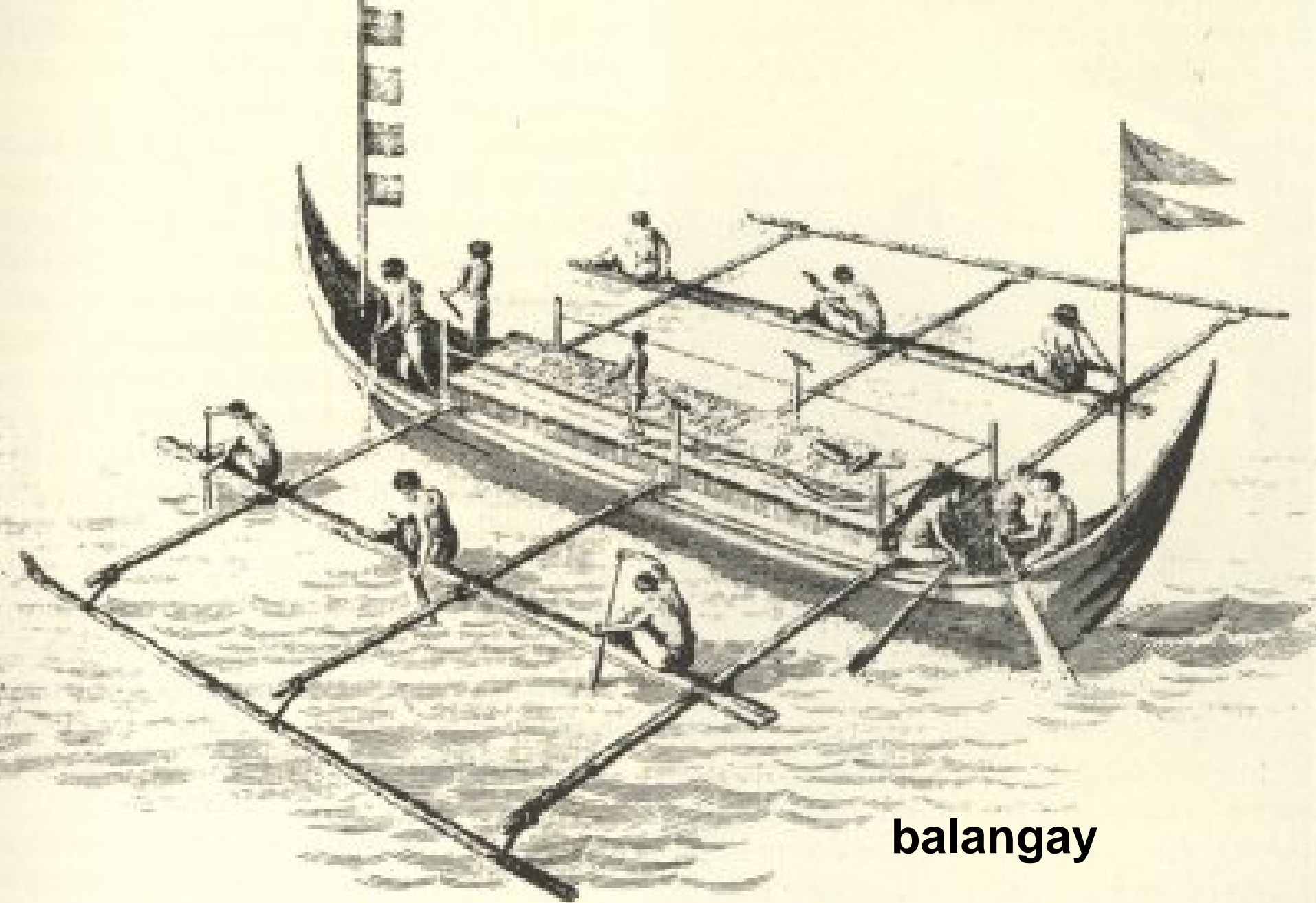
Politics



Government

- unit of government was the barangay, which consisted of from 30 to 100 families. The term came from the Malay word *balangay*, meaning boat
- barangays were headed by chieftains called datu
- the subjects served their chieftain during wars, voyages, planting and harvest, and when his house needs to be built or repaired; they also paid tributes called *buwis*

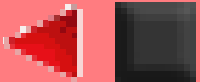




balangay

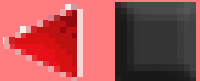


- the chief or datu was the chief executive, the legislator, and the judge; he was also the supreme commander in times of war
- alliances among barangays were common and these were formalized in a ritual called *sangduguan*
- conflicts between or among barangays were settled by violence; those who win by force is always right



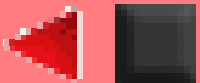
Laws

- were either customary (handed down from generation to generation orally) or written (promulgated from time to time as necessity arose)
- dealt with various subjects such as inheritance, property rights, divorce, usury, family relations, divorce, adoption, loans, etc.
- those found guilty of crimes were punished either by fine or by death; some punishments can be considered as torture by modern standards
- however, it must be noted that ancients did not believe in endangering society by letting loose a gang of thieves or recidivists who are incapable of reform



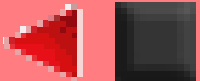
Legislation

- before laws are made, the chief consults with a council of elders who approved of his plan
- they are not immediately enforced until the new legislation is announced to the village by the *umalohokan*, who also explains the law to everyone



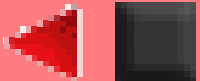
Judicial Process

- disputes between individuals were settled by a court made up of the village chief and the council of elders; between barangays, a board made up of elders from neutral barangays acted as arbiter
- the accused and the accuser faced each other in front of the “court” with their respective witnesses
- both took an oath to tell the truth; most of the time, the one who presents the most witnesses wins the case
- if the losing party contests the decision, he is bound to lose in the end because the chief always take the side of the winner



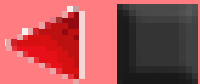
Trial by Ordeal

- to determine the innocence of an accused, he is made to go through a number of ordeals which he must pass
- examples include dipping one's hand in boiling water, holding a lighted candle that must not be extinguished, plunging into a river and staying underwater for as long as possible, chewing uncooked rice and spitting, etc.
- among the Ifugaos, ordeal by combat was common, i.e. *bultong* (wrestling), *alaw* (duel)

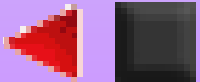




bultong



Religion



Religious Beliefs

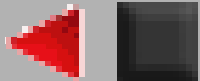
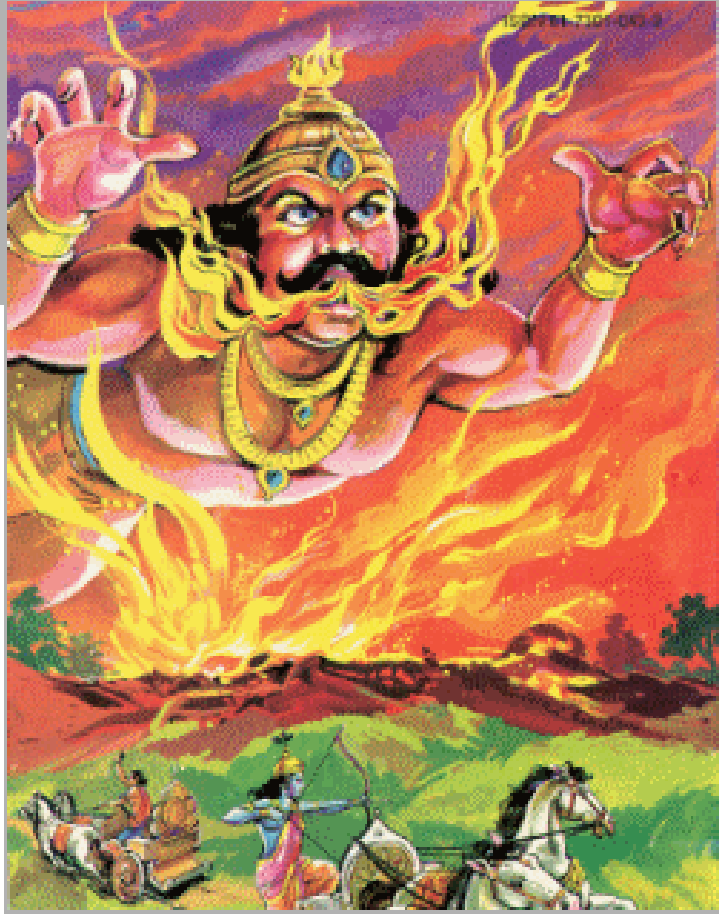
- pre-colonial Filipinos believed in the immortality of the soul and in life after death
- they also believed in the existence of a number of gods whom they worship and made offerings to according to rank
- i.e. *Bathalang Maykapal* (Creator), *Idinayale* (god of agriculture), *Sidapa* (god of death), *Balangaw* (rainbow god), *Mandarangan* (war god), *Agni* (fire god) *Lalahon* (goddess of harvest), *Siginarugan* (god of hell), *Diyan Masalanta* (goddess of love), etc.



Agni (India)



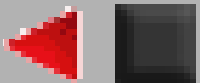
Bathala



- also showed respect for animals and plants like the crocodile, crow, *tigmamanukin*; some trees were not also cut because they were thought to be divine
- diseases were thought to be caused by the temper of the environmental spirits
- Filipinos also venerated the dead by keeping alive their memory by carving idols of stone, gold or ivory called *likha* or *larawan*; food, wine and other things were also shared with the dead

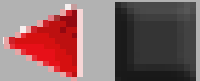


- adored idols called *anitos* or *diwatas* to whom they made offerings
- some *anitos* were considered bad; however, they made offerings to them too in order to appease them or placate their anger
- priestesses such as the *babaylan*/ *baylana* or *katalona* acted as mediums to communicate with these spirits



Burial

- the dead was placed in a wooden coffin and buried under the house complete with cloth, gold and other valuable things
- upon the death of the person, fires were made under the house and armed men acted as sentinels to guard the corpse from sorcerers
- professional mourners were hired to accentuate the depth of mourning





www.rhymer.net

Hindi p
sa bang



ilipiniana.net



- sometimes, the relatives of the dead wore rattan bands around their arms, legs and necks and they abstained from eating meat and drinking wine
- the ancients distinguished mourning for a woman from that of a man – *morotal* (for women) and *maglahi* (for men)
- mourning for a dead chief is called *laraw*, and this was accompanied by certain prohibitions like engaging in petty quarrels, wars, carrying daggers with hilts in the normal position, singing in boats coming from the sea or river, and wearing loud clothes

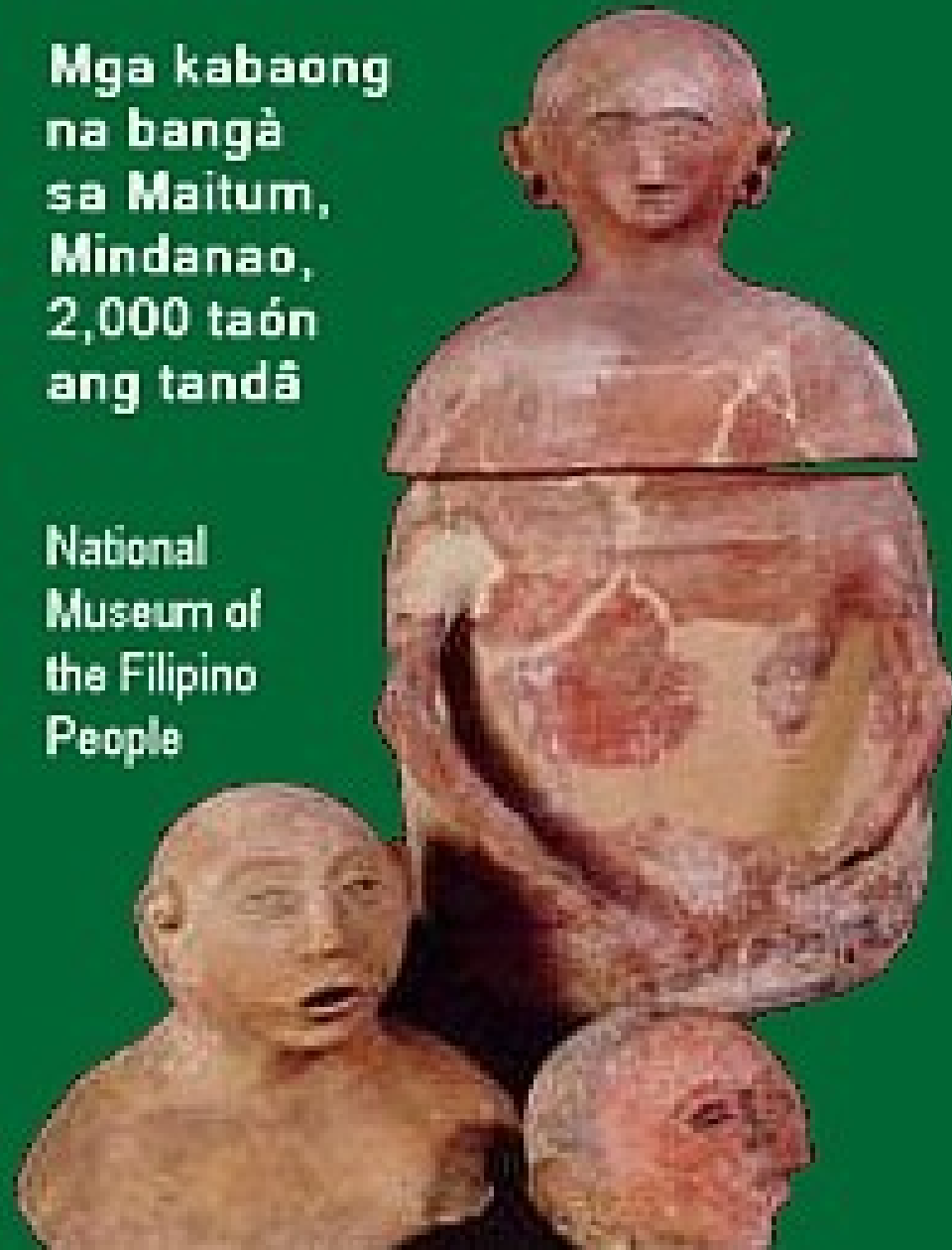


**Manunggul
Jar**

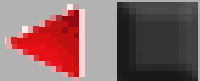


National Museum of the Filipino People

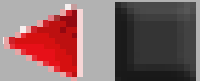
**Mga kabaong
na bangà
sa Maitum,
Mindanao,
2,000 taón
ang tandà**



**National
Museum of
the Filipino
People**

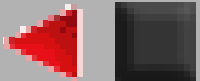


- some ancients fasted and limited their nutrition to vegetables; among the Tagalogs, this is called *sipa*
- relatives of the dead who was murdered would not end their mourning until they have exacted vengeance or *balata*
- the celebration held on the ninth night after the death of the person is called *pasiyam*, in which a play called *tibaw* is staged to honor the dead

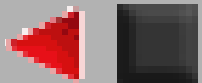


Divination and Magic Charms

- ancient Filipinos are quite superstitious and put much stock into auguries, and magic charms
- they interpreted signs in nature like the flight of birds, the barking of dogs, the singing of lizards, and the like, as good or bad omens depending on the circumstances
- they also consulted with the *pangatauhan*, or soothsayers, to tell their fortunes



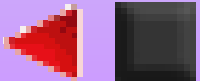
- there was also a belief in the existence of the *aswang*, [mangkukulam](#), *manggagaway*, *tiyanak*, and the *tikbalang*
- amulets and charms were also used by the ancients like the [anting-anting](#), *gayuma*, *odom* or *tagabulag*, *wiga* or *sagabe*, and *tagahupa*
- these beliefs were not eradicated with the coming of Western civilization and most of them were practiced behind the backs of the Christian missionaries
- the result was a blending of pagan and Christian beliefs that made Filipino



Catholicism unique

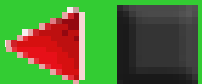


Economic Life

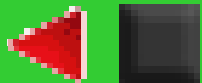


Agriculture

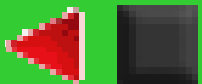
- main source of livelihood
- rice, [coconuts](#), sugar cane, cotton, hemp, bananas, oranges, and many species of fruits and vegetables were grown
- done in two ways : *kaingin* system (slash and burn) and tillage
- when the Spaniards came to the Philippines, they noted that Cebu and Palawan were abundant in many agricultural foodstuffs







- agricultural productivity was enhanced by use of irrigation ditches like those found in the Ifugao [Rice Terraces](#)
- landholding was either public (less arable land that could be tilled freely by anyone) and private (rich and cultivated lands belonging to nobles and datus)
- some rented land and paid in gold or in kind





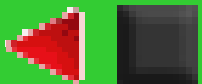
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- the daily fare consisted of rice and boiled fish, or sometimes pork or venison, carabao or wild buffalo meat
- fermented the sap of palm trees and drank it as liquor called *tuba*

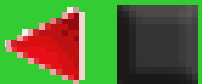
Livestock

- Pre-colonial Filipinos raised chickens, pigs, goats, carabaos, and small native ponies



Fishing

- was a thriving industry for those who live in the coast or near rivers and lakes
- various tools for fishing such as nets, [bow and arrow](#), spear, wicker basket, hooks and lines, corrals and fish poisons were used
- pearls fisheries also abound in Sulu



Fishing with bow & arrow



Mining

- comparatively developed before the coming of the Spaniards
- the ancients mined gold in many parts of the archipelago and were traded throughout the country and with other countries

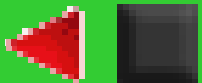


Lumbering and Shipbuilding

- were flourishing industries
- Filipinos were said to be proficient in building ocean-going vessels
- all kinds of boats or ships were built, which the Spaniards later call *banca*, *balangay*, *lapis*, *caracoa*, *virey*, [vinta](#) and *prau*



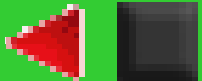
The front end of a Butuan boat or balangay, made of wood with wooden pegs, from 1320 A.D.





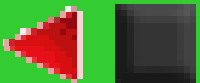
Weaving

- home industry that was dominated by women
- using crude wooden looms, textiles such as sinamay from hemp, medrinaque from banana, cotton, linen, and silk, were woven



Trade

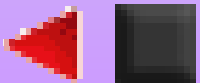
- was conducted between or among barangays, or even among the islands
- there was trade too with other countries such as [China, Siam, Japan, Cambodia, Borneo, Sumatra, Java](#), and other islands of old Malaysia
- did not use any currency but conducted trade through barter
- sometimes, goods were priced in terms of gold or metal gongs
- Chinese traders noted that Filipinos were very honest in their commercial transactions





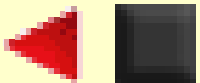
Culture

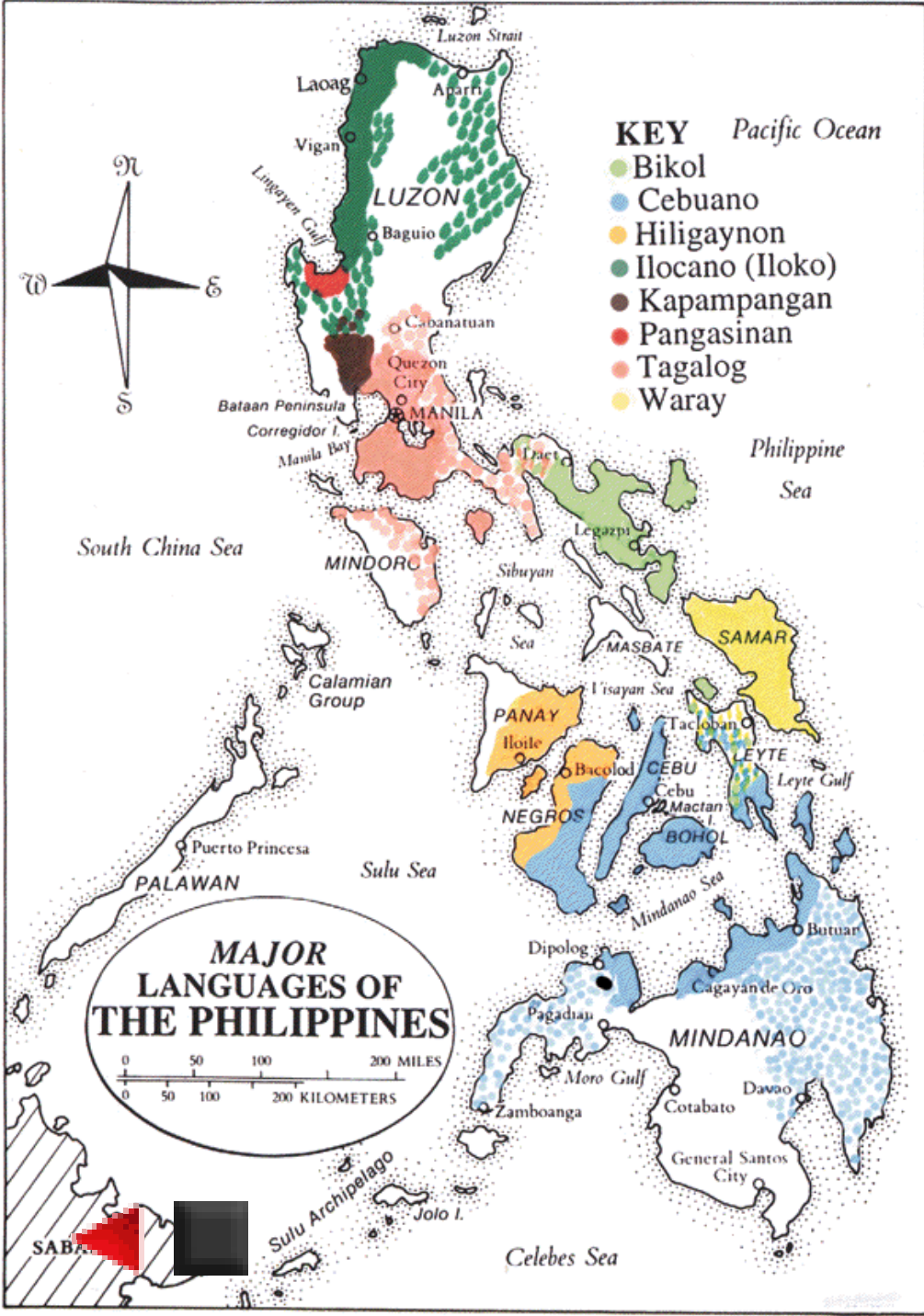
Philippine pre-colonial culture was basically Malayan in structure and form. They had written language which was used not just for communication but also for literary expression. They also had music and dances for almost all occasions and a wide variety of musical instruments that shows their ingenuity.



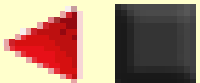
Languages

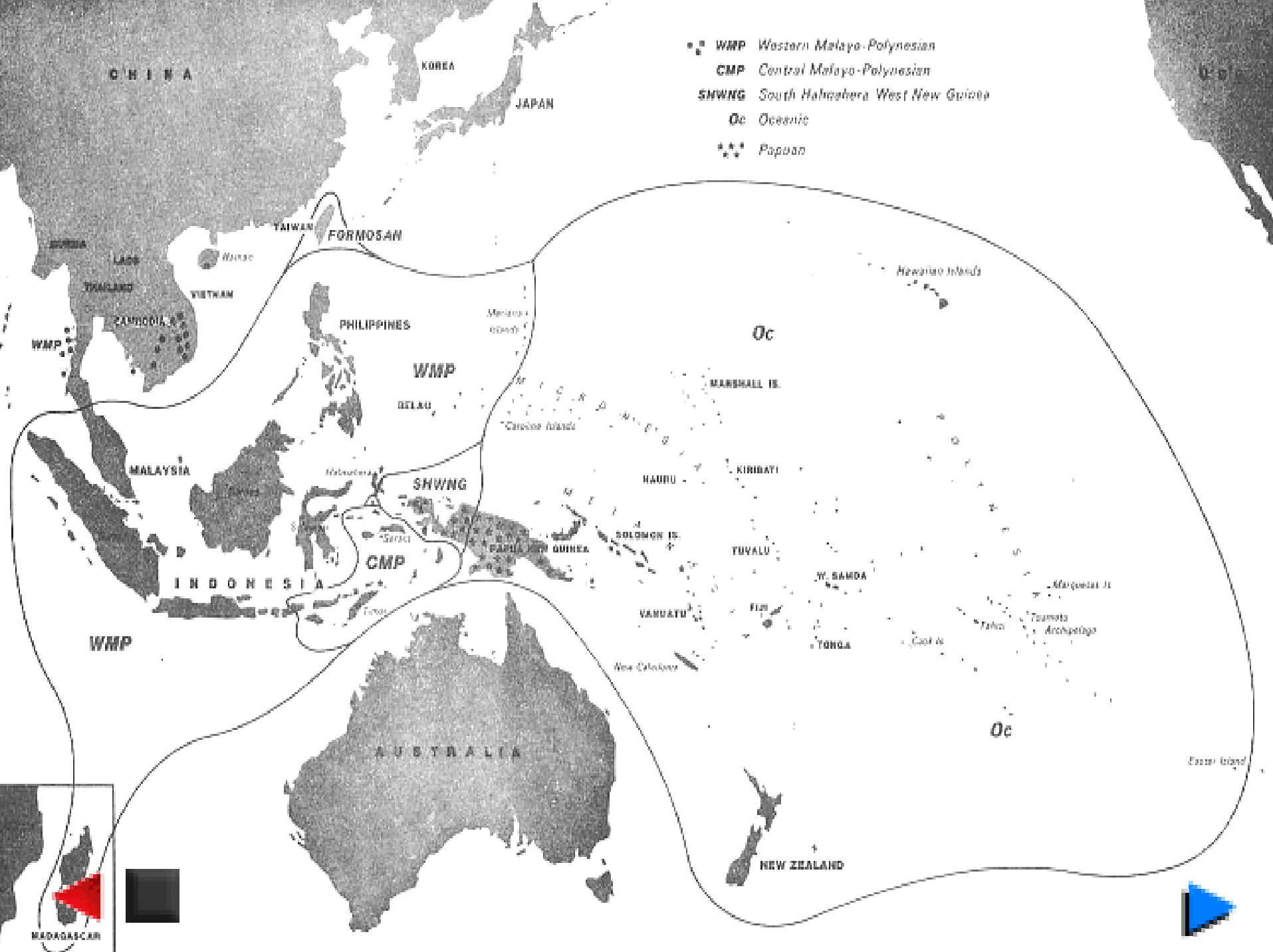
- there are more than one hundred languages in the Philippines, eight of which are considered major languages. They are: Tagalog, Iloko, Pangasinan, Pampangan, Sugbuhanon, Hiligaynon, Samarnon or Samar-Leyte, and Magindanao



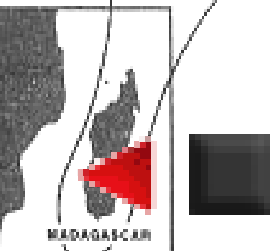


- these languages are descended from Austronesian or Malayo-Polynesian language
- the differences might be accounted for the need to forming new words and phrases to fit the new environment
- many of the words or terms in Filipino languages were derived from Malayan



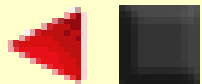


- WMP *Western Malayo-Polynesian*
- CMP *Central Malayo-Polynesian*
- SHWNG *South Hahashera West New Guinea*
- Oc *Oceanic*
- Papsan *Papuan*



System of Writing

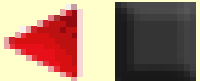
- before the arrival of the Spaniards, Filipinos used a syllabary which was probably of Sanskrit or Arabic provenance
- the syllabary consisted of seventeen symbols, of which three were vowels and fourteen consonants
- no one is certain about the direction of writing
- Fr. Pedro Chirino's theory is that the ancients wrote from top to bottom and from left to right



A n t i g u o s s i l a b a r i o s f i l i p i n o s

	a	e,i	o,u	ha	ga	nga	la	da	na	pa	ba	ma	ya	la	sva	sa	ha
Tagalog			3														
			3														
			3														
			3														
Ilocano			3														
			3														
Bisaya			3														
			3														
Pangasinan			3														
Pampango			3														
?			3														
			3														

- pre-colonial Filipinos wrote on bark of trees, on leaves and bamboo tubes, using their knives and daggers, pointed sticks or iron as pens and the colored saps of trees as ink
- only a few of this writings survive into the present because early Spanish missionaries destroyed many manuscripts on the ground that they are the work of the Devil himself
- some pieces of literature, however, have been handed down to us orally



Laguna Copperplate Inscription

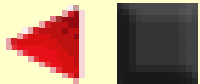
By Hector Santos

http://isanghamahal.blogspot.com/2006_03_01_archive.html

Antoon Postma, a Dutch national who has lived most of his life among the Mangyans in the Philippines and the director of the Mangyan Assistance & Research Center in Panaytayan, Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro, was able to translate the writing. His effort is all the more remarkable when you consider that the text was in a language similar to four languages (Sanskrit, Old Tagalog, Old Javanese, and Old Malay) mixed together...

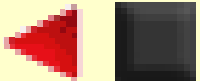
The text was written in Kavi, a mysterious script which does not look like the ancient Tagalog script known as baybayin or alibata. Neither does it look similar to other Philippine scripts still used today by isolated ethnic minorities like the Hanunóos and the Buhids of Mindoro, and the Tagbanwas of Palawan. It is the first artifact of pre-Hispanic origin found in the Philippines that had writing on copper material...

Postma's translation provides a lot of exciting surprises. Like most other copperplate documents, it gives a very precise date from the Sanskrit calendar which corresponds to 900 A.D. in our system. It contains placenames that still exist around the Manila area today. It also lists the names of the chiefs of the places mentioned. The placenames mentioned prove the Philippine connection of the LCI. The names are still recognizable today although almost eleven centuries have passed since the document was issued. The placenames are Pailah (Paila), Tundun (Tundo), Puliran (Pulilan), Binwangan (Binwangan), Dewata (Diwata), and Medang (Medang)...

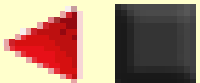


Literature

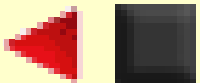
- pre-colonial literature may be classified into : floating or oral and written literature
- Tagalogs have the *bugtong* (riddle), *suliranin* and *indulanin* (street songs), *sabi* (maxim), *sawikain* (saying), *talindaw* (boat songs), *diyuna* (song of revelry), *kumintang* (war song which evolved into a love song), *dalit* and *umbay* (dirge), *tagumpay*, *balikungkong*, *dupayinin* and *hiliraw* (war songs), *uyayi* and *hele* (lullabies), *ihiman* (bridal song), *tagulaylay* (mournful song), *tigpasin* (rowing song), *tingad* (household song), and *kutang-kutang* (couplets usually chanted by the blind)



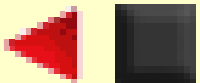
- songs, dance and the drama probably developed simultaneously
- most of the pre-colonial drama was held in the *sambahan* or places of worship
- these dealt with various subjects including love, war, legends, the memory of the deceased, and war heroes



- dramas developed into different forms such as the *pagbati*, *karagatan*, *tagayan*, *pananapatan*, *sabalan*, and *tibaw*
- the *karagatan* was a debate in verse in which a problem is resolved; it developed into the *duplo* during the Spanish period and then into the *balagtasan* in 1924 during the American period
- *tibaw* on the other hand is performed during the *pasiyam*

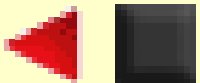


- Maranaw literature, inspired by Islam, consisted of *tutul* (folk tale), *tubad-tubad* (short love poems), *pananaro-on* (sayings and proverbs), *sowa-sowa-i* (drama), *antoka* (riddle or puzzle), and *darangan* (epic poetry)
- Ilocano literature, for its part, has many kinds of songs sung on different occasions; this include *dal-ot* (song during baptismal party, wedding, or a feast), *badeng* (love song sung in a serenade), and *dung-aw* (dirge)



- Filipinos were fond of composing epic poetry, which is why the country is unique for having more than twenty epic poems. Examples of this are *Hudhud* and *Alim* (Ifugao), *Biag ni Lam-Ang* (The Life of Lam-Ang / Ilocano), [*Bantugan*](#), [*Indarapatra at Sulayman*](#), and [*Bidasari*](#) (Moslems)

Igorots
reciting
Hudhud



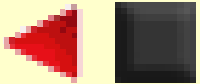


**Princess
Lanawen
to be won
by Prince
Bantugan**



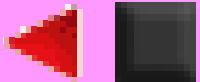
Princess Bidasari story is like Snow White's

**Indarapata &
Sulayman**

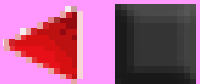


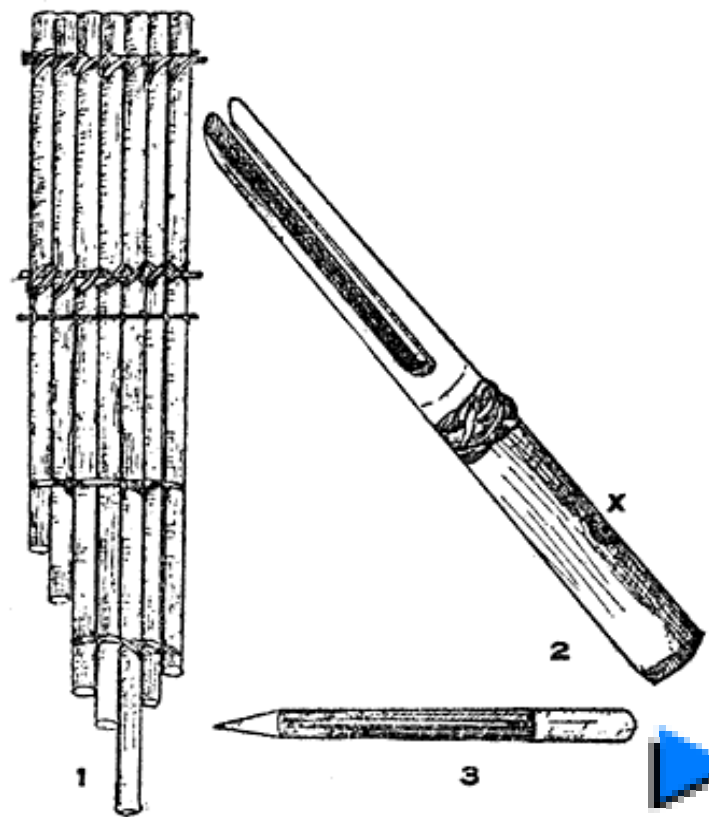
Music and Dance

- Filipinos are naturally fond of both music and dance, and usually, whenever music is played, it is accompanied by dance

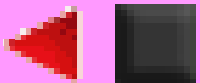


- some examples of pre-colonial musical instruments include *kudyapi* (Tagalog), *bansic* or a cane with four holes and *gangsa* or a small guitar (Negritos of Luzon), *abafii* a Malay music instrument (Igorots), gongs, Jews harp, bamboo flute, *kutibeng* or a guitar with five strings (Ilocano), *kalaleng* or a nose flute and [diwdiw-as](#) or pan pipe made of seven bamboos reeds (Tinguians)

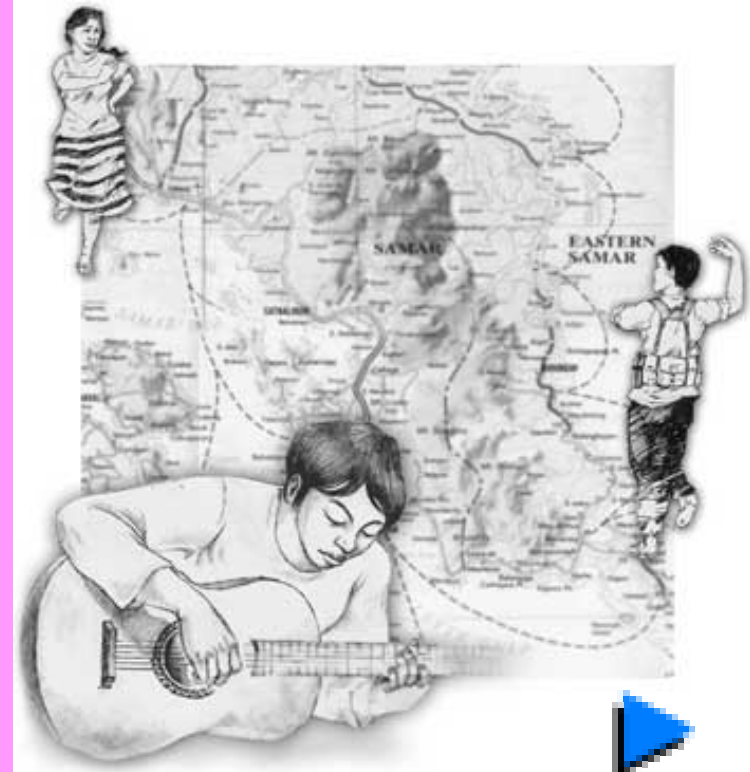




- examples of the native dances, which depict different events include Potato Dance, Torture Dance, Duel Dance, Lovers Dance (Negritos); *macasla* dance (Tagbanua), *kinnotan* or ant's dance and the *kinnallogong* or hat dance (Ilocano); *balitaw* and *dandansoy* (Visayan); *balatong*, *dalit*, *hiliraw*, *kutang-kutang*, *lulay*, *indulanin*, *kumintang*, *salampati*, *tagulaylay*, *subli*, *barimbaw*, and *tagayan* (Tagalog)



- this shows that Filipinos have songs and dances for almost all occasions and because of their frequent association, their social organization was more well-knit than it is today



Art

- first glimpse can be seen in primitive tools and weapons that were polished along the lines of leaves and petals of flowers
- can also be seen in beads, amulets, bracelets, and other ornaments made of jade, red cornelian, and other stones
- dyed and ornamented their barkcloth with designs of attractive colors

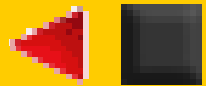


- in the Iron Age, aside from armlets, bracelets, rings, and headbands, tattoos also became fashionable; metals and glass also came into use; weaving became a preoccupation for women; weapons were manufactured with designs on their handles; pottery with incised designs were made; and carvings made of wood, bone, ivory or horn were also done not only for the use of the living but also of the dead





Sarimanok



gangsa

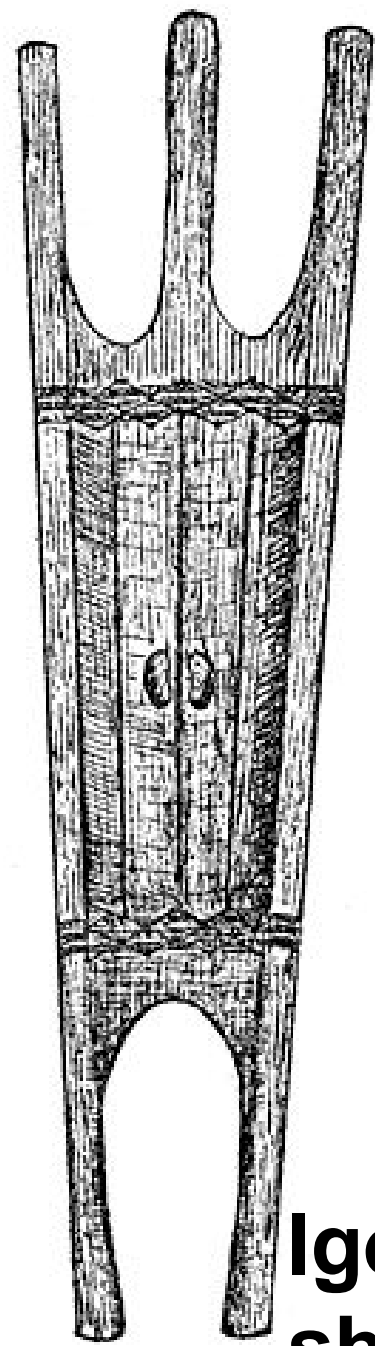


utensils

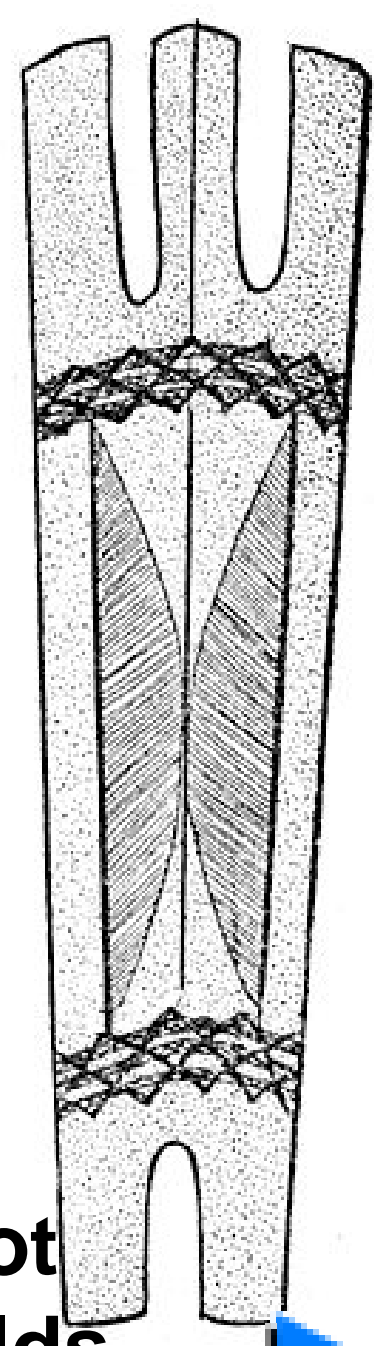


- the zigzag designs on ancient lime tubes and the ornamental carvings on combs reflect Negrito influence
- Indonesian influence can be seen in the apparel of the Kalingas, Maranaos, Manobos and Bagobos
- Malay influence can be traced to the [wood carvings](#) found in utensils, boats, and wooden shields of the people of Sulu, Mindanao and Mountain Province



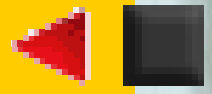


1A

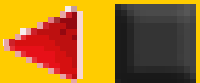


2

Igorot shields



- Islamic influence can be gleaned from the ornamental and decorative art of the Lanao Muslims; most represent geometric and plant designs because Islam is iconoclastic
- Ifugao art deals with human and animal representations but not fish and plant forms; Ifugao art is functional

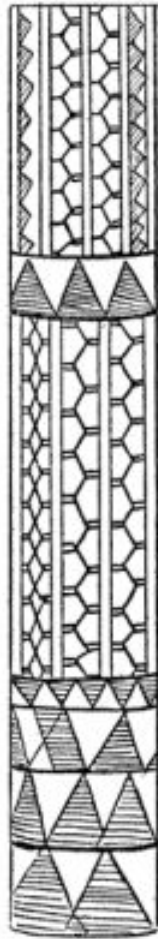




1



2



3



4



5



Igorot
bamboo
art



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