

**THE BUKIDNON OF MINDANAO.  
FIELDIANA: ANTHROPOLOGY. A  
CONTINUATION OF  
THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL SERIES OF  
FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY.  
VOLUME 46**

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## Preface

The material presented in this volume was gathered in the first seven months of 1910, while I conducted the R. F. Cummings Philippine Expedition for Field Museum of Natural History (now Chicago Natural History Museum). During that period a detailed study was made of the everyday life, customs and beliefs of the Bukidnon of north-central Mindanao in the Philippines, and collections were made to illustrate that life in the Museum.

These people usually refer to themselves as Higañnan, "mountain dwellers," but they are better known as Bukidnon, a name applied to the mountain people by the coastal Bisayan. This latter appellation has caused some confusion in the literature, since it also is applied by the coastal dwellers to the interior peoples of Negros, Nueva Ecija and Panay. Spanish writers often used this term, or Monteses, for all highlanders (Mozo, 1763).

As this study was approaching completion, a situation was developing in the Davao Gulf region of Southern Mindanao which made an immediate transfer to that area seem imperative. Several months were spent in that district before a tropical illness necessitated my return to America. A slow recovery, installation of the Philippine collections, publication of the Davao Gulf material (Cole, 1913), and other duties led to the putting aside of the Bukidnon material for later publication. Before that time arrived World War I intervened. Later I returned to Malaysia to conduct studies in Indonesia and The Malay States. In 1924 I became associated with the University of Chicago, and my Mindanao materials remained, for the most part, unpublished except for a brief summary (Cole, 1945b).

I had hoped that upon retirement I might return to the Bukidnon and develop an acculturation study based on my early work. Unsettled conditions after World War II made the accomplishment of the task so uncertain that it has not been undertaken. However, the Rev. Ralph Lynch, S.J., has recently dealt with some of the changes in Bukidnon between my stay and 1950 (see Lynch, 1955).

At the time of my visit to the Bukidnon, the American government was constructing good trails into the interior, was forcing the natives into model villages, and was supplying them with plows and other facilities for farm-



ing the grasslands. New crops were being introduced, schools were being opened, and new ideas of government were being urged on the people. Change was rapid in the area under control and was considerable in the peripheral districts. It was evident that this was the last opportunity to see these people in anything like the old life, or to make a representative collection.

Certain trends were even then evident. The newly established villages were, for the most part, replicas of the less advanced settlements of the Christianized Bisayan of the coast. The *datos*, or local headmen, were being replaced by "elected" village officials, and in some towns the dress was changing towards that of the civilized peoples.

Peripheral settlements, not under direct control, were also affected, but here two lines of resistance were becoming apparent. The distinctive dress of both men and women was being elaborated, and no small part of the "wealth" was being spent for cloth and ornaments. A second line of withdrawal into the old ways was in religion. The aggressive intervention in daily affairs by the American governor—Frederick Lewis—was weakening the political leadership of the *datos* or local headmen. Meanwhile the importance of the *baylans* or mediums was increasing. The ceremonies, which the mediums conducted, were assuming increasing importance to the extent that they dominated the social and religious life. As other aspects of the old life weakened, interest in the spirit world increased.

Following the time of my visit, the Bukidnon Company, under the leadership of former Commissioner Dean C. Worcester, established cattle holdings in the area. Later the Del Monte Company introduced pineapple culture, and with the advent of World War II the Japanese took control. Since the war there has been a steady migration of coastal peoples into the area, as well as settlers from other regions of the Philippines.

It is evident that the old life is largely gone. A few marginal settlements retain part of the former customs, but only a part. Given the background, the surviving Bukidnon should offer ideal material for an acculturation study. It seems unlikely that I shall make that investigation, but I can furnish rather an intimate picture of what the Bukidnon were in 1910 before the many disruptive forces mentioned came into play.

The material which follows is primarily descriptive. It is drawn from notes long "cold," and is devoid of many lines of investigation which might be employed today. Nevertheless it is a rather full description of a functioning native culture.

The procedure in the investigation was for us—the writer and his wife—to settle in a community for several weeks, during which we sought to participate in, and to observe and record, the daily life. Securing the Museum collection was a major help, since each object was discussed in

detail with the owner. If it was a trap or lure we saw it in actual operation; if it was an instrument employed in agriculture, weaving and the like, we observed and photographed its use. Details of dress were studied and household objects were recorded as used. Many hours of animated discussion dealt with the relative value of different kinds of traps and snares. We hunted with the men, using only their devices, and later they went with us while we demonstrated the use of guns. As friendships and confidences were built up, we were invited and took part in all activities, including the ceremonies. These were carefully recorded and photographed and the meaning of various parts was discussed with several participants.

Subjects such as religion, warfare, slavery, and family relations were taken up, first with the leaders and then with the average person. In all cases, even in regard to items which seemed trivial and trite, information was sought from more than one individual in each village. Village was checked against village and discrepancies were studied and evaluated. It is our belief that this volume furnishes as reliable a picture of native life as was possible for an outsider to obtain in a few months.

In passing it should be noted that we contributed considerably to the pleasures of the people. Our phonograph and the records we made of their songs were major attractions. Our pneumatic mattresses were so fascinating that they often had to be demonstrated to wondering visitors. Our food and ways of eating, our dress—in fact, all our strange ways—were as intriguing to them as theirs were to us. Our medicine kit was an additional aid in establishing cordial relations. We never allowed it to take the place of curative ceremonies but we added its magic to that of the mediums. The success of an investigator in a functioning culture, it is our belief, will be in direct ratio to the extent he participates in the daily life.

Beyer (1917, p. 42) and others have stated that the Bukidnon culture is probably similar to that of the pre-Spanish Bisayan. Outside contact had considerably modified the life and beliefs of the latter long prior to the Spanish invasion. Such influences had filtered into the interior but in much lesser amount. Later Spanish influence is evident even in remote settlements.

The dialects spoken by Christians and pagans appear to be very similar. Recent linguistic studies and surveys of Bukidnon Province tend to treat all the dialects found there as variants of Manobo. Atherton calls the dialect of Northern and Central Bukidnon by the term Binokid (Atherton, 1953). Abrams and Svelmoe (1953) say that the dialect spoken at Lum-bayo, just east of Mailag, is Binokid, but that of nearby Tigwa is similar to Manobo.

With two exceptions the method used in transcribing native terms is that used by American linguists for Indian languages. When a capital E

appears in the body of the word it stands for e<sup>o</sup>; the symbol ñ is a post palatal nasal n.

Except for collecting representative word lists, we did not attempt a study of the language during our stay. However, a Bisayan student from Misamis, who accompanied us part of the time, insisted that the Bukidnon dialects were very close to the language spoken on the North Coast.

Aside from instances of physical mixture with peripheral tribes, the Bukidnon closely approximate the Christianized people. It is probable that in many respects the Bukidnon do furnish us with a glimpse of old time beliefs and customs which have, for the most part, vanished from the coast.

The narrative is written in the present tense, but unless otherwise indicated, it refers to conditions existing in 1910.

I am indebted to Father Frank Lynch, S.J., for various comments on the Bukidnon and their history. George Talbot prepared the drawings for the text figures, and Phillip H. Lewis made the map.

FAY-COOPER COLE

SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA

*May 30, 1954*