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Tattooed Warriors of the Philippines

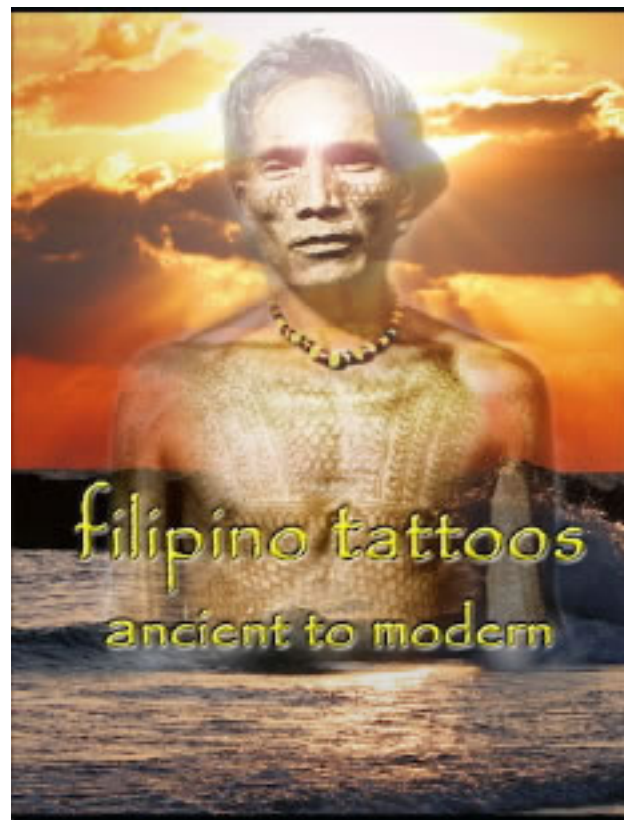
In the past, both men and women were tattooed. Women received their tattoos at puberty because of their innate power and connection to the ancestors through life-bearing. Men, in contrast, had to earn their tattoos.



Author Lane Wilcken



Tattooed Warriors of the Philippines



With the permission of the author, this issue of FMA Informative is able to share with our readers, a small portion of the author's knowledge about the tattooed warriors of the Philippines.

There are very few and rare books on the art of tattooing such as the "Filipino Tattoos: Ancient to Modern". Mr. Lane Wilcken has put together a book that is a must to own, not to just browse through but to read and gain the knowledge that this book offers.

Here is a little about the author of the book:

Lane Wilcken is the author of the book *Filipino Tattoos: Ancient to Modern*. He is a core member of the Center for Babaylan Studies as well as an artisan of ancient technology and art, an independent researcher and scholar, and private practitioner. Lane's mother is a native Ilokana blend from the both Ilocos regions in the Philippines and his father is an American of English and Scandinavian descent. On Lane's maternal side, his family is well acquainted in the traditional spiritual beliefs of the Philippines, his grandmother being a mangngilut (midwife and healer) whose healing practices were given via communication with ancestral spirits. His great-great grandmother was a mangnganito or spirit medium. His grandfather was well versed in the oral traditions and practices of the past.

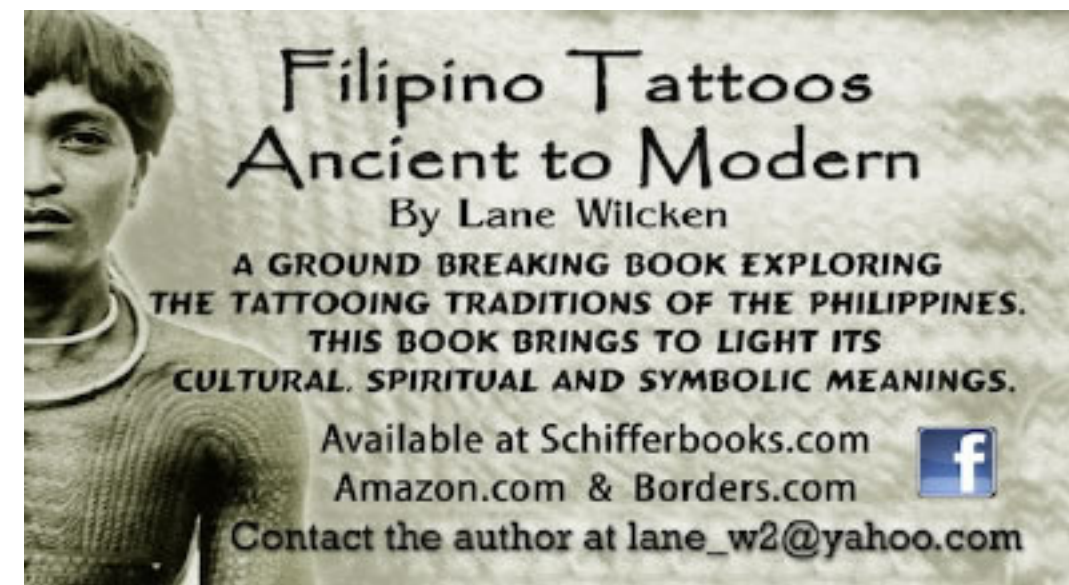
Lane's methodology incorporates personal ancestral knowledge, oral traditions; written history, linguistics, personal experience and cross-cultural analysis with other Austronesian peoples to bring a fuller understanding of the tattooing traditions of the peoples of the Philippines. His interest in cultural tattooing is borne from a desire to reunite Filipinos symbolically and spiritually with their estranged ancestors. This passion for his ancestors continues to motivate his research into the wisdom of the past. His book is available at Barnes and Noble, Amazon.com and various retail outlets.

Each issue features practitioners of martial arts and other internal arts, other features include historical, theoretical and technical articles; reflections, Filipino martial arts, healing arts, the culture of the Philippines and other related subjects.

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Tattooed Warriors of the Philippines

Not a few years ago, the tattoos were considered at the very least, in poor taste and at its worst, the mark of criminal behavior. Unfortunately, this stigma of tattoos representing criminal activity is still prevalent in the Philippines. In the past few years, tattooing has become one of the fastest growing industries in American society. Due to the popularity of reality television shows depicting the wearing of tattoos as a highly glamorized lifestyle, this trend as changed many perceptions about tattoo art to a more positive light. One popular style of tattoo work is the so-called “tribal tattoo.” The majority of “tribal” tattoos incorporate heavy blackwork designs based off of tattooing traditions of the Austronesian speaking peoples of the Pacific Ocean. Austronesian speaking peoples include the islands of Indonesia, the Philippines, Micronesia, Melanesia, Polynesia, Madagascar and Taiwan. Most of these peoples tattooed at one time or another. It is from these cultures that the modern tribal tattoo has been extrapolated. These types of tattoos are popular among martial artists especially those who compete in mixed martial arts. In spite of its popularity, the knowledge of what these ethnically based tattoos actually mean has largely been ignored. Most people who get these types of tattoos will state that their tattoos represent their family and/or being Samoan, Filipino, Hawaiian, or whatever ethnicity they descend from. If these people were actually honest, they would

state that they got these tattoos because they want to look more dangerous and tough. In its original ancient context, a person’s nationality (being Filipino) had nothing to do with being tattooed, but tattooing did have a lot to do with a man’s martial prowess.

Generally most people in the Western World get tattoos for any number of reasons. Some look at gaining a tattoo as a symbol of individuality, or rebellion, self-expression or identification with some particular subculture or movement. In the west **you** are the one who decides when you will be tattooed and what will be tattooed on your skin. In the ancient Philippines, you didn’t have these choices. The perspective towards tattooing was very different. Rather than a symbol of individuality, exclusion, separation, et cetera, tattooing in ancient Philippines was a symbol of conformity to cultural expectations, spiritual beliefs, and communal responsibility. The tattoo recipient did not decide when they will be tattooed or what will be tattooed upon them. Those choices were the prerogative of the community and the tattoo practitioner, not the individual.

Las Islas de los Pintados, “The Islands of the Painted Ones” was the original name the Spanish gave to the islands we now call the Philippines. Tattooing was so prevalent among men that, unless you were a shaman, you were expected to have tattoos or suffer in shame the rest of your life.



Fully tattooed “Pintados” of the Visayas, from the Boxer Codex ca. 1590

According to the late William H. Scott, a leading researcher in pre-Hispanic Philippine history, the majority of the peoples of the Philippines tattooed at one time or another. It was known that some of the people of the Tagalog speaking region and other groups that had converted to Islam⁽⁶⁾ in the southern portion of the archipelago did not practice tattooing at the time of the Spanish advent. Still, the word “to mark, stamp or print” in Tagalog is “*tatak*,” which is very similar to its Polynesian counterpart, “*tatau*,” from which comes the modern word for tattoo. So even among these people there may have been tattooing practiced at some time in the past before Islam reached the islands. Other names for the marks of tattooing in the Philippines were called, *patik*, *batek*, *batuk*, *batok*, *fatok* or *burik* in our various languages. No matter the location, the same values of commitment to uphold

community roles and responsibilities, both spiritual and physical remained the same. Due to the spread of Christianity throughout the islands over several hundreds of years, tattooing is nearly extinct as a cultural practice. Currently the only place traditional tattooing exists in its original forms is in the Cordillera or Mountain Province, but even there it is in rapid decline.

In the past, both men and women were tattooed. Women received their tattoos at puberty because of their innate power and connection to the ancestors through life-bearing. Men, in contrast, had to earn their tattoos. Men had to prove their power and connection to the ancestors, usually proven through bravery and heroism in warfare. Each line and symbol conveyed deep multi-layered meanings. If a warrior has a tattoo of a dog symbol, it doesn’t represent that he has a dog, likes



Ifugao warrior with Kinahho or dog-like tattoos incorporated into the upper center of his chest tattoo that marked him as a successful headhunter and spiritually protected man.

dogs or even eats dogs! The symbol represents something much deeper. In the case of the Ifugao kinahho or dog tattoo, this symbol was given to a man who had participated in a headhunt. Because of the negative emotions associated with taking a human life, he received the Dallung ceremony where protective spirits are ritually invoked to guard the man against vengeful spirits or sorcery. Just as a dog barks upon the approach of strangers, sometimes even before they are actually seen by humans, so will these ritually invoked spirit helpers “bark” or warn the man of spiritual and physical dangers. This is just a short explanation of this symbol.

For the modern Filipino, the meaning behind the dog tattoo would never have been understood. These ancient tattooing symbols are difficult to decipher because through Spanish / American influence and colonization we have forgotten old cosmological and spiritual concepts and their associated metaphors that played a role in tattooing designs. Some people searching for a “tribal” tattoo symbols mistakenly believe that tattoo motifs are like Japanese kanji where a symbol means a certain word or meaning like “strength” or “bravery.” As we have seen with the kinahho (dog) tattoo, the practice is much more complex than that. Even though a particular design may convey “bravery,” for example, the specific context may be “bravery in the face of an enemy” or “bravery in childbirth.” Moreover, the design also portrays the underlying **reason** the person **earned** that trait, such as

bravery. These symbols are typically representative of a value or trait already proven by the individual, especially in the case of males. For example a male wearing a chest tattoo called, *bikking*, *binibikking* or *chak-lag*, (depending on the community), it will show both how many victories he has achieved and the spiritual guidance that led him to these victories. In addition, certain motifs within the chest tattoo display the fertility or prosperity his actions produced in the community. Then as he and others looked upon his tattoos, the designs constantly reminded him of his responsibility to uphold these values. These motifs and designs conveyed entire concepts, which had many interrelated meanings that convey the “magic” of the tattoo. So why are these symbols are powerful or magical? To understand this we first must understand the old beliefs regarding spirits in the Philippines.

Our ancient concept of the unseen sacred world was made up of different spiritual entities. Above all, there was usually a supreme being or god called by various names such as, Bathala, Laon, Apo Namarsua, Kabunian, Manama, etc. Below this being were lesser gods or disembodied spirits made up of ancestral spirits who had been deified. These are generally called throughout the Philippines, *anito*. Humans were embodied spirits. There were also selfish or evil non-human spirits called, *mangmangkik* in Ilokano. The last groups of spirits were the spirits of animals, plants, rocks, and the natural world.

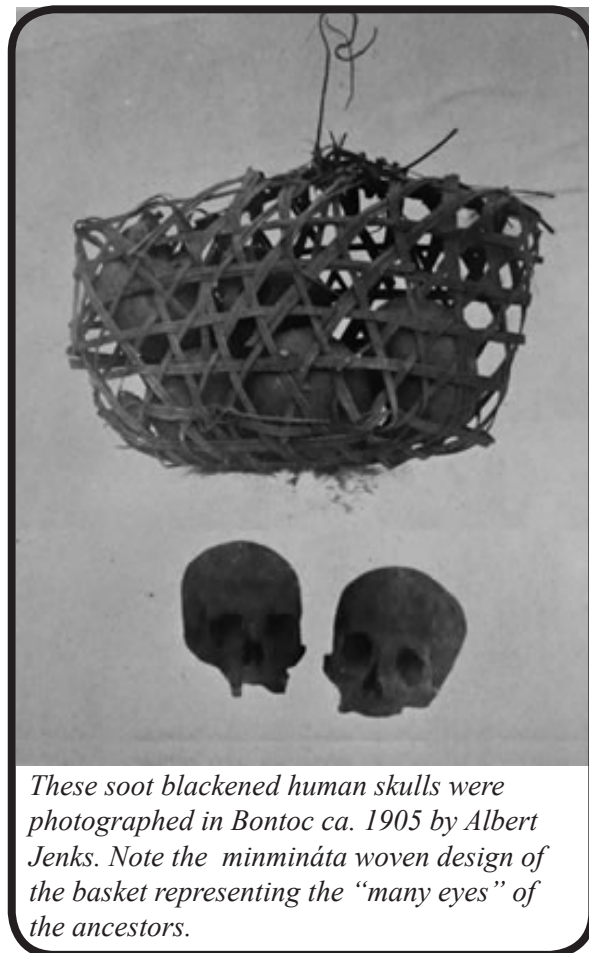
All these entities played a role in the everyday lives of people. Generally, the spirits you

Footnotes:

i - Garcia, pg. 334

wanted to interact with were the anito because they were your family who cared for their posterity and so shared a vested interest in your success. But just like families today, you can have benevolent members as well as selfish members in a family. These disembodied spirits still felt emotions such as love, compassion, anger and even jealousy. So care was exercised when interacting with these spirits. In certain ceremonies anitos were encouraged to care for their posterity and were appeased with sacrifices and offerings. Children were named after ancestors to invoke their blessings.⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ (Everyone of my siblings and I were named after ancestors.)

These anito were able to communicate either directly with their posterity in the form of inspiration, warm feelings, feeling a sudden chill, impressions, dreams, spiritual manifestations, or sometimes, by forceful possession. Such was the frequent experience of my great-great grandmother Honorata Esmerelda Esabra, a spirit medium called a *mangnganito* in Ilokano. Ancestral spirits could also communicate indirectly through influencing the actions of the natural world, such as the behaviors of animals such as birds, snakes, insects, etc. Many times,



These soot blackened human skulls were photographed in Bontoc ca. 1905 by Albert Jenks. Note the minminata woven design of the basket representing the “many eyes” of the ancestors.

specific animals were identified as the physical avatars or representatives of anitos. Most common were birds, snakes, crocodiles, centipedes, and lizards,⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾ animals commonly reflected in tattoo designs. Killing snakes, for example, was avoided in the Bontoc region for fear of accidentally harming one of their own ancestors.^(iv) In the Visayan region, pythons accompanying men on sea-raids were good fortune in that it indicated the anito’s participation with them.^(v) In short, when

the anitos felt amiable towards their family or descendents, they inspired them how best to succeed and blessed their lives in general.

So how did this work out in everyday life? Much of what has been written about tattooing has been in the context of headhunting, which was at one time practiced throughout the Philippines and the Pacific Islands. Many people falsely assume that only Ilongot or Cordilleran peoples (Igorots) practiced headhunting. However Franciscan friars in the early colonial period of the Philippines recorded that Tagalog men “at the death of any chief, they had to cut off many heads in order to avenge his death.”^(vi) These heads were later displayed on poles.^(vii) The people of Pangasinan were

described to the Pope by Father Benavides as “an unconquered tribe whose fiestas were cutting off one another’s heads.”^(viii) Ilocanos retained the head of Juan Saledo when his body was sent back to Manila for burial.^(ix) Visayans also took heads. The secretary of Miguel Lopez Legazpi recorded on May 23, 1565 that sixteen Cebuanos came by night and ambushed Pedro de Arana of the commander’s personal company. “...they leaped out and speared and killed him and cut off his head and took it back to the port of Gabi where they

made a great celebration and feast with the head.”^(x) Fray Rodrigo wrote of the people on the Surigao coast of Mindanao that “When you are talking to them, they will look at your head covetously as if it were gold, and say, ‘Oh, what a fine head!’”^(xi) Among many peoples of the Philippines, the majority of men’s tattoos had to be earned through displays of courage in battle and the taking of lives or heads.^(xii) These particular tattoos on specific parts of the body were the outward marks of valor, courage, manhood, martial prowess, and spiritual communication.

The act of taking a human head is a difficult concept to stomach in our modern views. Usually the only context we accept the taking of human life is in defense of life or in military action. In order to understand this now foreign concept I offer these brief explanations. Among ancient Filipinos the head was considered the seat of the soul. The top of the head was the nexus or conduit of communication with the ancestors. Procuring a head as a sacrifice was the greatest of gifts one could offer to the spirits. Heads were generally taken from enemy villages. Sometimes these villages could be as close as the first settlement past one’s neighboring village. Despite considering their victims enemies, some groups like the Kalinga held elaborate feasts called *cañao* to honor not just the head taker, but

also the spirit of the victim.

Among many groups in the Philippines, those who suffered death by violence were accepted into a type of paradise that was greater than the afterlife of those who died natural deaths. Among the Bontoc people, those who lost their heads received a head of flames in this heavenly realm where they enjoyed life as before. The flame headed pin-teng also became a type of avenging angel upon all those who murdered small children and infants.^(xiii) Taking a head was also a way to appease angry anitos who would show their displeasure by causing any number of calamities, death or just bad luck upon the family or community. Sometimes a recently deceased person’s spirit would be angry because of their own death and seek vengeance. By taking the life of someone else outside of the community, the anito’s desire for vengeance at the loss of their own life is appeased. This potential vengeful aspect of the anito is the basis for why modern Filipinos sometimes place food offerings aside for the dead. This food offering is called *atang* among Ilocanos and is accompanied by a ritual chant addressing the anitos, inviting them to come and share in the feast. Often in the *atang* chant there are phrases asking for the anitos to not to harm the people but to give a blessing instead.

In many places the suc-

cessful headhunt assured the fertility of animals, crops and people for the village.^(xiv) In some Philippine societies a human sacrifice (i.e. headhunting) secured the spiritual power for a village by honoring the spirit of the victim through a feast celebration called *cañao* in Luzon in which the spirit became a helpful entity towards the village. Through the influence of the spirit of the victim the prosperity of the village would increase. This is very different from the modern view of warfare where one’s enemy is the object of hatred. In other places only the spiritual power of the head was ceremonially distributed among the members of the village.^(xv) With this in mind let us briefly examine the exercise of the headhunting tradition and its relationship to tattooing using the following example.

Suppose a man is traveling to an enemy village to procure a head needed for a sacrifice. As this man went out on his journey, imagine that along the way a snake (or any other animal representative of the anito) crosses his path. In this omen event it was believed that the anito manipulated the snake to cross his path to get his attention. Seeing the snake would startle him into awareness that something supernatural was happening. In effect it was like an anito saying, “WAKE UP! I’M TRYING TO CONTACT YOU!” The man’s responsibility at this

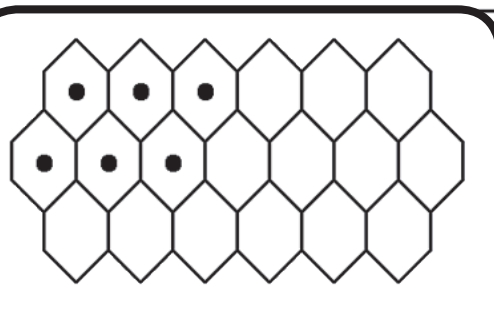
Footnotes:

- ii - Jenks, pg. 197
- iii - Krutak, Lars. www.larskrutak.com/articles/philippines
- iv - Jenks, pg. 197
- v - Scott, *Barangay: Sixteenth Century Philippine Culture and Society*, pg. 81
- vi - *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas. Ca. 1588 (title page missing) fol. 2.*
- vii - Scott, *Looking for the Prehispanic Filipino*, pg. 10
- viii - Aduarte: pg. 131
- ix - Scott. *Looking for the Prehispanic Filipino*. pg. 9

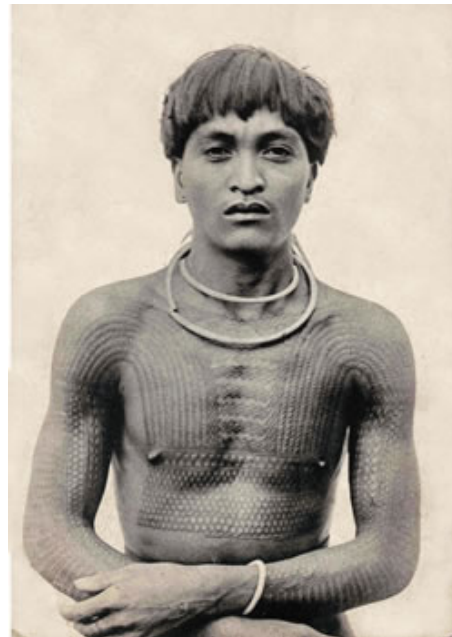
Footnotes:

- x - *CDIU 3 pp. 210-211*
- xi - Scott. *Looking for the Prehispanic Filipino*. pg. 5
- xii - Salvador-Amores, *Batek: Traditional Tattoos and Identities in Contemporary Kalinga, North Luzon Philippines*. pg. 110 - See also Scott, *Barangay: Sixteenth Century Philippine Culture and Society*, pg. 20
- xiii - Jenks, pg. 199
- xiv - Jenks, pg. 174
- xv - Salvador-Amores, *Batek: Traditional Tattoos and Identities in Contemporary Kalinga, North Luzon Philippines*. pg. 118

point was to observe the snake, see which direction it traveled, which could be an indication of a good or bad omen. Perhaps, the snake is simply in the path, in which case, he pauses, speaks to the snake and meditates on the meaning of the omen event. Once he has done this, he receives inspiration on what he should do at that point of his journey.^(xvi) This counsel would come as impressions or thoughts to his mind. Maybe the counsel was to go back home, go a different route, check his weapons for problems, or simply delay his journey. Any type of inspiration may occur at this moment, though generally these omens were thought to be brought on in regard to the expedition at hand. In some traditions witnessing an omen event like a bird flying in the opposite direction of the man's travel was enough of a sign to turn around and go home.^(xvii) Listening for certain types of bird calls also were warnings for the traveler to be especially attuned to both the spirit world and the environment. A man going on a headhunting raid or war expedition would often pursue his prey with the utmost stealth. While approaching an enemy, the warrior reads a spooked bird as a clue to where his enemy lay. Even if he was the one who startled the bird, the bird would not intentionally fly towards another human. So the direction of the bird's flight could make him aware of the enemy's whereabouts. If the warrior was not the one who frightened the



The *inufu-ufug* / *minmináta* hexagonal tattoos shown with a few dots placed inside to show the representation as eyes and anthropomorphic figures.



A Kalinga Maingor (warrior) with *inufu-ufug* hexagonal snake patterns on his upper abdomen

bird, but it came flying towards him in spite of his presence that may have indicated that a larger group of enemy warriors were concealed ahead. Certain birds make specific types of chirps or calls when danger is near to warn each other. Hearing and understanding these different calls gave our ancestors another form of awareness outside of their own senses. It could be considered a type of natural early warning system or surveillance. Paying

attention to the calls and actions of animals was practical in nature as well as an excellent reminder to be attuned spiritually.

Generally omen events were handled in the following way:

- The omen event occurs
- Communication, prayer or spiritual attunement
- Counsel is given from the spirit world
- Opportunity to obey the counsel given

As a warrior obeyed the counsel of the spirit world with guidance from beings that could see farther than mortal eyes could, his ancestral spirits with invested interest ensured in his welfare. Consequently, he achieved success, a joint victory with those unseen beings that cared for their living descendant. When he returned victorious from his endeavor with the evidence (in the form of a head) of his successful guidance from the spirit world, he was subsequently tattooed with the marks of this venture. When viewed in this context, the prestigious tattoos of the old headhunters of the Cordillera are a composition of the inter-related symbols based on his successful joint-venture with these spirits. The tattoos symbolize the animal representatives of his ancestral spirits that guided his path as well as the gift of fertility and prosperity his actions provided. As this man went through life, each time he saw his tattoos, he was reminded to conduct himself in accordance with the prestige he

had earned. More importantly, it was a constant reminder to him and others as they saw his tattoos, to remain spiritually aware and open to the guidance from the spirit world. A tattooed man was considered to be of the highest character, strong, brave, a servant of the community and most importantly, blessed with awareness and guidance from the spiritual world.

Although there are many different tattoo motifs, let us examine one particular design that reflects these concepts, the *inufu-ufug* tattoo of the Kalinga. Erroneously thought of as honeycomb patterns, generally the Kalinga people state that the hexagon tattoos represent a woven mat. It is called, *inufu-ufug* or simply *ufug* by the Kalinga people.^(xviii) Among the Itneg people, carrying baskets are woven with this type of hexagonal pattern which they call *minmináta*, meaning “many eyes.”^(xix) In the past woven rectangular fish traps called *bobo* were made out of bamboo strips with this hexagon pattern. Now these types of fish traps are made from chicken-wire which is coincidentally also hexagon in form.

The *inufu-ufug* design is also said to represent the scales of the centipede among the Ilubo Kalinga, and among people of the Benguet region they are considered to be the scales of the snake or centipede. This stylized design may actually be many human figures interlocked together. A similar tattoo from the island of Roti in Indonesia southwest of

Timor that was placed on the thighs, has a dot within each of the hexagons. Nearly identical patterns have been incised into Bontoc tattoos, shields and *fikum*. (large mother of pearl ornaments). Sometimes within each hexagon is a dot, making the design resemble the many eyes as described in the name “*minminata*.” This may imply the eyes of many ancestors watching over a person or additional spiritual awareness due to the seeing eyes of ancestors. The dots also transform the hexagons into simple anthropomorphic stick figures of human beings. This protective tattoo is likened to the multitude of ancestors, family members and children all interlocked or woven together through the past, present and into the future. In much of Luzon and other parts of the Philippines, snakes, lizards, crocodiles and other reptiles were also thought to be avatars of the ancestral spirits (anito). So again from this perspective the snake scale design calls to mind the multitude of help from one's ancestors. To illustrate this point, in the ancient mindset, all disease was caused by the malicious actions of evil spirits. During the 19th century there was a severe outbreak of cholera and malaria. The snake-like patterns were said to have protected the wearers from contracting the diseases. The tattoo was thought to be an effective protection from all disease.^(xx) The reason is clear: if all disease reflects spiritual influence, then all protection from

disease requires spirit (anito) intervention.

In addition to these martial and protective meanings of the tattoos, the tattoos also guided as well as granted the soul passage to the underworld of the dead. This underworld was not the Christian Hell, but an ancestral homeland where we would be reunited with our families and ancestors. To understand this concept of the underworld, we must briefly look at the ancient cosmological paradigm of our ancestors. In many Pacific Islander cultures including the Philippines, the underworld is associated with the West, the direction of the setting sun. The East is associated with heavenly world because all the heavenly bodies rise in the east. In the Bontoc language the heavens are called, *chay-ya* or *ad-daya* while the word *daya* in Ilokano means the easterly direction. The celestial bodies rise in the East (heavens) and “die” and are “buried” in the earth in the West. Most of these Pacific Islander cultures associate the underworld of the ancestors with the West. Our creation myths speak poetically of our progenitors' migration (usually in a bamboo tube) from elsewhere, an ancestral homeland. As they voyaged away from this homeland, the land mass appeared to sink into the ocean as they traveled away from it because of the curvature of the earth. Sometimes, the underworld of the dead is spoken of as on the flip-side of this world. In terms of the sphere of the earth, distant loca-

Footnotes:

xvi - Garcia, pg. 348

xvii - Cole, Mabel Cook. pg. 143

Footnotes:

xviii - Salvador-Amores, Batek: *Traditional Tattoos and Identities in Contemporary Kalinga, North Luzon Philippines* pg. 135

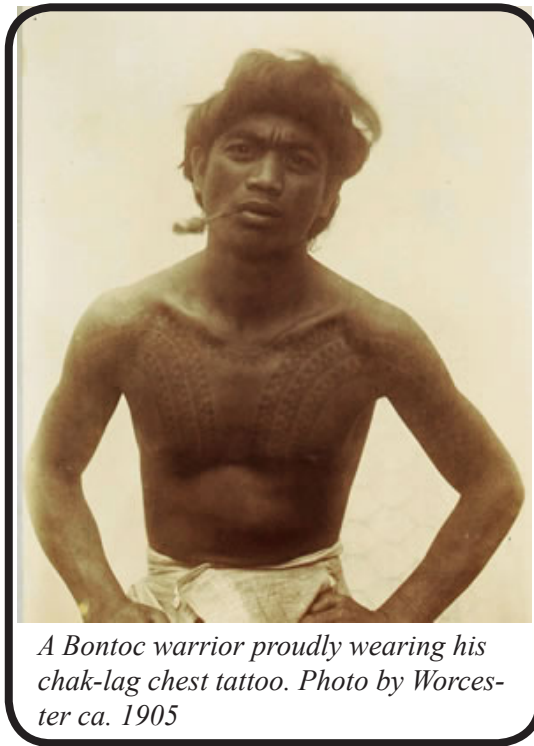
xix - Cole, Fay-Cooper. *The Tinguian: Social, Religious, and Economic Life of a Philippine Tribe* pg. 422, 423

xx - Salvador-Amores, Batek: *Traditional Tattoos and Identities in Contemporary Kalinga, North Luzon Philippines* pg. 125

tions are figuratively upside-down. A location a great distance from a person is still spoken of as being “on the other side of the planet.” So the underworld was simply a great distance away. Death was viewed as cyclical event, the soul’s return trip to where we lived. In many Philippine cultures the souls of the dead in their journey through the underworld must pass over a large body of water to reach the land where their ancestors await.^(xxi) Thus the underworld of the dead could be viewed as a poetic description illustrating travel across the curvature of the earth from another place.

With this in mind the placement of tattoos is nearly as important as the tattoo motifs themselves. In general the upper body (waist up) in many of our ancient cultural groups was associated with the earth world. A person’s head was associated with the heavenly world as the seat of the soul. The lower body (waist down) was associated with the underworld and afterlife where our ancestors dwell. The hands were especial members of the body to be tattooed because they symbolically traveled between the earth and heavenly worlds (upper body) and the underworld (lower body) depending on what task they performed.

For example, Kalinga male with the *gulot* or head-taker’s tattoo which was a series of lines tattooed around the wrist or hand showed that he had dispatched people from world of the living to the afterlife.^(xxii) In the act of raising



A Bontoc warrior proudly wearing his chak-lag chest tattoo. Photo by Worcester ca. 1905

the head-ax up and then driving home the beheading stroke, the hand and wrist symbolically travels the breadth of the three realms from the heavens, through the earth world and down into the underworld.

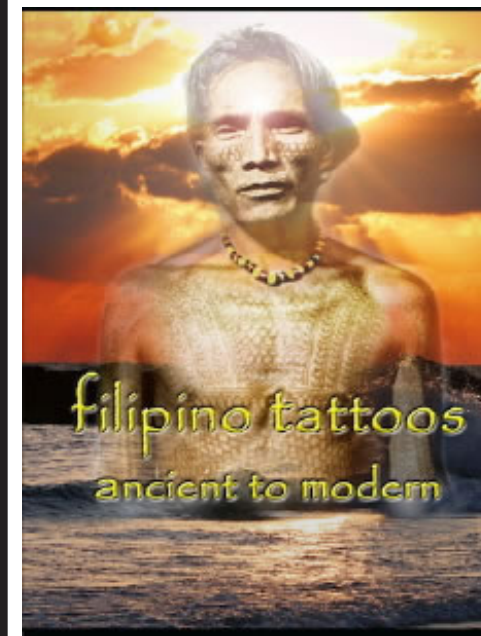
The wearing of tattoos was the outward expression of an enduring and rich spiritual tradition of our indigenous culture. Although only a very small fraction of the tattoo motifs and their spiritual importance are discussed here, I emphasize that it is the knowledge, personal character, and spiritual values that the tattoo represents that are powerful, not the ink in the skin. Especially in the case of males, one had to possess the qualities the tattoos represented prior to wearing them. The internalization of these traits or in other words, the *tattooing of a person’s soul* was so important to possess before becoming

tattooed. Without it, the marks on the skin are only vain decorations. Those men in the past who were tattooed without earning them were shamefully compared to the halo lizard which is richly patterned yet flighty and cowardly. These ancient tattoos served to reinforce the values of bravery and heroism through spiritual sensitivity, submission to guidance, respect for one’s family both living and dead, personal growth, sacrifice, the obligation to know and perpetuate cultural beliefs, protect and serve the community, to be industrious, and to continue one’s lineage.

In our modern world with its rapid departure from indigenous customs, many Filipinos have received contemporary tattoos for any number of the contemporary reasons that accompany them. It is my hope that through this writing, many of you, as my kindred and family, will be inspired to seek what our culture has already richly practiced for thousands of years. Perhaps in your desire to become tattooed you will seek first to instill those character traits our ancestors valued so highly in the past. After you have been tattooed upon your soul, then will the unseen guidance represented by the tattoos placed on your skin be a shining compass through this world and the next. Your tattoos will serve as an inspiration to all those around you to strive for the qualities that you possess, a modern Filipino warrior fortified by our indigenous heritage.

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Filipino Tattoos: Ancient to Modern

By: Lane Wilcken

Tattooing is a very old and spiritually respected art form that has existed in many different cultures around the world. After many centuries of not being practiced in Europe, tattooing was re-introduced to the Western world through the inhabitants of the Pacific Ocean. Beginning in the 16th century, European explorers came across many people who practiced tattooing as an integral part of their cultures. This is the first serious study of Filipino tattoos, and it considers early accounts from explorers and Spanish-speaking writers. The text presents Filipino cultural practices connected with ancestral and spiritual aspects of tattoo markings, and how they relate to the process and tools used to make the marks. In the Philippine Islands, tattoos were applied to men and women for many different reasons. It became a form of clothing. Certain designs recognized manhood and personal accomplishments as well as attractiveness, fertility, and continuity of the family or village. Facial tattoos occurred on the bravest warriors with names that denoted

particular honor. Through the fascinating text and over 200 images, including color photographs and design drawings, the deep meanings and importance of these markings becomes apparent.

Available at: Schifferbooks.com and Amazon.com.

Footnotes:

xxi - Scott, *Barangay: Sixteenth Century Philippine Culture and Society*, pp. 92-92, 238

xxii - Salvador-Amores, *Batek: Traditional Tattoos and Identities in Contemporary Kalinga, North Luzon Philippines*. pg. 120

School Submission

The schools listed teach Filipino martial arts, either as the main curriculum or an added curriculum.

If you have a school that teaches Filipino martial arts, or you are an instructor that teaches, but does not have a school, list the school or style so individuals who wish to experience, learn and gain knowledge have the opportunity.

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We reserve the right to use any photo(s) as cover material or additional compensation. We also reserve the right to edit material and to crop photographs.

We reserve the right to use articles or parts of articles that are given and approved from time to time as needed to promote the Filipino martial arts and the Culture of the Philippines.

Physical manuscripts should be typed in black, double spaced, and set to 1-1/2 margins (right and left).

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We welcome your article, ideas and suggestions, and look forward to working with you in the future.