

THE NON-CHRISTIAN PEOPLE OF AMBOS CAMARINES.

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The Province of Ambos Camarines is occupied mainly by the Bikol people. In the northern part of Camarines Norte there are certain towns which are occupied wholly or in part by Tagalogs. Many of the latter are said to have come in from the north at the time of the discovery of gold at Paracale and neighboring towns. With these exceptions all the municipalities of the province are occupied by Bikols. However in the hills of both Camarines Sur and Camarines Norte there are other people who apparently are neither Tagalog nor Bikol. In Camarines Sur these people know themselves and are known to the Christian population of the towns as "Agtá." The great body of them lives on the slopes of the two extinct volcanoes, Iriga and Isarog. They state that in Spanish times white people never ventured among them. Their hostility toward the Spaniards is said to have been due to continual attacks made on them by the latter and to the consequent desire for revenge awakened in the hill people. To all appearances there is no danger whatever in going alone among them at the present time.

Those about Mount Isarog are found for the most part about one-third of the way up the slopes and apparently in about the place where they have lived for years. They formerly were scattered about in the hills, but now are slowly coming to live in groups, although they say they prefer to live scattered about. This is probably partly because they are thus enabled to be nearer to their growing crops and partly because they have been accustomed to this method of life for many years.

The people of Consosop are typical of these groups of Isarog people. Consosop is some six or seven hours travel from Mabatobato, almost all of it uphill. Mabatobato is a *barrio* distant about three and one-half hours from Pili. A schoolhouse is located at Consosop on a spur which juts out from Isarog and is perhaps 610 meters high. The building can be seen for many miles, as the country immediately around it is not wooded. A few hundred yards back of the schoolhouse toward

the mountain are two houses. About the same distance below at a place where the hill is a little less steep is a group of six small houses. Off on another spur, across a deep gulch twenty minutes walk away, can be seen another house. Still others are scattered about in the forest, some near and some several hours' travel away.

The day I was at Consosop about 75 individuals—men, women, and children—came together in response to a call and they were probably not more than one-half or two-thirds of all the people belonging to this settlement. They are a peculiar people. They are not Negritos, although the name by which they are known both among themselves and to others—*Agtá*—might indicate that they are. Neither are they typically Malayan. There are, it is true, many among them who do not differ at all in appearance from the ordinary Christian Filipino, but as a rule they are smaller than the average among the latter. They are also darker. Very few of them have straight hair. Some have hair which is almost kinky, while the majority have wavy hair. Some have thick lips and a few the large, noticeable eyes of the typical Negro. (Plate I, figs. 1 and 2; Plate III.)

They dress like most of the other people of the Philippines. The women wear a *camisa* and for a skirt several pieces of cloth wrapped about the body and tucked in at the waist. The men wear trousers reaching to the knees and most of them some kind of a jacket or shirt. However, when working in the fields they wear usually only the loin cloth.

In former times these people lived in rude shelters much like those in which the Negritos still live. Now they dwell in small houses, so small that even they can not stand upright anywhere in them. They are built about 1.5 meters above the ground with floors of bamboo and roofs of leaves.

These people plant upland rice, camotes, maize, taro, squash, bananas, yams, and some few other plants. They have no goats or sheep, but occasionally kill birds to eat.

An old woman with whom I talked who had lived at Consosop all her life said that she did not remember a time when there were Negritos about there. From this as well as from the appearance of the people one would conclude that the Negrito admixture took place many years ago. She also said that formerly they were more numerous than now, that they had been killed by smallpox, cholera, and in fights with the Spaniards, but that they were increasing in number now.

They marry at from 13 to 15 years of age. The old woman above mentioned told me of one woman who had eight children. One man sometimes has as many as three wives, although as a rule they are monogamous. They are said to have a language of their own which has

some Bikol words in it. It may be, however, that this is merely a dialectic variation of Bikol and not a distinct language.

On the Kalawat Islands, which lie a few miles east of Paracale in Camarines Norte, there is a small population most of whom are Bikol, like the people on the mainland opposite, but there are besides the Bikols certain small groups of people known as "Dumagat." They live for the most part in small groups by themselves not far from the Bikol settlements. These people too, like the Agta of Camarines Sur, show evidence of Negrito blood. They are darker than their Bikol neighbors though not noticeably smaller. Some of them have wavy and some curly hair while others have hair as straight as the ordinary Filipino. (Plate I, figs. 3 and 4.)

The Dumagat people of Kaboong Island, one of the Kalawat group, said they came from the mainland. One man was from near Nueva Caceres and looked much like the people about Mount Isarog. They said that they had all been baptized, but the probability is that they are practically non-Christians, as they are remote from any Christian influence. They talk Bikol among themselves, live for the most part scattered about on the hillsides in houses like those of other Filipinos, plant camotes, maize, taro, and yams, but do not plant rice. They had never heard of Negritos living on the Kalawat Islands. They say they call themselves Dumagat because they live near the sea.

I was told that on Butawanan Island off Kinabugsukan Point in Camarines Sur there is a considerable number of these Dumagat people. There are also a few of them scattered among the Bikol people of the coast towns. I did not visit Butawanan and so can not say whether the people of that island resemble the Dumagat of the Kalawat Islands.

There are three possible explanations of the origin both of the Agta people in the vicinity of Mounts Isarog and Iriga, and of the Dumagat of the Islands off the east coast of the province and of the neighboring shores of the mainland. The resemblance between the two groups is sufficiently close to lead one to believe that their origin may be the same.

The first possibility is that they are remnants of an earlier Malayan invasion which preceded that which brought the Bikols and Tagalogs to the Philippines. The second is that they are the result of crossing between an aboriginal Negrito population and their Malayan neighbors. It is furthermore possible that they may be the result of the crossing of some primitive Malaysians with Negritos. That there is Negrito blood in them I have no doubt, although this opinion is based only on their physical appearance.

The simplest explanation of the characteristics of these people is that they are the result of crossing many years ago between the Malayan people and Negritos. Occasionally even now men from the low-

lands join these hill people, preferring the life of the latter to that of their fellows in the plains.

The Negritos in Camarines are to be found both in Camarines Sur and Camarines Norte. In Camarines Sur a few Negritos live near Payatan on the slope of Mount Isarog. Here scattered about they dwell in rude shelters in the forests. They work for their Filipino neighbors. They are typical Negritos, apparently without admixture of other blood.

Near the town of Iriga there is a settlement of about 68 people of mixed Negrito and Malayan blood. Some have almost kinky hair and others hair almost straight. I saw no one at this settlement who appeared to be of pure Negrito blood, although in Iriga itself are some 10 or 15 Negritos who are said to be practically slaves and who are not allowed to leave their masters. They do, however, occasionally escape.

In Camarines Norte on the other hand are many pure Negritos, although how many I am unable to say. There is one group near the *barrio* of Batobelani and there is at least one other group near Ragay on the west coast of Camarines. These Negritos do a little farming on their own account, but they more often work for the Christian Filipinos planting and harvesting crops. When they come into the Christian settlements the women and some of the men wear the ordinary Filipino costume. Others of the men wear only the customary loin cloth. The shelters in which they live are often the simplest possible, consisting of a rough floor and a roof of leaves. (Plates II, IV, V.)

It seems to be a rare thing with them to intermarry with the Christian Filipino. All whom I saw in Camarines Norte looked like pure Negritos with no admixture of other blood. In all probability prejudice against marriage with the Negritos has increased with the coming of Christianity. If this be true most of the blending of the Negrito and Filipino blood which has occurred here took place many years ago.

There are probably several hundred Negritos in Camarines Norte. I suspect most of them have come to be dependent to some extent on the Christian Filipinos and, therefore, live near them. They are a mild-mannered, inoffensive people, but I did not see enough of them to learn much about their mode of life.

They are typical Negritos. They are short of stature, have dark skin, closely curled hair, and flat noses. When they are of pure blood there is never any possibility in the Philippines of mistaking them for any other people.

With the exception of the Negritos, the Dumagat people, and those living about Mounts Isarog and Iriga all the other inhabitants of Camarines I believe to be Bikol, with some Tagalogs in the north and a few individuals from other parts of the Philippines scattered about here and there.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

PLATE I.

- FIG. 1. Woman of Consossep, Camarines, showing no evidence of Negrito blood.
2. Man of Consossep, Camarines, showing strong evidence of Negrito blood.
3 and 4. Men of Kalawat Islands, Camarines, showing traces of Negrito blood.

PLATE II.

- FIGS. 1 and 2. Negrito women, near Ragay, Camarines.
FIG. 3. Negrito man, near Ragay, Camarines.
4. Negrito man, near Batobelani, Camarines.

PLATE III.

- FIG. 1. Group of men, near Mount Iriga, Camarines. Some evidently have Negrito blood; others not.
2. Negrito hut near Mount Isarog, Camarines.

PLATE IV.

- Group of Negrito men, women, and children; Ragay, Camarines.



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.



Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.



Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

PLATE III.



PLATE IV.