

Culture Beliefs and Practices in Malingin

According to Philippine history books, the aborigine of the Filipinos is the Negritos who were five feet tall; having dark kinky hair, flat nose and black skin. They were believed to be uncivilized and were nomads.

Thousands of years past, the Malays (people from Malaysia and Indonesia) came to the country via sea aboard in a boat called “Balangay”. The term was later on used to refer to a small unit of government of the early Filipinos, the Barangay.

There are also evidences found in caves of Palawan about the early inhabitants of the country that were believed to reach the country through the land bridges.

In the later years, Chinese were able to arrive in the Philippines to trade.

In 1521, Spaniards headed by Ferdinand Magellan came to the Philippines and landed in the island in Cebu. Thereafter they converted the native of Cebu from Paganism to Christianity in accordance with their purpose of voyage, the three G’s: gold, glory and government. The Philippines became the colony of Spain for more than 300 years spreading Roman Catholicism. That is why at the present Philippines is known as the only Christian Nation in the Far East. Spanish rule ended in the year 1898, leaving the country in the hands of Americans by the virtue of the “Treaty of Paris” on December 10, 1898.

Filipinos were greatly influenced by the American customs and traditions including the system of government during the time of Americans.

In 1941, the Second World War broke out. The joint forces of the Allied Powers and the Filipino soldiers fought against the Japanese that brought an end to the Japanese occupation in the Philippines in 1945. Americans recognized the country’s independence on July 4, 1946 but Filipinos first declared it on June 12, 1946 under General Emilio Aguinaldo making Philippines a free and democratic country up to date.

In general, the Negritos, Malays, Chinese, Spaniards, Japanese, Americans greatly contributed to the present way of life of the Filipinos. This made Filipino race a complex race having various customs, traditions, beliefs, and even philosophy.

In general Filipinos are known to be hospitable, family-oriented, hardworking, religious, joyful and humorous, fatalistic, passive.

Traditions:

According to the definition, traditions are customs, beliefs, practices that are passed on from generation to generation. Here are some of Filipino traditions that are common to the people of Malingin.

Customs:

Christmas Day and New Year's Eve

-during these celebrations, you will notice that people prepares food and shares it with the other members of the community. Most of the time, people prioritize the New Year's Eve than the Christmas Eve. For the "noche buena" (during Christmas eve) they usually prepares a loaf of bread with a spread and a softdrink, unlike in "media noche" (during New Year's eve) where in families cooks food like spaghetti, salad, valenciana, and other foods for special occasions. As an influence from the Chinese, everyone makes sure that they have firecrackers to light for the New Year's Eve. The firecrackers is said to throw away bad luck from the house and family, and to welcome good luck for the coming year. There are also various things that people in the community do before and during the New Year. Each house sees to it that the house is clean and things like curtains, pillowcases, blankets are newly washed. As a family-oriented people, parents make it sure that all their children are together in the house during the New Year's Eve. As much as possible the family refrains from buying and going out of the house during the first day of the year because if that happen, all year round, you will be buying and you won't stay in your house. That is why whatever bad or unreasonable practices are avoided during the first day of the year.

Fiesta celebration (a celebration for the patron saint of a particular place)

-this event is often started with a mass in the morning honoring the patron saint of the place. Then this will be followed of either parade of the place's officials and members, as well as the muses; a short program; parlor games (often times there is a "palo sebo"-a game wherein the facilitators will place a very tall bamboo pole at the center of the venue/plaza, full of grease to make it slippery with a prize at the to end of the pole. Participants should get the prize by climbing the pole to its top end. Participants cooperates with each other to get the price and then later divide it by themselves.); sports activities (basketball league, volleyball); playground demonstration; cockfighting/derby; drag racing; fluvial parade (places near the sea/river); bull fighting; and many more. The celebration is highlighted by the crowning of the fiesta queen followed by a benefit dance.

*Al Cinco de Noviembre

-This commemorates the ingenuity of Bagonhons. This is exemplified by the action of General Juan Araneta when he bluff the Spaniards by using fake cannons and arms and won freedom for the Negrenses In commemoration of that creative endeavor we today continuously prove that we can be creative and original in our approaches to life. The Bago City Government celebrates that event with gleeful reminiscence and pride for a great General and his gallant men from this City who armed with courage and ingenuity played a great role in the history of Negros. Spanish authorities in Bacolod capitulated after seeing advancing troops armed with rifles and cannons which were actually nipa stalks and rolled sawali mats painted black. Al

Cinco de Noviembre showcases not only the courage and gallantry but also the creativity and ingenuity of the Bagonhons. November 5 has been declared a holiday in Negros Occidental.

*Babaylan Festival

The babaylan Festival was conceived to highlight a unique brand of Filipino heritage, one that dates back to the pre-Spanish period. This festival aims to rediscover the region's indigenous music, literature, dances, rituals and other artistic endeavors. A Babaylan is a doctor, herbalist, artist, medium, adviser, agriculturist and more, all rolled in one very interesting character. He is the keeper of rituals and spirit agents in normal world. He inspires awe and fear. For this event, every barangay prepares for a street dancing and a dance presentation depicting the barangay's history to be performed after the street dancing. Lately, due to the shortage of funds for this festival, a barangay merges with the other for them to be able to come up with a presentation without using much funds for the preparation. This is held during the charter anniversary celebration of the city of Bago.

Pamamanhikan/Pakagon (Engagement)

-this is the when lovers decides to settle and get married. The guy, together with his parents, some family members and relatives go to the house of his girlfriend. Both parties will talk about matters regarding their children's decision to marry, whether they agree or disagree with the wedding proposal. if both parties agreed and approved the proposal, that's the time to set a date of the wedding, including the venue of the wedding and reception, the motif , the primary and secondary sponsors, best man, maid of honor, and other matters regarding the wedding.

Tigkalalag

-this celebration is done for the honor/commencement of our loved ones who already passed away. Celebrated in the 1st (All Saint's day) and 2nd day of November. Several days before these dates, family and relatives starts to clean and repaint the tombs of their loved ones. Cemeteries are overcrowded during these days especially in November 1. Actually, this celebration should be on the 2nd day of November, but due to the old practice of the people November 1 has been the day where in they rush to the cemetery and visit. Most families bring native foods like suman (made of "malagkit"-a sticky kind of rice, with sugar and coconut extract), valenciana (made also of malagkit with yellow ginger, chicken/pork meat, peas-specifically the green pea, raisins, and seasoning), and other delicacies mostly made from malagkit to be shared by the whole family. Because of the fact that everyone visits their passed-away loved-ones, this day also serves as a reunion for the family. Some even stay at the cemetery until night. Because of this other cemeteries held a benefit dance at the premises of the cemetery.

Beliefs:

It is believed that buying needle and salt during evening may cause damage to the remaining stocks of the said product.

During a meal, if someone drops a spoon, a lady visitor is believed to be coming. If it is a fork a man is expected to arrive.

Women having their menstrual period are not supposed to plant especially flowers because the plant will die. They are also prohibited from going to the garden because the plants that they might be stepped-over will die.

People believe that if a hen is laying its egg and an earthquake strikes, the egg will not hatch. A member (Salustiana) has proved this belief.

The first twelve days of the year is believed to represent the twelve months of the year. Jan. 1-January, Jan. 2- February, Jan. 3-March, so on. This is often used by the elders to predict the weather. If it rains in Jan. 1, then the month of January is said to be a rainy month, if it shines and it did not rain in the 4th of January, then the month of April will be a sunny and hot month with least expectation of rain, and so on.

Practices:

Most of the beliefs mentioned above are still practiced by the people of the congregation but there are still some that were already rejected due to the modernization and advancement of technology.

At night everyone avoids sweeping the floor because the luck and blessings are believed to be swept out of the house too. If ever you really wanted to sweep the floor, you should not throw what you have gathered out of the house.

According to folk beliefs, a pregnant woman should not go out of the house during an eclipse because it is said that eclipse may cause abnormality to the baby after birth.

Another practice is the sharing of foods with neighbors especially the viand. Every time a family cooks something special, they always share a bit of it to their neighbors. It is a mutual practice of the resident. Maybe because the families are related to each other or Filipinos have a kind heart towards others. Even other communities practice this kind of sharing.

Cock fighting enthusiasts during mourning are not allowed to engage in any cockfight because the only possibility is to lose the game. Just the same if a member of the family is having her menses.

NOTE: For more details about the customs, beliefs, practices, history and events, natural resources, and important information about the Philippines and its people, kindly visit the bookstore in the locality and look for the book of David King's, "Philippines - Know and Appreciate Our Homeland"