

## A PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A SAMARAN FILIPINA<sup>1</sup>

DONN V. HART

The paucity of systematic information on rural life in eastern Samar, Philippines, encouraged the publication of this incomplete "life" history. Postwar research in the Bisayas by both Filipino and American anthropologists and sociologists has concentrated in the western and central Bisayas, mainly Negros, Cebu, and Bohol. Studies of both primitive and peasant societies have been made in these islands. Two extensive barrio investigations have been made in western and eastern Leyte, the latter within the Samaran (Waray-waray) linguistic region. Interestingly, in this aspect, the two "outer" islands of the Bisayas, Panay and Samar, have been largely neglected. Within this context, the story of Engracia's\* life has increased value.<sup>2</sup>

I was attracted to Engracia as a possible life history informant because she was a friendly woman, respected by the barriofolk, a noted *paralo-on*, and had been born and reared in Lalawigan. My explanation for collecting her life history was that "if she would tell me everything she could remember about her life, it would help me understand Lalawigan customs and history." This brief explanation sufficed; my field notes indicate "She started right off." Since her children were adults, her family tasks were relatively few. Dikoy\*, her husband, often was away from the house. And Engracia loved to talk.

The information presented here was gathered in seven separate sessions, spread over a period from April to July, 1956. The interviews were held in her home, often while she was working (sewing a fiesta dress for her "adopted" daughter, etc.). Her husband was never present during these interviews that began three months after my residence in the area. As I was not competent in Samaran, my assistant translated her conversations into

---

<sup>1</sup>Field research in eastern Samar during 1956 was made possible by a Fulbright Research Fellowship.

<sup>2</sup>The name of the informant is fictitious. All names followed by an asterisk, when first mentioned in this article, are also fictitious. There was no reason to change every name.

English. Engracia was given no instructions what to discuss, merely "to begin back as early in her life as possible and to tell everything she could remember."

I was eager to obtain several life histories since I was involved in studying two aspects of barrio life—marriage and folk medicine. In 1950-51, research in southern Negros illustrated the value of these fragmental life histories in obtaining vivid details about barrio institutions and customs.<sup>3</sup> Participant observation and controlled interviewing of numerous informants are more efficient methods to chart the convoluted contours of specific institutions. But informants who willingly discuss their lives in great detail, often illumine silhouettes in the patterns and invigorate the abstract with a reminiscential freshness. Engracia's remembrance of parental efforts to wed her, and the resistance she offered, is an excellent example of one value of what might better be called personal narratives. Such documents are not life histories in the Dollardian sense.

Engracia was born in Lalawigan in 1898. She finished the fifth and began the sixth grade, a fine educational record for a woman at this time. She married Dikoy, one year her senior, who completed only grade four. They had eight sons and one daughter. In 1956, only six sons were living, the other children had died when young. Two sons were then in Manila, one in college, the other studying to be a certified public accountant. One son was in the U.S. Navy and another, a high school graduate, lived with his parents. Two sons were married, one resided in Boroñgan, the other in Lalawigan. They had "adopted" a 12-year old girl who live with them. Engracia and Dikoy occupied a better-than-average barrio dwelling. Their basic income was from their land but each earned a small supplementary income as specialists in folk medicine.

Dikoy is a noted barrio *tambalan* (herbalist), particularly in treating boils. When he was 10 years old, he had a vision in which Kagaskas, the supposed founder of Lalawigan, told him to become a *tambalan*. Engracia is a *paralo-on* who treats *lanti*. *Lanti* is a common ailment of infants and small children in Lalawigan (fever, loose bowel movements, coated tongue, cold feet and hands). This affliction allegedly is caused by fright, either

---

<sup>3</sup> See the author's, "Half-Way to Uncertainty: A Short Autobiography of a Cebuano Filipino," *The Journal of East Asiatic Studies*, V. 5, (July, 1956), pp. 255-77.

of the child (e.g., by a vicious dog) or a family member, particularly one who "often handles the child," whose fright is transferred to the child. A rather elaborate "fumigation" treatment is required, known as *paglo-on* ("to smoke"). Women often brought a child ill with *lanti* to Engracia's house for *paglo-on*.

Samar is a mountainous, thinly populated, poorly developed island in the eastern Bisayas. A recent analysis of barrio life noted that "Progress has by-passed Samar.... To this day, it has the dubious reputation of being one of the 'most economically depressed areas in the Philippines.'"<sup>4</sup> Eastern Samar is a series of small deltaic lowlands backed by a forested central mountain range. The eastern coast is connected by bus to the western side of the island by a single dirt road, crossing the central mountains.

Boroñgan, one of the larger towns (poblaciones) of eastern Samar, is a typical Philippine poblacion. The plaza is bordered by an old stone Catholic church, the *municipio*, a private school, and the stores of the Chinese and Boholan merchants. A small Catholic college was organized in the town after Liberation. Barrio Lalawigan, an agriculture-fishing village of about 1000 people, lies along the national road, five miles south of Boroñgan. The village faces a section of the Pacific dotted with small rocky islands. Divinubo is a small island just off the coast of Lalawigan. The island also is called *Puró* that means "island" in Samaran. At low tide, one may wade from *puró* to the mainland.

Nearly hidden by tall coconut trees, the dwellings of Lalawigan are unusually sturdy to resist the destructive typhoons that sometimes devastate eastern Samar. The barrio has several good-size *sari-sari* stores, a small nipa chapel, and a school with classes including (1956) the fourth grade. Rural life in Lalawigan is enlivened by the annual fiestas, various Catholic religious celebrations, wedding and funeral feasts, and local school programs.<sup>5</sup>

I was born in Barrio Lalawigan but, like a sleeping child, the first thing I remember was living in the island of Puro. According to my parents, all the people in Lalawigan were ordered to move to Puro so no one was left in the barrio. This was during the Spanish Revolution.

---

<sup>4</sup>Rodolfo Ragodon, "Samar's Story: A Sad Saga of the South," *Sunday Times Magazine*, October 11, 1964, p. 10

<sup>5</sup>The preceding paragraphs on Samar are summarized from the author's *Riddles in Filipino Folklore: An Anthropological Analysis* (Syracuse University Press, New York, 1964).

While we were in Puro, we lived in a little hut with a roof made of woven coconut leaves.<sup>6</sup> The ground was the floor. We slept on a raised platform. We had a hard time in Puro because the food we ate came from Lalawigan. *Palauán* was the common food.<sup>7</sup> Owing to the Revolution, the farmers could not work in their paddies.

When someone went to Lalawigan to get palauán, he first asked for a pass from the Americans in Puro. Without a pass one might be shot. Others went to Lalawigan with American companions. But it was dangerous to work in the fields because the insurgents [Filipinos] were the enemies of the Americans. If the insurgents saw a person in the field, they would shoot him. If a person came to Lalawigan without a pass, he also might be shot by the Americans.

We had a difficult life because food was scarce and we could not easily work the fields. Some of the Americans—I remember their names—were called Piscot [Prescott?], Quiambo, and Bacalao.

Our house was near the shore. Children were not allowed outside the house without a purpose because the Barrio Lieutenant, Lt. Baquelod, from Maydolong, [a community south of Lalawigan] was very strict. Any child seen outside the house, lingering around, was ordered to lay face down on the ground and then was whipped with a small piece of rattan. Children in Puro did not have time to play.

When I grew older, I sometimes went out with my brother to trap birds. Then there were plenty of birds in Puro, especially *owak* (crow). The reason why so many *owak* were in Puro was that some of the carabaos from Lalawigan were brought to Puro to protect them from the insurgents and Americans. When some carabaos were brought to Puro, they had a disease that attacks carabaos. When the dead carabaos were rotting, many *owak* came to eat them. I went with my brother and I brought home the *owak* we caught.

When we returned to Lalawigan the barrio was covered with tall grass. There were only five houses with people living in them. We built our house where we live today. While some of our relatives were building this small house, my father and mother cut the grass in the

---

<sup>6</sup> Make-shift huts usually are thatched with coconut leaves and often are not raised above the ground on piles.

<sup>7</sup> *Palauán*, *Cyrtosperma merkusii* (Hassk.) Schoot., has large, starchy rootstocks that are eaten when food is scarce. William H. Brown, *Useful Plants of the Philippines*, V. 1 (Manila, 1951), pp. 351-53.

yard and planted camotes. We got a good harvest from this camote field. Others, still living in Puro, saw our family living in Lalawigan with a nice camote field. They were encouraged to return to Lalawigan.

Soon the number of houses increased and the people also planted camotes. This was a common food—camotes and *palauán*. We could not work the paddies because of the scarcity of carabaos. Gradually, the grass was cleared from Lalawigan. Later on, my father built a bigger house in the same place. He made a *kaiñgin* in Laot, far away. I used to help my father make his *kaiñgin*. When copra was brought, I helped my parents make copra.

During the Pulahan period I attended Grade One under Mr. Miguel Martinez.<sup>8</sup> [I asked their relationship since they shared the same family name.] Miguel and my father were first cousins.<sup>9</sup> While in Grade One I studied Spanish under Mr. Quirino Azul. We used two books, *Manual de la Infancia* and *Caton Methodica*. [The informant then recited, in good English, "Mary had a Little Lamb." She was quite proud she remembered the verse from the first grade.]

The reason why I studied Spanish was that it was the order of my parents, especially my father. They were still influenced by the Spanish way of life. Anyone who failed to learn their assignment was punished. The boys were whipped and the girls had their palms slapped with a round flat piece of wood. Sometimes our palms were swollen. When we were given an assignment in the morning at the Spanish school, we had to memorize it by afternoon. This made it difficult for children who had poor memories for they were punished.

Because of this harsh treatment, many children, except the intelligent ones, hid and did not report to class. Later on all the children studying in the Spanish school transferred to the American school where there was no punishment. This was when Filipinos began to be attracted to Americans. Mr. Dicker was then the American superintendent of schools. [Who started the Spanish school?] This was a school run by Filipinos, but I don't know who organized it. No Spaniards were around then. There were only two living in Boroñgan.

---

<sup>8</sup> The *Pulahanes* were Samarans who fought the Americans during the aftermath of the Spanish-American war. They had a certain nativistic quality and many charms that supposedly protected them from harm.

<sup>9</sup> All information or questions in brackets were added or asked by the author.

Not long after this the *Pulahanes* arose. At that time the people in Lalawigan were advised to stay in the *sa-wang* [Boroñgan poblacion] but not all went. Those who were brave remained in Lalawigan. Before transferring to the town, an evacuation place was made near Duca, called Kalawid. [Why an evacuation camp so close to the barrio?] It was foolish to have it so near Lalawigan but they were advised by the Americans. Today I laugh when I think about it.

The *Pulahanes* first landed in Puro and from there came to Lalawigan about 4 p.m. Their purpose was to make an armistice with the (Filipino) Volunteer Guards for the Americans were in the town. My father was the chairman of the Volunteer Guards. They had a drinking party in Lalawigan. I was alone in a small hut in Kalawid and it was getting dark. A girl friend of mine living next door was also alone. Later my older sister came and told me that the *Pulahanes* had landed in Lalawigan.

I went and got my girl friend and we ran to the shore near Duca. It was already dark and we hid in some small trees growing in the shallow water. The high tide was coming in. We cried for the water was getting deeper and we did not know where to go. [Asked what happened to the elder sister; Engracia said she returned to Lalawigan.] Then we swam toward the shore, holding on to the trees and reached the beach. We rested on the shore and cried for we were uncertain where to go.

After resting we proceeded to a certain house. Here we found a woman crying for she had been told her husband had been captured by the *Pulahanes* on his farm. Good this woman had food to feed us—plenty of cooked clams. We stayed here all night. When morning came my relatives, sister, father and my mother, were looking for us. We returned to Kalawid and met my parents who were looking for us. I was questioned by my parents where I spent the whole night. I was questioned if I had eaten last night. I told them the whole story how I went to that house. We got the nickname, *Pagatpát*, for that is the name of the trees where we hid.<sup>10</sup>

We later heard that the prominent people (*dominaco*) in Lalawigan were all listed to be killed by the *Pulahanes*. My parents were worried by this news and decided

---

<sup>10</sup> *Pagatpát* (*Sonneratia caseolaris*, Linn., Engl.) is a tree "found along the seashore throughout the Philippines," William H. Brown, *Useful Plants of the Philippines*, V. 3 (Manila, 1946), pp. 44-49.

to go to town [Boroñgan] instead of Puro. If we stayed in Puro it would be harder to get food than if we lived in the town. So we went to the town. The tennis court in front of the Telecom building was then [the site of] a hospital. There were patients in the hospital from Maybocog, Lalawigan, Boroñgan, etc. One person, Alberto, died in the hospital. Many people attended his funeral—it was the best funeral I ever saw.

When in town there were many American tents near the present *municipio* that was near the [American] headquarters. We stayed a long time in the town because father bought a house. I was sent to school by mother. The school was located in the place where the post-office now stands. It had two stories. While I was in school the children in [Barrios] Bato and Tabok were prejudiced against me. Sometimes I got lost in the school because it was a big building. I cried. Sometimes my friends took me home while I was crying. [Why were the children prejudiced against you?] Because of their foolishness. They were whipped by the teacher in front of the class.

One of our neighbors had a [small] sugar cane field where we bought and then sold sugar cane to make a little money. We bought pencils and paper. One of our neighbors, close to our house, was the wife of an American who had two children. She was good to us. Whatever they had we were given, like food. This American house was a gambling place. Sometimes people spent the whole night gambling in the house so there were many people around. It was here we sold our sugar cane.

Because the gambling place was near, my friends and I woke early in the morning and went under the house and looked for money. Sometimes we found money [on the ground] under the house. We also found safety pins. It was expensive to live in the town so mother decided to return to Lalawigan, but we were left alone in the town because we were going to school.

There was less disorder in the locality by now. Then it was difficult because men were forced by American soldiers to go to the forest during their raids on the *Pulahanes*. These men carried their equipment and they had a hard time because they were heavily loaded. Because of this many men hid so they would not be found by the American soldiers.

While I was in school in the town, I went to Lalawigan every Wednesday and Saturday. My purpose in go-

ing home was to get food for the rest of the week. During Saturday and Sunday I used to go with my eldest sister, Felma\*, to the farm [i.e., kaiñgin] because we were told by our mother to make a camote field. I went with them to cook our food and wove coconut leaves for the walls and the roof of the hut in the field. I did not work on the farm because I was still small, only my sisters worked. [How old were you then?] About 9 to 10 years old, I guess.

Every Saturday and Sunday I went with them to the farm. After the camotes, we planted rice in the same field. After the rice harvest, the field was divided equally among us by my father so each had a plot to clear for planting camotes. Our father was very strict and we were forced to do our share for fear father might punish us. The purpose of dividing the field was that father wanted all of us to work equally. We cleaned the field the best we could and made a contest out of it to see who could finish first their part. After this the land was planted with camotes. The name of the place where our farm was located was Laot.

We were hard up then so we worked constantly to live. We were told to make copra in Laot for we had coconut trees there. We gathered the nuts. As soon as the copra was finished we carried the bags on our backs to Lalawigan. It was hard because there were no roads, so we passed along the beach.

Not long after this our mother died. While I was in Grade Three, I think. At this time it was my eldest sister, Felma, who did most of the work. She acted as a mother. After the death of my mother, she was worried how to take good care of us. After mother's death, father left us alone and went to Balod because he was looking for a partner [wife]. Our father was cruel to us. Sometimes my sisters were whipped by my father, not me so much because I was in the town most of the time.

Our eldest sister was very good to us. She helped me while I was in school. Good I was in school because I was not punished by my father, but the rest of my sisters were punished during my absence. Every Wednesday when I came home, they told me they had been punished by father, especially when he got drunk.

We were left by our father in our house which needed repairs badly. My two elder sisters, Felma and Pilar\*, went to Maypandang [south of Lalawigan] to gather nipa and made nipa shingles. The people were encouraging my



eldest sister to marry but Felma said: "I will never marry until my younger sisters are older because no one will take good care of them."

My oldest sister was good to me. We used to work together. So we soon were in a better economic condition. This was the time our father returned home. It was the time that my sister and brothers were sent to school, although some of them did not continue their studies. I was the only one interested in going to school. It was a sacrifice for me to go to school. I didn't have money for pencils, paper, and notebooks. What Felma did was to husk two or three coconuts, and I took them to the market and sold them for 5 centavos each. Then I was able to buy my school supplies. I did this many times.

My father discouraged me from continuing my studies. Sometimes I was whipped by father who said: "We don't have money to pay your school fees." Yet I insisted on going to school. Sometimes I cried. I was worried for if I stopped my studies, I could not learn English. My father told me: "You can read *novenas* already.<sup>11</sup> That is enough. What you desire is to be able to write love letters to your sweetheart."<sup>12</sup> I was the brightest pupil in our class. I got first prize in embroidery.

In our programs every Friday there was a rule that girls had to wear a *camisola* (a dress like *daraga* wear today) with a cap. We could not wear our skirt, *kimona* and *candongga* (scarf). It was hard for us to follow this rule because we were in the habit of wearing the skirt and we insisted on wearing it.

When father returned from Balod, I was still going to school, returning home Wednesdays and Saturdays. The following week [after her father returned from Balod] when I came home, on Wednesday, I found that many benches and chairs were in the house, including a big table. I asked my sisters: "What did you do last night?" But no one told me what happened. Later on I heard from my friends that last night we had visitors for a marriage negotiation for me. But my sisters did not tell me.

---

<sup>11</sup>A *novena* is usually nine successive nights of prayers. Various *novenas* are printed in different Philippine languages in little booklets and sold throughout the country.

<sup>12</sup>In the rural Philippines, young people often court by exchanging love letters. Frequently, these letters are smuggled to the boy and girl by their friends. Inexpensive pamphlets are published, many in Cebu, that contain sample love letters that may be copied or used as models. For example, *Basahon sa Olitawo ug Dalaga* (Cebu City, no date, 32 pages) contains a series of letters ("*Mga Sulat Sa Gugma*") exchanged between a young man and his sweetheart.

I cried and was worried. But I did not show my anger to my father over the marriage negotiation. My father was very strict. A little mistake and one was punished. We couldn't go out without asking his permission, especially to dances. No matter how much I wanted to go, if my father wouldn't permit me I couldn't go. If I went out without permission, I might be scolded or whipped.

Then my father questioned me. "Why don't you want to marry?" I said to my father: "If you could afford it, I'd like to continue my studies." Father said: "If you marry without my permission, what shall I do to punish you?" I promised him that if I married without his knowledge and permission, he could cut me to pieces. I said: "You can cut off my fingers." Then I went to the town and did not return home during the weekends. I did not have enough food, so I ate with some of my friends in the town. For I did not want to return home any more. I was angry, but I didn't show it to my father for fear I would be punished.

Later I wrote a letter to father telling him that I was going with my cousin to San Julian [a municipality north of Boroñgan] and couldn't come home. [Did your father call off the marriage?] I insisted I would not marry because I wanted to continue my studies. I was advised by my sisters to tell my father that I didn't want to marry because I wanted to continue my studies. I cried before him.

My father answered my letter. He would not permit me to go to San Julian. Because of his letter and my fear I would be punished, I didn't go to San Julian. I came home. On my arrival I was advised by my elder sisters to approach my father, to tell him I was not ready to marry and wished to continue my schooling. I went to father, cried before him, and as a result I did not marry the man for my father had not made the final decision during the negotiations. He only said to wait for he wanted to ask me if I would like to marry the man. According to my father, he said to the persons at the negotiations, "Her body is mine but not her mind." So I moved to my grandmother's house [mother's mother] and lived there.

While I stayed with my grandmother, I visited my sisters but spent most of my time with my grandmother. While I was there, another man came for a marriage negotiation, but I insisted I would not marry and even got angry. I disliked this man more than the first one. But my relatives were encouraging me to marry. My father and uncles were trying to force me to marry this second

man, I insisted I would not marry. Another grandmother [father's father's sister] went to my father. She advised him not to force me to marry for my grandmother said I was very unhappy. If I were forced to marry, I might not stick to the marriage later on.

Then I moved back to our house [in Lalawigan] and stayed with my father and sisters. I heard that this [second] man was insisting on marrying me and that my father and relatives liked him. I went personally to this man's house and told them [his relatives] that their purpose was hopeless. Still I heard rumors that they were going to have a *pagsayod*. Because of these rumors, I planned to go to our farm known as Hilo-agan. This was on Thursday. I asked permission from my sisters before I left, telling them I would return on Saturday for the *sayod*.<sup>13</sup> I went to our farm alone, arriving there in the afternoon. I stayed with my grandmother [father's father's sister]. I stayed there until Saturday. My grandmother asked me why I came. I told her that I came because father and my relatives were forcing me to marry against my will.

On Saturday I saw my father coming. When he arrived, I asked him: "What about the marriage negotiation?" My father said: "I don't know. I came here to take you home." Before we left I said to him: "Father, I'll go with you but I'll stop by the man's house and tell him not to continue the negotiations." On the way home I was crying and kept repeating: "Father, I will tell the man I am not ready to marry." We separated. Father went along the beach and I took the road so I could stop by the man's house. I stopped at the man's house and told him I wasn't ready to marry.

When night came the man insisted on coming to the house of my grandmother [mother's mother] where I lived before. He was met by all my relatives and my father. Finally my father said: "I find that my daughter, Engracia, is not ready to marry. We can't do anything. Of course, I can force her but if I do, I fear something bad will happen in the future.'

I continued my studies after this incident. I was in Grade six. [How old were you?] About 16 years. I failed to finish the sixth grade. Later another man began to court me but I didn't like him. This man was too aggressive; he often visited me. When there was a dance, he wanted to

---

<sup>13</sup> When the parents and relatives of the boy and girl meet to discuss the possibility of marriage for their children.

dance with me all the time. At this time it was unusual to dance every dance with one boy, even if you were engaged to the boy—not like today.

One time a dance was to be held and Datoy [nickname of the man, given at my request] invited me to go with him. But I hated him. What I did, because he was pressing me, was to tell him I couldn't go to the dance because I wasn't feeling well, although I was not sick. I also told him I had locked my trunk [where she kept her nice dresses] and the key was in the hands of my elder sister who was on the farm. I said I didn't expect she would return that afternoon. I had the key myself.

He often visited me at night. When I learned he was coming, I would hide under a big tree and it was at night. Then Datoy would leave. Datoy was always coming to my house. When my sister told me he was coming, I would go to another house to hide from him.

It was hard then because when one's parents liked the man, they forced the daughter to marry him. If you didn't agree with your parents, you would be punished. This is one reason why I failed to continue my studies because so many men were always courting me.

Datoy kept on courting me. For more than one week we didn't see each other for I was avoiding him. Datoy told his relative, Rafael,\* husband of Maria,\* that I was not entertaining him, and didn't want to meet him. Datoy asked Rafael: "Please tell Engracia not to treat me this way or find out why she is treating me this way." The following night Rafael visited me, advised me to treat Datoy fairly, not to show that I disliked him even if in my heart I really didn't like him.

Later we met when he visited me at home. Another awkward habit of Datoy was that he liked to sit very close to me. My parents and elders didn't like this. So next time he visited me I prepared two chairs. Before we were sitting on a bench. When he came, we sat on the separate chairs. When he moved his chair nearer to mine, I moved mine away a little. I didn't like my father and my elder sisters to see me sitting so close to Datoy.

This time I asked him: "What is your purpose in coming here? Are you willing to marry me?" Datoy answered: "What do you think is my purpose? My purpose is not merely to visit but to marry you." I answered: "If that is your purpose, why not call my father and

*mana* [eldest sister] and tell them you are willing to marry me." So I called my *mana* who was in the kitchen. When I called my *mana*, he felt insulted. He thought I was joking with him. I insisted it was for him to ask father and my *mana* if he were willing to marry me. Datoy was just approaching me [about marriage] and not my father or *mana*.

I promised my father that I would never marry without his consent and knowledge. But Datoy didn't try to talk to my father or *mana*. Once he even brought a marriage contract for me to sign. But I didn't sign. I told Datoy: "If you are willing to marry me and want me to sign this contract, call my father and let him sign first and then I will sign." Datoy's purpose in bringing the marriage contract was that he was planning to leave for two years and he wanted to marry me when he returned. He pressed me to sign the contract for he was leaving the following day.

After a long conversation, I finally told him: "If you are true and sincere, get your father and we will go to Balod to my father." He was staying there in our house at night because we had chickens in Balod. My purpose was to test Datoy's sincerity, but he didn't get his father, so he was not sincere.

Before he left he exchanged his ring for my ring. Datoy said when he gave his ring to me: "Here is my ring. It is for you to keep. If you don't like this ring, you may give it to another, but do not give it to a man." He further said: "I'll be away for two years. I hope you will not marry another man." Later on I gave his ring to my sister because I didn't want to wear it. When I married Dikoy, the sister of Datoy asked for the ring. I told the sister: "It is true I have the ring, but I will not give it to you, not unless Datoy gets the ring. You don't know what our agreement was in exchanging the rings." [Did you give Datoy your ring?] Yes, it was an ordinary ring with a cat's eye for a stone while his ring was gold-plated.

Once, a day before Christmas, Datoy came to my house, inviting me to go to town to attend mass. At this time my friend and I were already set to go, but I told him: "I don't plan to go to mass." The moment Datoy left I went to my friend's house. We passed through the coconut trees, a short-cut, running as fast as we could. There were no trucks then. We went to mass. When Datoy came home that night, he came to my house but I wasn't

home. The following day, when I arrived from town, I met him. He said to me: "Oh, you are a liar. You told me you were not going to town, but you weren't home last night." My friend and I kept on laughing.

After I quit school I stayed in the house and did household work. I was unhappy because father would not send me to school. Whenever I asked my father if I could return to school, he always said he didn't have the money. My *mana* was a girl and had no money to help me. Maybe this was the reason why father did not let me continue school—he wanted me to get married. But I didn't want to marry yet.

Then the parents of Dikoy came to my father to request that I marry him. Dikoy didn't court me and I didn't want to marry at that time. I got married through the will of my father.

Before our wedding I stayed in the house of my cousin in Lalawigan to indicate I didn't want to get married. One time my father came with a broom and threatened me with it. When I returned home my sister encouraged me to marry for my father liked Dikoy. I got a tin can, threw it at my sister, hitting her forehead, making it bleed.

After this I went to town. [Whom did you stay with?] My first cousin. This was ten days before our wedding. I kept silent and didn't prepare anything. Usually, before a wedding, one is very busy. My cousin made my wedding dress. My friends asked me what arrangements were made for our *kombete*,<sup>14</sup> were we having an orchestra, etc.? I just said: "I don't know." My sisters were encouraging me. Sometimes I said to my sisters: "If you like him so much, why not marry him?" [During most of this session, she laughed heartily.]

We were married on Tuesday, not like today when one gets married on Wednesday. We also did not have to get a license at the *municipio*. The orchestra was waiting for me. The plan was that we would be followed to the church by the orchestra. Many were dragging me down from the house for Dikoy and the orchestra were waiting for me. I didn't say anything. When the orchestra was near the church, it was followed by Dikoy only. Then I came down from the house. During our wedding I didn't say anything until the wedding was finished.

---

<sup>14</sup>The *kombete* is the feast that follows the wedding, at both the bride, and the groom's dwellings.

It was like I didn't know what was going on during the wedding. I didn't know what the priest was saying. My sisters were busy preparing for the *kombete*. Before the wedding the parents of Dikoy brought money and jewels to be used in the wedding. But I didn't know the amount. I went to Dikoy's house and returned the money the following day. [How much?] I don't know, I didn't open it. I just threw the money on the floor and said: "Here is your money. I don't want it." Dikoy's father said: "What's wrong, *baying?* Do you want more money? Please wait and I'll give you more." But I didn't wait, I just left Dikoy's house and went home.

[With whom did you stay after you married Dikoy?] We lived with my husband's parents until we had two children. While living with my husband's parents I soon had a child. I stayed home with my child while Dikoy worked on the farm with his father. Everywhere my husband's father worked, Dikoy was with him. But he was working separately. They made copra and farmed. These were the ways we made our living. Although we lived with my husband's parents, we earned our own living and did not depend much on my husband's parents. Since my husband decided to live with his parents, I followed him. I tell my children now that we didn't do like newly married couples do today, living with one parent and then another. When we were newly married, we began immediately to earn our own living, though we lived with my husband's parents.

As one reads Engracia's story, two themes emerge clearly. First, her high evaluation of a formal education. Only Engracia's persistence enabled her to continue schooling, in the face of both inadequate funds and her father's objections. Engracia's sex did not work in her favor for then, less so today, the education of women was believed less important than men. Lengthy schooling was not felt essential for a woman's life revolved around the "three Ks"—children, kitchen, and church. One innovation that has modified this attitude, perhaps more than any other factor in the rural area—was the opening of school teaching to women.

Second, Engracia's emphasis of the continual pressure, particularly by a stern father, for his daughter to wed. When Engracia did marry, against her will, the selection of a husband apparently was a wise choice. All evidence and observation strongly indicates that Engracia and Dikoy had been happily married. Their family is a source of pride and, in their later years, they live comfortably

and respected in their community. Parentally arranged marriages were not, necessarily, unhappy marriages.

In contemporary Lalawigan, however, Engracia's father would be an anachronistic individual. The concept of romantic love has assumed almost primary importance in the selection of a mate. Parents rarely force children, particularly sons, to wed against their wishes. It is realized that if there are no serious objections to the marriage — impediments accepted by the local community — parental refusal to sanction the union probably will result in elopement. Although the ancient facade of marriage negotiations remains, and parental approval is highly desirable, the power of the choice of a mate, in most cases, has passed now to the young people. This is only one aspect of the growing individualization of social relations in barrio life.