

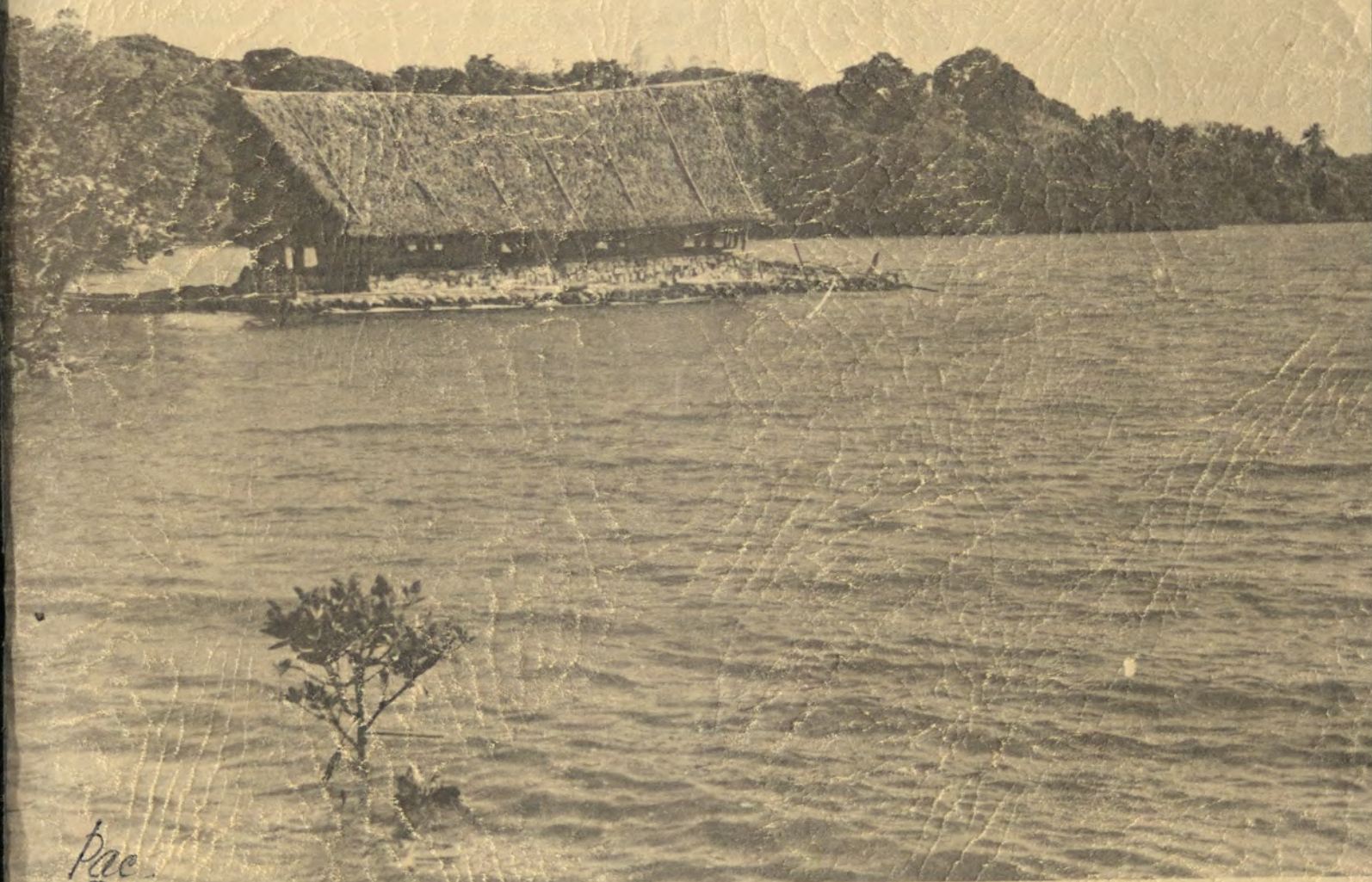
# KAKROM

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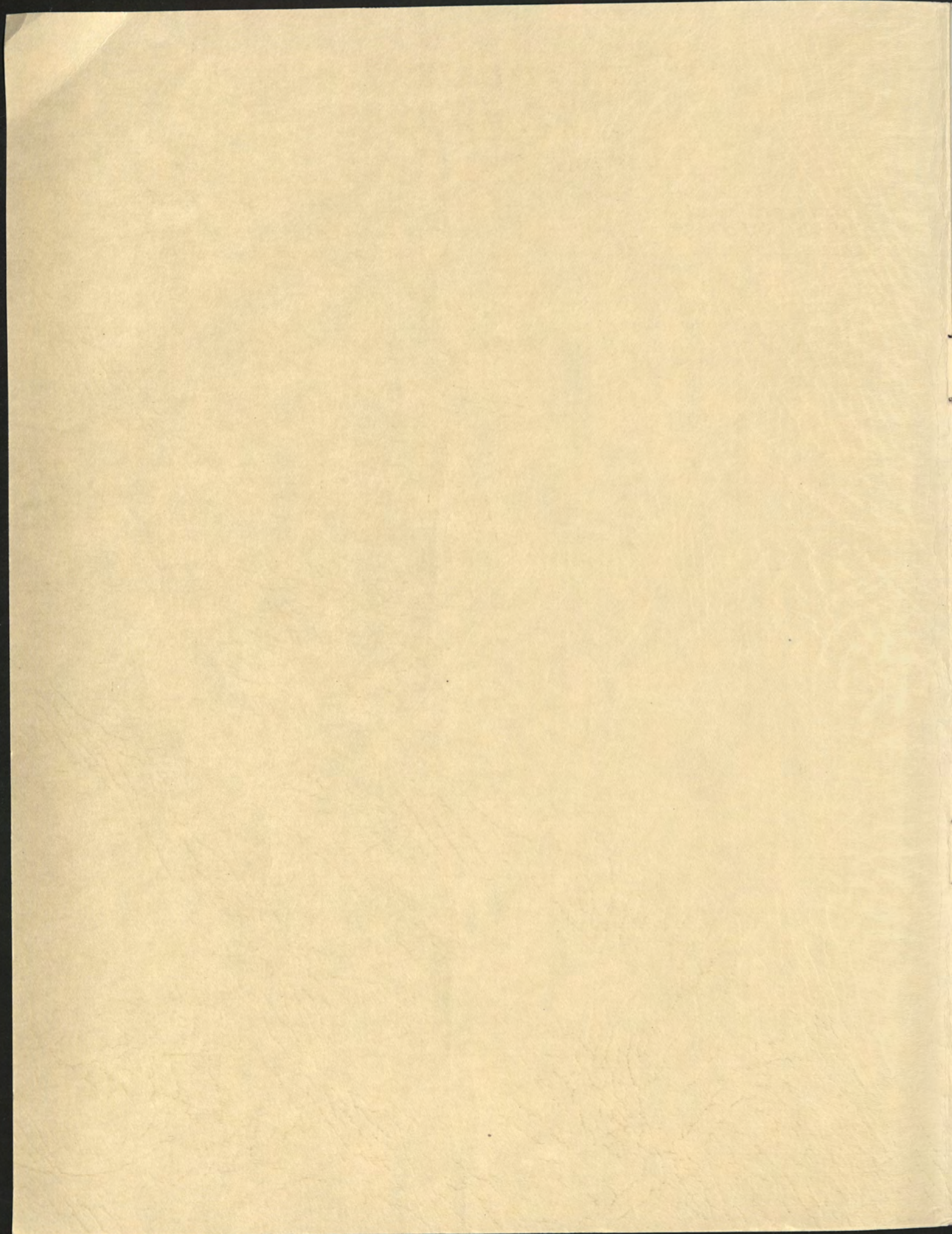
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# Introduction

The materials presented herein were developed under Title IX Grant No. G007602908, a grant from the United States Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the United States Office of Education, and no official endorsement by the United States Office of Education should be inferred.

Kakrom, published bi-annually by a few selected students participating in two special classes called Yapese Cultural Studies jointly offered at the Yap Junior High and Yap Senior High schools in Yap District, is the product of the students' efforts to extract information from the Yapese resource people in the various villages on the island. The efforts and cooperation shared between them made it possible to put things in the form of a magazine. This is the first student attempt from these joint-project high schools to take part in a TT-wide project in which participating students and their communities are engaged in the process to get hold of a way to preserve their culture, their ways of living in a rapidly changing world. Kakrom represents to the staff the qualities and values of the Yapese people and their cultural heritage. The staff has had the pleasant task of capturing this uniqueness of Yapese tradition and other island features for all to enjoy. We hope our Kakrom will brighten your days and be of lasting value.

Sebastian L. Anefal  
Teacher/Advisor

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It seems an almost endless task to thank the people whose efforts have produced this first issue of Kakrom. On behalf of the Kakrom staff, we heartily thank all the Yapese people who served as resources, offering their valuable time and permission to make the stories appearing in this magazine possible. We are greatly in debt to them all since they contributed so much to this work. Each in some way played an important role in the accomplishment of this magazine. We certainly will never forget all these local people whom we interviewed. Their extended skillful knowledge in and experience of the Yapese cultural heritage were a great help to the start of our stories. They made the stories more accurate and interesting than what the staff could put together. To our belief, all the information gathered from these important people has made the stories wonderful, if not excellent.

Special thanks and recognition must go to our hard-working teacher/advisors, Sebastian L. Anefal (Yap Senior High School) and Robert A. Ruecho (Yap Junior High School), whose combined efforts, instruction, advice and knowledge brought us to this unique accomplishment, containing "Yapese information by Yapese". Without their constant hard, tedious work and frequent encouragement, this magazine would not have been possible.

We are deeply grateful to both Gary E. Smith, Principal of Yap Sr. High School, and Jean Kirschenman of the Yap MICAL Program who assisted in the grammar correction of the stories. We owe much to Mr. Smith for lending us material and technical assistance at crucial times.

Thanks also to the Faculty and Staff of both the Yap Sr. High and Yap Jr. High for all the technical assistance provided for the benefit of this special class, the Yapese Cultural Studies, at each school.

We are very appreciative and thankful to the Yap District Department of Education Administration for allowing the District Social Studies Department to include into the two schools' curricula the Yapese Cultural Studies class, and to take part in this project where several schools in the Trust Territory also offer special cultural classes. In the same line, we would also like to say "KAMMAGAR" to:

Headquarters Department of Education, Saipan

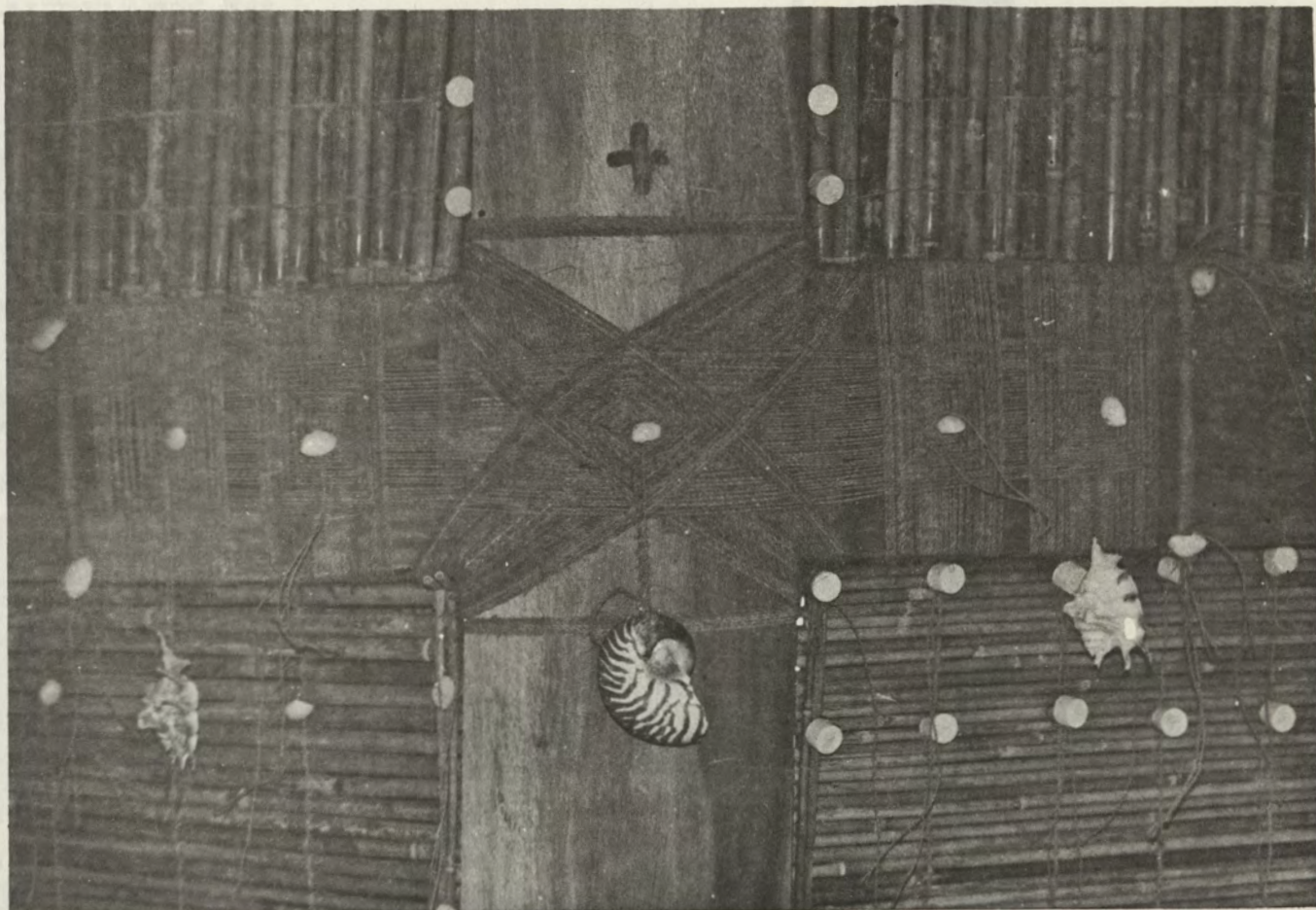
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Our last thanks, but not least, must go to George Haberman, Social Studies Coordinator, and Celestino Emwalu, Assistant Social Studies Coordinator, both of Headquarters Education, Saipan. Their continual and direct assistance in forwarding the required material supplies for the project course prompted this first edition.

We sincerely thank all who helped. We apologize for the inadequacies. We alone may be held accountable for them. We hope that this magazine will be helpful to those who wish to know more about the Yapese culture.

Tamdad, Editor



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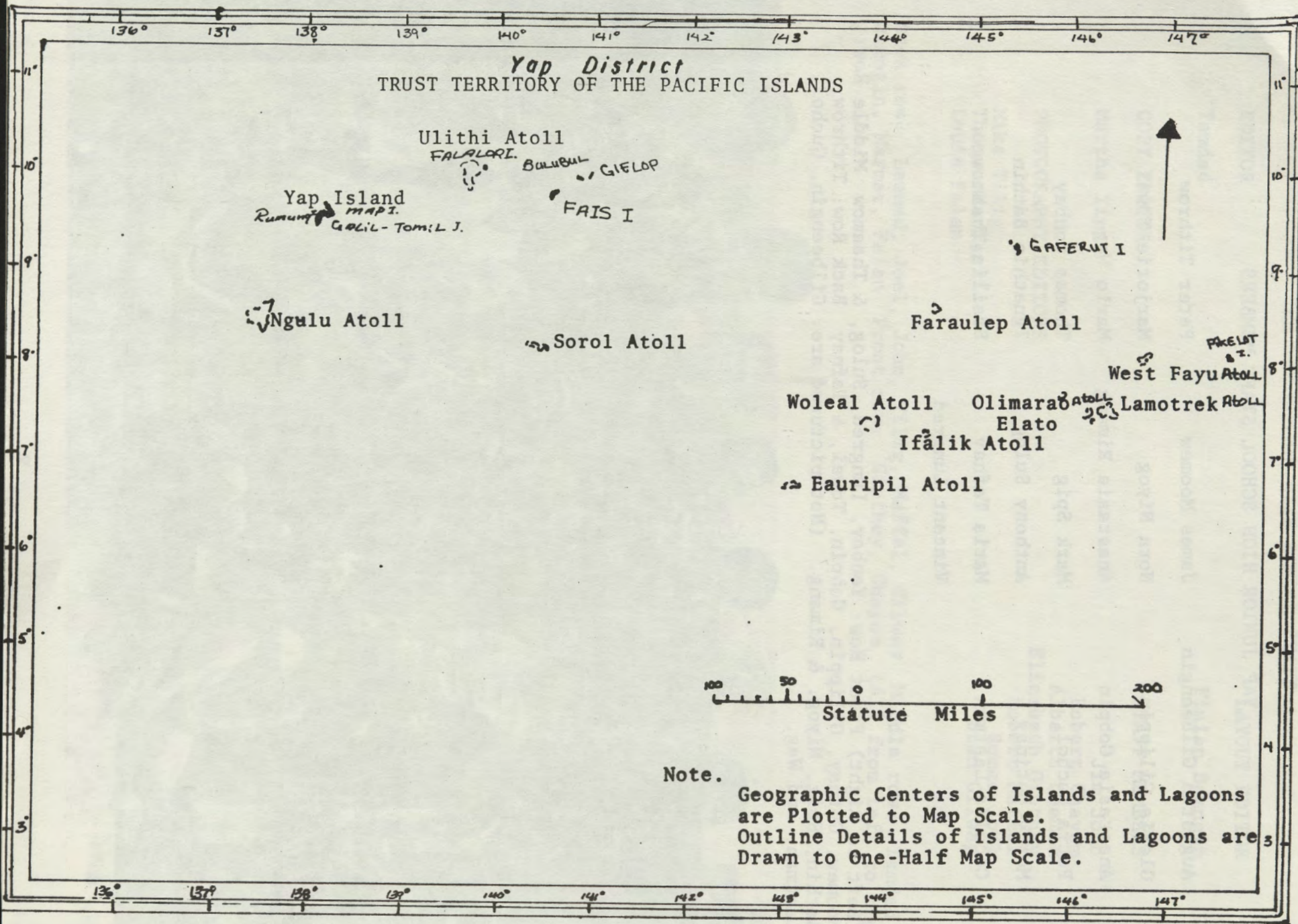


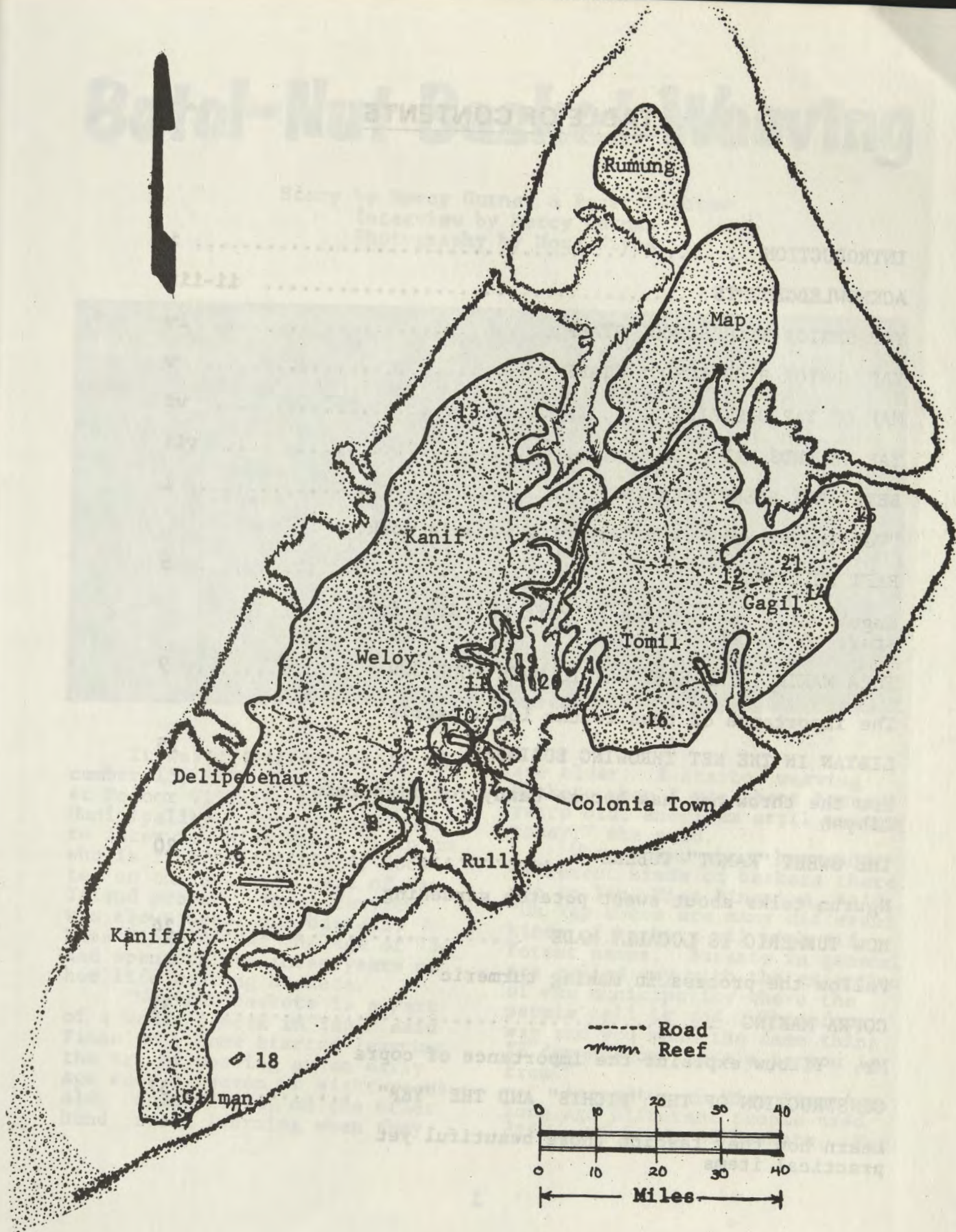
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# Betel-Nut Basket Weaving

Story by Mercy Gutnay & Peter Tithrow

Interview by Mercy Gutnay

Photography by Nora Niyog



It was mid-afternoon on December 13, 1977 when we arrived at Fedoor Village, Dalipebinaw Municipality. Our purpose, was to interview Miss Maria Pinan'um who is from this village, located on the southern part of Yap Island proper. The interview was about betel-nut baskets. Miss Pinan'um, at the age of 73, had spent thirty-three years of her life weaving baskets.

"Weaving baskets is a part of a woman's work in Yap," said Pinan'um. Some started learning the art of weaving at an early age such as seven or eight years old. Some people, on the other hand, start learning when they

are older. I started weaving baskets when I was about forty years old, and I am still weaving today," she said.

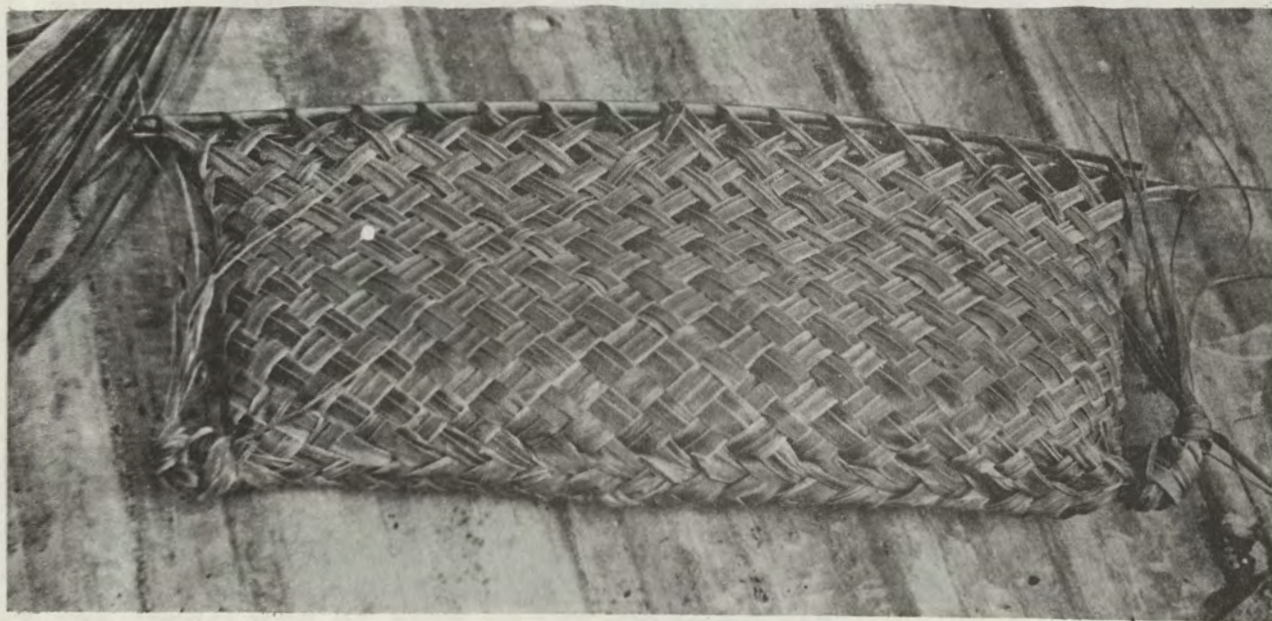
When asked about how many different kinds of baskets there are on Yap, Miss Pinan'um, said, "On Yap there are many different kinds of baskets all with different names. Baskets in general are called way with the exception of one municipality where the people call it yod. Therefore, way and yod mean the same thing. It depends on where a person is from."

According to Miss Pinan'um, long ago different people used different kinds of baskets. For

example, people of higher caste used baskets different from the kinds people of lower castes used. That practice is fading nowadays. "People use whatever kinds of baskets they want, or whatever kinds are available to them despite old customs and traditions. Things are really mixed up.

Pinan'um. People today, are inventing new kinds of baskets; baskets that people long time ago did not know how to weave.

In order for someone to weave a betelnut basket, she must first select the right kinds of coconut leaves. Small coconut leaves are usually good and are



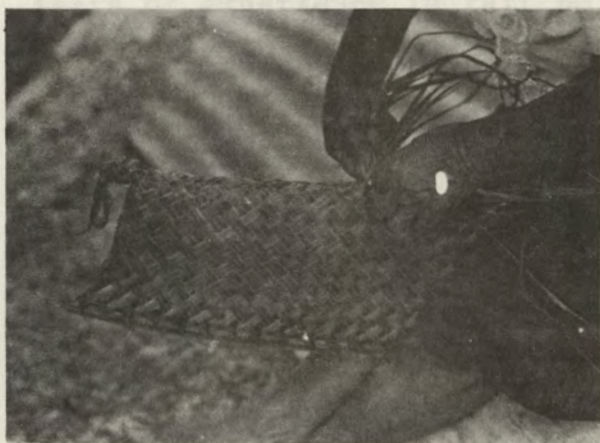
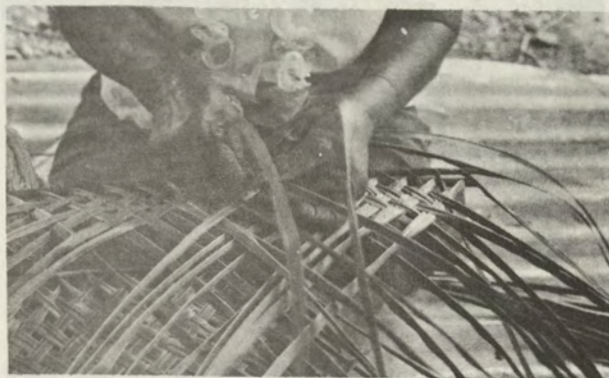
People of higher caste use baskets which used to be for lower caste people and vice-versa," said Pinan'um.

Miss Pinan'um named some different kinds of baskets woven on Yap proper. They are: "fan-wul'", used by people of low caste; "chel", made from only one leaf and used by older people; "fathlap"; "fene Gilman", used by people of Gilman Municipality; "Maseyran", woven out of the fairly young or sprouting coconut leaves; and finally, "chibalaw", which is another kind of basket. People of different villages weave other kinds of baskets with names and uses unknown to Miss

found on old, tall coconut trees and/or the very young ones. Secondly, she sort of roasts the leaves over an open fire and lays them under the sun to finish drying. Drying under the sun will take two to four days depending on the weather. When the leaves are dried well, then she cuts the leaves equal to the length of basket desired. Since the leaves are wrinkled at this stage, a grinder-shell is used to smooth the leaves before the actual weaving begins.

According to Miss Pinan'um, there are many different kinds of baskets for different people of different villages according to

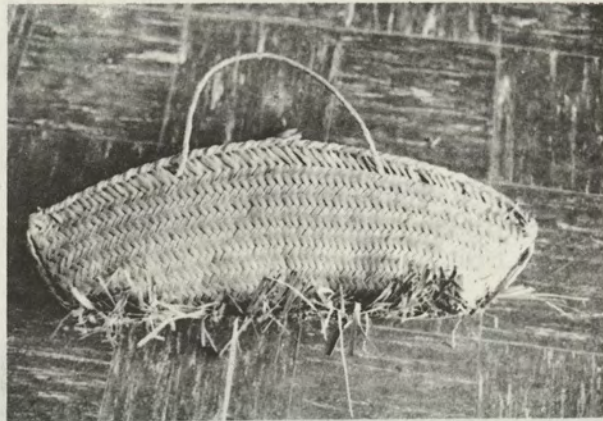
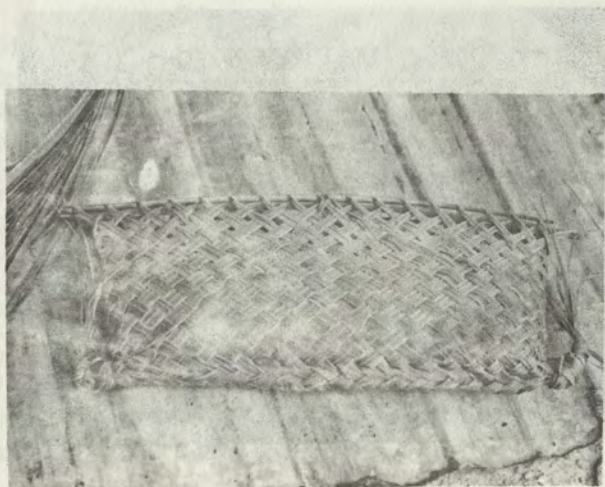
the caste system here on Yap.  
 "Long time ago, people of low  
 caste could not use baskets be-  
 longing to the people of higher  
 caste, but now everything is  
 mixed up and basket usage is no  
 exception!," said Pinan'um.





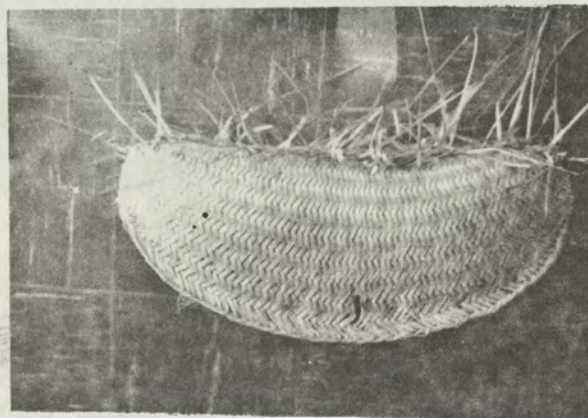
(It takes one coconut leaf to weave the basket above. Although some people use this kind to carry their betel-nut in it, most people prefer the other kinds of baskets--the fancy type).

(The basket below looks better than the one above. Two leaves are needed in order to weave this kind of basket. Lots of people use this kind of basket nowadays).



It takes about four leaves to weave the basket.

For the basket below, it takes six to eight leaves to weave one. It looks fancy, but it does not last as long as the one above.



A finished basket is used to keep things inside: betel-nuts, pepper leaves, and lime are the most common contents. Some people put other small valuable things inside, too. In Yap, men and women, both carry betel-nut baskets. Do not mistake a man for a woman because both sexes carry baskets. Unlike the United States where only women carry purses.

# Raft Building

Interview by James Moomew

Story by Petra Guchol

Photography by Basilia Thaamow & Petra Guchol



Yap's younger generation does not really care much about the local skills such as building canoes, rafts, houses, etc. As a result for example, only a handful of canoes are still seen around the island of Yap. Although more rafts than canoes are seen today in Yap, it is believed that if we do not try to preserve the skill of raft building, it will be lost for good in the near future.

Searching for a skillful person in raft building is sometimes hard, but we were fortunate to come across the right person. This forty-three year old man by

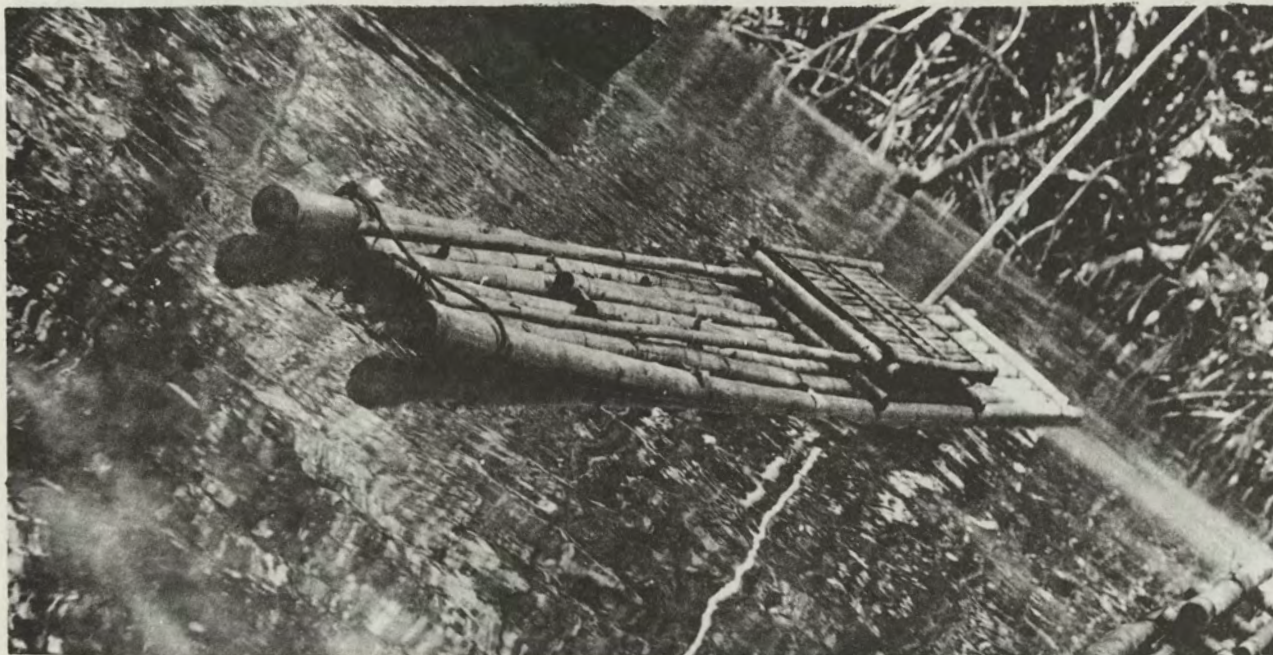
the name of Serafin Kuguy possesses the skill and has eighteen years of experience in raft building.

When asked about raft building in general, he, in turn, asked another question, "What kind of raft are you interested in?" Just then we learned that there is more than one kind of raft. But with a slight smile on his face, Mr. Kuguy said, "There are two kinds of rafts; the first one is called fofot and the second one is called wup-eb, which is the bigger one. The fofot is commonly used when people go fishing. The bigger one, wup-eb

is used for carrying a big load of cargo or whatever. Fofot and wup-eb are similar, except that one is bigger and one is smaller.

"To start building a raft, you just have to cut bamboo. The green bamboo is used only if you really need a raft right away. The brown or dead bamboo, on the other hand, are used if you want a raft to last. Still, if you

process saying, "You cut the green bamboo and put it in the sea water and let it stay there for quite awhile. You have to wait until the green color of the bamboo changes into brown, or until you are certain that sea water is soaked well into the bamboo before you remove it and place it on the dry land. Then you must wait until it is

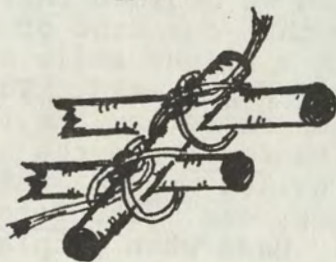


really want a raft that will last longer, you should choose the green although you have to go through a long process", said Kuguy. He further explained the

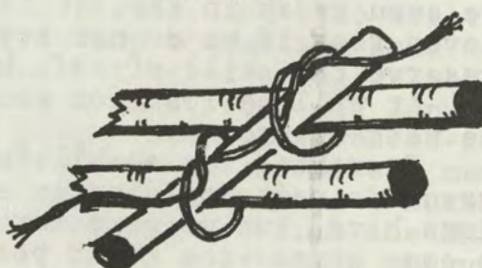
dried before you start building your raft."

"After all the bamboo is dried up, you gather the pieces together and cut them at the de-

K'AY



CHAGAR





sired length, then tie them together. As far as tying, we use two different kinds of tying methods; one is called chagar and the other one is called k'ay. After all the pieces of bamboo are put together, you take a short piece of bamboo called chogoyol and cut it with its length equal to the width of the raft and place it across the bunch of bamboo. The chogoyol, or cross pieces, should be on top of the rest of the bamboo and not underneath. Then take a piece of string or vine and start tying," said Kuguy. According to Mr. Kuguy, people long time ago, used only coconut ropes and/or vines for tying. (People nowadays can choose from a wider variety of ropes, wires, and so forth--things that the outsiders have brought into Yap.) "Before all the tyings are done, all the bamboo must be cut to the desired length of the raft then holes





should be made at one end of each piece of bamboo. You tie the chogoyol to each piece of bamboo lying beneath it, and then go on to the next, doing the same thing until all the bamboo are tied to same chogoyol. Now, proceed to the next chogoyol and do the same. After this stage, you have to worry about the platform which sits on the raft. (Refer to picture #1.)

For the platform, you have to cut pieces of bamboo equal in length to the length of platform desired and strip all the bamboo into the desired width.

Even though both kinds of rafts are useful, we must not forget that our popular Yapese stone money which was mined in Guam and Palau was brought to Yap mostly on rafts--the bigger kind called wup-eb.



# Tuba Making: An Easy Way To Make Your Own

by Louis Falan

Do you like to drink tuba? Many people do, but take a close look at it. There are two types of tuba. One is very sweet and tasty and is a non-intoxicating drink while the other one can certainly make people dead drunk. It is soury bitter.

Tuba is considered important by some Yapese people. Why? The natural taste of many local foods can be improved through the use of tuba in cooking. It is also a "mild" drink for some people compared to wine. And more importantly, it has been a quite nutritious diet for most Yapese babies.





Many of the locally grown food crops, such as taro and breadfruit, can be cooked in a pot with sweet tuba which adds a sweet taste to the food. This is quite often done by the people in the outer islands where there is not much fresh water available for cooking.

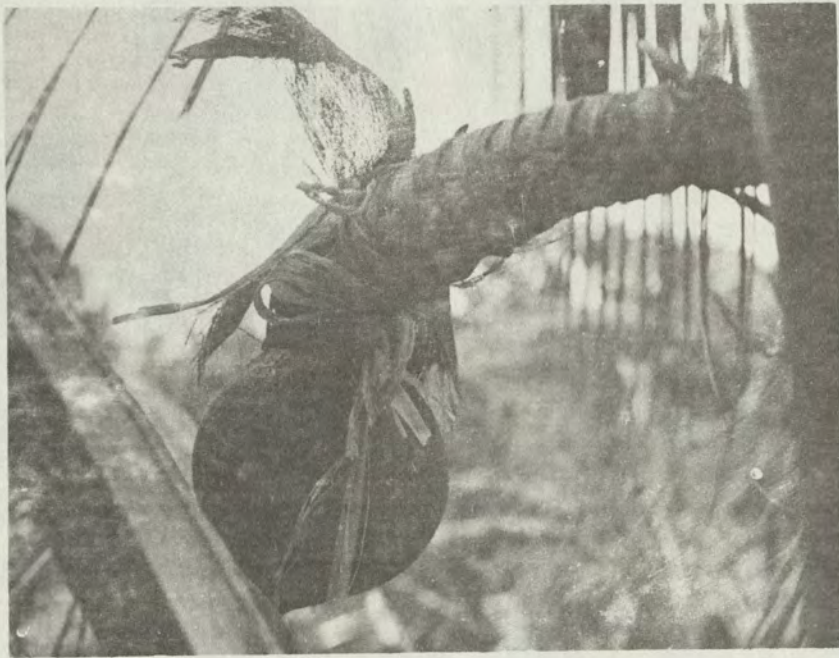
"Since tuba is not hard to make, almost anybody--men, women, or children--can easily make their own," Mr. En encourages. "All it takes to make the drink is the time to climb the coconut tree three times a day." Mr. En, who is now in his early 30's, has been in the business of making tuba since he was a teenager. He resides in Makiy, Gagil.

During the Japanese Administration and the Naval Occupation of the islands, many people were involved in tuba-making due to the fact that they had no other choice. They were limited to tuba as there was no other booze available. But this was a secret for most of them, if not all, which had to be kept from the Japanese authority, as the 'natives' were not to consume nor possess any alcoholic beverages. With the Naval Administration this was not longer a secret among the tuba makers. It is said that many people began making it to offer to the Navy personnel in exchange for something.

Today, the making of tuba is obviously lessening due to the increasing importation of all types of alcoholic beverages, sugar and syrup, and bottled baby foods. "The Yapese are becoming more and more dependent on the western innovations, but they are very, very expensive," Mr. En points out. Apparently, the few who still make tuba nowadays are old people who cannot



Using a sharp knife to cut off a small piece of the "ICHIF" means the gripping of both hands: one to hold and the other to cut.



afford the expense of liquor at the local stores.

Most people were involved in tuba-making some thirty years ago because it served as a source of income for their families. The fermented tuba used to be sold in gallon and half-gallon jugs for about fifty cents per gallon. On the average tuba-makers were making nearly four dollars a day, which seemed to be a very steady income for most people at that time. With higher earnings available for many people today, the idea of selling tuba has begun to wear off.

What is needed to make tuba? A healthy-looking coconut tree of normal height (25 ft.) is needed first. Some trees are better than others, of course. Sometimes a tree that does not bear very many coconuts can be very productive; other times, one teeming with coconuts is better. Some people choose trees with a certain number and appearance of leaves. People usually select trees that are near their residence for the convenience in maintaining them, and to keep other bootleggers or thieves from the trees.

The tree is to be climbed three times a day, so generally people cut steps into the stem of the tree to provide easy and safe climbing. For trees that are not very tall, a step ladder can be used for climbing. Using the ladder is better for young trees than cutting steps into them. In carving out the steps on the tree, the tuba maker uses a hand-ax. The tree has to be left alone to "recover" from the "step wounds" for a period of about one month. After the healing period, the tree is to be cleared of coconuts and all other unnecessary

things on it.

The tuba maker has to be very selective and accurate in choosing the ICHIF, the tuba-producing flower bud on the tree, for neither an overgrown nor an undergrown Ichif is productive. He has to know exactly when it is ready and capable to produce tuba. When it is, a hibiscus string is generally wrapped all around the Ichif to prevent it from rupturing or blooming away. The growth of the Ichif is then controlled by the string; once every two weeks the string should be loosened to allow for some expansion. A sharp knife is used to cut a small piece off the tip of the Ichif and this is done three times a day. The Ichif itself has to be forced from its natural growing position gradually by pulling it downward with an attached string in a horizontal position so that the tuba juice can easily drip into a DAG, the coconut shell catchment fastened under the Ichif. To make the intoxicating tuba, the same Dag is used day after day, allowing yeast to form in the bottom of it. So all the while tuba is dripping into the Dag, fermentation is also taking place. The sweet and non-alcoholic tuba is obtained in the same way except that the Dag is replaced in the morning and evening. The Dag is carefully washed with salt-water to prevent any yeast formulation. By not allowing any fermentation process the tuba therefore remains sweet. Both types, however, have to be filtered before consumption. The "soury smell" do attract many insects.

No one really knows for sure when tuba-making started on Yap, but according to our tuba-making expert Mr. En, "It was in prac-



tice long before the coming of Spaniards to the islands. It could have been here for over two hundred years, but it was not until the Germans' time when more people first learned to make alcoholic drinks out of it." Long before that, tuba or ACHIF, as the Yapese call it, was just used in cooking.

When we look at it now, tuba-making is losing its value as was practiced long ago. Most people today make tuba because they want to get drunk on it, and not to make extra income. Something that, only a few decades ago, many families depended on to make their living. Today, what is to preserve? The drink or the drunk?



Interview by Tamdad and Jim John

Photos by Tamdad.

Story by Tamdad.

# ***Libyan In The Net Throwing Business***



It is our intent to make this article for the interest of other people. Net throwing, locally called TALADA, has been used for fishing for the last fifty years. Mr. Libyan, a resident of Gilman, is a long time user of the throw net. His experience with the use of net throwing has been most satisfying.

"Net throwing was first introduced in Yap District just a few years before the second war, but has spread to other parts of the Island. It was really the people of the Mariaras who introduced it to the Yapese. At that time I was just a young boy, but many people were using throw nets. And it was from them that the Yapese learned how to use a throw net," Libyan said.

Libyan said that he likes using a throw net more than any other fishing gear. When asked why, he said, "It is handy, and available for use any time you want. Any time of the day and night you are sure to catch some fish. At night you just throw the net, not knowing where the fish are, but chances are that you will catch some."

Not very many people were using throw nets during World War II. Only a few knew how to knit it because it was quite complicated. Also there were not any available at the stores in those days. So one would have to go to the store to buy thread to make his own net.

An average throw net really looks like a round flat piece of cloth full of holes except that it is knitted together. It can spread out to about twelve feet and its length is about eight feet. But some vary in

size. The net has small pieces of lead attached to the edges to hold down the net. This makes the net a little heavy and it weighs about ten pounds. Nylon thread or string can be used to make the net, but nylon is much better because it lasts longer and is much stronger.

In Gilman where Libyan lives, there are very good places for net throwing. The reef is wide and plenty of good spots can be found where there are lots of fish. Usually at night on the reef one can catch a lot of good-sized fish. But in the daytime he may catch the kind of fish he wants. So, that is one good thing about a throw net--you can catch fish any time you want.

To be good at throwing a net, you have to practice first. Strength and endurance are needed. Patience is also necessary. Some people, when they see a large school of fish, get so greedy that they don't throw the net properly and thus miss all of it.

You need to be patient. If you really take the time to watch the movement of the fish, you can make a good catch.

"One time with only one throw, I caught more than enough fish so I returned home," Libyan said.

Of course, there are some disadvantages to a throw net. Sometimes when you catch a lot of fish it weighs you down and you can't go on. One is alone against danger. If a fish like the barracuda is in your area, you're in danger. Once you throw the net on the barracuda it will come straight at you with those sharp teeth. To be safe two to four people should

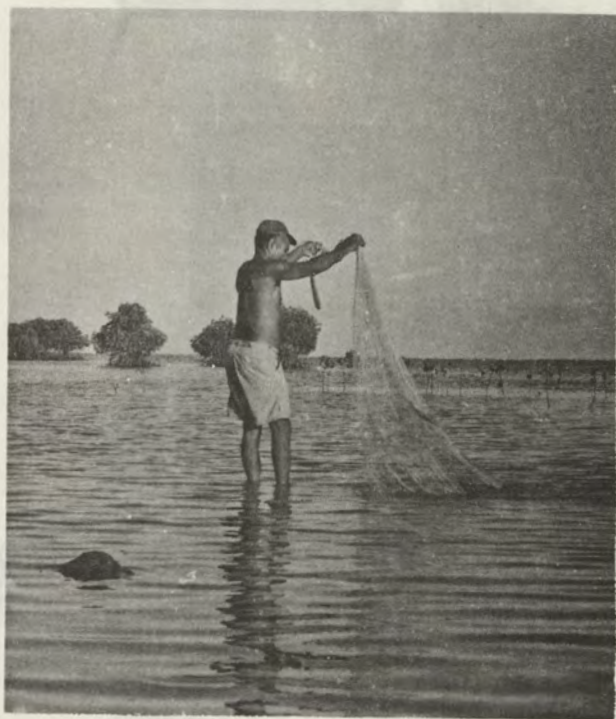
go fishing together. They should start at one end of the reef keeping about an equal distance between them. In this way, their noise will scare away the barracuda. Besides, they can help each other if one gets injured. At night you just throw the net around, but there are good spots for fish on the reef near the big piles of stones. You, yourself, can guess where the fish are if you are familiar with the reef area. At times you just have to keep on throwing the net until you get some fish.

During the daytime while fishing, if you come near a large school of fish, you have to be careful. When a large school of fish is searching around for food, there are always two or three fish ahead. In other words, they are the "scouts" of the group. If the scouts ran



into you, they would normally turn back to the school to scatter them in all directions. So, if you see a large school of fish coming your way it's good to get around behind it before you throw the net.

When the tide is beginning to come in you have the best chance of catching fish with a net. The fish usually go in smaller groups then. They move slowly along with the tide, eating along the way. If approached from behind, it is likely that they will come in your direction because it is too shallow at the front for them to go there. It is not very advisable to fish at a deep place where the tide is up to your waist. After you throw the net and it hits the water, it takes a longer time for it to reach the bottom, thus allowing the fish to escape under the net. A throw net with heavier weights is better for a deep place since it takes a shorter time before reaching the bottom. It is also good at a shallow place, however.



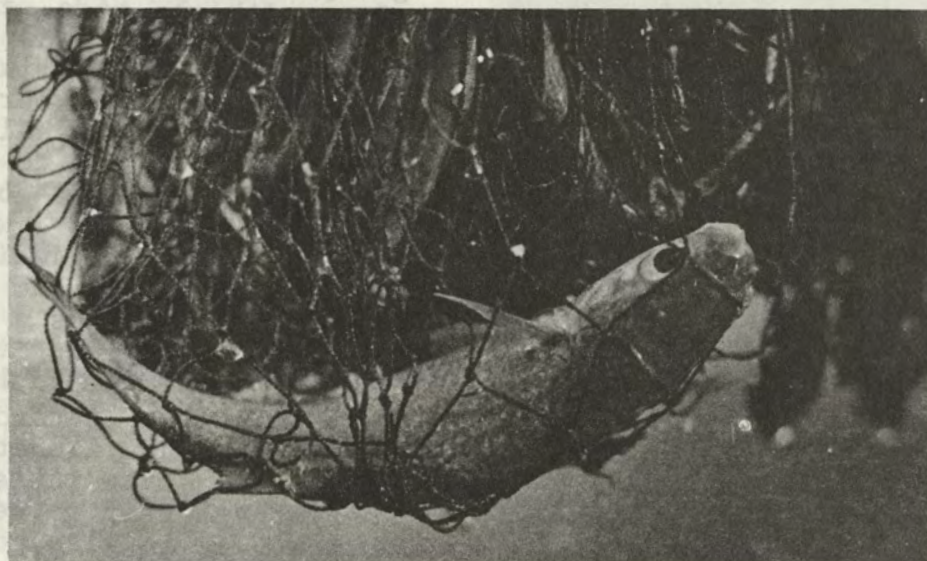
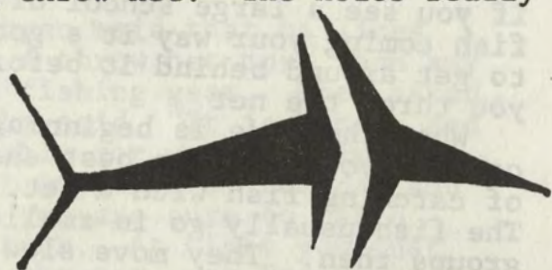
The size of thread or nylon string chosen for the net is decided by the user. Some people prefer bigger thread or string. This makes the net strong and larger fish can be caught with it. Also, it is not as easy for bigger string or thread to be tangled up with coral. The smaller-sized thread and nylon string are sometimes good because they are lighter to carry around.

The size of knitted holes determines the size of fish that can be caught. The bigger the hole opening is, the bigger the fish you can catch. So, it is always better to have smaller holes, because if you aren't catching larger fish then certainly, you can catch smaller ones. The recommended size of hole is two square inches. This is the most commonly used size for the meshing throw net. The holes really

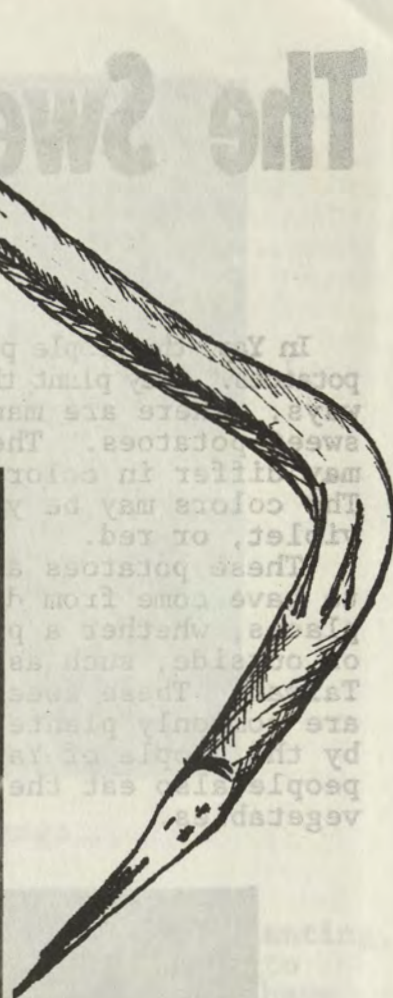
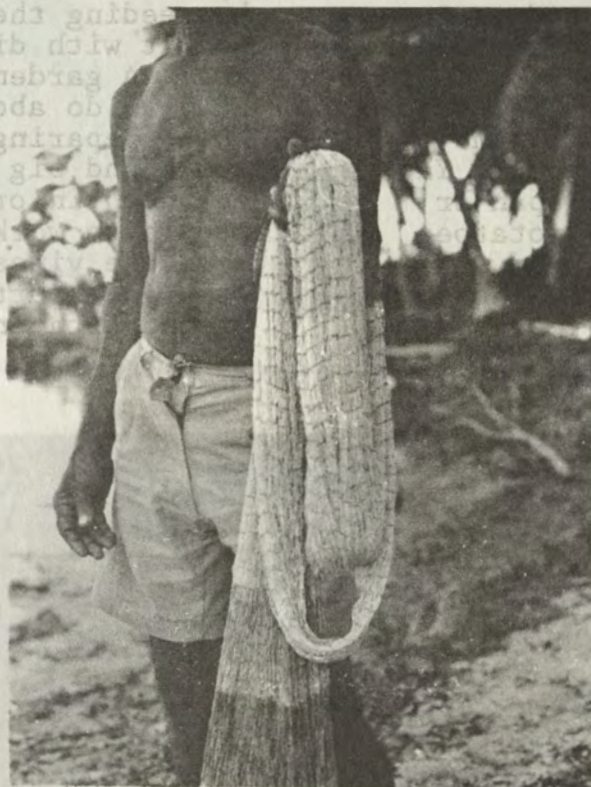
look like squares all connected together.

A throw net cannot be thrown very far. Usually it can be thrown about twenty-five feet away, that is from where you are standing to the closest edge of the net.

When throwing the net on a large school of fish, one has to be quick. He should try to hold down the bottom of the net as soon as he can. After that he should begin gathering the weights into both arms, making sure he is not lifting part of the net up. After he has gathered the bottom section of the net, all the fish should be at the other end of the net. He can collect the fish and put them in the CHEW, a basket tied around the waist for the purpose of carrying the fish.



Libyan said that during the Japanese times many people were using throw nets. This was because at that time there was a government policy that limited the people's fishing rights. The policy permitted certain villages on the island to fish utilizing, however, only the permitted fishing gear specified under the policy. The net was so new that it was never mentioned in the policy. With the use of the net, people could catch all the fish they wanted, then distribute

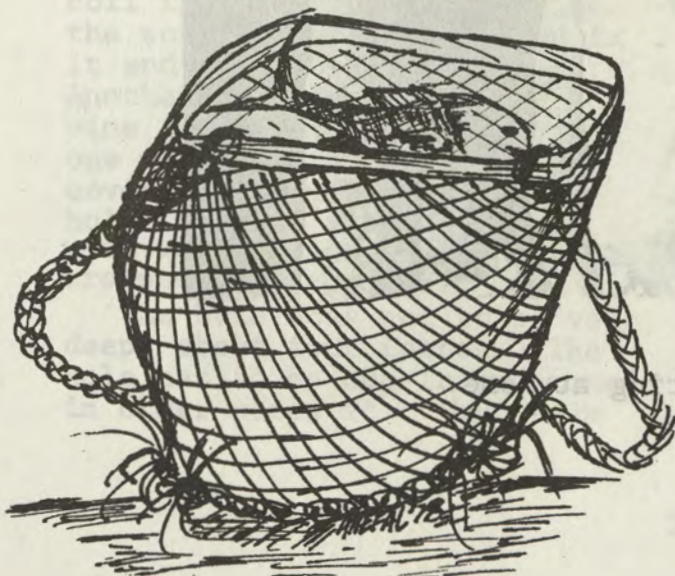


some to the restricted villages.

Libyan went on to say that at times during a special occasion he and some people would

catch enough fish just by using throw nets.

"Only a few people are using it today, but a throw net will always be my fishing gear. I have owned one since I learned how to use it, and I do not intend to stop using it. I plan to buy some thread soon and start making me a new one," Mr. Libyan concluded.



# The Sweet "Kamot" Tubers

Compiled by Martha Tinan

In Yap, the people plant sweet potatoes. They plant them in many ways. There are many kinds of sweet potatoes. These potatoes may differ in color and taste. The colors may be yellow, white, violet, or red.

These potatoes are believed to have come from different places, whether a place in Yap or outside, such as Japan or Taiwan. These sweet potatoes are commonly planted and eaten by the people of Yap. The people also eat the leaves as vegetables.

There are a couple of ways of preparing a place for sweet potato gardening, either by covering the grass with dirt or by weeding the area and covering it with dirt before planting. A gardener has to decide what to do about her garden. When preparing the place, all small and big trees should be cut down in order for the people to work easier and to help the vines of the potatoes grow and scatter freely on the ground with enough sunlight.



Mrs. Ngurun is resting at home.



"Fedoor, Gitam, Gagil, Taiwan, Hiyokngo..."

A garden has to be "striped" with a few ditches on or alongside the rows for water to drain easily. But the main reason for making these ditches is to use the soil from them to cover the top of the garden. According to what Mrs. Ngurun said about planting potatoes, "There are many ways of planting a potato vine. One is to coil it, dig a small hole in the soil, set the vine down in it and then cover it with dirt. Another is done by folding the vine in the middle and letting one end over the other before covering it with dirt in the hole." Those are the widely used ways because more potatoes are usually produced.

The hole does not to be very deep, about four inches. The hole has to be dug in and around, in other words it has to be

shallow but wide. When planting, the vines, you don't have to place them deep, but they have to be covered with enough soil to help prevent them from being easily taken away by the water when it rains or from being easily pulled out by somebody or an animal.

One person may plant potato vines differently from others, depending on how he best find the plant to grow more tubers, and how fertile the soil may be. Planting the same type of potatoes but using different planting methods, a person may surprisingly find upon harvest that one method works better for him than the other. In short, two potato vines, planted by the same person but using different methods, are very likely to produce varying numbers of potato tubers- even under the same

conditions.

Potatoes need to be taken care of when they have grown about a span. After the vines have grown to about four to five feet in length and are beginning to crawl on the surface the tops have to be trimmed and stems covered with more soil so as to enrich the growth and provide for more roots or tubers to take their places in the soil. They need to be covered to help prevent rats from eating them.

The garden needs full attention and cleaning like weeding the grass. It is said that potatoes and other crops grow just like human being. "If they are cleaned and well-taken care of they will feel happy and feel free and they will grow rapidly", said Mrs. Ngurun. "They have their own names such as

"Fedoor", "Gitam", "Gagil", "Taiwan", "Hiyokngo", and many others. The people believe that the name "Fedoor" came first from Fedoor, a small village in one of the municipalities in Yap. "Gitam" came or grew first in Gitam, another small village in Yap. It's the same with "Gagil". It must have come from one of the municipalities on Yap called Gagil. "Taiwan" and "Hiyokngo" are known to have come from Taiwan and Japan", said Mrs. Ngurun.

Tools that are usually used or needed for potato gardening are: knives, digging stick, spade, and syckles. Syckles are sometimes used to cut the grass and weed the garden. These tools may be used for different purposes. "Dor" or the spade is used first when digging ditches on or alongside the garden. It

...will feel happy and feel free  
and they will grow rapidly."





is also used for cutting layers or earth to be laid along the sides or edges of the garden to prevent the loss of fertile dirt by being washed over the sides. And "Lil" or the digging stick is used to dig dirt to be spread over the entire garden, and sometimes helps serve the same purpose as the spade does (cutting layers of earth).

It takes three to four months for the potatoes to grow to full size. After six months or more, they become hard and bitter. Three to four months after planting is a good time for harvesting. It should be done before the rats celebrate or have an enormous feast. There's one kind of potato which is called "Dalipe pul", which means three months, that's to be harvested within three months.

There are two good locations for planting potatoes. There are the valleys and the hillsides. The hillsides are preferred by most people. Why? Because of the clearings. They are not shady. The vines that are planted there produce more potatoes than in the valleys. In the valleys, some people say, the vines produce fewer potatoes, but they are very big in size.

After being harvested, the potatoes are taken home to be eaten. Before eating them, they must be cleaned in order for people to eat them without eating dirt. After they are clean, they are put inside the pot with water. Then the pot is put on the fire. When they're cooked, the pot is taken from the fire to cool off. Before eating, they must be skinned. Sweet potatoes are very delicious.



Turmeric or RENG may not be as great in value as the stone money, but it is oftentimes very useful to the people on the islands of Yap. Turmeric is traditionally considered a Yapese money in the sense that it is used for many customary and traditional things in Yap. For instance, it is used for exchanging goods, decorating or painting the body (as during a dance performance), marriage ceremonies, coloring food, and in paying tribute to the chiefs. Today, however, one would probably not find much of it on the island because most people do not fully remember how to make it. Making turmeric is actually hard work and requires a lengthy period of time, as well.

# *How Turmeric Is Locally Made*

Interview by Mike Tilig  
Photos by Robert Chayam  
Translated by Mike Tilig

Mr. Bathin of Binaw, Gagil is busy harvesting his own turmeric plants.





Harvesting the  
turmeric plant...

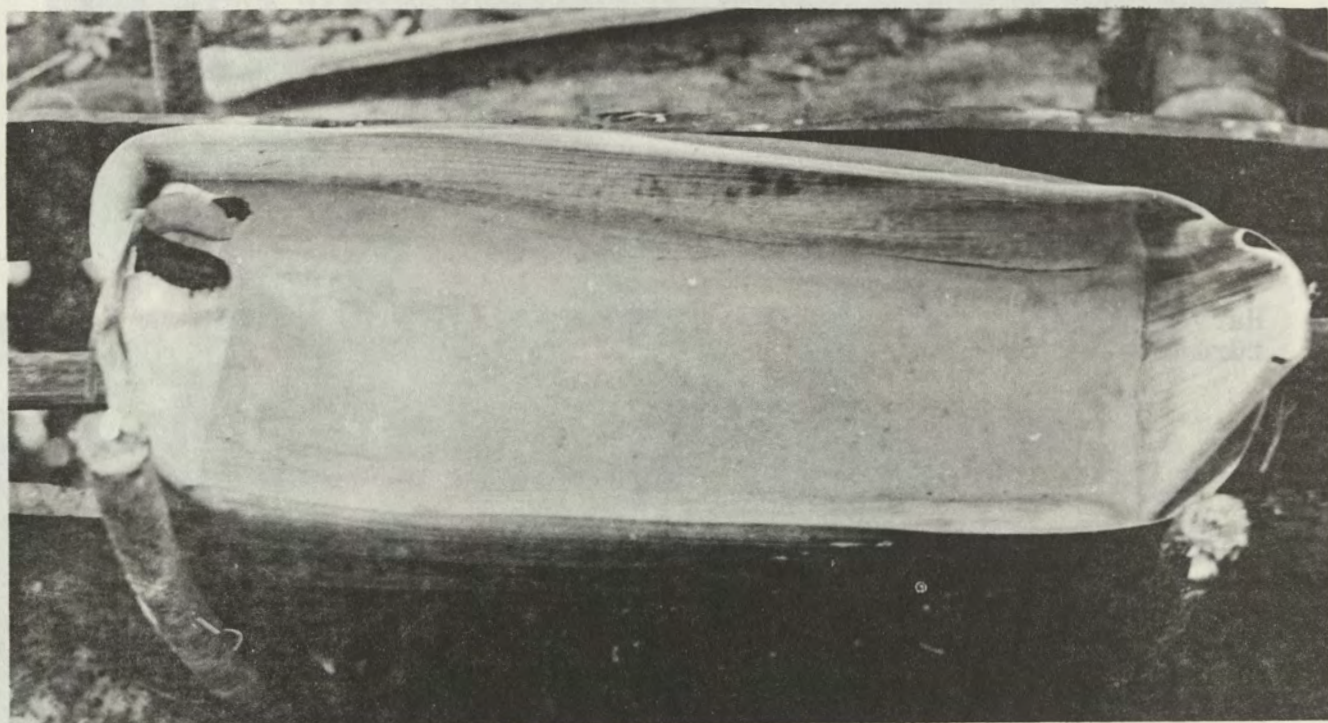
and cutting off  
the hairy roots.



Turmeric is made out of the turmeric plant. This plant is very small--about two feet tall--but the leaves smell quite good. The leaves are usually worn by Yapese boys and girls because of the nice smell. The plants are usually about four years old before they are harvested. The part of the plant that can be used is the tuber, or the section of the plant that is beneath the ground. After digging or pulling the whole plant from the ground, one would realize that there are two sorts of tubers in the ground, having two different colors: one is bright-red and is called TINMA, and the other is yellowish-orange and is called FALGARUCH. The Falgaruch tuber is not fully matured, but is still growing. The Tinma' tuber, on the other hand, is stunted and has reached the stage of full maturity.

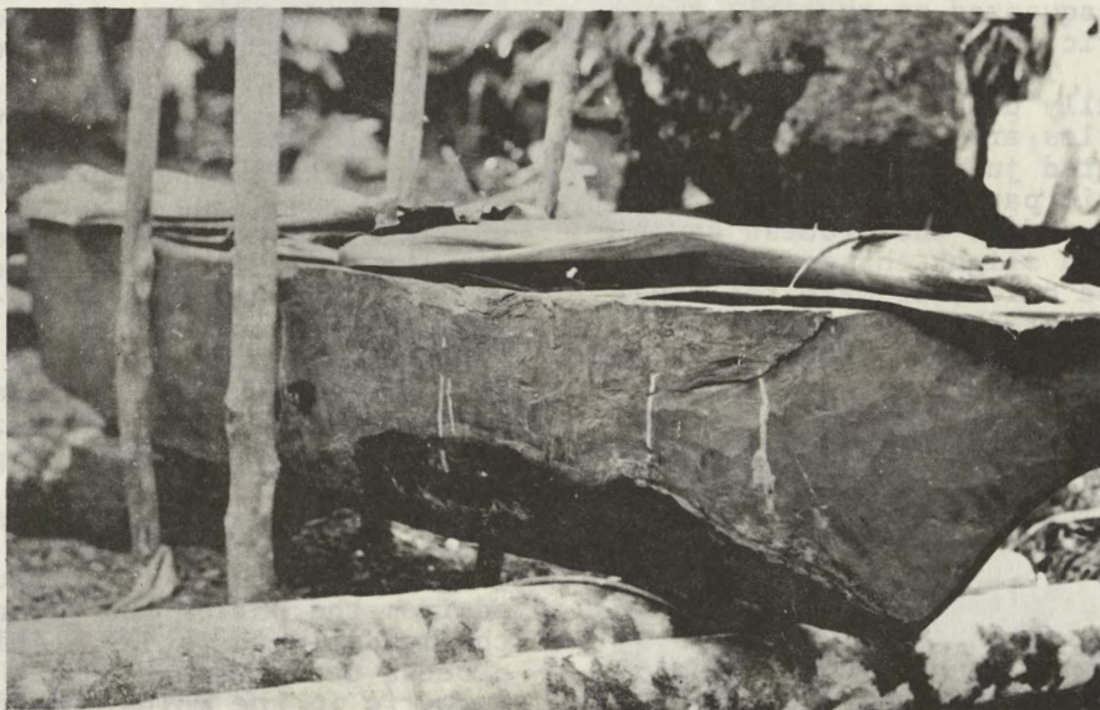


The IMLAW  
and  
the DABIY





FALGARUCH or TINMA'? The answer is both of them.



Is it a sailing canoe? The answer is "NO".  
The GAYAY is firmly set aside for precipitation to take place without disturbance.

After collecting and separating the two Different tubers all the hairy roots are then cut to enable easy washing. The Tinma' tubers are then thoroughly washed with fresh water to ascertain the removal of all dirt particles. At this point, a tool called IMLAW, or grinder, is used to grind the turmeric tubers into small, fine particles. (The Imlaw is a kind of coral which has a flat but rough surface for grinding. In the olden days before the introduction of modern tools, the Yapese greatly depended on the Imlaw for grinding up things.) The ground turmeric is collected in a wooden bowl called GAYAY. From the Gayay, the ground turmeric is placed in a real fine filter over a larger wooden bowl, the DABIY. Enough water is poured over the ground turmeric before it is squeezed so that all the turmeric juice is carefully collected. The filtering process is carefully done so that no small particles are included in the collected juice. An unnoticed turmeric particle included could at the end of the process cause either a slight change in its desired color, or make the final product break or crack easily.

The collected juice has to be set aside for a period of one day without disturbance to allow the turmeric solution to precipitate. The precipitation period could last longer if the solution is somehow disturbed. At the end of the precipitation period the precipitated solid from the suspension is drained off by overflowing the liquid into another container and retaining the solid matter (turmeric). After draining, more water is added to the sticky turmeric and more stirring is applied to

allow for a complete transfer to a smaller Dabiy. More water is added and proper stirring is required at this stage before setting the Dabiy aside again for the next precipitation to occur. This whole process is repeated a number of times during a period of about four days. The purpose here is to actually provide for a pure separation of the turmeric from other substances and/or the solution.

At the end of the four-day precipitation period, a light yellow substance called TOEW should be settling down to the bottom of the Dabiy. Then the turmeric should be separated from the Toew substance and transferred to another Dabiy. After the Toew is well separated from the turmeric, it is ready to be boiled. The Toew has to be heated in a big pot with water. Some 30-45 minutes of boiling time is required.

Contrarily, while the Toew is "cooking" the pure turmeric substance is scooped-up in coconut shells. The coconut shells are used here as molds for the turmeric. The shape and size of the turmeric depends on the coconut shells. There are also wooden molds that are much bigger in size.

Small holes about the size of the coconut molds are dug in the ground. The coconut molds are then placed in the holes. When the Toew substance is "cooked" it is poured from the pot on and around the molds in the holes. This process tends to harden the turmeric in the molds. After about an hour the coconut molds should be partially uncovered to see if any needs to be refilled with more turmeric.



The turmeric is  
poured into the  
coconut mold.



The filter used to  
separate the ground  
turmeric from the juice.



The TOEW is  
being "cooked"  
in a big pot.



The turmeric generally shrinks  
in size when it dries up.

The molds are kept in the  
holes for about thirty minutes  
to cool off. After the end of  
the molding process, the molds  
are then taken out of the holes  
and are placed in baskets in a  
cool dry place. A period of  
about twenty-four hours has to  
elapse by before the molds can  
be taken from around the tur-  
meric. Taking off the mold  
allows the turmeric to dry more  
quickly.



At the end when all the tur-  
meric is dried, coconut husk  
fiber is prepared to be wrapped  
around it. Again the wrapped  
turmeric is placed in a cool  
dry place.

Turmeric making requires a  
lengthy period. Only a few  
can make it nowadays. With  
the tremendous incoming of  
material things from the out-  
side world, most of the Yapese  
people have become more inde-  
pendent of turmeric. It appar-  
ently has lost its traditional  
value because the people have  
gotten used to the "bright  
lights" of the non-Micronesian  
world.

Mr. Bathin's house  
in Binaw, Gagil.



Making copra is one of the very important tasks for many people in the villages of Yap. Mr. Yilbuw, a well-known copra maker of Gal', Kanifay Municipality, says, "I think making copra is a very important yet a hard job for us Yapese because we earn money from making it. It also makes our villages look nice and clean, but it is very laborious."

Most of the people know how to produce copra that is better in quality for marketing. Of course, this job is not one that is fully original to them nor has it been a practiced part of their cultural heritage, but producing copra for sale has become one of the very common jobs for many Yapese--especially those who reside in the villages and own land properties which

by Fanian Bamngin

## ***Copra Making: A Laborious Task***



Gathering ...

... husking



... and splitting  
the nuts.



within are thick coconut groves. The growing desire for more production is dependent upon the need to earn money. More village people are becoming more and more attracted toward copra production.

However, there are some people who do not have many trees on their land but are interested in making copra. These people usually ask their friends and relatives for additional coconuts in order to come up with an average of about three thousand, five hundred (3,500) coconuts, if they are to be dried in one of the Ceylon-type copra dryers widely in use today.

Copra production requires several laborious steps and not too many of these can be carried out by just one person. It actually requires manpower. Copra makers need to ask for assistance from a group. For example, the first step of gathering coconuts can be done by just one man, but it would take him one or two weeks to come up with the required number of nuts. In gathering one has to be selective with the nuts. Nuts that have already sprouted and are supported by four or more primary leaves may not have much copra when dried. Collecting nuts requires cleaning and clearing of other trees on the

land so the next time around it will be easier to find the coconut. While gathering the nuts one needs to have a sharp machete to cut down vines and small trees. Moreover, this first step is quite tedious for one man alone.

The second step is that of husking the collected coconuts and this ought to be done by a group of able men. It is one heck of a job husking thousand of nuts all by yourself. So, when a copra maker has all the coconuts gathered in piles in scattered locations, he has to make arrangements with his "people" to help him husk the nuts. Of course, the more men the easier, and the more experienced they are in husking, the faster the husking will be. The nuts are husked with husking sticks made from mangrove tree stems and roots. The sticks are sharpened at one end and are stuck in the ground near the pile of coconuts to be husked. Some strong women, however, also take part in husking.

The third step, in which the husked nuts have to be thoroughly cleaned and split, should be done on the same day of husking or soon afterwards. The husked nuts easily spoil, if they are left in the sun and rain for several days. Besides, they provide a good feed for land crabs, hermit crabs, chickens, rats and other creatures. It is in this particular step where women and children are of great help since they can render the manpower needed for cleaning the husked nuts. In cleaning each nut, it is first split up in halves, the fibers on the shells are peeled off, and the watery white ball (BULL) in the inside of the sprouted nuts has to be taken out to allow faster drying. The coconut shells are cleaned on the outside to prevent possible fire while they are in the dryer.

The fourth step is the carrying or transporting of split nuts into the copra dryer to dry. Baskets and copra sacks

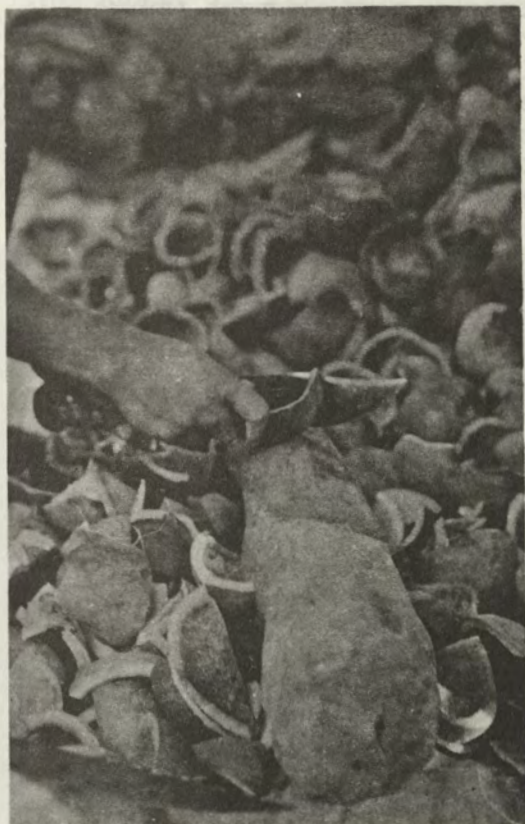


A  
Ceylon-  
type  
copra  
dryer.



Firing is  
easier than...

chopping up  
dried copra.



are used to carry the cracked nuts. A pick-up truck or two are very helpful to transport the baskets and sacks to the dryer. This, again, is one of the laborious steps because it requires muscles.

After all the coconuts are carried to the dryer, the next step can be manned by just one person. The empty coconut shells from previous dryings are laid out in the fireplace in the dryer for the drying process to take place. During the drying period, the first couple of fires should be lit in the middle of the lined up shells. The shells are placed in a certain way in the fireplace where one is placed in the other and lined up in the fireplace. The fireplace is about the length of the dryer. By starting the fire in the middle, it takes a shorter time for the fire to spread and die down, and provides a greater heat intensity. If it is burned in the middle, however, there should be two fires prepared per drying day. On the other hand, if it is started at

one end it takes longer for the fire to spread thus there should be only one fire preparation per day. With an average of about two fires a day, it takes four to five days for the copra to get dried. Faster drying depends on the dryer itself; the newer the dryer the less time for drying. But if the dryer is old and the heat leaks through the walls or roofs, then it will certainly take five to six days to dry. Once in a while during the drying period, the copra owner has to check on the copra to make sure it is drying properly.

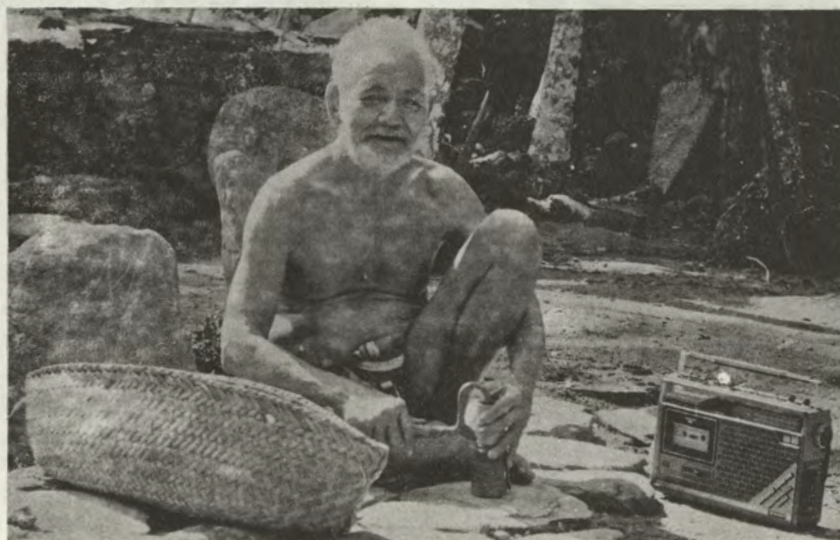
At the end of the drying period, the dried-up coconut meat or copra in the coconut shells can easily be removed from the shells. This is another tedious step which requires many helping hands. Women, children, and men together can complete this task in two or three days. This step involves mainly the cutting up of dried copra into sizeable pieces and sacking them in bags or baskets. Each bag

weighs about one hundred pounds. When asked why the dried copra has to be chopped up, Mr. Yilbuw had to say, "If you just put them in the sacks without cutting them up, then that will take more sacks. Besides, the copra has to be pounded into the sack. It is quite hard to get a sack of about a hundred pounds if the copra is not compressed. The sack has to be closed by using a string to stitch up the opening."

The final step before money is obtained is the marketing of the copra. This necessitates the need for some sort of transportational means to transport the copra to the marketing place.

The Ceylon-type copra dryer is built in such a way that it consists of three compartments: a storage compartment where the coconut shells are stored; a fireplace built on the ground level; and a raised drying place with the porous floor installed about eight feet directly over the fireplace.

After a long day of husking nuts, Mr. Yilbuw takes a pause for a chew and some sounds.



# Construction Of The "RICHIB" And The "YEP"

Interview by Louis Falan

Story by Romeo Joel

Photos by Thomas Marmar

RAWAY, or the traditional Yapese comb, is believed to have been in use long before the coming of Westerners to Micronesia.

Mr. Falngak of Thol, Tomil, relates that he believes that the Rawey was first introduced soon after men inhabited the islands of Yap and Micronesia.

The Rawey is shaped like an "X" with no opening at one end. Mr. Falngak says, "The Rawey is worn in the hair to signify or name a person in rank." When asked what Rawey is, he answers by saying, "Rawey is a kind of

mangrove tree and the roots are what we use to make the traditional combs. So, we call them Rawey after the original."

Actually, the Rawey is made out of an ordinary root of common mangrove found on the shores of Yap. There are two kinds of Rawey and they are locally known as the "Richib" and "Yep".

How the Richib is constructed is quite complicated and requires skill and patience. The making of Richib starts when a man goes to the mangrove swamp to cut roots, as related by Falngak. The selected roots are first cut,

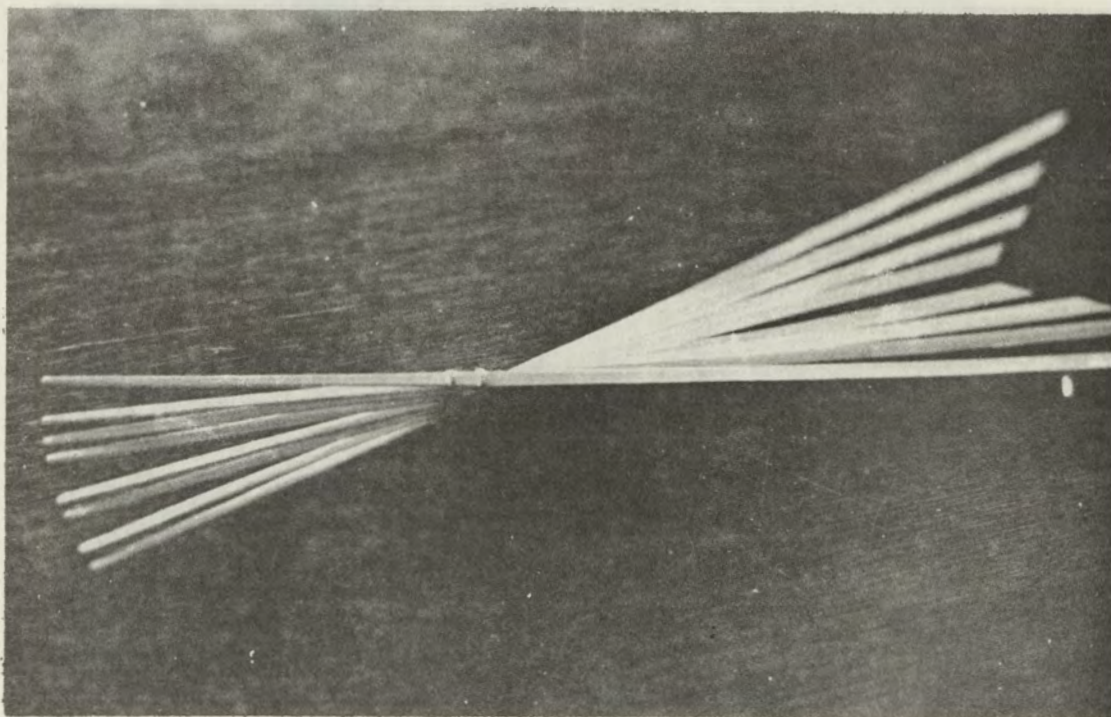


Mr. Faingak carefully assembles the pieces of the "RICHIB".



then sliced into long thin pieces. After they have been sliced, the teeth are then scraped and smoothed with sharp blades. Then they are fitted one on top of the other. When completed they form the shape of an "X" punctured through the middle with usually three holes and held together with small pieces of stick which are pushed tightly through the holes.

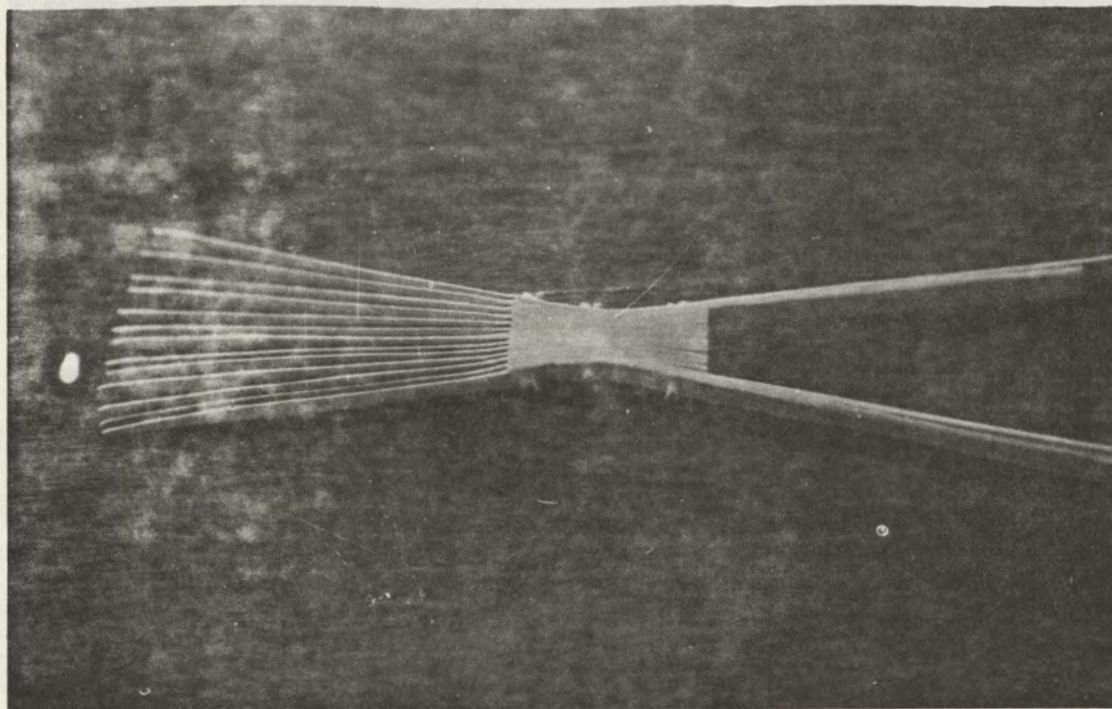
After this process is done, the teeth are smoothed finely so they will not tangle-up or cut hairs while combing. Constructor Falngak states that the Richib is used for several purposes such as combing the hair, catching lice, etc. The Yep, on the other hand, is commonly seen on people during big and important gatherings. The Yep is totally used for body decoration and statement of a person's power in the complicated Yapese caste system. For example, one could tell right





away if a particular person belonged to the Bulchee (the highest ranking villages) or Ulun (the 2nd highest ranking villages) by the kind of comb that person was wearing. Speaking in his own words, Mr. Falngak states, "The construction of the Yep is exactly like that of the Richib, except for a very small difference. Instead of punching the pieces with holes, the Yep is tied with a string of hibiscus fibers to hold the parts and everything together. The Yep does not stay open. Unlike the Richib, it is like a Japanese hand-fan. This kind of comb cannot be used for straightening hair.

Women only use the RICHIB for combing their hair, and other purposes dealing with their hair.

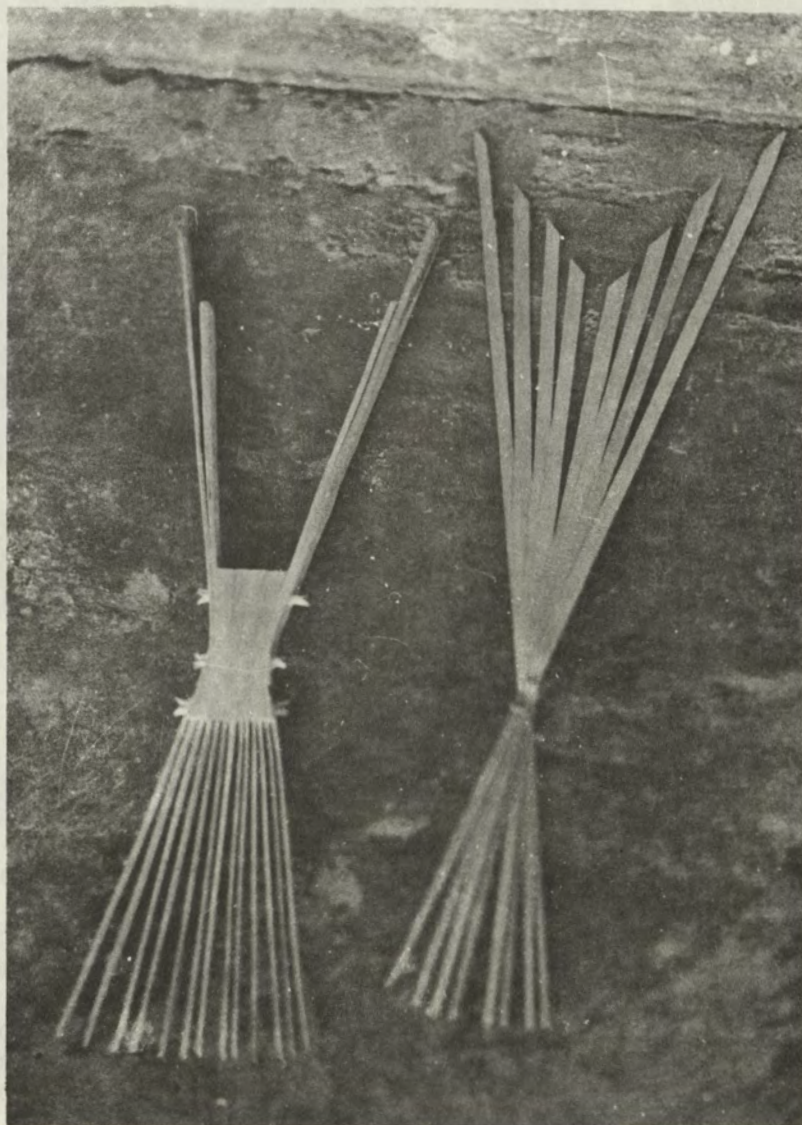


Women only use the Richib for combing their hair, and other purposes dealing with their hair. Traditionally, wearing the comb signifies manhood, not womanhood. It sounds crazy, but yet it is culture. We cannot do anything about it. The Rawey makes the Yapese culture complete. The Rawey is now seen and sold in handicraft shops. Rarely is it seen in public.

We have completed a journey through time, but still some unanswered questions are haunt-

ing us. Mr. Falngak adds to this by saying "Yes, if a person nowadays is seen with the Rawey in his hair, people tend to look down on him and say, 'He is off his rocker'."

Mr. Falngak concludes, "The days of the use of Rawey are well-gone, but their memory still lives on. I would really like the young people to keep on preserving our past because the past is losing the fight with the present."





# Yapese Dancing

Story by Tamdad  
Interview by Alberta Leemed  
Photos by Stan Gilwag

One of Mankind's greatest recreational arts is dancing. There is perhaps no race of people on the surface of the earth who does not practice some form of dancing. It would be quite interesting if we took a close look at the dances performed on the islands of Yap.

In Yap there are actually two ways in which the Yapese do their different dances. There are "sitting" and "standing" dances, implying that the dancers do perform dances while either sitting or standing on the ground. A good example of the standing dance is represented by the bamboo or stick dance

and other forms that are very similar to the lovely hula dance of Hawaii. The sitting dances, unlike the standing dances, are performed with less mobilization on the part of the dancers involved.

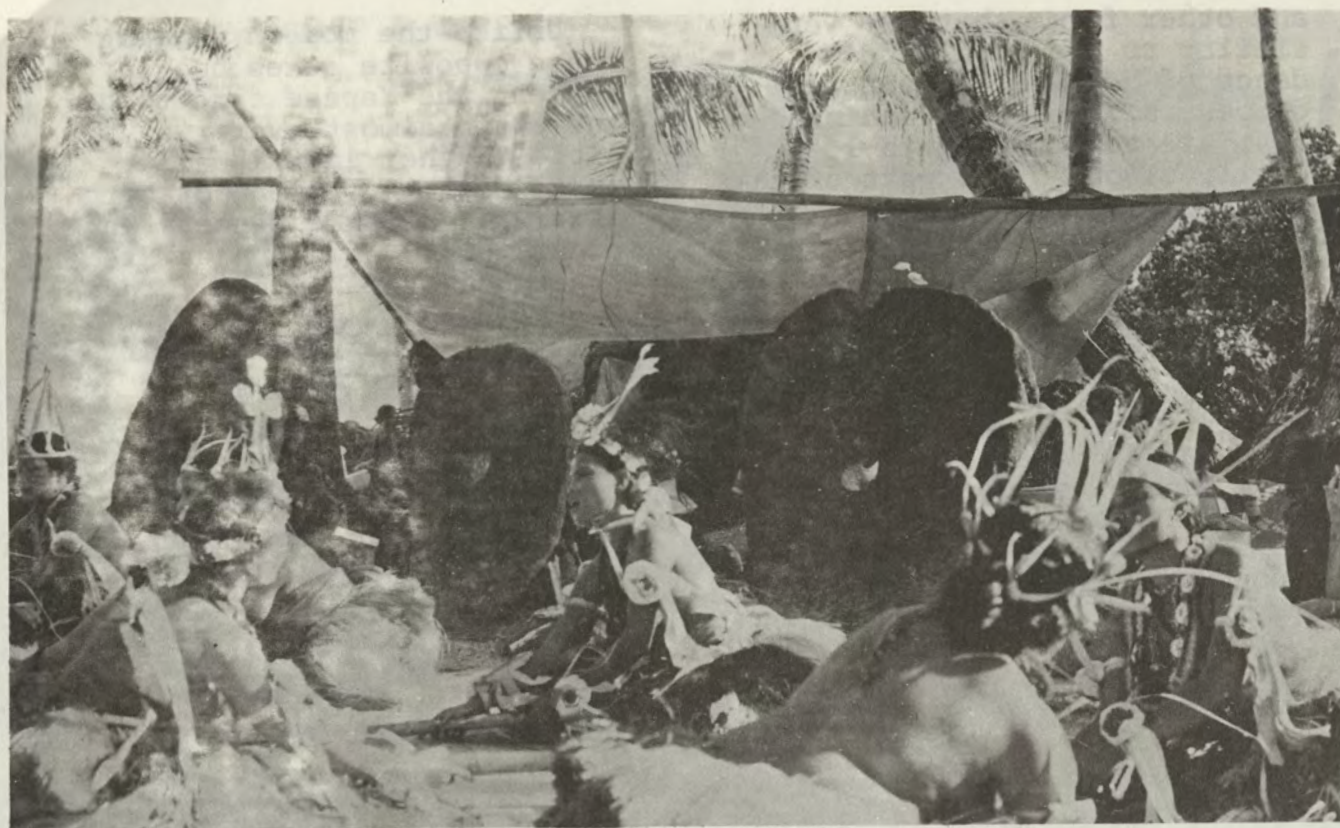
In practice, there is a wide variety of dances and the purpose for each depends on the dance itself. But for one thing, all the dances have one thing in common: a message to transmit to the audience. Some dances are designed to exert influence on people and some are performed just for amusement. For example, some may make people cry or make them feel happy, some are performed to remind people of something that may have happened a long time ago.

Unlike the modern dancing where opposite sexes boogie together, the Yapese tend to do theirs in almost every way possible whether individually, just women, just men, or both sexes in the same dance. In other words, some dances are practiced by men alone, others are done by only women dancers while still others are jointly performed. Furthermore, a few are staged individually by a single dancer.

It might seem surprising that men participate in a lot of dances all by themselves, but the fact is they are traditionally obliged and the dances are assigned for them, too.

When a dance is performed, all the dancers, whether old or young,





are heavily decorated on the body: face and head, arms, and legs. A dancer can hardly be recognized with all the beautifully colorful decorations. A head-dress made out of bird feathers is most often worn by men. Sometimes, coconut fringe is used as a replacement for the feather head-dress. The young yellowish coconut leaves are widely used in decorating the legs and arms of the dancers. Many types of ornaments such as earrings, beads, bracelets, combs, etc. are worn for adornment. The body is rubbed with coconut oil and sprinkled with turmeric powder. The face is generally painted with a red dye in a manner similar to the American Indian warriors. The women wear their colorful grass-skirts while the men are dressed up in the lion-cloth-like *thuw*.

The GAPNGEG is a beautiful war-dance performed by the men and young boys demonstrating the tactics, wisdom, bravery and heroism in the wars. The male dancers gracefully twist and turn representing actions on the battlefield. Unfortunately, the Gapngeg is no longer practiced today. No one knows why for sure, but it may be because the Yapese are no longer found in action on the battlefield so the Gapngeg faded away in the beginning of the German Administration when they put an end to the wars among the Yapese people.

BARUG is another form of sitting dance performed by women. It involves steady yet graceful movements of the arms and body. It is performed to amuse and entertain people.

The GAMAL', or bamboo dance is a standing dance often practiced today by both boys and girls either together or separately. It is adopted from the outer islands in Yap District. So, the language used in it is not fully understood by most Yapese. Bamboo sticks are used by the dancers. Each stick is measured to be about three feet in length or more and about two to three inches in diameter. The dance in itself is rough and requires a greater amount of practice than any other dance. The bamboo sticks have to be accurately hit against each other with such a force that if a dancer accidentally misses the right target, one of his/her dancing partners could get injured. So, the dancers need to be on the alert and should master endurance and preciseness. The middle-aged people are

seldom seen taking part in the Gamel', for most of them tend to lag behind the more active dancers. All the dancers are paired up and are in groups of four. Each dancer has to defend himself against his partner by using the bamboo stick. When a Gamel' starts one can tell the groups apart because the dancers in each group clash their sticks only among themselves. Then later on each pair moves together toward one end while the other pair takes the opposite direction. The same dancers should always unite time after time during the dance. The Gamel' is more lively than others because of its quick graceful movements and the rhythmic sounds and clack of the bamboo sticks being hit together. It is perhaps the most popular type.





The Yapese dance that is unique to women is the TAYOR, or TAM, as some people call it. Tayor is practiced by both young girls and old women to beg or request (usually from the Chiefs) an offering such as food, traditional Yapese money, and other necessities that the dancers themselves may be requesting. The Chiefs and other concerned members of the society therefore have to pay close attention to the dance requests so they can be given to the dancers. For example, the dancers could ask the Chief for a canoe. According to custom, he has to find one for the dancers.

The TEY is a sitting dance for men. The hands and body are in constant movement. They are moved gracefully up and down and

from side to side. The perfect Tey is when all the dancers move and sing together in unison. The chants used in Tey could be about history or wars, or about famous people. In some places the language used is sometimes hard to understand. The chant is mumbled out. People say it is the language of the spirits. It is said that the spirits taught the men how to dance a long time ago. The Tey consists of numerous dancers. Sometimes it stretches out as far as 300 yards. A person who is not used to this kind of dancing might find it burning if he does not understand what the dancers are saying. In some Tey just one person does the singing most of the time. This person is selected among all and the one who has

the best voice is chosen so the audience can understand what is said. This kind of dance is still used today mostly during special occasions.

The GASLEW is perhaps the most beautiful love dance, but very obscene in language and motion. This is a sex dance which displays the art of love-making, thus the words used are the worst in the Yapese language. However, the action part of the dance may seem shocking as well as amusing. Everything about sexual activities is included in the dance, but some are not so bad as others. This dance is not performed together by men and women; the men perform their own

and so do the women. It is not a public dance, however. It is usually performed at an isolated place where only the interested are invited.

The dance is normally used to criticize or ridicule the opposite sex about their failure in the art of love. Long ago, the male and female dancers would compete together at night and interested viewers would sneak in the dark to learn what one sex could say about the other. Each group would be cheering for their dancers. Unfortunately, the Gaslew is not practiced anymore. It could be that everyone is a good humble Christian.





Al' these dances require a tremendous amount of time for practice. It is shameful on the part of the dancers and their relatives if the dance appears to fail in competition. A single dancer, if not well-trained, could cause a dance to collapse whether it is a standing or a sitting one. Therefore, all the dancers are always given

directions and orders by the older members of the society so as to bring great esteem and respect upon themselves and all other members who contributed to the betterment of the dance. If the dance pays off at the end of the competition, then that very well means that a number of the participating dancers gracefully achieved their purposes as dancers.

# Yapese Lion - Clothes

Interview by Jim John  
Story by Tamdad  
Photos by Tamdad

The KAFAR or the lion-cloth has always been the man's traditional dress in Yap as long as one can remember. Like any other Yapese custom, the Kafar plays an important part in the daily life of the Yapese people. It is a custom that originated from the earliest people who came to Yap, and has been practiced ever since. Today, the Yapese--especially the older men--still retain wearing Kafar.

The importance of wearing Kafar is great among Yapese family members because it starts in the family. It shows honor and respect for family members as well as to the people and chiefs in the community. For a Yapese young man to wear the Kafar, it means ritually that he is "leaving" his boyhood behind and "adapting" to manhood. Customarily, this is something that all Yapese boys must go through. About the ages of 17-18, boys must start wearing Kafar.

In the Yapese custom, the young man has to pass through five dressing stages (periods) showing the degrees in maturity at each stage by proving their ability and resourcefulness while coping with the daily activities of the society.

At the first stage, the little boy wears a single piece of Thuw, a piece of cloth wrapped between the legs and around the waist. In the years before foreign rule, however, boys wore tree leaves and bark. The

boys generally prefer to wear a red Thuw at this first stage.

At about ages thirteen or fourteen boys assume the second stage. Within that age-bracket they double up their dressing by wearing another piece of Thuw having a different color than the original piece. This is really a temporary stage of development, like other stages, except for the final stage.

A third piece of Thuw is worn when the boy becomes about 15-16 years of age. Again the color should always be different than the first two pieces of Thuw. At this stage it is very evident because the boy is wearing three different colored Thuw, usually white, red and blue. At about age seventeen and on, they may start wearing the Kafar over the three different Thuw.

The age does not really matter that much, though it is indicated here because it is usually between those ages that the changes generally occur. Some boys may mature very quickly and start wearing Kafar younger. Some may start late because they mature slowly. Another factor here is that it depends on the size of the particular person; a bigger person may look older and may be pressured to start wearing Kafar.

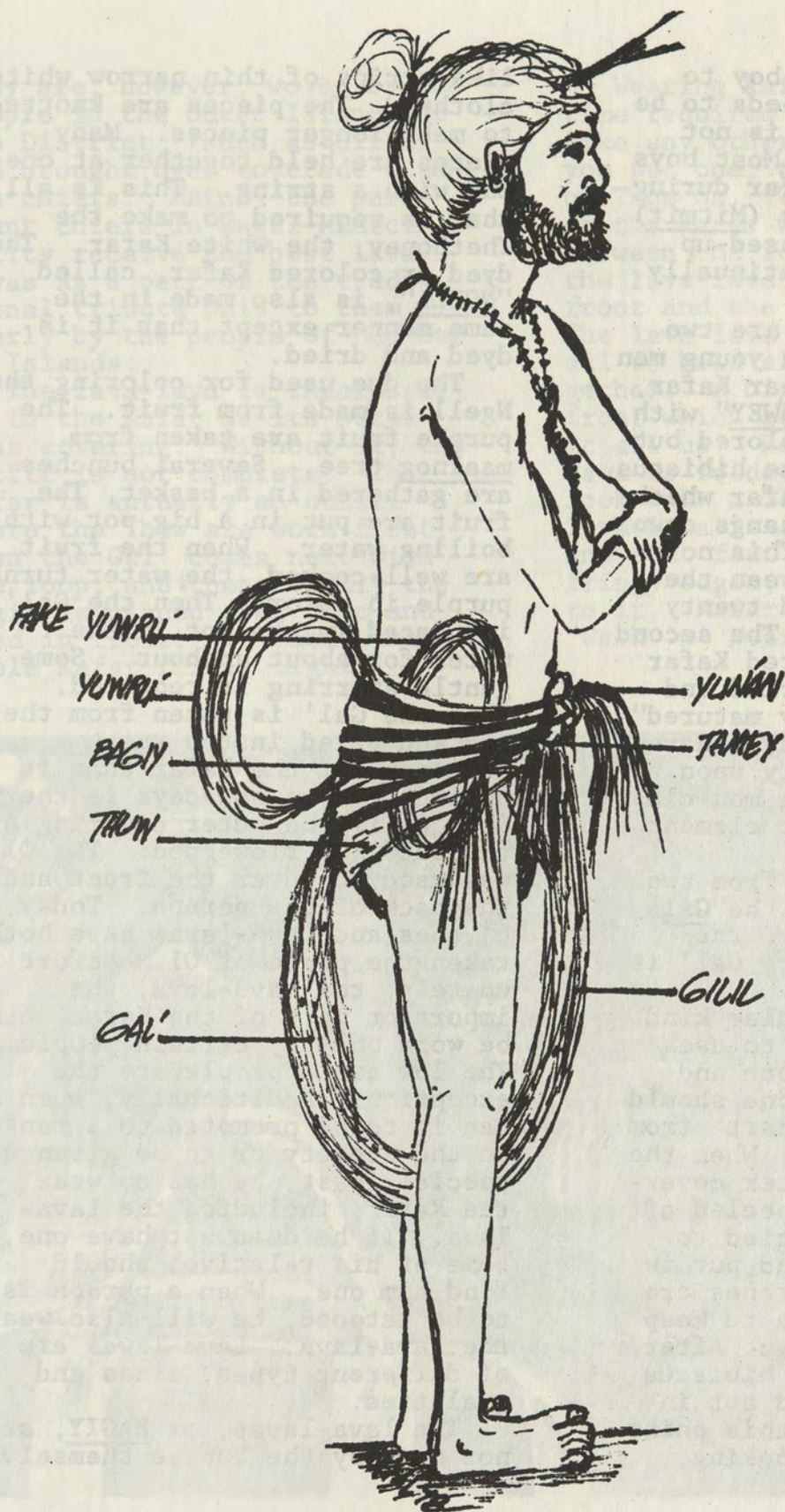
One needs to be careful of his choice to change or add on to his clothing. A rather late change from one stage to another



A boy in his early teens wears the two colored THUW.

can bring criticism upon himself and his family. If it is the proper time for the boy to wear Kafar, yet he does not wear it, people will think of him as someone undisciplined or not well-taught by his parents. This is the status and respect and reputation for the family which could be ruined easily if one does not proceed according to social norms. Once the boy is seen by the members of his family with the Kafar on, he cannot stop wearing it. He shall continue wearing it during the rest of his life, according to Yapese custom. So, if





it is not time for a boy to wear the Kafar, he needs to be very careful that he is not seen by his family. Most boys change to wearing Kafar during times of great feasts (Mitmit) when everyone is dressed-up. From then on they continually wear Kafar.

In reality, there are two kinds of Kafar. When young men for the first time wear Kafar, it is called "THETHONWEY" with the Gal' not being colored but white. (The Gal' is the hibiscus fibers used in the Kafar which forms the loop that hangs down between the legs.) This normally takes place between the ages of seventeen and twenty with unmarried men. The second kind is the red colored Kafar normally worn by married and older men, the "fully matured" persons in the society. Here, the Gal' is dyed. Only upon marriage is the young man classified as an important element of the older society.

Kafar can be made from two kinds of tree bark: the Gal' or hibiscus and Dinay, the banana tree. However, Gal' is most widely used.

There is a particular kind of Gal' that is best to use. The stem is very smooth and light in color. Anyone should be able to tell it apart from other types of Gal'. When the stems are cut the outer covering of each stem is peeled off. After this they are tied together in a bundle and put in salt water. Heavy stones are piled over the bundle to keep it from floating away. After about seven days the hibiscus fibers are washed and put in the sun to dry. At this point the Gal' is whiter-looking,

like strips of thin narrow white clothes. The pieces are knotted to make longer pieces. Many pieces are held together at one end with a string. This is all that is required to make the Thethoney, the white Kafar. The dyed or colored Kafar, called "NGELL", is also made in the same manner except that it is dyed and dried.

The dye used for coloring the Ngell is made from fruit. The purple fruit are taken from maalnog tree. Several bunches are gathered in a basket. The fruit are put in a big pot with boiling water. When the fruit are well-cooked, the water turns purple in color. Then the Gal' is placed in the pot in the water for about an hour. Some gentle stirring is required. Then the Gal' is taken from the pot and dried in the sun.

A part of the Kafar that is no longer worn nowadays is the OL. OL is the outer covering of the betelnut flowerpod. The OL was used to cover the front and the back of the person. Today, clothes and lava-lavas have both taken the place of OL. Unfortunately, the lava-lava, the important part of the Kafar, can be worn only by certain people. The low caste people are the exception. Additionally, when a man is to be promoted to a rank in the society or to be given a special feast, he has to wear the Kafar, including the lava-lava. If he does not have one, some of his relatives should find him one. When a person is to be tattooed, he will also wear the lava-lava. Lava-lavas are of different types, sizes and qualities.

The lava-lavas, or BAGIY, are not made by the Yapese themselves.

They are, however, woven by the people in the Outer Islands of Yap District, (such as Ulithi) and brought over to trade with the chiefs. Mainly the paramount chiefs in Gagil Municipality receive the best lava-lavas as a part of the traditional tribute paid to them yearly by the people of the Outer Islands.

The lava-lava is incorporated in the Kafar as its outermost covering. Without it, the outfit is not complete. The Kafar is actually an outfit where the Thuw are worn first, then the Gal' comes next with the loop, and then finally the Bagiy is placed over them and tied in front. It makes the whole Kafar firmly tight.

Wearing Kafar for the first time requires much practice like any other thing. First, you put one, two or three pieces of Thuw on. The Gilil (the part of the Kafar which hangs down between the legs) is worn under the lava-lava, one end at the front and the other at the back. The lava-lava is worn on top of all to hold all the pieces together. A big knot is made in front which actually tightens it all up. However, the lava-lava is folded in the middle to look like a Thuw. The average lava-lava is about a foot wide and four feet long with unwoven fringed edges, which add beauty to it. Kafar is the Yapese "Wash 'n' Wear".



# DAWACH or Eating Classes In Yap Island

Interview by Frank Lifang

Story by Rick Marksbury

Art by Sebastian L. Anefal

In Yap, it was never customary for an entire family to sit down and eat their meals together. In fact, years ago this would have never happened because Yapese culture consisted of a very strict division of eating classes. The whole concept of eating classes in Yap is referred to as DAWACH, while the individual eating classes are referred to as YOGUM. One Yapese may approach another and ask him what his YOGUM is if he wishes to know the other man's eating class. The restrictions associated with DAWACH are not followed as closely today, but in this paper, we will describe how they functioned in earlier times.

In most Yapese high caste villages, there are seven distinct YOGUM or eating classes. The names of these seven classes often differed from village to village. In addition, these seven classes were ranked. For example, in Teb village, Tomil, the seven YOGUM are P'luy, Dogchul, Math'aeg, Yangach, Lan malal, Tan ea lan malal, and Yothar. In Teb, P'luy is the

highest ranked YOGUM while Yothar is the lowest ranked. However, in Lamer village, Rull, the seven YOGUM found there are called, Munthing, Maachabal, Math'aeg, Toruw, Pagael, Duchoay and Magadliliiy. In Lamer, Munthing, was the highest ranked YOGUM with Magadliliiy being the lowest. If one were to compare the YOGUM of these two villages, he would find that Munthing was the same rank as P'luy; Maachabal the same as Dogchul; Duchoay the same as Tan ea lan malal and so on. Even though the names of YOGUM differed from village, Yapese knew that P'luy was the same rank as Munthing or Garkuf. It was necessary to know this in case one Yapese went to another village to eat.

Not all villages in Yap had DAWACH. For example, some low caste villages did not participate in ranked eating classes. Some low caste villages had seven YOGUM while others had fewer or none at all. However, even in the low caste villages without DAWACH, members of a family still did not eat together, nor did the very old eat with the young.

Why is there DAWACH in Yap? No one can be sure, but it probably grew out of the belief that men and women should not eat together nor should old people eat with young people. In Yap, men are viewed as being tabgul or 'pure' while women are considered ta'ay or 'contaminated'. In addition, old people are thought of as tabgul and young people as ta'ay. Yapese believed that those who were tabgul should not eat with those who were ta'ay. Out of this, grew the complicated system of DAWACH and as they grew older and became more tabgul they continued to move up in the ranked YOGUM. Let's see how eating classes worked in a village.

All men in a village were members of a YOGUM. A young man usually began participating in DAWACH when he was about 10-14 years of age. Such young men would belong to the lowest ranked YOGUM in their village. This did not mean that all young men in the village had to eat apart from everyone else, however. For young men, there were only certain times of the year when they would eat with other members of their YOGUM. During the rest of the year, they could eat with their other brothers and sisters and mothers. When a young man became a member of a YOGUM, it was looked at as part of a step in his becoming a man. He could begin to participate in village affairs such as being involved in a village celebration or mitmit.

The men of a village were usually the ones who decided when to let a new member into the village's DAWACH, or when to allow one man to move up into a higher YOGUM. In villages with seven YOGUM, the

lower four were usually considered ta'ay when compared to the upper three which were tabgul. In these lower four YOGUM, the food that was collected for the members could be gathered by young women, and the members of these YOGUM could also eat with women and small children. This was not true for the three highest YOGUM.

When a man became a member of the top three YOGUM in his village, only certain people could gather and collect his food. There was much more ceremony involved when a man became a member of one of the highest YOGUM. Only an even number of men, such as 2, 4, 6, 8 and so on were allowed to enter these top three eating classes at a time. To allow an odd number of men join would bring bad luck. To become a member of these high eating classes a man would have to present a piece of yar or 'shell money' to the overseer of the DAWACH for the village. This yar would be for all of the members of the eating class that the man was joining. When these ceremonies occurred, they took place at either a men's house or an individual's house such as the chief's house. The food that was served usually consisted only of bananas, coconut meat and drinking coconuts. These were served on a rorow, the 'large flat stones' where food was served. During these ceremonies, all of the men in a village who were members of the top three eating classes would gather to participate, but they would eat in separate groups.

As we have already stated, there are numerous restrictions



surrounding DAWACH. Members of the higher ranked eating classes ate food that was collected from specific plots of land and cooked in separate pots. A man, therefore, would never eat the same food as his wife nor would he eat food out of the same pot that she had cooked her food. In addition, a man would never ask for food or betelnut from another man who belonged to a higher eating class. However, members of eating classes could give food to men of a lower eating class. Not every man in a village could become a member of the higher eating classes in his village. To become a member of a very high ranked YOGUM, a man had to own a taro patch that allowed him to join it. For example, before a man could join the YOGUM of Munthing, he had to own a taro patch that was considered Munthing. Not all men owned the necessary taro patches to belong to the higher eating



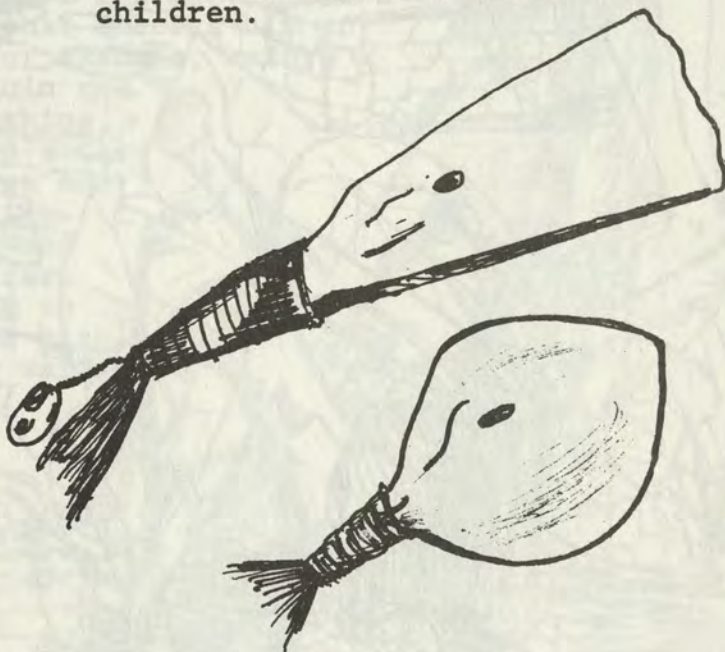
classes, especially the highest eating class in the village. This was even more true years ago when more people lived on Yap.

When a man became a member of the high ranked eating classes, he could designate certain trees to be for his use only. For example, if the father of a household was of the Garkuf YOGUM, he could point to a coconut tree, banana tree, papaya tree or whatever and inform the other members of his family that the tree was only for his use and no one else could take from it. This was necessary to do since the father could not eat fruits or drink coconuts from the same trees as the rest of his family. In some villages, there were YOGUM for only priests and high chiefs. The eating restrictions surrounding these men were even more severe. There were only a very few people who could collect and cook food for such men.

Women did not participate in DAWACH but it did affect their lives as well as their status. A woman who was married to a member of a high ranked YOGUM would be higher in status than a woman who was married to a member of a low ranked YOGUM. Two sisters who were separated in age by many years were not supposed to eat together in public. The women, who gathered the food for the men, had to know the ranks of the plots of land. It sometimes was necessary for a woman to go to three different taro patches in order to get food for her family. From one taro patch, she had to collect food for her husband, from another she got food for herself and small children and

from another she might get food for her oldest son. This was not only true for taro patches, but for all food that was collected.

Today, DAWACH is not followed as strictly as it was a few years ago. Young men seldom participate in eating classes. Today, a man can join an eating class when he desires, even if he is sixty years old. Even though older Yapese men are often members of eating classes, they do not adhere to the daily regulations surrounding DAWACH. DAWACH is usually only followed during specific ceremonies or celebrations in Yap today. An old Yapese man might eat the same food as the other members of his family, but during a celebration he will eat the food collected for the members of his YOGUM. However, there are some old men who continue to eat only taro that was grown in taro patches of their YOGUM rank. There is no doubt that DAWACH was an integral part of Yapese society and culture involving men, women and children.



### TEACHERS/ADVISORS' NOTE

The project of putting together the first issue of KAKROM took two long quarters, each consisting of nine weeks. The accumulation of information and data alone could have been very trying indeed. Had it not been for the enthusiasm and encouragement displayed by the students of both project schools, the project could not have been as complete and successful. Often times the students got into the habit of working late into the evenings and it was not uncommon for them to be seen working on the weekends, too.

The task of being a teacher/advisor in this particular project entailed several problems. It was discovered that in many instances we had to learn together with our students. Mr. Sabestian Anefal, who co-advised the project with me, will agree that we both lack a great deal in the experience department as far as putting together a magazine of this magnitude is concerned, and the fact that this was our first exposure to this type of project added to the problem.

The process of accumulating information for this first issue of KAKROM was geared primarily toward community aspects of traditional skills. Depending largely on interviews, the students visited elders in the communities to accumulate their information. The cooperation received from members of the community was tremendous and the degree of willingness showed is seldom equaled, in spite of the fact that often times there existed a barrier between students and elders regarding the method of interviewing and the materials involved. Although it was natural for all to show some degree of frustration, everyone tried diligently to ensure the successful completion of this very first issue of KAKROM.



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