

Tondol, Pangasinan

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THREE-quarters of all Filipinos live in rural villages, the *barrios*. Everyone in Manila these days is talking about the barrios, sometimes confusing them with small country towns in general. It is highly possible that attitudes, customs, and life in general in the remoter barrios may differ significantly from those in villages along the principal highways, but until a scientific study of such villages is carried out, this point will remain undetermined.

Recently the writer had the opportunity to visit a remote Christian Filipino barrio briefly. This was Tondol, on Cabarruyan Island which forms the Municipality of Anda in Pangasinan Province, Luzon. Tondol was chosen for a visit because, although two hours' journey by launch or afoot from the nearest highway, it is only that same distance away from the Hundred Islands beach resort where boats and accommodations for visitors are available. How typical it is, can not be determined accurately. Some of the informed American and Filipino observers of the Philippine scene who have read the draft of this article believe that Tondol is above the national average in many respects, as the Communist-ridden barrios in Bulacan and Pampanga are below average in everything except communications.

ANDA is one of the 46 municipalities in the Province of Pangasinan. The municipal area of 14,980 hectares is comprised almost entirely by Cabarruyan Island and a few tiny islets off its shore, set in shallow, reef-filled waters just off the Bolinao Peninsula which forms the western side of Lingayen Gulf. The 1948 Census of Agriculture shows that 61.8% of the farm area of 4,522 hectares was cultivated. The population in 1948 was only 11,213, indicating a lack of pressure on the land. Principal occupations are rice farming, coconut raising, and fishing.

Anda, the *poblacion* (seat of government), is connected with the outside world by a gravel road leading to a ferry (a surplus United States military landing craft) across the narrow strait to the mainland. There is a telegraph service. Jeeps and buses run frequently to Alaminos, from which there is a direct, scheduled bus-service to Lingayen, the provincial capital, and to Manila. The eight barrios of Anda are without all-weather roads. Some can be reached, though with difficulty, by jeeps in the dry season, but most intra-municipal communication is by foot, carabao, sled, or banca (dug-out canoe). The barrios in the southern part of the Island find that the easiest route to the outside world is via banca or launch to Lucap on the mainland, from which they take jeeps to the large market-town of Alaminos, 3-1/2 miles away.

Because of its relative isolation, Anda Municipality has escaped most of the disturbances of the past half century. Its residents watched invasions of nearby Lingayen by the Americans in 1899, the Japanese in 1941, and the Americans again in 1945 without themselves being touched. When the Americans returned to Luzon the last time, the small Japanese detachment which occasionally had patrolled the Anda barrios quietly marched away. The Hulus, who were a serious menace to western Pangasinan from 1950 to 1952, never disturbed Cabarruyan Island. A few municipal policemen have kept the peace successfully. There have been no election disturbances.

Western Pangasinan speaks three separate languages and dialects: Pangasinan, Bolinao Zambal, and Ilocano. The *lingua franca* is Zambal and there is apparently little friction between the language groups. Even a colony of Visayan fishermen who settled on Cabarruyan and married local girls has been quietly absorbed into the fold.

Cabarruyan Island differs from the Philippine national average in religion, its people being about evenly divided between Aglipayans (an independent nationalistic and originally Catholic sect, now affiliated with the Episcopal Church) and Methodists. The majority of Filipinos are at least nominally Roman Catholic. The Rev. Mr. Weinert, a Methodist missionary and agricultural expert, is the first American to live on the Island.

There is apparently no great friction of any kind among the people on Cabarruyan, although such a statement should not be accepted until more than a superficial examination is made. Certainly, there are no vast gaps between rich and poor such as plague Pampanga and other Central Luzon provinces; no one is hungry, although some may be poorly nourished; and politics, although intensely interesting this year, is not regarded as a matter for violence.

TONDOL is the largest barrio of Anda Municipality; with a population of 1,944 in 1948, it was slightly larger than the poblacion. It is situated on the northwest shore of Cabarruyan Island, facing the Lingayen Gulf, about 5 airline miles ENE of Anda town and slightly over 8 miles north of Lucap wharf. The town of Agoon, on the opposite shore of Lingayen Gulf, is 21 miles east, and the high peaks of the Malaya Range are prominent on the eastern horizon.

To reach Tondol from Manila, the visitor must first take a 5- to 7-hour trip by highway over roads ranging from excellent concrete to badly deteriorated gravel as far as Lucap wharf, just north of Alaminos, Pangasinan. Here he takes a small launch, and if winds and waves are favorable, arrives off Tondol in from 2 to 3 hours. There are no navigation markers; the boatmen know their own landmarks for threading the narrow channels between the reefs and shoals. At most tides, the traveler rolls up his trousers and wades through several hundred yards of shallow water and wet beach to the shore. Tondol also can be reached from Anda, involving a 2-hour walk across the fields. During the dry season the track can sometimes be followed by jeep, but the slightest rain turns it into an impassable quagmire.

The village is scattered widely along sandy paths which wind through the coconut groves, much as a Balinese village would be. Houses are built of thatch or bamboo, set on wooden posts. A few are constructed of wood and have galvanized-iron roofs, but these are in the minority.

CASUAL observers of Filipino life often make the remark that "life in the barrios hasn't changed in the past 500 years." The older people in Tondol dispute that statement.

A white-haired and nearly toothless *baket* (old woman), who came to Tondol from Alaminos 40 years ago as a bride, said her personal way of life had not changed much but agreed with other residents of 25 to 35 years' standing, that things were different. They listed the following:

(1) *Education*. There has been a school at Tondol since the early days of the American occupation, or for about half a century. Originally there was only one teacher, probably only an elementary-school graduate himself, and only primary grades were taught to a limited part of the population. Dr. Monico C. Calma, now Principal of the Pangasinan Fisheries High School, and the present Principal were teaching at Tondol in the 1920's and agreed that even at that time much missionary effort was required to persuade parents to relinquish the time of their children in the fields to allow them to go to school. Now there are

two schools at Tondol that offer education through the elementary level (6th grade, although the 7th grade, abolished in 1940, will be restored under the present national educational policy). All children who want to go to school are accommodated. The seven teachers are all normal school graduates. All informants agreed this was the most important change in the Tondol way of life during their lifetimes. A number of Tondol young people attend the two private high schools in Anda. One of these is run by a local board of trustees, but the Methodist Mission, which helps to provide financial support, obviously has a considerable say in its policies. Mr. Weinert teaches agricultural courses in this school. The other is a farm school of the Dagupan Colleges, teaching vocational subjects. Families will and do sacrifice their hard-earned pesos to send their children to school and provide them with good clothes, for they feel that education is the only way for them to have a chance to live better than the parents do.

(2) *Health and sanitation.* Although primitive by some American standards, sanitation in Tondol probably would compare quite favorably with that of some parts of the South (United States) and most Asian villages. People have been taught through the schools and by sanitary inspectors the necessity for cleanliness, use of latrines, proper diets, and modern vaccines and medicines. The people are proud of their government-built sanitary well even though it delivers brackish water and they want more wells to replace the shallow surface wells.

(3) *Travel.* Although even today many Tondol residents have never been outside their home village, the proportion of people who travel increases each year, particularly as youths go to the poblacion, the provincial capital, or even Manila for higher education. The outside world becomes more real to them every year.

(4) *Reduction of superstition.* Although superstition is still a powerful factor in village life, its influence among the younger generation has been greatly reduced and its forms have changed. Today a Tondol resident will place the same faith in penicillin he once gave an *anting-anting* (good luck charm) composed of magic phrases in Latin. Many of his superstitions are now comparable to those of the average American who forces apartment-house owners to "omit" the 13th floor. Perhaps the greatest illusion today is that providing a child with a diploma automatically guarantees his success in life.

Broadened knowledge has resulted in an increasing desire for improvements, particularly in the field of government services. The barrio people realize more and more what they have been missing and are quickly learning the power of their votes in the struggle to achieve their rising expectations.

THE visit to Tondol was made less than a month before the national elections at which the Filipinos were to choose their President and Vice-President, and their Representatives and eight of their Senators. Municipal officials were not up for election that year (1953). Two of the candidates for Congressman in the First District of Pangasinan had visited the barrio and made campaign speeches. Some of the houses were plastered with posters listing the names of one or the other of the political parties and its candidates. People were not afraid to thus publicly advertise their choice.

The election precincts were the two schools. Voting booths had been set up in the class-rooms for election day, November 10, a general holiday. The names of the new registrants were displayed in a book hung on the front porch of the school visited. Persons who voted in the last elections had not had to register. More than 1/4 of the population was then registered, a proportion which was said to represent virtually all of those eligible to vote.

Tondol has never had any election troubles. The people were very much interested in the campaign and had learned,

principally from the news sections of their vernacular magazines and through discussions with barrio people who travel to the provincial capital or Manila, the general qualifications of the presidential candidates.

TONDOL school receives only the *Free World* magazine from the U. S. Information Service output. Copies arrive via ordinary mail at the Municipal Building and are called for by pupils who happen to visit the town. The two copies sent are used by 6 teachers and 281 pupils and are then placed in the Community Reading Center. The teachers said that the contents of the magazine are "interesting and informative" but they indicated they would prefer a publication which could be related directly to the school curriculum or used to improve barrio life, a feeling shared by a sampling of teachers in barrio schools in other parts of the Philippines.

A few people in the village had seen the USIS mobile-unit film-showings at the Asbury High School in the Municipality. No motion pictures have been shown in the village itself by any organization. The spot-check indicated that a majority of Philippine barrios had not seen USIS movies, which is obvious enough in view of their number and the lack of roads.

There is one radio in the barrio, apparently unlicensed, since people were reluctant to disclose its location. Radio is a potential mass-medium of great value, but the high cost of receivers and batteries has so far prevented much actual development of the medium in the barrios. Tondol, like most barrios, has no public electricity supply. A field-check indicated that the average receiver would have no difficulty in picking up the Dagupan Station and at least three in Manila during the daytime. At night, reception of China mainland and Taiwan stations is possible, while VOA Malolos and Poro are very clear indeed.

No Tondol resident subscribes to a daily newspaper, although when a teacher goes to the poblacion or the provincial capital on business, he usually returns with a copy of the *Manila Times* or the *Manila Chronicle*. Most issues of the Philippines *Free Press*, a weekly newspaper, similarly find their way to the village school teachers. On the other hand, the vernacular weekly magazines *Bannawag* (Ilocano) and *Litwayway* (Tagalog) are said to circulate rather widely among the population as a whole. Their news supplements are the chief apparent source of information on external events, although a detailed study is necessary to determine just what the real situation is.

TONDOL, like other such barrios, has a leader who, however, the writer does not wish to identify here. Such a man is usually no longer the priest or the teacher and sometimes not even the barrio lieutenant. Often he is a jack-of-all-trades and his influence is largely due to the fact that he knows how to farm or fish better than his neighbors who seek his advice. Once a man in a barrio has proved his ability in the fundamental art of earning a living, his views have greater weight in other matters. Sometimes such a man is one who has seen something of the outside world. Generally he has a large enough income to enable him to spend some of his time in minding other people's business. Also, he has a reputation for honesty and fairness in his dealings. Such men are readily identified by the barrio people. One need only ask whom they most respect, whom they go to for advice and comfort.

In any efforts made to improve conditions in our barrios, it would be wise to gain the interest and support of such local leaders first of all. But not even the barrio leaders can speak for all the people. Direct approach to them is necessary, but if it can be demonstrated that there are feasible methods of improving their livelihood from their own resources, the way has been prepared.