

Story of Philippine Cloths

PINOLPOG

By L. V. R.



If you look over the old skirts of your grandmothers or your grandaunts, you will perhaps find some that are made of a smooth, glossy material that is much stiffer than silk. This material is made in some parts of the Bicol region. It is called "pinolpog" or "pinokpok," which means pounded or beaten cloth.

The pinolpog is woven in the same way as ordinary sinamay, but the finishing process is different. The ends of a piece of sinamay which is to be made into pinolpog are sewn together. The whole piece is dampened with water. Then it is folded lightly and placed upon a piece of hardwood. A boy sits on each side of the log. One boy holds and turns the cloth with one hand and beats it with a mallet held in the other hand. The other boy beats the cloth with mallets held in his hands.

NOTICE

The poem which appeared in the August issue entitled "My Hour Song" was written by Mrs. Winifred Lewis and illustrated by Pedro Felipe.

Pedro Felipe is an art student from Laoag, Ilocos Norte. He is studying in the city at present and we hope to publish more of his drawings.

After beating for some time, the cloth is neatly folded and beaten some more with larger mallets. For pounding an 8-meter piece of pinolpog, a boy usually earns ₱0.20.

The pinolpog is then bleached or whitened. It is placed in a mixture of water, the juices of several lemons or limes. It is allowed to stay there for about fifteen to twenty minutes. After this, the cloth is washed in clear water and dried in the sun. While drying, the cloth is stretched tight so that it will become smooth and even.

When the cloth is dry, it is rolled on a rounded piece of hard wood. This is next placed on a smooth block and beaten some more until the cloth gets silky and smooth. If the maker of the cloth wishes to make it softer and smoother, he slowly unwinds the cloth from the wood and rolls it on another. Then he beats it further. After the pounding, it is washed once more in a solution of lemon juice and water, dried and pounded again.

The manufacture of pinolpog is done largely in the town of Daraga, Albay Province. Early in the morning, and at twilight, any stranger coming to the place will be surprised by the continuous pounding. If he does not know what is going on, he would suppose that the sound he hears is the beating of many drums.

