

**REPORT ON
MALI WORKSHOP PROJECT
January 16, 2010**



Photos by I. Myrtle Palacio

Bayera, Dangriga, BELIZE

**I. Myrtle Palacio, O.B.E.
January 2010**

BUYEI JUAN LAMBHEY INSTITUTE

Mali Workshop Project
January 16, 2010
Bayera, Dangriga, BELIZE

A REPORT
(updated February 2010)

Background

Buyei Juan Lambey Institute is a legal entity that came into being in 2000. The leaders, Mr. Eugene Hernandez and the late Buyei John Mariano saw the Institute as an engine for education in general regarding Garifunaduo and in particular the role and significance of the *Dabuyaba*. Both Mr. Hernandez and Mr. Mariano returned to Dangriga from the United States upon retirement, and along with their spouses and other family members have contributed immensely to the Dangriga community. Through the initiatives of Mr. Hernandez and Mr. Mariano, the Buyei Juan Lambey Institute has conducted among other activities, summer workshops in drumming and *wanaragua* dancing, skills training for income generation, exhibition of Garifuna artifacts, experimented in aqua-fishing, and gave support to *hana* and drum making by Mr. Kapi Mariano.

The Mali workshop resulted from a request by Baba John Mariano just before his illness and passing in September 2009. He saw the need for such continuous activities as he considered the *Dabuyaba* as central to *Garifunaduo*. This workshop was also in honour of Mr. Eugene Hernandez and in remembrance of Buyei John Mariano for their many contributions. It is a project as the meaning connotes some continuation in this area.

The Mali workshop project initiative was organized and sponsored by the Myrtle Palacio family grouping through the Buyei Juan Lambey Institute. It came to fruition with the support and confidence of Cannon Jerris Jones Valentine, Pastor of Christ the King Anglican Church of Dangriga, Belize. Cannon Valentine is the foremost knowledgeable person in every aspect of the *Dugu* ceremony from the drumming to *awisahani* and the calling of the *uyenu*. He is one of possibly three persons in Dangriga who can call the *Mali*. Cannon Valentine organized the agenda and was the primary facilitator for the workshop.

The Workshop

The workshop was held on Saturday, January 16, 2010 at Bayera, in Dangriga, Belize. It was the first sunny and dry day in approximately two weeks in Belize, with a gentle sea breeze blowing from the Caribbean. Bayera was the ideal venue, being the location of the Baba John Dabuyaba, which is positioned immediately in front of the sea. After the sending out the call for the workshop, the feedback was that there would be a maximum of 20 participants. By 10:30 a.m. on the day of the workshop, some 58 persons had registered and through the flexibility and initiative of Ms. Lilly the cook, we were able to provide food for a total of 64 participants.

After the welcome and introduction by Ms. Myrtle Palacio, Mr. Roy Cayetano gave an overview of our history and incorporated that with the object for a *Dugu* and symbolic meanings for the drums etc. Several questions were asked of Mr. Cayetano on his presentation leading to a lively discussion. After a short break Cannon Valentine led the discussion to the *Mali*—its significance, the symbols of the movements of the drums, the *sisira* and the calling of the *Mali*. Several questions were fielded, a few not directly on the topic that Cannon Valentine kindly guided to the satisfaction of the participants who continued the discussion into the lunch break. Lunch consisted of *darasa* or *ereba* with fish or chicken and a coleslaw, pound cake and citrus juice.

Lunch was followed by the practice of the call and response of the *Mali*, which was introduced by Cannon Valentine, and this time utilizing the drums (the music). He demonstrated the importance of synchronizing the call with the movements of the drums--up and down. Ms Gwen Nunez Gonzalez willingly exercised the calling of the *Mali* during the practical. While this was new experience to some, it was reinforcement for others.

A full *Mali* was conducted with participants putting what they learnt into practice with Cannon Valentine critically looking on. The participation of the youth who were fully engaged was very promising. The *Dabuyaba* rocked, literally, with enthusiasm and confidence. The workshop ended with *chururuti* and *awesahani*....and with calls for more. The “Chiquita Cola” piece was a hit.

Mali—An Overview

The Garifuna word *malí* derives from the verb *ámaliha* and/or the noun *ámalihaní*. The action word (verb) *ámaliha* means in English, to placate, to appease or to mollify. Similarly, *ámalihaní* as the noun means the placation of; and the term *malí* is popularly used for the placating of the *Gubida* (spirits) in the *Dügú* ceremony. Presided over by a *Buyei*, the *Dügú* takes place in the *Dabuyaba* (ancestral house) and the *Mali* is one ritual in the ceremony. While the primary objective of the *Dügú* ceremony is to mollify the *Gubida* by yielding concessions or to pacify by granting demands made by the *Ahari* (Ancestral spirits), the *Mali* is one of the most important and sacred aspects in the entire *Dügú* ceremony, in terms of obtaining the objective. The belief is that the *Mali* also repairs damaged relationships, and after reconciliation and repentance, there is joy and satisfaction. There are three drums and the three drummers stand and move around playing the drums throughout the *Mali*, which lasts approximately 36 minutes. The middle drum is referred to as the *anighi* (heart). The other musical instrument is the *sisira* which is usually played by the *Buyei*. Please note that the photographs in this report show the practical aspects of the workshop; so that the person playing the *sisira* is not a *Buyei* and that this was only a demonstration of the *Mali* ceremony.

The word for sun and day (*weyu*) in Garifuna is the same. The fact that the earth is divided into two—day and night, and is further divided into morning and evening, twilight and deep sleep is very much respected in Garifuna rituals and belief systems.

For example, it is believed that bad spirits roam the earth around mid-day and mid-night and therefore drums are not played in the *Dabuyaba* at those times; and in times past children were not to be found on the road/street around mid-day. The use of the *rida* (calabash) of water with two pieces of coconut leaf spine placed on top at most rituals demonstrates this belief. The cross divides the *rida* in two, similar concept too the division of the earth into day and night. Where the two sticks cross is the centre, and from the centre there are movements back to the extremities of the cross and back again to the centre (see photos in Appendix i).

The movements in the *Mali* are played out in much the same manner. The drummers move with the *Buyei* throughout the *Mali*. Commencing from the centre at the western end of the *Dabuyaba*, from in front of the *Guli* (inner chamber of the *Dabuyaba*), the three drummers stand facing the *Buyei* who plays the *Sisira* and the participants stand behind the *Buyei*. The *Buyei* leading the *Mali* shuffles backwards and then forward to the centre of the *Dabuyaba*, with the drummers and participants following the *Buyei's* every lead (see photos in Appendix i).

At the centre is the *maniguati* (quiet or silence). The chanting stops and the drums are down to a murmur. The drums represent the spirits of the living; the *Sisira* played by the *Buyei* represents the spirits of outerworld, and the ground represents the spirits of the underworld. The drummers with their drums bend down, the drums touching the earth. The *Buyei* also bends down playing the *Sisira* to meet the drums and taking turn to play the *Sisira* in front of each drum, and then back to the middle drum. This is a moment of great significance in the *Mali* ritual (see photos in Appendix i).

The movement then shifts to the southern door, and it is believed that we are moving our existence. The same shuffling as occurred in the west including the *maniguati* is repeated at every movement, next to the east, then north and back where it started in the west in front of the *Guli* and back to the centre. The rhythm is now faster as the movement is repeated clockwise this time, but faster—to the north then the east, then south and back to the west in front of the *Guli*. On reaching the west, the *Mali* is over, it has been accomplished and the ancestral spirits have been placated.

Conclusion

The objective of individuals leaving the workshop with full knowledge of calling the *Mali* was not fully met. However, understanding its significance, timing and the how was generally accomplished and with continuous practice a few experts may emerge. There were calls for more of the same from the participants, as well as workshops on the language and the *Dugu* itself. Cannon Valentine mentioned that the workshop was historic—a first—so let this workshop be the beginning, and that there be a continuation of this and other areas, led by an individual and/or youth group as we now know that one day or one occasion is not enough.

More than a half of the persons registered were young persons to the age of 21 and relatively young to the age of 40. While there were far more female participants, the presence of males particularly within the youths was heartening.

Lastly, a *dagagudou* to the ancestors was organized by Cannon Valentine with the assistance of Auntie Felo. This took place in the *Guli*—so that what we ate and drank was also shared with the ancestors in the spirit of the tradition and *Garifunaduo*. Some of the information in the “Overview” on the Mali was shared with me by Cannon Valentine.

On behalf of the Buyei Juan Lambey Institute and the Myrtle Palacio family grouping I would like to wholeheartedly give thanks the following persons:

- Cannon Jerris J. Valentine for facilitating and for his contribution of water and ereba
- Mr. Roy Cayetano for his presentation on the Overview of the Garifuna History
- Mrs. Jeremy Jacqueline Valentine Cayetano and Mrs. Lorraine Valentine for contributing the stipend of \$90.00 to the drummers
- Mrs. Digna Mariano for preparing the *Dabuyaba* and Ms. Lilly for her creativity in stretching the food and who was never flustered by the large turnout
- Ms Arreini Palacio Morgan for designing and producing the programme
- Anighi, Aniki and Arreini for the logistics on the ground on that day
- Ms. Gwen Nunez Gonzalez for assisting with the registration on Saturday
- Our elders, Auntie Felomena Arana and Auntie Lilly Garcia for assisting in guiding us along
- Mr. David Craig of CPBL for the juices and cups

Seremei toun Wabuongiute hama Aharigu. Weiriti naritagoun lau chulugua-hama.
Many thanks to all.

I. Myrtle Palacio
January 2010

APPENDIX i



Lecture/discussion in the morning



Facing the West, in front of the Guli



Facing the South---first move counter-clockwise



The Rida with water and cross



3 drums, the middle is the Anighi (heart)

APPENDIX ii

Buyei Juan Lambey Institute
Bayera, Dangriga, BELIZE
January 16, 2010

Mali Workshop Project List of Names

| No. | First Name | Last Name | Address | E-Mail |
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| 47 | Kelvin | Thomas | Belmopan | |
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| 49 | Tiffany | Rubio | 53 Canal St. | |
| 50 | Victor | | 63 Lakeland | |
| 51 | Marcella | Arana | 33 Lakeland | |
| 52 | Marlon | Melendrez | 2 nd New Site | |
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| | | | | |

For more information:
www.belize-glessimaresearch.org
www.issuu.com/irispal



**Mali Project Workshop
Buyei Juan Lambey Institute
Dangriga, Belize
January 16, 2010
Facilitator: Canon Jerris Valentine,
Christ the King Anglican Church**

INTRODUCTION

Iduhenyu:

In memory of *Buyei John Mariano*
In honour of *Mr. Eugene Hernandez*
The Buyei Juan Lambey Institute is hosting a workshop on "The Mali", sponsored by the Myrtle Palacio Family.

The objectives are:

- ♦ to learn or become aware of the call and response to the Mali
- ♦ to know the significance of the Mali in the Dugu ceremony

Seremei





Buyei John Mariano
June 24, 1936— Sept 12, 2009



Mr. Eugene Hernandez

PROGRAMME

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- 08:00 Registration -- Meet & Greet
- 09:00 Welcome and Objective of Workshop
- 09:30 Why a Dugu?
(open discussion)
- 10:30 Garifuna Spirituality or Scandal?
- 11:00 Significance of the Mali
- 11:30 Singing of the Mali
- 12:30 LUNCH and Abeimahani
- 13:30 Practice of 'calling' the Mali
- 14:30 Abelagudahani
- 14:45 Mali
- 15:30 Chururuti ... awisahani
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