

# Babaylan Spirit and Power Roles

*“Baylans” were historical figures in ancient pre-colonial villages in the Visayan Islands of the Philippines. They were the baranggay leaders. Female leaders, the “babaylans,” were of equal rank to men. Baylan comes from two baybayin sounds BA and LA. According to Philippine baybayin scholars, BA is the feminine principle and LA is the masculine principle. BA-LA together is quite indicative of the balance and harmony that baylans worked to maintain in their communities.*

Today, the *babaylan* exists not just as a reclaimed icon. Filipino women, real persons in our living, breathing communities, have always enacted the power roles of the *babaylan* --- warrior, teacher, healer, visionary and even priestess. Modern society benefits from this form of *babaylanism*.

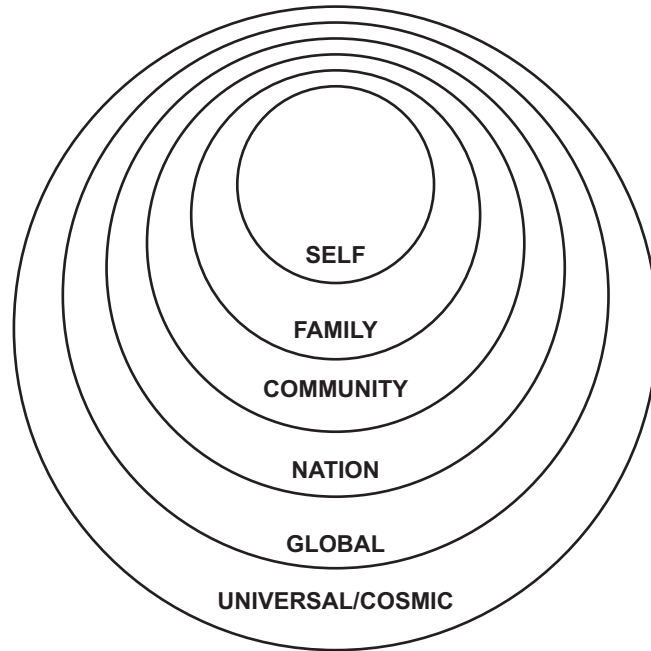
The underlying approach of this conference is to explore essence of Filipino soul and leadership and awaken Babaylan strength in you by learning about the power roles of Warrior, Teacher, Healer and Visionary/Sage.

The speaker panel concept is based on leadership icons or *babaylan* power roles of Warrior, Teacher, Healer and Visionary. Briefly ---- **Warrior** takes a stand for not only survival but also for change for the better, for fairness, justice and for balance and harmony in the community. **Teacher** harvests knowledge and heritage, processes nurtures and develops knowledge and heritage and then plants seeds for future generations to harvest. **Healer** removes dis-ease and dis-ease, brings about health and wholeness in the physical and emotional well-being of the community... And **Visionary** intuits and perceives truth and understanding and shares this with family and/or community, from which action is taken to move forward for development, success, harmony and peace.

These power roles are actually archetypal personifications of universal wisdom within the *babaylan* experience. Each archetype/power role characterizes a specific aspect of *babaylan* work. Each archetypal role in turn corresponds to an archetypal energy of one of the four Elements--- Earth, Fire, Water, Air. There are types of actual service and work that falls under each archetype or more than one at a time. Individuals and collectives can embody a power role or all at the same time.

# Levels of Empowerment

*of Walking the Path of the  
Warrior, Teacher, Healer and Visionary*



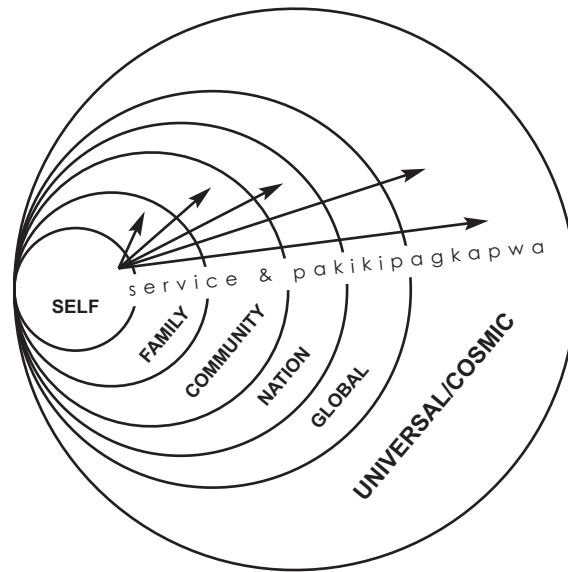
An individual can call upon his/her inner Warrior, Teacher, Healer or Visionary for growth, wholeness, advancement, inner evolution and success. Many times individuals may have been embodying these archetypes at certain periods of their lives already, but were not completely aware of that process at the time. The book of Angeles Arrien, *The Four-Fold Way, Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer and Visionary*, talks about these universal archetypes and how we can tap into them for empowerment or what in indigenous traditions is called "Big Medicine."

Such archetypes, among others, are empowerment tools of all cultures and are universal. Shamans have called upon such symbols for "medicine" through rituals, oral heritage and mythologies. The universal "hero" of legend and epics walks the paths of Warrior, Teacher, Healer and/or Visionary.

All it takes is a shift in one's awareness to more consciously walk the four-fold way for one's own personal healing and empowerment and even for one's community's healing and empowerment.

And so, we can each be on such a path for ourselves. We can be so even for our families. And when we walk the four-fold path that benefits others in our communities and nations, this is when we have become true leaders.

# Walking the Path of the Babaylan



The *Babaylan* knows very well that all things, all people, all existences are connected. This is Sacred Internconnection which, in Filipino, is called *pakikipagkapwa*.

In the end, *babaylan* is merely a word. It is what it means that it is essential. The role and title of *Babaylan* carries with it great meaning and great service only in the sense that such leadership involves great responsibility.

We hope you benefit from discussing babaylan leadership in this conference in that you will make better decisions from moment to moment, and that you can better face head-on your personal challenges and, too, the challenges of our world. For the sake of those we love. And for the sake of those generations that we will never meet.

# *Spirit of the Babaylan* Open Art Exhibit

Opening 5-7:30 PM June 2, 2005  
Ends June 24, 2005  
Kimmel Center's Commuter Art Gallery  
New York City

This summer, New York City's Kimmel Center Commuter Gallery will be transformed into an ethereal artscape of works by Filipina American artists. *Spirit of the Babaylan: Open Art Exhibit*, a pioneer indoor art exhibition organized by the Filipino American Women's Network Conference on behalf of NewFilipina, Inc. and Philippine Forum, will open on June 2 and run through June 24. This all encompassing multi-media exhibition – the first of its kind in New York City to date - will feature new and emerging work from nine Filipina American artists:

Madonna Davidoff  
Dulcie Dee  
Valerie Jelski  
Christine Quisumbing Ramillo  
Kinding Sindaw  
Sabrina Alcantara-Tan  
Maryann Ubaldo  
Marv Velando  
Perla Daly

Works of art from this eclectic group of Filipina American artists will grace Kimmel Center's Commuter Gallery to complete an ethereal transformation and usher the viewer into the *Spirit of the Babaylan*, its different dimensions in contrast with the realities of being a woman and an ancient spiritual and cultural legacy unique of those who know the Philippines as Motherland.

The Kimmel Center Commuter Gallery, located on the second floor of the Helen and Martin Kimmel Center for University Life, New York University's new hub of campus activity for undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, staff and alumni, overlooks Washington Square Park in the heart of Manhattan's Greenwich Village.

Gallery Hours: Monday - Friday 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. Weekend hours are to be announced. The *Spirit of the Babaylan: Open Art Exhibit* is free to the public.

AE Coordinator: Marv Velando