



# The Forgotten Children of Maui: Filipino Myths, Tattoos, and Rituals of a Demigod

*Lane Wilcken*

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When people hear of Maui, they mainly think of the island named after him in the Hawaiian archipelago. In Polynesia, Maui is best known as a superman, a demigod who performed incredible feats of strength like fishing up islands and capturing the sun. His timeless stories are still shared throughout the Pacific Islands as they have been for countless generations. Some islands claim him to be a god, others a semi-divine man, but many count this bold adventurer as an ancestor. For more than two centuries, western scholars have worked to record the tales of this mythic hero from around the Pacific. However, these anthropologists have overlooked and largely ignored the traditions of the Philippine Islands. Yet, hidden within the ancient mythology, extinct tattoos, and dying rituals of the Philippines, lays the powerful impact of a man well known in Polynesia, but nearly forgotten in the Philippines. Lane Wilcken, the author of *Filipino Tattoos: Ancient to Modern*, deciphers the fragments of the Maui tradition of the Philippines and compares them with what is known in the Pacific Islands to restore a holistic understanding of Maui and the traditions surrounding him. In this groundbreaking work he reveals the actual life history of a world changing progenitor hidden in the metaphors of mythic traditions that still affect us today.

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