



*Understanding the*  
**Lumad**

A Closer Look at a Misunderstood Culture



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Revised Edition



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## ACRONYMS

<b>Alsons</b>	Alcantara and Sons, Inc.	<b>OND</b>	Oblates of Notre Dame
<b>ARMM</b>	Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao	<b>OSCC</b>	Office for Southern Cultural Communities
<b>CADT</b>	Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title	<b>OTLAC</b>	Organization of Teduray and Lambangian Conference
<b>CERD</b>	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	<b>PNOC</b>	Philippine National Oil Company
<b>CHED</b>	Commission on Higher Education	<b>RLA</b>	Regional Legislative Assembly
<b>FPIC</b>	Free and Prior Informed Consent	<b>SEC</b>	Securities and Exchange Commission
<b>GRP</b>	Government of the Republic of the Philippines	<b>SILDAP-SE</b>	Silingang Dapit sa Sidlakang Mindanao
<b>IAHTCO</b>	Impahanong-Amosig Higaonon Tribal Community Organization	<b>SSL</b>	Sandawa Sarili Langis
<b>IFMA</b>	Integrated Forest Management Agreement	<b>TREES</b>	Tribal Education on Ecological Systems
<b>IPA</b>	Indigenous Peoples Apostolate	<b>TRIPSS</b>	Tribal Professionals and Students Solidarity
<b>IPRA</b>	Indigenous Peoples Rights Act	<b>TVI</b>	Toronto Ventures, Inc.
<b>Kadima</b>	Kaimonan ka Dibabawon aw Manggwangan	<b>UGAT</b>	Ugnayang Pang-AghamTao
<b>MILF</b>	Moro Islamic Liberation Front		
<b>NCCA</b>	National Commission for Culture and the Arts		
<b>NCIP</b>	National Commission on Indigenous Peoples		
<b>NSO</b>	National Statistics Office		

## FOREWORD

The publication of the revised edition of *Understanding the Lumad*, with gratitude to Tebtebba Foundation and Silingang Dapit sa Sidlakang Mindanao (SILDAP-SE) for the permission granted, is primarily intended to make it more widely available to our public school teachers in Mindanao and others who are working with indigenous peoples in various education programs.

The pursuit of the enhanced basic education program – K to 12 – requires teachers and education managers to equip themselves with the perspective, knowledge, and skills supportive of the transformation of our learning programs into one that is truly inclusive and relevant to the social and cultural context of the diverse communities in the country. The Department of Education (DepED) has earlier adopted the National Indigenous Peoples Education Policy Framework (DepED Order No. 62, s. 2011 or “DO62”) as a response to the long-standing call of indigenous communities for reforms in the education system that would make it capable of valuing and nurturing culturally rooted education – *edukasyong nagbibigay-halaga at patuloy na nagpapaunlad sa katutubong kaalaman at kakayahan kasabay ng dagdag kaalaman at kakayahan*. Along with the policies set by DO62 and K to 12 on indigenous peoples education, DepED has also affirmed that its mission is “to protect and promote the right of every Filipino to quality, equitable, *culture-based*, and complete basic education.”

The intentions of DO62 and culture-based education cannot be realized without meaningful community engagement, one that is empowering and respects the indigenous peoples’ right to self-determination and cultural integrity. This kind of engagement between DepED and indigenous communities, however, can only happen if we develop a “culture of encounter” among our teachers, school heads, and others involved in our education programs. This presupposes the capacity and constant effort to reach out and understand with openness and humility various realities, experiences, aspirations, and cultures, which may be different from our own.

As an initial step towards cultivating this culture of encounter, DepED is promoting better appreciation of the historical and socio-cultural underpinnings of indigenous peoples education, as well as how our education system developed and its influence in how we see ourselves as Filipinos and the different peoples of the Philippines. Following the directive of DO62 “to promote greater awareness and appreciation of the indigenous peoples’ cultural heritage and history – an integral, yet often neglected, part of the Philippine nation’s cultural heritage and history,” we are working towards ensuring that these are “given due recognition and appropriately integrated into the learning content of schools and learning programs” and that our learning resources “are free from discriminatory content and erroneous accounts, descriptions, and visual depictions, which misrepresent the history and culture of indigenous peoples or do not adequately acknowledge them.”

We hope that our teachers would find this book useful as a material for reflection and that it would generate sincere interest in getting to know better the communities of our indigenous learners. It is our desire that this publication would trigger more questions – rather than merely treated as a source of plain and clean-cut facts – the answers to which the reader would seek through dialogue and engagement with indigenous peoples themselves in their immediate community.

Keeping in mind that culture is constantly shaped, affirmed, and modified by people, culture-based education can only be a reality through constant engagement with the community, which ultimately provides the context in determining the relevance of education. From this perspective, a written material such as this book can only serve as a jump-off point for a more nuanced and informed attempt to understand and appreciate the past and present realities of indigenous communities. It is only in doing so can teachers journey with them towards the future that they desire for their communities and their ancestral domains.

**ROZANNO E. RUFINO**

Indigenous Peoples Education Office (IPsEO)  
Department of Education



## PREFACE

Seven years ago, Fr. Frank Nally of the Columban Fathers talked to us about one of his projects. This project is a book which can explain, in the simplest terms, who are the Lumads of Mindanao? His concern is that even in Mindanao the knowledge of the average non-indigenous person on the original people in that island is so inadequate. He asked us in Tebtebba if we are interested to do this work.

We did not hesitate to support the project, because this exactly fits with Tebtebba's vision and mission. As an indigenous peoples' global policy, research and education center, one of our priorities is to help indigenous peoples do their own research and write about themselves and their issues. We stand and work for the protection, respect and fulfillment of indigenous peoples' rights, as enshrined in international human rights instruments, especially the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). An integral component of this work is the publication of results of researches into books so the knowledge generated can be shared more widely.

We partnered with SILDAP-SE (Silingang Dapit sa Sidlakang Mindanao), a local NGO based in Tagum, Davao del Norte in Southern Philippines. SILDAP is involved in capacity development of several indigenous communities for the past 27 years. Among these efforts is the establishment of several indigenous schools in Southern Mindanao that provide indigenous-sensitive and culturally appropriate education in the primary level. They establish indigenous primary schools in certain areas and after some years, they pass these on to the Department of Education.

The research was undertaken by indigenous researchers from Mindanao. As mentioned earlier we, in Tebtebba, believe that they are the ones who can better tell their stories. This is in line with our efforts to develop indigenous peoples' capacities to undertake their own researches, and not be mere subjects or objects of research. We also made sure that the indigenous leaders, indigenous women, elders and youth are involved in the whole process so that they will own the output of this undertaking.

Originally, we wanted to cover the 22 indigenous Lumad groups in the research, but due to limitations – both physical and financial, we were only able to include 11 major groups. Community validation of the research was finally finished in 2008. It took many years to finish this because we wanted to make sure that this work is done properly. This means that those who wrote these stories were able to share and validate what they have written with the storytellers to make sure that they reflected what have been shared. Colleagues in Tebtebba who were assigned to this project joined several of these validation meetings, which were held in various communities.

We, in Tebtebba and SILDAP take pride in what has come out of our joint efforts to get the Lumad to tell their story. "Understanding the Lumad" is a collection of stories of 11 Lumad peoples: the Manobo of Davao del Norte, the Manobo of Agusan del Sur, Teduray, Mamanwa, B'laan, Dibabawun, Mansaka, Mandaya, Bagobo, Higaonon and the Subanen. Through their stories, we get to understand their cultures, traditions, practices, spiritual beliefs, and the enduring struggle to protect their lands, territories, forests and resources from external forces and interventions.

Interspersed between the stories are myths and legends, some of which were narrated by elders who have kindly shared these with us. These legends are reflections of their cosmologies and customary laws that regulate and sustain their ways of life.

This book is a collaborative effort and would not have been possible without the assistance of the indigenous organizations and communities of the study areas, several of our friends and colleagues. To SILDAP, in particular, Manggob Masinaring, an indigenous Mandaya who is the main author; Germelina Lacorte who edited the manuscript; to our staff in the Publication Desk (Raymond de Chavez, Paul Michael Nera and Marly Carino) - for the copy editing, book design and lay-out; the Philippine Team (Ador Ramo) and the Research Desk (Mikara Jubay and Jo Ann Guillao) - for the research support and validation; and to Prof. Raymundo D. Rovillos and Prof. Leah Enkiwe-Abayao of the University of the Philippines Baguio, who helped guide the research. To the Columban Fathers who supported the research and Fr. Frank Nally for his unwavering trust in Tebtebba. And lastly, to Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED) of Germany, whose funding support helped make this book project a reality.

“Understanding the Lumad” is our humble contribution to efforts that surface the Lumad’s voices. Only when we have a genuine understanding of who the Lumad are, can we begin the process of tearing down the walls of prejudice, ignorance and discrimination that have oppressed the Lumad and denied them of their rights for so long.

**VICTORIA TAULI-CORPUZ**  
Executive Director, Tebtebba



## INTRODUCTION

The Manobo village of Sitio Talos in barangay San Jose is just a 30-minute *habal-habal* (motorcycle for hire) ride from the town of Santo Tomas (also locally known as *Tibal-og*) in Davao del Norte. “Among the 11 indigenous communities we are supposed to visit, the village is the easiest to reach,” Ruel, a former staff of *Silingang Dapit sa Sidlakang Mindanao* (SILDAP-SE), said at the beginning of the trip.

Surprisingly, the road was well-kept, owing to the banana plantations that (unfortunately) replaced the trees in the mountains. But halfway through the smooth, rolling ride, we happened to turn around and found ourselves staring down a precarious ravine far below. “This is what’s happening to us,” Datu Dumakonog Tumaytay, the Manobo leader in Talos, reflected as soon as we got to his place near the top of the mountain. “We are pushed deeper and deeper into the forest.”

“But why do we shun the life below?” he continued. “As Manobo, we don’t want trouble. We want to keep to ourselves. We like the peace, the breeze that only the mountains can give. We leave the chaos to those below.”

Beyond the bluish haze of distant hills lies the Pantaron range, the sacred hunting ground of the Manobo. The place still remained untouched by mining and logging. But another Manobo leader has been waging a *pangayao* (ultimate act of the indigenous community to seek justice) to defend the area against a big logging company whose project had begun to encroach into their ancestral land.

The Manobo is just one of the Mindanao Lumad groups whose stories are included in this book. But Datu Dumakonog Tumaytay's remark echoed down the 11 indigenous peoples we visited in the course of the writing and the validation of this book.

In the Philippines, laws like the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) define the indigenous peoples as those who have been living in the land since time "immemorial" and who have retained their customs and beliefs, including the economic, political and cultural system, practiced by their ancestors even before the years of colonization.

But the movement of settlers from Luzon and the Visayas, which started in the Spanish period and has continued up to this day, had driven the Lumad (collective name for the indigenous peoples of Mindanao) deeper into the last remaining forests. These days, there are 18 indigenous groups living in the most difficult areas in Mindanao.

But it is not just the bad roads, the ravines and the difficult terrain that have separated the Lumad from the people below. Through the years, the Lumad have managed to keep their customs and traditions intact but differences in worldviews with settlers and other newcomers have given rise to long standing biases and misunderstandings.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has set the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples around the world. It has also re-affirmed the Lumad right "to their distinct culture" and the right to their ancestral lands.



But up to this day, the Lumad are not only driven away from their lands. Derogatory attitude towards their culture also continues to take root in the consciousness of non-Lumad, making life even more difficult for the Lumad. Oftentimes, we hear statements that plainly reflect this attitude.

*“Ah, hugaw kaayo ka, mura man ka’g Manobo (You’re so dirty, you look like a Manobo)” or “Guapu lagi ka? Mura ka’g di Mansaka (You look handsome. You don’t look like a Mansaka at all),”* are statements oftentimes spoken right to their faces.

By coming up with this book that introduces the culture of the Lumad, the non government organizations SILDAP-SE and Tebtebba (Indigenous Peoples’ International Centre for Policy Research and Education) hope to address this bias.

This book hopes to help readers gain better insight into the Lumad culture. It celebrates the Lumad right to their distinct culture. It also forms part of the SILDAP-SE’s campaign to end other forms of discrimination against the Lumad. It is done with the hope that the new generation of Lumad in Mindanao will begin to appreciate deeper their culture, instead of being alienated from it.

Physical constraints, however, have limited the scope of this book to only 11 indigenous peoples in Mindanao. These are indigenous peoples that SILDAP-SE has already established contacts with, like the Mandaya of Davao Oriental, the Mansaka of Compostela Valley, the Dibabawun of Kapalong and the Manobo of Davao del Norte, where SILDAP-SE runs a number of schools for Lumad children.

They also include the B'laan of Mt. Matutom, the Bagobo of Davao del Sur, the Manobo of Agusan del Sur, the Teduray in Upi, Maguindanao, the Subanen in Zamboanga, the Higaonon in Cagayan de Oro and the Mamanwa in Surigao. They are indigenous groups that SILDAP-SE had established indirect links through the network of non-government groups working with the Lumad.

Quite a number of books have already been written about the Lumad in Mindanao. But this is the first conscious attempt to involve the leaders of the community in the process of writing and research, in the hope that in doing so, this book will reflect the Lumad views and perspectives.

As a non-government organization working with the Lumad for the last 27 years, SILDAP-SE took rigorous care in consulting with key leaders of the communities and convincing them to take part in the project. Researchers entering each of the areas followed standards of protocol, asking permission from the communities before doing the research. After the actual writing, the material was presented back to them for validation and review before it underwent another set of revisions and rewriting.

From the first Manobo village we visited for the validation activities, this book brought us to other Lumad villages more difficult to reach. On the way to sitio Batiano of Caraga town in Davao Oriental, a road was scraped to connect Caraga to the Maragusan town of Compostela Valley in the opposite side of the mountain. But villagers pointed out that the new road network actually led to villages where potential mining exploration would be done.

Towards dusk, in a Mansaka village in Maragusan, we sat, knees on our chins, in the porch of one of the houses, looking up at the looming shadow of Mt. Kandaraga, when Babo Felina Pacio, our Mansaka host, recounted the story told to her by her mother and her grandmother: how one day a long, long time ago, the ground around the *daraga* (maiden) crumbled, leaving untouched the place where she was seated. That was how the mountain “Kandaraga” came to be called. Babo Felina pointed to the portion of the mountain where a rock, shaped like a chair, stood. It was the rock where the maiden sat when everything else around her crumbled. “She must have been our great, great grandmother,” Babo Felina said. “We (the Mansaka) must have all descended from her.”

For SILDAP-SE, what is lacking even in the current attempts by groups to promote the culture of the Lumad is the understanding of the basic principle that gave rise to this culture. For a non-Lumad, a B’laan’s *tabih* is just another cloth or a souvenir.

But for the B’laan, a *tabih* is not just an item for sale. It is a part of life, linked to their relationship with the land and with each other. There is a whole system in the life of the B’laan that leads to the making of the *tabih*.

And so, it is with the Mandaya’s *dagmay* (woven abaca cloth).

In fact, there are lots of things in the culture of the Lumad that a non-Lumad needs to understand, says Allan Delideli, the executive director of SILDAP-SE. A Subanen *timuay* (traditional leader) we talked to during the validation workshop recounted with shock and horror how an academic researcher had “desecrated” their lake near the top of Mt. Malindang by catching the birds and

butterflies the Subanen considered sacred and then, stripping the creatures of carcasses to bring them back to the city as stuffed animals.

Ironically, though, the places where the Lumad live are also considered as the country's last frontier in the battle for resources. A map showing areas with the highest mining potentials and the last remaining forests in Mindanao actually showing that these are also found in the ancestral lands of indigenous peoples.

Of the 23 top priority mining projects under then President Arroyo's mining revitalization program, 10 are in Mindanao, mostly within the ancestral lands of indigenous communities. Aside from mining and logging, big plantations also encroach into these indigenous peoples' areas; and despite laws like the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act that supposedly protect the indigenous peoples' rights, big corporations still manage to enter their ancestral domain.

The majority of the Lumad communities included in this book voiced out their disappointment over the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) and complained of manipulation in the way that the free and prior informed consent (FPIC) were taken to allow the entry of big companies into their ancestral lands. This is true with the Mandaya in Caraga, Davao Oriental and the Bagobo in sitio Tudaya, Santa Cruz, Davao del Sur.

Since everything about themselves—their culture, their political and economic system—is closely linked with the land, the Lumad find it hard to practice their own culture when they are driven away from the land.

In 2008, the plight of the Subanen struggling against the encroachment of a big Canadian mining company into their ancestral land caught the attention of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). CERD sent the Philippine government a strongly-worded statement, calling to attention the government's international commitment and the need to respect the Subanen's right to their ancestral domain.

Sometimes, the struggle to defend the ancestral lands turned some Lumad into fugitives, as in the case of the Talaingod Manobo Datu Guibang Apoga of Salugpungan Ta Tanu Igkanogon. Datu Guibang waged a pangayao against Alcantara and Sons, Inc. whose Integrated Forest Management Agreement had encroached into their territory.

All the Lumad groups covered in this book consider the struggle for their ancestral domain and the right to self-determination as their most important concern. Without land, they could not practice their own economic and political system, their customs and their tradition.

They are hopeful that this research will help the government understand them as a people.

Except for the Dibabawun, most of the groups feel that their identity has been imposed on them by outsiders without their consent. Although this did not bother some groups, like the Mandaya of Davao Oriental, it was a source of concern for the Manobo of Talos.

Dibabawun leader Datu Biran Casigtuan observed how the difficult struggle for survival and the coming in of settlers have alienated the Lumad from their culture. “Sometimes, we don’t know where we come from anymore,” he said, “especially when those who could tell us are no longer alive.”

This book hopes to contribute to the effort of correcting the historical injustice done to the Lumad for centuries. We hope that it can generate increased genuine interest in the Lumad culture so that people will gain insights and a deeper understanding of their way of life, and hopefully, address the age-old bias against them as a people.

We hope the Lumad can claim this book as their own.

**GERMELINA LACORTE**  
Editor



the  
Manobo  
of Davao del Norte

*They do not want to be called Ata*



“The Bisaya call us Ata,” said Datu Doming Domakonog Tumaytay, the elder of what many people today call the Ata-Manobo in sitio Talos, barangay San Jose, Santo Tomas, Davao del Norte. “The name indicates a negative view, that’s why, we add ‘Manobo’ to emphasize that we are people, not animals,” Datu Doming said. “It hurts us because we’re being called by that name without our consent. If we have a choice, we wish to be identified simply as the Manobo. If they have trouble classifying us from the Manobo in Agusan del Sur and the Manobo from Kapalong, they can just identify us by the place where we live: we are the Manobo of Talos.”

Manobo, he said, simply means katutubo or native to the soil. But he told his people they cannot do anything about the name that has stuck with them for ages. “Since it was the outsiders who started calling us Ata, changing the name would have to come from them, not from us,” he said.

In 2000, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), estimated 44, 851 Manobo living in Davao del Norte, Davao City and Bukidnon. But the 1984 ethnographic survey of an anthropologist group Ugnayang Pang-AghamTao (UGAT) placed the Manobo’s estimated number at 222,000. Datu Doming estimated the number to be much higher but he didn’t have the statistics to back his claim yet.

Talos is a sitio of barangay San Jose, some 15-minute ride on a habal-habal (motorcycle for hire) from the town Poblacion of Santo Tomas, Davao del Norte.

Datu Doming welcomed us to his house, offering a cup of coffee and a dish of boiled camote. He told us about a new feeder road being built to facilitate the construction of the Kalahi-CIDDS housing project for his village members. Some Manobo working for the project were in his house. They were tired and hungry from hauling sand and gravel two kilometers away to the project site. They listened as we talked about how the Manobo choose their leader. Datu Doming said the Manobo never called their leader “datu.” The title only came about when former President Ferdinand Marcos organized the PANAMIN,<sup>3</sup> appointing leaders from among indigenous communities. Today, the title “datu” is used to call the government-recognized leader of any indigenous group in the Philippines.

The Manobo call their leader igbujag. Although Datu Doming became his clan’s elder after his elder brothers, leadership in the indigenous community is not exclusively through the bloodline. Datu Doming has been training younger men to succeed him later.

Datu Doming took the leadership from his elder brother, Bacoco, who also succeeded his elder brother Dapulan Tumaytay. Dapulan, who lives in the nearby barangay of Sto. Niño in Talaingod, Davao del Norte, gave up his leadership and chose to retire in Talaingod. Today, Datu Doming continues to consult them on matters affecting the affairs of their Manobo community.

Bacoco believed that a good igbujag should always help people in need and must never sell their ancestral land for profits.

The Manobo choose their leaders by peoples' consent, not through election. "No igbujag could proclaim himself leader without the consent of his people," Datu Doming said. "His leadership has to come from the people who recognize his fairness and his character." Sometimes, there can be 10 igbujags in one Manobo community. An igbujag earns the trust of the people by his ability to lead. He also knows the problems confronting the Manobo people and right now, these problems are numerous and big: their claim over some 117,000 hectares of ancestral domain since 1985 has not been recognized by the government until the writing of this book. Datu Doming's group, KATOSAGDA, claims 12,633 hectares of the total ancestral domain claim of the Manobo people; while another Manobo group called Talakayan, led by former Talaingod Mayor Jose Libayao, claimed 65,000 hectares. But the Talakayan claim is still being contested because it included the territory of Datu Guibang Apoga of Salugpungan, another group of Manobo in Talaingod.

Since 1986, the Manobo in sitio Talos, along with the Manobo in the neighboring areas of Kapitalong and Talaingod, have been struggling for their ancestral domain claim. Their application for Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) covers 13 communities in Davao del Norte. They want to claim the CADT, not to invite investors to their area, but to exercise their right to self-determination and self-government.

The Manobo of Talos have organized their *baganis* (warriors) to protect the forest within their ancestral domain. These *baganis* are not armed with armalite or M203s but with their own *bankaw* (spear) and *pana* (arrows). “We’re not organizing them just to look for a fight,” said Datu Doming. “We’re organizing the *baganis* to protect our ancestral domain, to go after those who trespass our land, and those who destroy our forest.”

He railed against the military’s practice of using the concept of *baganis* and *pangayaos* to use members of the indigenous community for counter insurgency operations.

The *igbujag* does not only hand down laws but also practices what he says, explained Datu Doming. It is the *igbujag*’s role to bring harmony among his people and with the neighboring communities. When conflicts arise, the *igbujag* provides solutions.

In her unpublished research entitled “Field Notes on Mandaya and Ata Manobo,” Mawalik Vina Masinaring (2000) mentioned how in the Manobo customary laws, the aggrieved party can demand indemnification for the speedy solution to a problem. Valuable materials can be offered to the aggrieved party. But this is not similar to the eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth principle. The Manobo believe that a wrong can be settled by peaceful means.

The Manobo are noted for *pangayao* which, according to the study, they practice up to this day.

It is an ultimate act of the indigenous community to seek justice, said Datu Doming. He said the Manobo only wage the pangayao when nothing else works to solve a conflict or to right an injustice. One of the famous pangayao was waged by Datu Guibang Apoga, a Manobo leader in Talaingod, against the logging company Alcantara and Sons, Inc. (Alsons), whose Integrated Forest Management Agreement (IFMA) encroached into the ancestral domain of Datu Guibang. In the course of this pangayao, which started over a decade ago, three Alsons security guards were killed, prompting the court to issue a warrant of arrest against Datu Guibang Apoga, now a fugitive, seeking refuge in the forest.

From where Datu Doming lives, beyond the bluish haze of distant hills, lies the Pantaron range, the hunting ground of the Manobo and home to one of the near-extinct indigenous fauna and flora. According to Datu Doming, this area that is relatively untouched by mining and logging, is being guarded by Datu Guibang.

When the decision to wage a pangayao is decided, the mangayaw (the person who executes the pangayao, usually the bagani) undergoes a ritual of cleansing, accompanied by prayers that the good triumph over evil. The execution is done very quickly. But the pangayao is only executed as a last resort when all attempts for the peaceful settlement of a wrong failed.

The pangayao is done after an elaborate ritual, invoking Mandaangan ng Talabosao or the war spirit. Manobo warriors (baganis) execute the pangayao, upon order of the igbujag.



Oftentimes, a pangayao is waged against a neighboring community whose member did not pay his obligations agreed during the *husay* (conflict resolution).

When somebody from one community has done wrong to someone in another community, the leaders of the two communities work together to settle the conflict and prevent the pangayao.

The *baylan*, a mediator between the mortals and the spirit world, is another dominant character in the Manobo's life.

Erene (pronounced Ee-ree-nee) Dalatao is a baylan of Talos. According to him, the baylan can convey messages coming from the Spirits to the people who are still in *taliwaro* (the world of the living) so that they will know what lies beyond the present. Baylan Erene can bring one to the land of the Dead and bring him back to earth again. Besides being a medium, a baylan also acts as medical herbalist, so that the Manobo turn to him in times of sickness.

One identical mark of the Manobo of Talos, like the other Manobo clans in Davao and Cotabato provinces, are their tattoos—black stripes on the arms and wrists for men, black stripes on women's bellies.

## Rituals

The TREES (Tribal Education on Ecological Systems) research (Masinaring 1999) referred to the *Sunggod-to-Kamanga* as the Talos Manobo ritual to signal the new cropping season. A farming (*kakamot*) ritual that marks the beginning of another cropping year for the Manobo, it is also the time when the community prays for a bountiful harvest. It reflects the Manobo's intimate knowledge of the environment, their ancestral domain and the supremacy of *Manama* (God). As soon as the *balatik* (Orion's belt) appears in the skies, the community prepares food from the fresh waters or forests and cooks rice in a *tinumbo* (bamboo). The baylan (priest or priestess) offers a panubad (prayer) to the *Kalayag* (spirit of the plants) and perform this ritual.

During the Sunggod-to-Kamanga, the farm implements are cleaned, placed under a heap of cooked rice and prayed over. The seeds are offered as well. After the panubad, the farm implements are removed. The amount of rice sticking to the bolo signals whether the harvest of the current cropping season is good or bad for the owner of the *ugpit* (bolo). If only a small amount of rice sticks to the bolos, people need to offer more rituals and beg for more blessings from the spirits.

The Manobo depend on signs and omens (which they believe come from the spirits guarding the forests, trees, plants, and farm sites) to start planting. For instance, they would decide on which portion of the land to till during the stage called *panlawag* or *panloyu* when the farmers call on the spirit of the plants, *Kalayag*, to send an omen through the *limukon* (turtle dove) bird. Then, a portion of the site targeted for planting is cleaned. The call of the *limukon* coming from the wrong direction is not a good sign and the cleaning, no matter how large the clearing was, must be stopped. If they insist on continuing, an untoward incident—a child getting sick and dying, perhaps, may happen.

But they consider it a good sign when they only hear the sound of the limukon after they have spent a long time cutting grass and bushes. Once this happens, farmers working together under a labor sharing system they call *ak-khat*, will immediately take part in a ritual performed by a baylan. A chicken is beheaded, its blood poured down onto a small hole dug at the eastern direction of the farm site. Holding the dead chicken in his hands, the baylan invokes the spirits, saying:

*Kay kow na no Kalayag* (Spirit of Kalayag)

*Umawon ko si koykow* (I call on you)

*Kayi to panlu-oy a to og kamuton ko* (I am here to open this field)

*To og gigilang a to manok* (I offer this chicken to the soil)

*To ignangon ko kay kow* (I ask permission from you)

*So inaan to'g kamuton ko* (Allow me to till this land)

*No'g dakol to ka ghaani ko* (That I may have ample harvest)

*Dangob no ignangon ko kay kow* (may I request, too)

*No'g pamariyo ka Pako-id* (That Pako-id won't tempt us)

*Woy ka pamano* (The evil that surrounds us)

*No ayow ka, kono'g doma kodi to'g kamot* (Please stay apart from us)

*Amag do daisok ka kamot ko* (I may have a small area to till)

*Ig omaw kow ka Kalayag* (I call on you Kalayag)

*Woy so koy kow ka Talu-agkap* (I call on you sister, Talu-agkap)

They fill the hole with chicken blood and then they cover it with soil. After which the baylan places the offering of *manika* leaf, betel nut, *apog* (lime) and *tabako* in an *alík-ík* leaf on the ground of the covered hole.

The farmers leave the area and observe their dreams at night. Dreams, like being bitten by a snake or a tree falling over by itself, are considered bad signs. If the dreams are bad, they make another ritual. They wait for good signs in their dreams. They know that the area is a good choice when they dream of sending a snake away or of crossing the clear water of the river, which they consider good signs. If the bad dream is repeated, the farmer has to look for another area.

Only with the good omen known, does the farmer proceed with *pangamot* or the under brushing. This is followed by *popolod* or the cutting of big trees, after a ritual asking the spirits of the trees to leave and for the insects in the grounds to transfer to another habitation. *Golo*, the next stage, is when the trunks are chopped into pieces to be dried under the sun for 15 consecutive days. This happens during *gulabong* (sunny days).

The fourth stage of *kakamot* (farming) is the *silaban* when the farmers burn the dried trunks. The burning is usually done towards midday. As the burning is done, the farmer whistles and shouts, "*Oy, oy Kalamag!*" calling upon the air to blow the fire and finish the task before nightfall.

Finally, the site is ready for planting or urok. *Sawod-to-dawa* (planting of dawa seeds) is done before the main crop *humoi* (rice) seeds are planted. Manobo spread dawa in areas surrounding the rice farm to protect the rice grains from the birds. They plant the dawa before the humoi so that this rice-looking plant will bear fruit exactly at the time when the rice grains are still soft and are most attractive to the birds. In this way, the birds get distracted away from the soft rice grains to the dawa grains; and by the time the birds have consumed the dawa grains in the field, the rice grains are already too hard for their taste. The casting of the seeds or *pagbobol* is done by women, who follow after the men making holes using a *palakpak-no-urok* (a sharpened bamboo stick about 2.5 meters long).

*Hilamon* comes next to remove the unwanted grasses that have grown in the fields. They then build a small fire from the dry weeds, in order to control the insects. Both men and women are engaged in this activity.

The Manobo see to it that nothing disturbs the growing humoi. Trails are detoured so that passersby could not destroy the fields. They are also careful about making noise in the fields planted with rice. Failure to respect the crop violates the spirits, which might depart together with the promise of a good harvest.

When the season for harvest approaches, the Manobo hunt and fish for food. The *mangasoon* (hunter) explores the forests with his *mangalowag-no-aso* (tamed dog) and says a panubad while tabako, betel-nut, manika leaf, and apog are offered to *Yakan*, the spirit-guard of wild animals. Fishing also entails the offering addressed to *Alimugkat*, the spirit that dwells in the water. Prior to both hunting and fishing, the Manobo listens and observes their dreams.

On the day of harvest, everybody is careful not to offend the spirits. No one is allowed to complain, curse, yawn or sigh while the *ghaani* (harvest) is going on. When the harvest is done, they set aside a small portion of the new humoi for tasting in a ceremony called *goting*. This is already part of the thanksgiving celebration for the bountiful harvest called *hiluto*.

They butcher a pig and serve delicious food in gratitude to Kalayag. The baylan offers a panubad to Manama for the good harvest. On this occasion, men and women in the community perform the *bwalawan*, a traditional dance that depicts the entire farming process. They dance to the beat of the *bangkakaw*, a log of a dangkalan tree carved and formed into a pestle and used by the *magbibinayo* woman to pound rice. The women do the pounding while the whole community dances. They all dance to the rhythm created by women pounding rice grains.

Bwalawan, which also provides opportunity for one to find a future mate, is an activity that expresses the Manobo's gratefulness to Manama and to the spirits that guide their endeavors. It is also an occasion that strengthens solidarity among the members of the community.

After the harvest, they plant camote, banana, cassava and taro, leaving the land to fallow over a period of time.

But the indigenous farming system of the Manobo has become a rare practice because of the changes brought about by modern agricultural technologies, which also brought along environmental problems.

Datu Doming said the use of chemicals and fertilizers have destroyed the productivity of the soil. Modern farming's preoccupation with increased yield per harvest without allowing the soil to rejuvenate also brought about production decline as years go by. As a result, food production has become so low that not a few children and adults in Talos die of malnutrition or of ailments that doctors can no longer cure.

The Manobo should be allowed to practice their farming system and beliefs to sustain their capacity to produce food. After all, their tradition as a people directly connects them to nature, Manama's gift and man's source of life.



## The Story of Datu Maguinta

*As narrated by Igbujag Domakono and Igbujag Bakoko Tumaytay*

Datu Maguinta was hunting in the forest when he met Katipunán, an immortal lady, who led him to Sungkalob, a big rock on Mount Pantaron, where the immortal lady's father, Kirakow, lived. Kirakow was once a mortal punished for his disobedience to Magbabayo. He was placed in the Sungkalob, a rock which is actually a big house in the eyes of a *baylan* (spiritual leader).

When Kirakow learned that Katipunán brought Maguinta to his place, he asked his daughter why. Katipunán said she wanted Maguinta to be her husband. Maguinta did not oppose but when Katipunán told him this could only happen if Maguinta would "take off his clothes" as a mortal, which means, leaving behind his body, the "clothing" of his soul, Maguinta hesitated. Later, he decided to leave and went back to his wife.

Datu Maguinta waited for the right time when he could live with Katipunán. Katipunán, in turn, became Maguinta's *abyan* (guardian spirit).

When Datu Maguinta was about to die, he told his people his soul will dwell in the Sungkalob, the house of Kirakow. He asked his people to seek for guidance and help from the big rock on Mount Pantaron. Upon the death of Datu Maguinta, Mount Pantaron became an important sacred site within the Manobo's ancestral domain.



the  
*Mansaka*  
of Compostela Valley



For as long as they could remember, the older folks of the indigenous peoples called Mansaka claim that their people have been living in a land covering the present towns of Pantukan, Maragusan, Mabini, Maco, Mawab, and Nabunturan in Compostela Valley. Through this land runs several rivers and creeks, most of them springing from the great Tagugpo range.

The late Bapa Mitin Guisang of Maraut, Mabini town was 75 years old when he made an elder's testimony for their Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) application in the late 1990s.<sup>4</sup> He declared that his clan followed the Hijo river (pronounced "Iyo" by the Mansaka) as they transferred their home from one parcel of land to the other within their own territory.

Bapa Guisang claimed he could still point out the important places, the hunting and fishing grounds and other landmarks to prove the Mansaka have been living in the area for hundreds of years. But until now, the government has not recognized their ancestral domain claim.

Comatin Casagda, 60, said his people did not originally call themselves Mansaka. Before the Bisaya (settlers) came, people used to identify themselves only with the place where they came from. People living along the Agusan River, for instance, were called Managusan while those living along the Karagan were called Mangaragan. It was only the Bisaya, arriving in the mid-'50s and mid-'60s, who coined the word Mansaka as the collective name of their people, said Casagda. "Saka" in Bisaya means "to go up." Saka, however, is likely a settler's word for farm or cultivation, which, in Mansaka means *magapawa* or *manlupa*. With the influx of settlers, the Mansaka who wanted to avoid the settler's "chaotic" life, moved further and further up the hillsides and mountains.

Casagda was one of the first catechists of the Catholic Church when Rev. Fr. John Rich, a Maryknoll priest assigned in Nabunturan in the early '60s, started the mission in Maragusan.

The Mansaka of Maragusan stressed that their identity as a people is distinct from those of other Lumad (collective name for the indigenous peoples of Mindanao), including the Mandaya of Davao Oriental. They objected to the report of the 1980 census on population and housing by the National Statistics Office (NSO) lumping them as a “sub-tribe” of the Mandaya. They also reacted to the observation by the researcher John M. Garvan (1931) who wrote in his book, *The Manobos of Mindanao*, that the Mansaka have “physical structure” similar to the Mandayas.

In an article on the Mansaka, Bernardo Limikid (2008) insisted that their culture and traditions as Mansaka are distinct from those of the Mandaya. Limikid used to be a Mansaka member of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA).

Felina Pasio, a Mansaka *matikadong* (leader) pointed out, for instance, that while both the Mansaka and Mandaya call their lady's blouses *dagum*, (a general term for clothing), the cut, design and colors used by the two indigenous groups differ. The Mandaya design their dresses loose, using a lot of red and blue colors; while the Mansaka cut their clothes to fit the body curves, using a variety of colors, preferred by the owner.

Aside from *dagmay* (woven abaca cloth) which the Mandaya frequently wear as skirt, the Mansaka also have *saragboy*, a very special clothing striped with yellow, red, black, white or brown, Babo Lenlen Ortiz, a Mansaka woman, pointed out.

But she said women who know how to weave saragboy are now becoming old and few that younger generations of Mansaka are growing up without having seen one. Besides, more Mansaka women have stopped wearing and making traditional attire. Those who still have one wear them only on special occasions.

Among these special occasions is the harvest festival called *Pagsawitan*, a municipality-wide affair that the Mansaka of Maragusan celebrate in November.

The festival was named after the word “sawit,” when every Mansaka family of old gave thanks to the *Magbabaya* (Almighty) and the spirits for allowing the crops to grow and yield an abundant harvest.

Ortiz recalled what her father used to do during the sawit. “*My ama* (father) invokes *Magbabaya* as well as the spirits *Daragpo* and *Layoyo* (the deities of harvest) through an incantation. The incantation expresses gratitude to *Magbabaya* and the two spirits. He also asks them to drive away hunger and to ensure that the first taste of rice will not cause stomach pain for those who eat them. The host (head of the family) must be the first one to eat the freshly-cooked rice and other food prepared for the occasion, with the people taking their share after the host’s wife has partaken of the meal.”

The matikadong is recognized in the Mansaka political structure. Although the highest leadership role among the Mansaka goes to a man; women also assume broad leadership roles and can also be called matikadong, Ortiz said. Women as matikadong also handle important tasks in the community and are not totally dependent on the men.

For the matikadong, his village (*mga nag-uya sang banwa*) is his jurisdiction.

Limikid (2002) wrote that the “matikadong consults the *mangkatadong* (elders) and the community” on matters that needed to be addressed, be it crime, conflicts, famine, chaos, et cetera. “The *mangkatadongs* and the community are the ones who choose the matikadong, based on his leadership qualities, a thorough knowledge of the Mansaka’s customary laws, his financial capacity, wisdom, decision-making ability, and his being articulate and a good mediator.

The matikadong is not chosen through election but through the consensus of the community and the *mangkatadong* (Limikid 2002).

Traditionally among the Mansaka, the male matikadong could marry more than one woman if they can provide for their families’ needs. The practice where the men can take more than one wife is what the indigenous community calls *duway*, which only happens after seeking the approval of the first wife.

Usually, it is the wife who decides that her husband takes another wife and goes on choosing the girl, herself. The decision is usually done when the household and the farm work have become too burdensome and they need additional hand in the family.

According to Mansaka elder Urustom Matucol, the *duway* is done in the past to maintain the economic stability of the family. The children of the second wife become the work force for the land.

But during the validation workshop, Pasio said that it is not the practice of the Mansaka to turn the second family into an *al-lang* (slave). She said that, in fact, the second wife could still inherit her husband's property with the approval of the first wife.

Ortiz, however, pointed out that the culture has already evolved today. But in the past, the practice of getting a second wife as an additional help in the farm or as *al-lang* really existed, she said. "But now, Mansaka women are more enlightened and more aware," said Ortiz, "They would no longer allow this to happen."

"There are good points in the Mansaka culture that we need to continue," she said. "But there are also practices that are unfair to women and needed to be stopped."

She said the Lumad have a long tradition of giving and hospitality that should be continued. But the *duway*, because it is unfair, should be stopped and discarded.

Limikid wrote that the *balyan* is the head of the Mansaka on religious matters. Usually a *balyan* is a female. In rare cases when a male becomes a *balyan*, he usually is *bido* (effeminate).

The *balyan* serves as a mediator between the Divine Beings and the people. She also serves as the herbalist or the medicine woman. She gets her knowledge of medicinal herbs through her dreams and from other *balyans*, who act as mentors.

The *bagani* (warrior) serves as the *matikadong's* arm in enforcing the customary law and in maintaining peace with neighboring communities. The community and the *matikadong* choose the *bagani* for his bravery and courage (Limikid 2002).

A person can become a bagani if he has already killed more than 12 persons in seeking out justice.

Mansaka system of farming, which often involves transferring from one farming area to another, has often been described by outsiders as “crude.” Yet, the system allows the soil to rejuvenate, making it more environmentally sustainable.

Today, the Mansaka have adapted to the new system brought about by outsiders, which includes the use of pesticides, chemical fertilizers and other farm technology on irrigated lands; a system that environmentalists warn could threaten the health of people and may deplete the soil, affecting crop yields in the long run. Aside from planting rice, the Mansaka also plant vegetables; and Maragusan has been known as a supplier of tomatoes, patchay, radish, carrots, cabbages, and other vegetables to the town centers of Davao del Norte and Compostela Valley province, and even as far as Visayas and Luzon.

Many Mansaka are now working in banana plantations, particularly, in multinational companies like the Stanfilco, which established its plantations in the province a decade ago. Young Mansaka women work as househelp in town areas and cities like Tagum, Davao and Metro Manila. Others go abroad as overseas contract workers. A few of them managed to finish college and found employment in government municipal offices and public schools. But Ortiz, a teacher, said Mansaka college graduates could hardly get employment in government and private offices. Many graduates finished their degrees from below-standard colleges which are cheap. Mansaka professionals usually end up working in offices working with the indigenous peoples.

Derogatory words continue to bombard the Mansaka. They have often been described as “Mansaka, hugawan” (Mansaka are untidy) or “*Mansaka, mga ignorante*” (Mansaka are ignorant) by biased, ignorant minds.

Ortiz said, sometimes, when a non-Lumad expresses surprise in seeing a beautiful or handsome Mansaka, he would say, “Morag dili ka lagi Mansaka, morag Bisaya na man ka (You don’t look like a Mansaka at all, you look like a Bisaya).”

Despite their marginalization, the Mansaka are proud of their identity. They want to transmit their culture to their youth. Vicente Casagda, a Mansaka whose father donated the lot for the town’s public school and municipal center, feared that their culture will eventually vanish. He joined activities of the Catholic Church and non-government organizations encouraging the revival of their culture and traditions. He also participates in symposia, workshops, conventions, and festivals. Now, we can hear Mansaka songs in some churches within the provinces of Davao del Norte and Compostela Valley, usually sung during the indigenous peoples’ Sunday celebration. These songs started in Maragusan in the mid-’70s when the Maragusan parish dedicated one mass a month for the Mansaka in the area.

Land is important for the continuity of the Mansaka culture. “In the past, we thought that land was abundant and free, so, a lot of us, Mansaka, gave it freely or sold it very cheap to the Bisaya,” said Urustom Matucol. Now, only the prominent Mansaka families have land in town centers. The rest were driven to the mountainous areas. But even there, one could still see the presence of the Bisayas.

Today the Mansaka still struggle to defend what was left of the land bequeathed to them by their ancestors. A recognition of their CADT will rekindle hope.





the  
*Mandaya*  
of Davao Oriental



Some early scholars have stereotyped the Mandaya as having “high foreheads, prominent cheekbones, broad noses, thick lips, and angular features” (Valderrama 1987).

But even in the Caraga town villages of Sobrecary and San Pedro, where I visited in April 2006, I could not find a Mandaya who fits this description. My grandfather, a Mandaya named Katsutsa, had straight, high-bridged nose and thin lips.

The Mandaya of Pantuyan also looked at each other, aghast, when they heard about what has been written about them.

“We should be described based on our ways and character as a people, not based on how we look,” said a Mandaya woman Marikita Diano-Mandagway. She said one of the traditional practices of the Mandaya is to straighten their teeth when they reach a certain age, and then, to blacken them, because blackened teeth used to be their concept of beauty. But this is not being practiced anymore as the young generations have embraced another way of life.

Ethnographic studies conducted by anthropologist Jesus Peralta (1988) “estimated Mandaya population to reach 22,000 in Davao Oriental in 1988 and 33,000 in the whole country.”

But in 1989, the Office for Southern Cultural Communities (OSCC) placed the combined Mandaya population in Davao Oriental, the towns of Compostela and New Bataan in Compostela Valley and some areas of Davao del Norte, at 650,784. In 2000, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) made a lower estimate of only 574,944.

During the validation proceedings for this book, the council of *mangkataadong* (leaders) explained that the term Mandaya was not the original name of their people. “*Daya*” means interior or upland, near the source of the headwater, while “*lawud*” means near the plains, or the opposite of “*daya*.”

“*Taga daya*” means people in the uplands, referring to the mountains of Caraga overlooking the Pacific; while “*taga lawud*” means people living in the plains, usually referring to the coastal area facing the ocean. Now that the indigenous group has been called Mandaya, its members have come to accept it as it is.

According to Mandaya leader Nestor Masinaring, Mandaya has been the identity referred to them as a people. The Mandaya keep their close relationship with nature and a reverence to *Magbabaya* (Almighty). Their ancestors defended the land and cared for the earth. Through generations, the Mandaya strongly believed that life should never be wasted. Their beliefs, laws and practices nurture life and ensure that nature, the source of life, will not lose its balance and soundness.

But years of colonization have alienated the Mandaya people from their culture. The mangkataadong council cited how the influences of schools and the mass media, specifically television, have estranged their children from their own culture and tradition. Through coercive or subtle means, various non-Mandaya concepts have been introduced and have disoriented them.

Arizola A. Calig-onan, 67, who lives in the hinterland sitio of Batyano, about 30 kilometers from Caraga town, said his father had converted to Christianity, at the time when being a Christian was popularly accepted among Mandaya. Calig-onan's father used to be a *matinayaon* (devotee). "They burned and crushed the idols, telling us these were tools of the devil," Calig-onan said. Most of the Mandaya converted to Christianity because of pressures. They realized that if they stuck to their old beliefs, the government would not give them the title of their lots and their children could not go to school. As a result, they were forced to either throw away or sell their old artifacts. The Mandaya's farming rituals, including the healing ritual called *balilig*, eventually faded. In the old days, when they got sick, they called on the spirits, but now, they call the *kaabag* (Church lay workers) who do not have any healing ability at all, said Calig-onan.

Most Mandaya today have been Christianized. The Spaniards maintained an outpost in Caraga in the late part of the 17th century.

Today's mangkatadongs would heave a sigh when they call to mind their younger years. "Mandaya ways are honorable and man's dignity is never trampled upon," recalled Mangkatadong Augusto Diano, chair of the barangay council of Mandaya in Pantuyan.

He recalled the old days when the community still shared the fruits of their labor with a neighbor or even a passer-by through a gesture of *pangapog* (the practice of offering betel nut, buyo/manica leaf and lime to visitors), *pagbana* (serving a visitor the most delicious food) and *padalla* (the practice of the host to pack food and delicacies from the feast for visitors to bring home). "But gone are the days of peace and bounty," Diano said.

Now, the Mandaya are having problems with their ancestral domain claim. The Mandaya lamented the delay in the processing of their Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT). They think the NCIP in Davao Oriental is “too slow” in processing their claim.

The Mandaya’s ancestral domain covers part of Compostela Valley, Caraga and Manay. But no CADT has been issued to them yet. About 6,000 hectares of land within the ancestral domain have been occupied by the Integrated Forestry Management Agreement (IFMA) of Asian Evergreen. Diano said the IFMA was approved and adopted by the Sangguniang Bayan without consulting the Mandaya.

The NCIP has also been organizing a separate barangay council of Mandaya to dismantle the group “*Kahugpungan sa mga Mangkatadong*” that Diano leads. His members questioned the NCIP’s move because among the Mandaya, the mangkatadong cannot be removed from his post, even if additional mangkatadongs are added to the council. A mangkatadong only knows he has lost his mandate when people stop coming to him for help.

A brochure entitled “Mandaya” (Sayman n.d.) earlier circulated in Davao Oriental once referred to the *tigulang* (old man) as the most outstanding man among the Mandaya. This outstanding man is consulted and obeyed by the Mandaya. But Diano refutes this. He said a tigulang is a Visayan term for any one who is old. Mandaya honor the mangkatadong elder who holds the highest leadership post in the community.

A research made by TREES (Tribal Education on Ecological Systems 2004) mentioned that “one of the primary roles of the mangkatadong is to settle conflicts.”

According to TREES, the mangkatadong ensures that crisis and problems are resolved, based on the customary standards of justice and morality. He presides over decisions on grave offenses detrimental to human dignity. These offenses include *paglugay* (incestuous affair), *pagdakop sang bobay* (abduction of a soon-to-be-married woman), *pagbiya sang tyawas da* (abandonment of a fiancée), *yagalabi, yagalata* (adultery), and elopement.

As soon as offenses are presented, the mangkatadong starts the process of validating it and planning the next courses of action. Punishment is determined by the nature and gravity of the offense. These are revealed during the investigation conducted by the mangkatadong. The punishment ranges from *ballukas* (paying moral damage) for minor offenses to *dalikop* (death penalty) for major offenses, usually those which involve morality issues. But before it is served, the mangkatadong ensures that both the offender and the violated party take part in a *ballaw* (dialogue or conflict settlement).

If the punishment involves a *dalikop*, the mangkatadong consults the elders and informs the immediate family and the entire clan of the offender. Among the crimes punishable by *dalikop* are rape and incest. The mangkatadong tells the parents and siblings that the offense or crime committed by their family member calls for death penalty. The mangkatadong explains that the penalty ensures that the act should not be followed (“*unosan sang kinabowi antak dida lumakway, di matapon sang kadaygan*”).



On the day of the dalikop, the aggrieved family executes the decision pronounced by the mangkatadong.

The elders use the dawa (millet) as a metaphor for the healing of the wound after the dalikop. When you pound on the dawa, the husk gives off the grain and closes in again, an apt metaphor for closure after pain. The elders pray that just like being wrapped by the dawa grain, the wound caused by injustice will finally heal (“mayn ng piyag-olikbowan sang ukap ng dawa”/like being wrapped by the dawa grain).

On the other hand, a Mandaya woman Parong Alimbon, a non-practicing balyan (spiritual leader), said the spiritual leader of the Mandaya is not called bailana but balyan. Baina is the name of another balyan next to Parong Alimbon.

The balyan has the capacity to heal the sick through panawagtawag (prayer) and the use of herbal medicines, the knowledge of which is inspired by her dream. If the balyan is a kallalaysan (the highest rank among the balyan) she may be able to heal a terminal patient who is about to die. She can do this simply by examining the eye of the patient, except when it is really a hopeless case and there is nothing that she can do anymore.

Balyans are not the only ones who dream about cures in the community. Anyone can. When someone dreams of a cure, he or she will be the source of healing for anyone who sought to be cured.

Aside from being a healer, the balyan also serves as the mediator between the people and the spirit world and the *Magbabaya* (Almighty). This is done through rituals.

The Mandaya considers some treasures sacred. Among them is a piece of woven abaca cloth called *dagmay*. Its designs are interrelated with each other; so, it must not be cut or separated, for doing so will destroy its essence. According to Parong Alimbon, the dagmay originates from the *Tagamaling* (a spirit dwelling in the *bodbod* or balete tree that Mandaya associate with the spirit of life and creation).

During the summer workshops conducted by TREES in the '90s, the Mandaya youths took the anecdote on the legend of the dagmay (see p. 33) as a warning that the handicrafts and their designs should not be copied and produced by just anyone. The dream, where the Tagamaling appears, means that weaving the dagmay is a divine experience, its designs directly inspired by the spirit. This explains why a real Mandaya weaver does her craft only after a prayer. She does her weaving only in a consecrated place in the house where it is quiet and children are not allowed to play. This is why the design of the dagmay is interlinked and one could not cut the cloth without destroying the flow of the design.

But modern ways have opened the Mandaya to the influences of outsiders. Nowadays one can see young people using new designs and new cloths for the making of dagmay, now a sought-after item in tourist souvenir shops. Diano sees no problem with the new designs. "They will not destroy but will enrich the dagmay," he said.



In interviews with Tebtebba researchers, Mandaya elders strongly lamented the encroachment by outsiders into their lands. Their forest areas have dwindled. *“Yang lopa pyagabunoan gayod yaan, kinabowi man god yaan* (We should fight for our land because it is our source of life),” says Engr. Eleuteria Monday, a Mandaya woman. Logging companies operate in their area for many years now. They even buy dapdap (*erythrina orientalis*) and all types of timber trees. The Mandaya people use dapdap to make coffins. *“Yahadlok kami na kaapektuhan yang supply ng tubig ngadi kanami kay yang dapdap iyan magtubo sang daplin ng tubig* (We fear that our rivers would dry up when all of the dapdap trees growing alongside the river banks are gone).”

The Mandaya fear that the denudation of their ancestral domain might bring about all kinds of calamities. Forest denudation and more cutting of trees might threaten their springs.

In barangay Maglahos, the Philippine Eagle Foundation told the community that part of their area has already been declared a “protected zone.” The area is a habitat of the *mallambogok* or monkeyeating eagle. The law no longer allows people within a 50-meter radius from the specific lawaan tree where the bird nests. No farming activity should be opened in an area of about 7,854 sq. meters where the bird lives. The affected Mandaya community resented that such a law came about without involving them in the process.

“We want to protect the eagle because it is a living sign that the forest is still abundant with food,” Diano said. But the Mandaya, particularly the affected 300 people in sitio Maglahos, were offended because they have been living in the area for a long time, and yet, they were not included in the decision-making process.

“This is our ancestral land,” Diano said. “We always want to protect it. We’re not the ones threatening the survival of eagle population here,” he said. “Logging concessions are.”

In sitio Boa of Baranggay San Pedro, people feel their rights are also being trespassed. Their burial grounds are being excavated by intruders looking for treasures and valuables such as antique plates.

Some college-educated Mandaya are trying to revive their culture by strengthening such peoples’ groups as the Tribal Professionals and Students Solidarity (TRIPSS), TREES, Sandug, Fomfi, Longga, Bandera Peoples Organization, and Kalasag. But it may still be years before their efforts start to bear fruit.



## The Legend of the *Dagmay*

A *tamisa* (the Mandaya term for an only son) was hunting in the forest when he passed a *bodbod* (balete) tree. Beside the *bodbod* was a big rock, here the *tamisa* noticed strange materials, so beautiful in design that he did not hesitate to bring it home, without bothering to know who the owner was. Later, he realized those beautiful materials he brought home was a cloth called *dagmay*.

It was owned by the *Tagamaling* (spirit dwelling in the *balete*). When the *Tagamaling* came to claim his possession, he found that the *dagmay* was no longer in its place. He became angry. "Byudbud ing magkanooy! Syapot ing Magsigabon!" the *Tagamaling* cursed the one who took it. It meant that whoever had taken the *dagmay* would die and would be rolled tightly in it.

At that very moment, the *tamisa* suddenly became weak and died. His community buried him with the *dagmay* wrapped around his body. The people ensed the cause of the *tamisa*'s death. They made a *panawagtawag* (prayer) to the *Tagamaling* for forgiveness.

Finally appeased, the *Tagamaling* appeared in their dreams. To show his forgiveness, he taught the people how to weave the *dagmay*.



the

*Dibabawun*

of Kapalong



The Dibabawun village of Kimataan II was supposed to be a three and a half hour ride by *habal-habal* from Tagum, the capital city of Davao del Norte. But the slow-moving logging trucks waddling their way in the middle of a slippery road hampered our trip. When the road got too rough (or too soft) to maneuver, the driver would ask us to get off his motorbike. It took us much longer to get there.

Logging companies that owned the logging trucks helped build the roads that led to Kimataan II, a sitio of Kapalong, Davao del Norte, from where one could see the glittering lights of far-away Tagum City by night.

Kimataan II is a rugged upland community in the northwestern portion of Kapalong, veering towards the boundary of Laac town. A purely Dibabawun village, it is home to the clans of Lagoy, Hines, Casigtuan, and Otaw, who can still trace their ancestors to 200 years ago. It was about the time when their ancestors first arrived in the area.

Purok leader Salvador Otaw, 42, recounted how the four major clans refused to sell their lands to the settlers (known collectively as the Bisaya) to prevent outsiders from coming in. "We learned lessons from Okapan where settlers were allowed to buy lands and some Protestant sects have put up a church in the area," Otaw said, referring to another Dibabawun village eight kilometers below.

He said a pastor of the Alliance Church in Okapan came to Kimataan II one day to preach without their consent. "I told him to stop," he said. "Christian religion will only create confusion among our people. We have our own beliefs and tradition. A new religion will only create enmity among us."



“We, Dibabawun, have our own religion,” he continued, “This should not be desecrated by anyone. We believe in *Taginiit* (Almighty) as the source of everything we could see here in this world. Taginiit entrusted his creation to lesser divine spirits. *Tagbanwa* and *Sugojun* nurture the *kabubuhian* (animals) and *kakajuhan* (trees).

“They are also the spirits we invoke during the hunt. For opening a farm site, and before harvesting our crops, we offer a ritual to *Makabuntasay*. We turn to *Gamawgamaw* for protection when we are in the *kawahigan* (streams and rivers) and for the soundness of our body, we befriend *Mandalingan* so that he would free our people from harm and sickness.”

“Like the Christians, we welcome our newborn babies to the world, through a ceremony we call Tagun-on, praying that he or she be protected during this lifetime. The *baylan* (shaman) officiates the ritual. He carves the *manaog* (wooden carving in the image of a man and a woman spirit) out of a branch of a bayog tree to represent the images of man and woman—representing the spirits. During the ceremony, the blood of a chicken is smeared on the *manaog* and on the infant’s forehead. While doing this, the baylan recites an invocation to Tagbanwa and the *Magbabaja* (Almighty, also Taginiit) to ensure safety of the child.”

The Dibabawun used to call their traditional leader *maniguon*. But during the time of former President Marcos, the title was changed into “datu.” Some elders like Maniguon Mino, Biran’s father, continued using the title “maniguon” to refer to the Dibabawun leader. The Dibabawun elders agreed to use the term *maniguon* to refer to the Dibabawun leaders in this book.

Mino serves as member of the council of elders assisting Maniguon Melanio Warag, the elder among the elders in the area. The elder among the elders takes care of administrative matters and takes active part in settling disputes in the community. In the present government set up, he also works with the barangay captain to settle conflicts involving a Dibabawun and a Bisaya.

The leader or *maniguon* (now datu) is chosen by the community and the *Kamanigoonan* (Council of Elders) based on his exemplary traits and nobility. In the case of Biran Casigtuan, Maniguon Mino's son, he cannot yet be formally installed as a member of the Kamanigoonan because his father is still alive. He said he could not speak with authority for the indigenous community and would have declined to speak in this research. Biran insisted that although he is one of the leaders of the indigenous peoples' group Panagtagbo, he is not formally recognized by the community as a maniguon.

The Dibabawun follow an elaborate ritual in the installation of their leader or maniguon. They let the candidate sit on the *lusong* (mortar) while a baylan, who may also be a *maniguon* (like Maniguon Mino) administers the *Tambalingo* ritual, chanting while putting on the *podong* (head gear made of cloth) over the candidate's head. It signals the recognition of a new leader.

Biran pointed out the symbolic meaning of the leader seated on a mortar: Once somebody assumes leadership role in the community, he is actually putting himself in the mortar. He will be pounded by all kinds of community problems that will need all his strength and resources to solve.



A big celebration to give thanks to Taginiit follows the solemn recognition ceremony. During this occasion, the Dibabawun give thanks to all the spirits. They call this festive part *hinang*. The festivity is done to install a leader but it is also done during planting and harvest seasons. During the *hinang*, the Dibabawun also find the potential *baganis* or baylans of their community.

The *hinang* is carried out in four steps:

- *Pangapog*. A beginning ceremony to seek guidance from the spirits. It is usually done at dusk when the day's light and the evening's darkness meet. The baylan leads the community during this rite, invoking his *abyan* (spirit) by offering *mamaon* (betel nut and lime). *Mamaon* is a customary offering for a close and respected friend who visits one's home. During this ritual, the baylan asks the *abyan* to come to their midst; and, using the baylan as medium, communicates with the community. After a few minutes of incantation, the baylan enters into a trance. It is an indication that the *abyan* has descended upon the baylan's body and has taken his or her place among the crowd. The *maniguon* then comes forward, and after some preliminaries, asks the *abyan* whether or not it is favorable for the community to celebrate the *hinang*. The *abyan's* reply comes through the baylan, who picks a fresh chicken egg prepared for the purpose. The baylan puts the egg on his or her open palm. If the egg points upward or is in a standing position, the answer is yes. If not, the *hinang* is postponed.

- *Pangujab*. Once the abyan indicates that the hinang is favorable, the baylan takes the chicken from the assistant, invokes the help of the abyan and wrings the chicken's neck, allowing the blood to drip onto a prepared plate. After the blood has been drained out of the chicken's body, the baylan, possessed by the abyan, examines the pattern the blood makes on the plate. Through the design, he foretells the events that will come to the community the following days and gives advice.
- *Binakilid*. At the crack of dawn, an *angkow* (altar) is built in an auspicious place within the community. Made of timber from a bayog tree, its four posts are planted on the ground and the whole column, divided across by sticks, can carry the offerings—the mamaon, rice and viand on top and the pig below. The parts of the altar are bounded by rattan strips. Certain plants are used as decoration.

When all the materials for the ceremony are ready, the *gimba* (drum made from a hollow tree trunk, its ends covered with skin extracted from a doe and a male deer) is sounded. The officiating baylan now recites incantations and dances to the beat of the gimba: the tempo, slow at the start and increases until the baylan goes into a trance, which means that the abyan has already descended, taking possession of the baylan's body. This is the time to pierce the pig with a spear. The abyan in the baylan's body may do the piercing or he may also choose someone, either a visitor or a respected person in the community, to perform the binakilid. While the binakilid is going on, the baylan experiences contortions in his body. When the baylan's body finally begins to rest, the abyan is gone.

- *Inidang*. The pig is immediately removed from the altar and slaughtered for the feast later in the morning. During the banquet, the whole community and the visitors partake of the food. After the meal, everyone joins games or dances. The merry-making lasts until the next day. To signal the end of the feast or the *hilanos*, the drummer plays the *bakatog*, a rhythm of the gimba which indicates the end of the seven-day hinang.

The Dibabawun respect the land and the spirits that dwell on it. In everything they do, they show reverence to the spirits of the land and nature because these are their sources of life. They always perform a ritual before opening a farm site or when constructing a house.

A Dibabawun woman, 45 year-old Norma Casigtuan, said she would rather die than lose the land of her ancestors. "*Maayo pa mawala ko kaysa mawala ang yutang kabilin,*" she said. "The ancestral domain is a sacred site, the burial ground of ancestors," said Biran, "We should respect the ancestral domain, which is our source of life, food, herbal medicine. We should respect the territorial boundaries of each clan."

Three Dibabawun people's organizations joined together to assert their claim over their ancestral domain.<sup>5</sup>

According to the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, the Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) covering 69,000 hectares was finally awarded to the entire Dibabawun community in Compostela Valley and Davao del Norte in 2008.

“Only after 14 Dibabawun leaders who have been struggling for their CADT since 1984 passed away without seeing it,” said Biran.

In Davao del Norte, the ancestral domain included Datu Alyansa’s claim over the sitios of Dugayan, Okapan, Kimataan II, and Kawayan in barangay Gupitan in Kapalong town and a portion of the barangays Monte Dujali, Datu Balong and Pinamono in the town of San Isidro (Sawata).

Another peoples’ group, *Kaimonan ka Dibabawun aw Manggwangan* (Kadima), also claimed the eastern boundaries of the Asuncion town of Davao del Norte, covering the barangays of Sonlon, Buan, Binansian and Camansa.

In Compostela Valley province, another group of Dibabawun staked the claim over some 49,015 hectares of land in 28 barangays of Laak, namely: barangays Aguinaldo, Ampawid, Andap, Belmonte, Bullukan (portion), Buhi, Datu Ampunan, Datu Dabaw, Doña Josefa (portion), Kandiis, Kidawa (portion), Kibagyoy, Kiokmay, LS Sarmiento, Longganapan (portion), Libuton, Mabuhay, Malinao, Melale, New Bethlehem, Panamoren, Pagwas, Sabud, San Antonio, and Sta Emilia.

To secure their ancestral domain and continue their culture and traditions, the Dibabawun see the need for their children to learn both the Lumad culture and the mainstream public school curriculum. In 1987, the Dibabawun of Kimataan II and Okapan, with the help of Sildap-SE, a non-government organization working with the Dibabawun, Mandaya, Mansaka, Manobo and Manguangan indigenous peoples, set up a school in the area. The two communities donated a parcel of land where the school site was built.

The parents built the school buildings from the materials found in the area. They also provided a house for the teachers from Sildap-SE.

Today, the Dibabawun school still stands, teaching pupils from grade one to grade four.

## The Tale of the First Dibabawun: Insaliyo and the Great Flood

*Datu Biran, who can trace the story of the present Dibabawun back to the 19th generation, tells this story about a Dibabawun ancestor, Insaliyo, during the Great Flood.*

A long time ago, a simultaneous typhoon, earthquake, drought, and flood struck the earth. It was the time of the Great Flood, when all the grounds turned into a vast ocean, where a gigantic shark roamed.

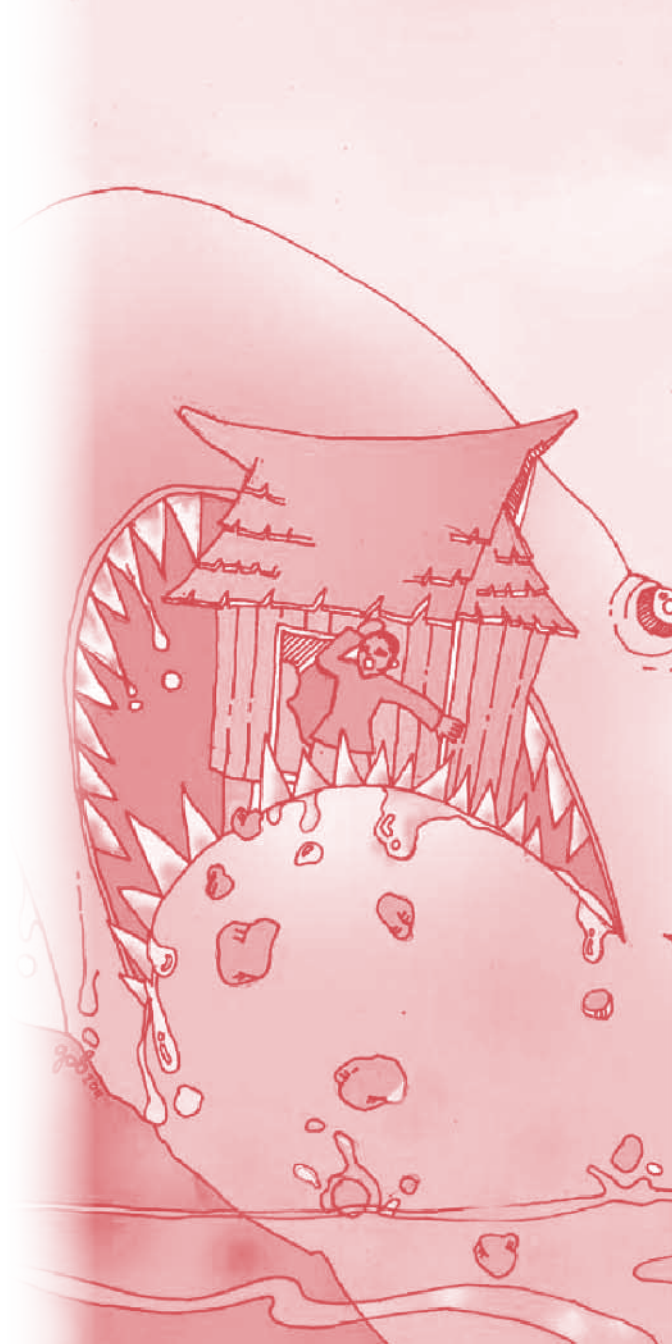
While swimming in the expanse of the water, the shark came upon the only house left standing. It was the house where Insaliyo lived with his children. The hungry shark swallowed the house, with Insaliyo and his children still inside.

Miraculously, Insaliyo and his children survived inside the shark's stomach. After so many days they ran out of food, so, Insaliyo decided to eat their clothes. This ran out, too, so Insaliyo invoked his spirit friend (abyan) to tell them what to do. The abyan told them to eat the innards and heart of the shark, which caused the shark to die.

Inside the stomach, Insaliyo heard the limokon (turtle dove) sing. This inspired him to slit open the shark's stomach so that they could get out of its body. When they were finally out, they found themselves on top of Mount Abon-abon.

Biran said his ancestors flourished in the mountains of Abon-abon. Since they lived on its peak, they called themselves Dibabawun, from the word *ibabow*, meaning on top or on a high place.

"In the past, during every full moon, we celebrated the event when our ancestors were finally freed from the shark's body," Datu Biran recalled.







the  
*Subanen*  
of Compostela Valley



Whether to call themselves Subanen or Subanun is still a cause of much debate among this indigenous peoples' group of Western Mindanao. They are mainly concentrated in the provinces of Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, Sibugay, and parts of Misamis Occidental (Lasaca 1990).

"We, the people of the eight rivers of Zamboanga del Norte, call ourselves Subanun," said Macario Salacao, a *timuay* (traditional leader).

But Vernito Sangilan, another *timuay* in the town of Imelda said those from Zamboanga, Sibugay, Misamis Occidental and Zamboanga del Sur call themselves Subanen.

Those who took part in the validation workshop, however, agreed that limitations of the Cebuano tongue must have caused the problem. Subanun pronounce the "u" in "nun" in Subanun or the "e" in Subanen as a "schwa," which does not have an equivalent Cebuano expression.

When asked about the origin of their name as a people, the 38-year old Sabilo Makan, a Subanen of Barangay Lampasan, Don Victoriano, Misamis Occidental, said their people are river dwellers.<sup>6</sup>

"*Suba*" is a Visayan word for river. "The Boholanos (people from the island of Bohol in the Visayas), found our ancestors living along the suba and called us Subanen," he said.

But for *Timuay* Boy Anoy, 62, and *Timuay* Macario Salacao, 67, nobody else could give people their name. The peoples' name is "*binogoy nong Mitpongon*" or given by God. *Timuay* Salacao said Apo Tumagna, the first man to live in Zamboanga, was the first to call himself Subanun.



There are different stories about how their name as a people came about. But sources for this book confirmed the story of Timuay Oscar Alo in the book *Defending the Land* (Tricom 1998). It traced the common origin of the Subanun to the four brothers who ruled Zamboanga Peninsula centuries ago. The four brothers were Milirilid or Gumilidgilid, Dumalandalan or Dumalandan, Gumabongabon, and Tobonaway.

### Fifth Brother

But in an interview, Timuay Boy Anoy claimed that the four had a fifth brother named Idsak. (Ramo 2005). From Idsak came Moong; and from Moong, came Manglang. From Manglang came Mosogia and Toke; and from Mosogia, came Baang, Anun, Mag, De and Bon; from Mag came Montinggong, Gitao, Mudai, Anoy (Ungyan), Liyon ang Inggang. From Anoy, came Agbog, Tumimbang, Diwanah (Piani), Ubiton, Dulaga and Sampol. From Diwanah, came Minsing and Lumuyod. From Lumuyod, came Martico, Jose (Pialang), Luis, Taning, Rose, Julie, Tiva and Rolando. From Jose came Nanoh, Nida, Maristes, Gina, Vivian and Florinda.

Thus, Timuay Boy Anoy, son of Lumuyod, was the grandchild of Manglang and the sixth generation member of the clan. After Timuay Anoy, four more generations followed. Timuay Anoy traced back his lineage because he is asserting his legitimacy as the real Timuay of the Canatuan Subanun in the legal battle against the Canadian mining company Toronto Ventures, Inc., which recognized another “timuay” for his people. All of the present timuays of the eight *dalungan* (rivers) descended from Apo Manglang. Seven of the dalungans

run through different municipalities in Zamboanga del Norte while one river traverses Zamboanga del Sur, particularly Zamboanga City. These rivers are as follows: Mokopal (Siocon) River in Siocon town; Nawan (the name of the sister of the brothers) in Zamboanga City; Kinonsi between Lapason and Kipit; Migogling in Labason; Panganudan in Gutalac; Patawag between Labasan and Liloy; Lintangan in Subuco; and Dikolon in Baliguian.

Village people recognize only one timuay in each of these dalungan or *tinubigan*. These timuays are members of a justice council called *Gukom* (Tricom 1998). But Timuay Salacao could not recall the names of the old timuays who used to rule these rivers. Timuay Vernito Sangilan can recall, though, that during the time of the Panamin—that government agency set up by former President Marcos supposedly to oversee the concerns of indigenous peoples—anyone, even a Christian settler, could be named a timuay as long as he gets his papers from Panamin.

For the Canatuan Subanun, a river defines the jurisdiction of a timuay. The timuay maintains a *bogolal* or a council to help him settle conflicts.

After the timuay, comes the rank of a *soliling*, whose function is to settle disputes when the timuay is not around. Sometimes, even when the timuay is around, the *soliling* is still asked to lead the conflict resolution proceedings because the timuay does not have to talk a lot during the process. The timuay only gives his final say. Like the timuay, the *soliling* should come from the lineage of Apo Manglang, particularly from his daughter.

## Borrowed Soliling

The position of a soliling is permanent, which also means that someone who come from a clan of solilings cannot aspire to become a timuay in his lifetime. Timuay Macario Salacao referred to this Subanun tradition when he questioned the legitimacy of the claim of Arnulfo Komisas—who works for the Toronto Ventures, Inc.—as a timuay of the Subanun community.

TVI is a mining company operating in Mount Canatuan.

Salacao pointed out that the Subanen opposed to the mining activities of TVI have refused to recognize Komisas as a timuay because Komisas came from a lineage of solilings. Salacao also observed that the mining company encouraged Komisas to assert his leadership claim as a timuay to “discredit” the leadership of Anoy and Salacao.

Anoy and Salacao have opposed the entry of mining firms in their ancestral domain, particularly in a place like Mt. Canatuan, which the Subanun consider sacred.

Komisas’ grandfather came from Zamboanga del Sur, who only settled in Siocon at the time when a certain Subanun named Limbang used to serve as the soliling. He later married Limbang’s daughter. When Limbang died, no one among his sons accepted the responsibility, so, Komisas’ grandfather became a soliling in a temporary capacity. He was supposed to “give back” the position to Limbang’s sons but it never happened. When he died, his son Mariano, the father of Arnulfo Komisas, succeeded him. Later, Arnulfo inherited the title from his father.

“Komisas came from the line of the solilings and there could be no way that he can become a timuay,” Salacao pointed out. “Besides, the position that he inherited from his grandfather was only temporary.”

Next to the soliling, the *pinosalag* acts as law enforcer. During the hearing on conflict resolution, he ensures that a harmonious process is followed through. The *pinosalag* need not come from the lineage of Apo Manglang. He is appointed by the timuay because he possesses the qualities of a good speaker and he could be a very good troubleshooter.

After the *pinosalag* comes the *mosalag*, who represents the timuay in settling disputes in far-flung areas. He also handles petty conflicts.

At the bottom of the rank is the *gukom basal*, who formally opens the hearings to resolve conflicts. He is expected to be a good speaker and he prods the soliling to start the hearing without delay.

Among the common problems that the timuay and his bogolal face these days involve conflicts arising from territorial disputes, theft and abduction of a wife.

But in Timuay Salacao’s area, most conflicts involve couples who have eloped. To settle the case, they invite both parties and open the hearing with a ritual. Afterwards, the *gukom basal* formally begins the hearing, which is presided all throughout by the soliling. Both parties (the relatives of the man, on one side,

and the relatives of the woman, on the other side) are given the chance to speak. Usually, after deliberations, the woman's relatives will demand a sungudan (valuable materials paid by the man to the parents and relatives of the woman). In cases when the man could not pay the sungudan, the timuay assumes the responsibility. In return, however, the man and the girl will have to stay in the timuay's place to render service as payback.

### **Mount Canatuan, a Sacred Place**

Mount Canatuan is the G'lapow (sacred place) of the Siocon and Canatuan Subanun. It is at the center of the life of Anoy clan and a part of Timuay Anoy's ancestral domain claim that covers 8,213.50 hectares. Mt. Canatuan is the home to 1,144 Subanun. An upland community, Mt. Canatuan can be reached through a 45-minute ride on a habal-habal (a motorcycle modified to accommodate about four to six passengers including the space in front of the driver) from the coastal center of Siocon.

Mount Canatuan, is a sacred mountain for the Siocon Subanun. They refer to it as Dongos nog Canatuan. But in December 2005, Timuay Salacao, his siblings and their relatives celebrated the Ginum Bonwa.

Ginum Bonwa used to be a lavish ritual. But that year, they celebrated it to invoke the spirits and the *Magbabaya* (Almighty) to deliver them from harm and extreme poverty that could result from the encroachment of TVI into their ancestral domain.

The celebration was no longer as lavish as it should be. The previous year was a hard one for the indigenous community.

Zamboanga Peninsula's rich forests and mineral resources have been attracting logging and mining companies through the years. Among these companies are Zambo Woods, DACON, Benguet Corporation, and TVI. They extract the timbers, gold, coal and other forest and land resources at the expense of people who have been living in the land for many generations.

The Subanun consider their entry as encroachment into their territories. These companies threaten both the Subanun's right to their ancestral lands and their lives as a people, as well. *"Gabase gyod ta sa yuta tungod kay kini kinabuhi. Ang Timuay dili mahimong usa ka lider kung wala siyay mga sakop gumikan kay wala nay yuta. Tungod sa pagkawala sa yuta, ang kultura nahanaw ug ang tribu nagkatibulaag* (We always trace our roots to the land because it is life. A timuay cannot become a leader to his people if he does not have land. Because of the loss of the land, culture vanishes and the indigenous community disintegrates)," says Timuay Vernito Sangilan of Imelda, Zamboanga Sibugay.

But Eddie Onto, a Subanun and community organizer from Don Victoriano, Misamis Occidental, notes that in his village, the Subanun do not have any choice but to work in the coal mines. They only receive a meager salary without benefits, such as health insurance. What they receive could hardly provide for their families' basic needs.

The struggle to claim the God-given right of the indigenous peoples to their ancestral domain should continue. Along with this, all the efforts to unify the indigenous peoples towards this struggle must also intensify.

## The Ritual of the *Ginum Bonwa*

As retold by Timuay Macario Salacao

In Apo Manglang's time, Mt. Canatuan was known as a place where no mortal could go and expect to return. People believed that beasts lived in the mountain and devoured whoever made an attempt to climb.

Until Manglang's people suffered from a *pisti* (cholera). Death and sadness swept over the land. Even the crowing of roosters and the barking of the dogs stopped. Apo Manglang was so distressed to see his people dying. He was very upset because he had no one to turn to for help. He could not even send one of his men to Mount Canatuan to look for medicinal herbs to cure the people.

One day, Apo Manglang heard the voice of Mokoson, a divine being who used to be a mortal given power by God. The Mokoson was Apo Sanag. He told Manglang to lead the people back to their indigenous ways. This happened at the time when people had neglected their indigenous customs and traditions. Following the Mokoson's advice, Apo Manglang offered the highest kind of ritual, the name of which Timuay Salacao could no longer recall. It was done to appease the evil spirits and beg them to leave. Soon afterwards, the pestilence stopped and the people were cured.

To show their gratitude to the *Magbabaya* (God), the Subanen offered the *Ginum Bonwa*, a thanksgiving ritual. Since then, the *Ginum Bonwa* has become the largest thanksgiving ritual of the Subanen to the *Magbabaya*. They hold the *Ginum Bonwa* in December each year. Timuay Salacao describes it as a celebration equivalent to the Christians' New Year. They celebrate it to appease the *Magbabaya* and the spirits so that they will have good health and good harvest in the next cropping year. The ritual can be done with a *bolian* (shaman) but it has become a tradition for the Subanen to have a timuay to officiate it.







the  
*Jedway*

*Dreaming of a Mamalo Province*



**P***ara kang Teduray (You look like a Teduray)."*

Spoken in a particular tone of voice, this is among the derogatory statements that the Teduray hear every now and then from their neighbors—whether from Christian settlers or from their Moro neighbors with whom they claim to share a “common history.”<sup>7</sup> While they are being courted by political candidates aspiring for political office during election time, they are usually back to where they were before, treated as the “lowly” Teduray after elections.

### **But who are the Teduray?**

Timuay Cabayashi Lumbos of Awang, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao said the Teduray share a common history with the Maguindanaos of Cotabato. Both indigenous groups descended from two brothers, Mamalo and Tabunaway. Tabunaway was the younger brother who converted to Islam while Mamalo, the older one, refused to be converted. From Tabunaway, the present day Maguindanaos descended; and from Mamalo, the Teduray came about. In fact, it was Sharriff Kabungsuan who called their people as Teduray, said Timuay Cabayashi.

Timuay Agustin Pascual of barangay Kibucay in North Upi, Maguindanao has another story. According to him the Teduray came from *Tulus* (God). Tulus created *dungya* (earth), where he put *ki llawan* (man) and assigned him as steward of the *pusaka* (land). The *ki llawans* were created from the soil. In his right hand Tulus molded *Ado* (man) while on his left hand, he molded *Di* (woman).

The *ki llawans* settled in Mount Tawan-tawan. Tulus told them that everything they needed to survive could be found in Tawan-tawan. Ado, foreseeing the coming of Sharriff Kabungsuwan, the one who brought Islam to Mindanao, told his sister to meet the Sharriff because he was going to the mountains and would settle there. Ado bade goodbye to his sister and promised her that he would bring her *sawit* (share of harvest) every year after harvest. Ado brought with him the fastest flying and walking animals. Timuay Pascual said that the present day Teduray descended from Ado while the present day Maguindanaos came from Di.

Timuay Pascual also told the story of how the word Teduray came about. The word was taken from the phrase “Dinurayen ufa no (fishing one’s betel nut chew).” Here was the story: Ado decided it was time for him to go to the realm of Tulus. The only way to Tulus was through the *Titay Bulawan* (golden bridge), which was guarded by *Malang Batunan* (a bad spirit that devours humans). Malang Batunan told Ado that he could only cross the bridge if he gave *buhis* (payment) of 16 persons. Ado agreed but told Malang Batunan to let all his people cross the bridge first before he gave his payment. After all of Ado’s people had crossed the bridge, Ado molded out of his chewed betel nut the life-sized dummies of 16 of his men and offered them to Malang Batunan as *buhis*. When Malang Batunan placed in his cooking pot the 16 men that Ado gave him, he realized that he was fooled. The color of the boiling water turned to red. Malang Batunan recognized that it was *ufa* (waste from a betel nut chew). Fishing out the chew from the pot, Malang Batunan decided no mortal should cross the bridge anymore. “Dinurayen ufa no” means to fish out. Dinuray, the root word of Dinurayen, is where the word Teduray came from.

Sometimes the Christian settlers also address the Teduray as *Tiruray*. Larry Tanso, a Teduray and community organizer of Kadtuntaya Foundation, resented that Christian settlers make fun of the Teduray's name, calling them *katuray*, the name of a vegetable, instead of Teduray. Others make fun of its close resemblance to the sound "terrorize."

Even before the coming of the colonizers, the Teduray were already here. But Timuay Pascual said his people did not call themselves Teduray before. His people were classified into five groups: the Tew Dogot or sea people, Tew Datar or people from the plains, Tew Todok mountain people, Tew Dagó or people from north of Rio Grande de Mindanao river, and lastly, the Tew Dawa or people from Fulangi (Rio Grande de Mindanao) river. Today, according to Milanio Ulama, the assistant director of the Office for Southern Cultural Communities (OSCC), the Teduray are classified into three groups, namely: those who still have their culture and traditions intact, those who are "semi-assimilated" and those who are assimilated. The "semi-assimilated" are those who claim to be a Teduray only when they can benefit from it. The assimilated are those who have abandoned the cultural practices of the Teduray and embraced another culture.

The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) roughly estimated the population of Teduray to reach 676,357 in 2000. They can be found in North Upi, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Firis in Maganoy, Dohon in Talayan Awang, Slongon, and Tuduk Tawantawan in Maguindanao; and along the Tran river (Tampada Balig) and in the province of Sultan Kudarat, particularly in Lebak and Ezperanza. No one among the Teduray I interviewed could articulate on the Maguindanao territory based on the Mamalo-Tabunaway pact.

In a book *Tiruray Subsistence*, Stuart Schlegel (1979) wrote that the Teduray speak a language that, though not “mutually intelligible with other neighboring indigenous peoples and peasant groups, is structurally similar to other Philippine languages of the Malayo-Polynesian family.”

The history of the Teduray is marked with resistance against oppressors. Timuay Lumbos recalled the days when Teduray leaders Salfasen, Bidok Roon and Timblow Buntod organized the *alangkat*, the Teduray warriors similar to the *baganis*.

Members of the *alangkat* are believed to possess amulets that give them supernatural powers. During Martial Law, they say, members of the *alangkat* were jailed because they were suspected of being subversives and Communists. A Teduray named Mao (see p. 65) was one of the *alangkats* jailed inside San Ramon Penitentiary in Zamboanga City.

The *alangkats* were able to stop the abduction of their fellow Teduray by Moros to be sold as slaves. This happened for three years sometime in the 18th century. Later, Mao also led another uprising. It is said that he once joined the Philippine Constabulary and formed his own *alangkat* against the Moros and Japanese, who abducted Teduray women and children. Today, some Teduray are still waiting for the next coming of Mao. Mao prophesized before he died in the San Ramon Penitentiary that he would come again to emancipate the Teduray against oppressors. But according to Teduray elder Unding Andag, Mao did not die there. He was transferred to Muntinlupa. He was believed to have escaped since he could go through prison bars because of his powers.

Antonio Moidal, a timuay in barangay Kibucay, said that some settlers had abused the name of Mao so that they could penetrate and exploit the Teduray villages. He was referring to the notorious Kumander Tutpik in the 1970s. Tutpik was a member of Ilaga, a paramilitary group during the time of former President Marcos, who fought against the Moro Blackshirts. Moidal said Tutpik made the Teduray believe that he was the reincarnated Mao, so that he was able to recruit among the Teduray a free army to fight the Moro people during the dark periods of Martial Law.

In his book, Schlegel (1979) also had this account about the Teduray: "During the last decades of the 19th century, the Spanish Jesuit Missionaries opened a mission station for the Teduray in Tamontaka. The presence of the Spanish occupation was short-lived due to the advent of the American regime at the turn of the century. According to accounts, the Americans opened schools for the Teduray to educate them. Moreover, numerous lowlander Christians mostly from Northern Luzon (the Ilocanos) began to move up to the Upi Valley to homestead. As a consequence, a large number of Teduray retreated from the migrant settlements; although there were still many who stayed and settled as farmers."

Traditionally subsistence farmers, many Teduray shifted to cash crops after the introduction of money. Their main crops are rice and corn. Timuay Pascual said the Teduray have their own system of calendar for farming. They look at the constellations in the heavens before they open an area for planting. They begin preparing their fields in January upon the rising of the constellation they call *kohokoho*. At this time, they conduct the *kanduli* to ask blessings from Tulus for a plentiful harvest. The appearance of the constellation *baka* (in the month of February) signals the start of planting.

But they do not plant in volume at this time. It is only when the constellation seretar is already 20 degrees above the horizon at star break that the Teduray start to plant in volume until the month of April when the constellation they call *lowo fegefraced* appears. When the sengked constellation shows up in the sky, the Teduray stop planting. According to Timuay Pascual the sengked constellation is a woman who always takes a bath. It signals rain, the time for the seeds to sprout.

The Teduray elders from Kibucay, Awang and Kinibka explained that the chieftain of the Teduray' judicial body used to be called *kefeduwan* but the term was later changed into timuay. The change came about because there used to be a clan named "Timuay," who were very proficient in the implementation of the peoples' customary laws. So, those who possessed the qualities of a *kefeduwan* was associated with the Timuay clan so that as the years went by, the *kefeduwan* came to be called Timuay.

Deonato Mokodef, secretary-general of the Organization of Teduray and Lambangian Conference (OTLAC), describes the *kefeduwan* as the healer of the heart and mind. In contrast to the mainstream justice system, the Teduray justice system emphasizes a "win-win" situation. This means that the process and verdict of a certain case aims towards reconciliation. The *kefeduwan* seeks to settle conflicts, and does not merely conduct trial.

As healer of the heart and mind, the kefeduwan may also refrain from imposing such cruel punishments as death upon the culprits of major crimes. For example, in an incestuous case which is punishable by tying the convicts to a boat that is sent to the deep sea to be drowned, the kefeduwan may choose to demand a *sukat* (fine) from the culprits. The fine consists of a gold necklace and a large jar. The gold necklace represents the chain to be tied to the convicts while the jar represents the boat that will carry them to the sea. The jar is filled with water, where the heads of the accused are dipped, symbolizing the drowning of the bad spirits that led the culprits to commit incest. Through this rite, it is believed that the convicts' spirits are renewed. It is believed that they will no longer commit immorality, which will eventually lead them to succumb to *morka* (bad fate).

At present, the Teduray are working hard to have their customary laws recognized and encoded in the Regional Legislative Assembly (RLA) of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). In 1994, Assemblyman Jackson Bandila of the first district of Maguindanao submitted the bill recognizing the Timuay Justice System of the Teduray. The bill provides that the customary laws of the Teduray and Lambangian (the people in the province of Sultan Kudarat, settling particularly in the lands along Tran river) be codified and administered. Also named RLA Bill No. 2, the bill has already passed the first reading.

“Teduray are people, not birds, not animals,” said Milanio Ulama, assistant director of the OSCC in the ARMM. “Since they are people, the Teduray need lands, where they can practice their culture and traditions.”

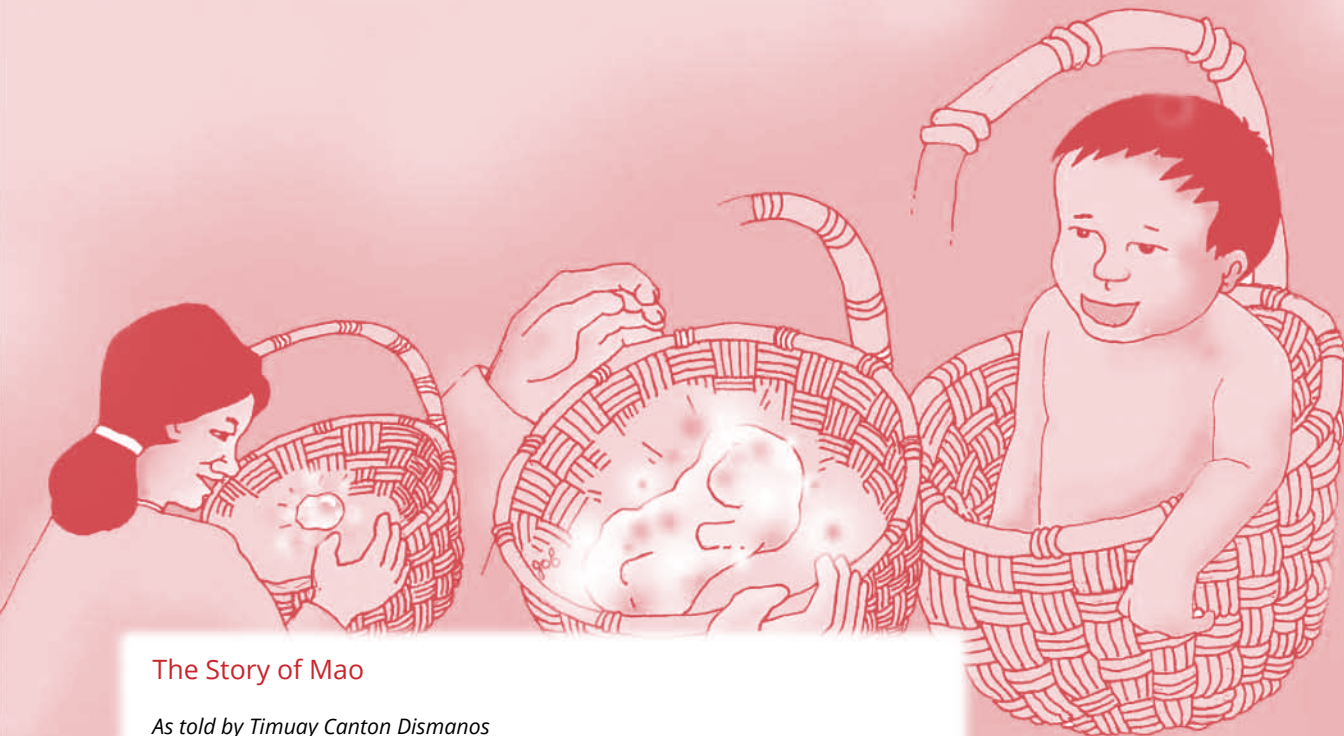


Today, the Teduray are asserting their rights to their ancestral domain. They hope that someday they will also have their own province where they can practice their autonomy similar to that of the ARMM. They plan to call this province the Mamalo Province.

The ancestral domain of the Teduray and Lambangian starts from Tawantawan Hill (PC Hill) in Cotabato City and covers the plains of Slongon (Esteros) in Awang and the upland communities of Drikan (Dalican), Dohon (Ampatuan), Firis, Kawran Buyaan, Binusugan, Tran and the whole of North and South Upi. This was clearly provided in the Chapter 4, Article 4, Section 1 of their *Ukit* (Teduray and Lambangian Constitution). Their *Ukit* was based on the historical accounts of the sacred pact between the peoples of Mamalo and Tabunaway. Ratified by thousands of people and leaders, who also took part in the making of the pact, the *Ukit* warned that anyone “who will forget (the pact) may not live long. He or she will live miserably in this land if he or she will forget to treasure the ancestral domain.”

On February 21, 2006, the Teduray submitted their position paper to the peace panel of the then ongoing talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). In this paper, the Teduray asked both parties to recognize the *safa* (pact) between Mamalo and Tabunaway.

Mokodef summed up the aspirations of the Teduray into three, namely: (1) that the Teduray must be represented in the ARMM Congress and that political domination and discrimination against the Teduray must stop; (2) a stronger network between the Teduray and other Lumad to strengthen their struggle towards self-determination; and (3) that assistance intended for the Teduray should reach them and should not be stolen by corrupt officials in government.



## The Story of Mao

*As told by Timuay Canton Dismanos*

One day a maiden named Iding was walking on the road of Tawantawan when a *mutya* (powerful stone) fell from nowhere. Iding picked the *mutya* and put it secretly in her *kamfilo* (basket). When Iding got home she opened her basket to look for the *mutya*. To her surprise the *mutya* shone brightly and slowly took the form of a baby. Even if Iding was mesmerized, she nursed the baby who grew up to be a boy. She named the boy Pedro Colina. But the boy was known as Mao because he was mute and he rarely talked. Mao became a *bolian* (shaman). He was endowed with so much power. He settled in Mount Feris where he built the *tininos* (church). During his stay at Mount Feris he always sat on the *batow* (rock), which until now, the Teduray believe, has been growing bigger. The Teduray regard Mount Feris as sacred because of Mao.



## How the Tedurays got their name

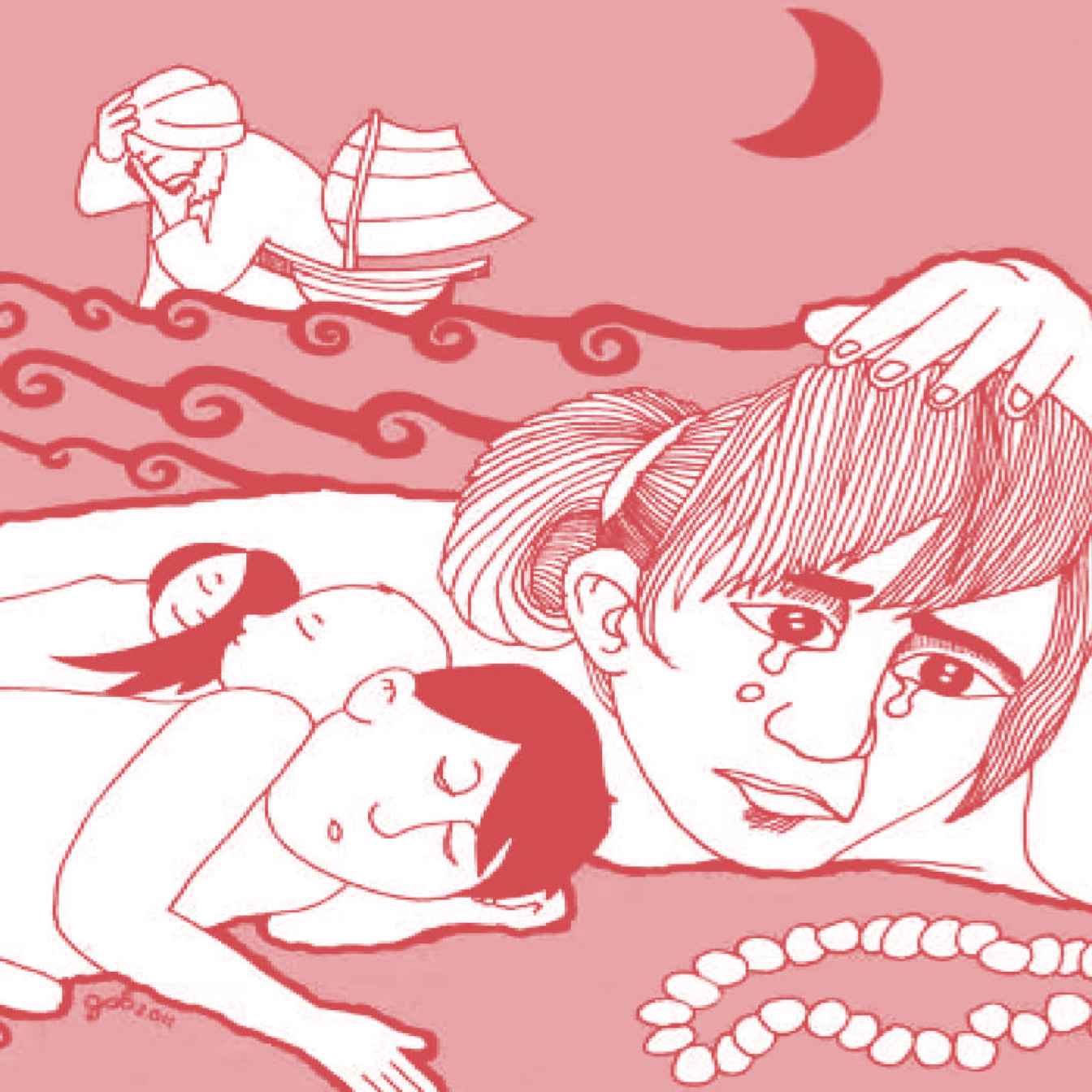
As told by Timuay Cabayashi Lumbos

Sharriff Kabungsuan who roamed countries in Arabia arrived in Mindanao looking for his lost sister Potli Tonila. While roaming the island of Mindanao, he saw a beautiful woman. He was so attracted that he wanted to marry her. The woman consented and their marriage bore three children, namely: Ado the eldest; Amil and Salabanon, the younger brother and sister. But shortly after this, Sharriff Kabungsuan discovered that his wife was actually his lost sister Potli. He recognized the necklace that she was wearing. Ashamed of the incestuous affair, Kabungsuan left her and the children.

When the children were grown up, they received a message from their father. The Sharriff wanted to meet them at a place called Pura. The children wondered why their father wanted to see them. Amil and Salabanon were interested to go but Ado, the eldest, refused. When Salabanon and Amil met their father at Pura, their father told them that he wanted them to be converted to Islam. The two agreed. They were baptized in the waters of Pura. After the baptism, Sharriff Kabungsuan changed their name. Amil became Shiragya Amil Tabunaway and Salabanon became Potli Salabanon. Sharriff Kabungsuan packed cooked rice to bring to their elder brother Ado. Kabungsuan said that if Ado tasted the rice, he would become a partial convert to Islam. He could become a full Islam believer if he bathed in Pura. Ado tasted the rice but he refused to bathe in Pura. His name was changed to Mamalo, from the words of Sharriff Kabungsuan, “malomalo maislam dama kabaloy (he nearly converted to Islam).”

Since the brothers already had different religions, Mamalo suggested that they needed to separate. He said he would settle in the mountain of Tawantawan (PC Hill). But before Mamalo left, Tabunaway proposed that they set up a boundary. He named the Salimbao creek as their border. Mamalo said Salimbao was too short to be their border. They should stretch it beyond. So, they agreed on a border beyond Salimbao. The descendants of Tabunaway were assigned in *tugunan* (marshlands) while the descendants of Mamalo were given the lands in the *palaw* (mountain). The *biwang* (coastal area) and *pansod* (valleys) served as a common ground among the two peoples. Since the two brothers departed, the descendants of Mamalo became “Tidulay na Bansa” (nearly converted to Islam). The word “Tidulay” later became “Teduray.”





gobson



the  
*B'laan*  
of Mt. Matutum





All B'laan living near the foot of Mt. Matutum are descendants of F'lasab, says Mă Lastino Malumpong, 45, a B'laan in sitio Amgu-o, barangay Landan in Polomolok, South Cotabato.

F'lasab was remembered among the B'laan as the ancestor who had a good relationship with the Diwata. "He was the one who taught the B'laan what to do in times of hardships. He taught people to offer rituals and help them in the crisis," says Mă Cariaga Macantal. F'lasab had a sister named Bli who married an Islam missionary. The B'laan call her Fo Bli, for Fo is a title for an old woman.

Mă Lastino's story seems to fit with the third theory on the origin of the B'laan presented by Maria Lourdes Avanceña-Arcenas (1993). The only difference is that Arcenas' theory named Bli as the brother and F'lasab as the sister who married the Islam missionary.

The third theory in Arcenas' book said the Maguindanao and the B'laan descended from a sister and a brother named F'lasab and Bli. F'lasab (the sister) married a stranger from a far away land who arrived at the place by boat. The man was believed to be an Arab trader or a missionary. Today the Maquindanoan claim to have descended from her while the B'laan descended from Bli, her brother.



Arcenas also presents the Mamalo-Tabunaway theory by Hadji Ibrahim Cadi of Kabacan that posits that the present day highlanders of Mindanao, including the B'laan, are descendants of Mamalo. According to this story, the brothers Mamalo and Tabunaway lived near the mouth of the Rio Grande de Mindanao river. When Islamic missionaries came, Mamalo fled to the hills and refused to embrace the new religion. But Tabunaway stayed behind and later became an adherent of Islam (Arcenas 1993).

Eduardo Lawa, a B'laan of Sitio Amgu-o, on the other hand, claims that his people are classified into three groups according to their location. The highlanders are called To Lagad (high places); the residents of the plains To Gutna or To Datal (plain); and those from the coastal areas are called To Baba (in much lower areas, or the coasts).

In the year 2000, the NCIP estimated the population of the B'laan at 676,357. The B'laan are concentrated in the provinces of Sultan Kudarat, South Cotabato, North Cotabato, and Davao del Sur.

The B'laan have their own distinct language. How they speak their language vary from those coming from the plains, or from the coastal area or the mountains. They also know how to speak Ilonggo, the language of the Christian settlers in the area. The B'laan feel they must learn Ilonggo to facilitate understanding between them and the lowlanders. The B'laan are very sensitive when it comes to using their B'laan language. During my visit to Amgu-o, the folks would immediately shift to Ilonggo whenever I was around. This is their way of showing respect to visitors.

The B'laan are a very artistic people. This is evident in the intricate designs found in their *tabih*, the traditional cloth of the B'laan made from abaca fiber.

Fo Sandawa Macantal, a B'laan weaver, related how they weave the *tabih*. They start by invoking the spirits of the *lutay* (abaca) saying, “*Fo dalo lutay fyu ikutimaron. Do fyo garo mi na too, gani folong too mi folong mimo don* (Owner of the abaca, please guide us, make our eyes clear so that we could make a beautiful *tabih*).” The making of *tabih* usually takes a month, said Pandoy Sandawa, a B'laan weaver. The beautiful design called *kumang* (diamonds in form) are interrelated, you could not cut the *tabih* without losing the essence of the design. Cutting the *tabih* is also considered *maftu* (a curse).

There are various designs depicted in a *tabih*. Among them, are the *batak knumang* (tentacles of a sea creature), *batak ubkong* (lizard design), *batak bwaya* (crocodile design), *batak sawu* (python design), and *batak snail* (referring to the numbered design). Animals are depicted in the *tabih* for their praiseworthy qualities; namely, the python for its medicinal benefits, the crocodile for being fierce and the lizard for making itself invisible when a stranger is nearby.

The B'laan believe that a long time ago, the crocodile lived among them, taking the form of a man who married one of their kinswoman.

There are also five kinds of *tabih*, which vary according to function, size, design, and color. The *tabih Fulo*, which is dominantly red in color, can be used as clothing for men and women; *tabih Logob* have bigger designs than *Fulo*, also used for clothing for women and men; *tabih Ftarag* is exclusively used by women for their lower garments. *Tabih Ugnandong* is similar to *Ftarag*, only longer. *Tabih Hmlato* is regarded as the first class *tabih*, because only *Bai Libon* or *Fulong* (an honorable woman in the community) wears it. *Tabih Hmlato* is much longer than the *Ugnandong*.

Mount Matutum is the prominent volcano that can be seen all throughout South Cotabato. Originally, the B'laan call it *Amtotong* (the white mountain) because in the absence of trees, its soil looks white. Amgu-o is 18 kilometers away from Polomolok, accessible only by horse, motorcycle or trucks.

The B'laan believe that the *D'wata* (God) lives in the upper portion of Amtotong. They consider the mountain sacred.

For them the *Molo* (evil one who takes bad souls) resides in the lower portion. Between the D'wata and Molo is a *kalkam* tree. This is the stairway for the B'laan to go to D'wata's realm. Within Mount Matutum are eight minor hills. Each hill has its function. The *Bulol Gumarar* (Gumarar hill) is where one could dance. The *Bulol Gusatlow* (Gusatlow hill) is the place for rituals. *Bulol Aknalom* (Aknalom hill) is the place where one could take shelter because it is full of trees. *Bulol Guslang* (Guslang hill) is the hill for meetings. *Bulol Ihan* (Ihan hill) is the hill where one could sharpen his bolo. *Bulol Maskurong* (Maskurong hill) is where a person can have a full view of the plains. *Bulol Afnosaklabon* (Afnosaklabon hill) is the abode of the clouds. *Final Bolul* (Final hill) is the invisible hill.

Lawa said that the B'laan are particularly cautious whenever they set foot on the mountain. They do not make noises to avoid untoward incidents. They believe that a lot of spirits live in the mountain.

*“Ang Amtotong bukid na pinalangga. Pinakagahum sa tanan nga bukid. Tanan nga bulong iyara da (We pay reverence to Mt. Matutum. It is the most powerful mountain. All the medicinal herbs can be found there),”* he said. He did not like the attitude of some Christian settlers when they climb the area. They do not respect the mountain. They make a lot of noise. They also do indecent things during their visits. This is clear disrespect, he said. The *mambulos* (spirits) will one day make us suffer because of it. Lawa also complained that lowlanders do not know how to pronounce his peoples’ name. Lowlanders should pronounce it as B’laan, not Bilaan, he said.

The B’laan also believe in other spirits aside from D’wata, the creator. Fulong Cariaga Macantal, the chieftain of Sitio Amgu-o, warned that these spirits can either help or harm his people, depending on the peoples’ personal relationship with them. *Fon Kayo* is the spirit that resides in the forest. He also nurtures the forest. *Fon Nael* is the steward of the waters. *Fon Bolul* lives in the mountain. *Fon Luas* is the spirit of rattan. *Fon Labon* is the spirit in the clouds.

The B’laan invoke these spirits to witness the ceremony of *sadyandi*. A *sadyandi* is a pact to eliminate hostilities between conflicting groups. Mario Macantal, the son of the Fulong (the wise one and the term the B’laan use for their leader), recalled a *sadyandi* he made with a notorious *To Lagad* robber named Ofla-o.

Ofla-o stole Macantal’s herds. But Macantal decided to make a truce with the Ofla-o to put an end to Ofla-o’s ways.

During a *sadyandi*, both parties make a little incision on their left chest to take a drop of blood, which they put into a glass of wine. Each party of the *sadyandi* drinks from the glass to signify his agreement. Macantal showed us the chest scar from the *sadyandi*.

After the sadyandi, Ofla-o did not disturb them anymore. It is matfu (curse, i.e., the stomach of the violator will burst) to violate what is agreed on in the sadyandi.

There are stories that speak of discrimination and bias against the B'laan. Peping Gulili, a B'laan elder in Amgu-o, remembers his experiences in childhood. *"Sadtong una, magsiling ang Kristyanos manol ang B'laan, kay kung magsulod sang department store, muagi sa entrans, sa entrance man muguwa. Pero way kami gapangakig kay tuod man* (The Christians used to call B'laan "ignorant" because a B'laan enters a department store through the entrance and goes out through the same door. But we were not angry because it was true)," he said.

What he can't accept was the incident between a Maranao trader and his father. "When my father went to the market in Polomolok, the trader forced him to buy a shirt. When my father refused, the trader hit my father. The trader even called his companions for help. They knew my father was a B'laan, that's why they were bent on harming him. We merely fled and avoided the fight."

In 1971, the government issued land titles to the B'laan clans of Macantal, Samling, Malumpong, Gulili, Muso, and Maligon.

Land grabbing is rampant in the areas of the B'laan.

In 1998 the B'laan settlement in sitio Akpig, Polomolok, South Cotabato was demolished by settlers and newcomers. The strangers told the B'laan they were squatting in the area because they did not have land titles. The Fulong the of Amgu-o said that even if the B'laan of Akpig did not have land titles to their lands, their families have been in the area since the time of their ancestors. Having no one to turn to, the B'laan from Akpig fled to North Cotabato to seek help from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). With the MILF, the B'laan went back to Akpig to get back their lands.

Reports of the presence of the MILF reached the Philippine Army, who launched tactical offensives against the Moro rebels. The MILF fled to the direction of sitio Amgu-o. The firefight forced 33 B'laan families to flee their homes in sitio Amgu-o and seek refuge in the forest. Their village was pounded by machine guns. Two B'laan were killed on February 25, 1998 because the Philippine Army believed the B'laan of Amgu-o sided with the MILF. The military offensive only ended in 2000 upon the mediation of the Oblates of Notre Dame (OND) sisters.

Learning from the experience in sitio Akpig, the B'laan of Amgu-o tried to secure their land. They did not seek the help of the NCIP. *"Indi na kami gasalig sa ila (NCIP) kay amo man lang giyapun wala man mahitabo sina (We don't trust them (NCIP) anymore, because just the same, nothing will happen anyway),"* said Fulong Macantal.

Instead, the B'laan in Amgu-o signed an agreement with the multinational pineapple company, Dole Philippines, to grow pineapples. The company allowed them to use the land as long as they set aside 60 hectares for pineapple growing for a minimum of three years. The multinational company opened the road from Barangay Landan to Sitio Amgu-o because of the project.

In 2003, the Amgu-o community, headed by Mã Cariaga Macantal, turned to contract growing of pineapples for Dole Philippines. They made the arrangement through the Landan People's Cooperative in barangay Landan, Polomolok, South Cotabato. They agreed to plant their 70 hectares of land with pineapples for the period of three years. But Fulong Macantal shifted his eight hectares of pineapple to corn, because he said, corn is far "better than pineapples." "In three years, you only harvest twice with pineapples," he said. "If you plant corn, you harvest thrice a year."

Since 2003, the B'laan in the villages I visited turned to pineapple contract growing. But Peping Gulili, 38, a B'laan in Amgu-o, realized that the contract growing scheme only buried them deeper into debts. Macantal also noticed that the productivity of one hectare pineapple farm is much less than that of a one hectare planted with assorted crops. The produce of a one hectare land planted with various crops is equivalent to the yield of five hectares planted with pineapple.

The B'laan also complained of the lack of potable water in Amgu-o. They had to walk one and a half kilometers to fetch water. They had asked the government to provide them with a water system but there was no response. They had to wait for election time to remind the politicians what they promised. A Japanese-funded Yamog Foundation in South Cotabato put up a water supply system in sitio Amgu-o. Yamog installed a 2.5 kilometer pipe from Ba Landan river to the community. It provided eight faucets in the community.

The B'laan have little access to government basic services. If not for Damlog Lawil Church (Abundant Life Church), they would not have a school for their children. The church established the B'laan Dalil Christian Academy for elementary pupils and high school students. They also tried to put up a college but it did not pass the standards of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). CHED required the school to provide for computer facilities to open a school in the area, where there is no electricity. The B'laan Dalil Christian Academy is a culture-sensitive school.

The B'laan elders wish to transmit their traditions to the B'laan youth. Fo Tagdo, a weaver of tabih, wants to teach the youth her skills in weaving. During the writing of this book, at least six women in Amgu-o still know how to weave the tabih.

Mã Gabay Maligon, a B'laan elder in Amgu-o, dreams of a harmonious society, where Christian settlers and B'laan walk as equals. He is sending his children to school.



the  
Higzonon

*Pushed deeper into the mountains*



“You could not do your research here in Bayawa unless we conduct a ritual,” Datu Mantugbungan told me when I was about to start this study in Sitio Bayawa, Malitbog, Bukidnon. Datu Mantugbungan is a leader in Bayawa. He is a *makaliga*, the one who leads the prayer during rituals.

According to him, their culture is too sacred to be brought to the open without seeking the guidance of *Magbabaya* (God) and the *Maulin-ulin* (Spirits of the Ancestors). Failure to say the *pandalawit* (prayer) will bring about illness to the respondents of my research.

Datu Mantugbungan belongs to the people called Higaonon, the indigenous peoples living in the mountainous areas of the provinces of Agusan, Misamis Oriental, and Bukidnon.

Datu Mangumboya, another Higaonon datu in Impahanong, was also a makaliga like Mantugbungan. He said the Higaonon did not originally live in the highlands. They used to live in the plains known today as the City of Cagayan de Oro. When settlers came in the 1950s their ancestors escaped to the highlands to avoid the strangers. The word “*higaonon*” came from the word “*gaon*,” which means, one who ascends the mountains from the coastal plains.

“Our ancestors used to be wary of strangers,” said Mangumboya. “This pushed us further into the mountains when the settlers came.”

Another Higaonon datu, Mantimongmong, said that in 1910, the Higaonon started to flee from the dumagats (settlers), not because they were afraid but because they did not want to be influenced by their culture. Datu Mantimongmong said that my research is “not that extensive” to demand an elaborate ritual.

Before 1960, the place of the Higaonon used to be a forested area. In sitio Impahanong, for instance, Chiquito Oquilan, 45, a Higaonon Catholic lay minister, recalled how they used to get from the forest everything they needed in their households. But in 1966, the logging companies came. First, came the Poblete logging, followed by Tan Singko and then the Bautista companies. Since then the Higaonon's way of life changed.

When I visited the three sitios of Logdeck, Impahanong and Bayawa, I could no longer see the logging trucks that Nong Chiquito said were constantly in the area. Not a single tree was left to haul.

Different religious sects came, contributing to the disunity of the Higaonon. Money was also introduced. During the writing of this book, at least three religious groups have already recruited followers in Impahanong. These are the Baptist, Pentecostal and Catholic Churches.

Some local officials in Malitbog had been eyeing the potentials of chromite mining in Mount Pangabolan in sitio Log Deck. Log Deck is 30 kilometers from the town of Malitbog, accessible only through a four-wheel drive vehicle or motorcycles. A good three kilometers from Logdeck, Impahanong is not accessible by vehicles, so one has to walk uphill for at least an hour before reaching the place. Bayawa is still six kilometers from Impahanong and can only be reached on foot; but the way up there is not as steep.

In March 2006, a group of town officials surveyed the area for possible mining potentials, according to a source from the Indigenous Peoples Apostolate (IPA) of Cagayan. But the Higaonon of Log Deck opposed the entry of mining, so the local government's plans were shelved. The Higaonon believed that mining would destroy their ancestral domain. But outsiders always prodded them to open their minds to it. "*Antos-antos lang gyud mo ug kamote. Maayo pag minahon na diha aron kakaon mo ug bugas* (You endure eating camote. You better allow that land to be mined, so that you can afford to eat rice)," outsiders often tell them.

Yet *camote* (sweet potato) has always been the staple food for the Higaonon. They value camote more than *humay* (rice) because it (camote) sustains them all year round. Rice production is only seasonal.

The Higaonon resented the dumagats for calling them "*nitibong ihalas*" (wild natives). "We are not wild," says Mangumboya. "We merely have a culture and tradition different from theirs. They should learn to respect our differences."

Despite the changes in their physical and social environment, the Higaonon managed to continue living their traditions. The datu still leads the Higaonon people. He is articulate in the customary laws. Datu Mangumboya recalls when his people still settle criminal cases through the *tampuda* (a ritual for settling conflict). It starts with a pandalawit. A pig, a chicken, a chick, and a piece of rattan is put side by side during the ritual. The officiating datu cuts the neck of the animals and the rattan; saying, "*Sahi tu ini na balagon ha matampod on so batasan na o lido* (As the rattan is cut, so the conflict between the two parties shall end)."

The guilty party would pay the aggrieved party a *salaam* (fine). In the old days, the guilty party would be killed. But these days, the *salaam* would suffice. Death penalty is prohibited by law. "The municipal hall is built to settle heavy cases," Datu Mangumboya said.

Present day Higaonon call their leader "datu." But Mangumboya said that in Agusan, some Higaonon still call their leader *matadong*.

He recalls during his childhood when his father, a datu, used to bring him to meetings with other Higaonon leaders. He would sit on his father's lap and listen to the discussion until he falls asleep. After he got married, his father-in-law anointed him as the leader. His father-in-law performed the *pandalawit* to their *maulin-ulin*, invoking their guidance and asking them if he, Mangumboya, could become the rightful leader. It was a ritual called *pagoop*. But before the *pagoop*, they also performed another ritual called *toos*, when the prospected leader was marked with a red handkerchief to identify him and set him apart for the task of becoming a datu. Then, when everything is ready, the community organizes a *dumalongdong*.

The *pagoop* is followed by the *pamungkas*, when the hands of the datu is smeared (*pamalasan*) with the blood of a chicken to cleanse him of impurities. His feet are smeared with the blood of a pig to drive away bad luck. A feast follows these solemn ceremonies.

After which the new datu is installed in a mass ordination during the *dumalongdong*. A *dumalongdong* is the biggest gathering of datu from different towns or communities. Datu Mantimongmong said the gathering is tantamount to a provincial meeting.

The datos then organize themselves.

The highest leader among the *Balaghusay* (Council of Datus) is the *Masikampo*. The Masikampo administers and presides the ritual of dumalongdong. As part of the ritual, the newly-installed datos are given their respective tasks. These tasks include the Datu for Justice or the *Balaghusay*, Datu for Ritual or *Babaylanon*, Datu for the Waters or *Pamulalakaw*, Datu for Agriculture or *Pangimbabasok*, Datu for the Treasury or the *Pamahandi*, Datu for the Animals or *Panalikot*, Datu for the Blacksmith or the Salsalan, Datu for Weaving or *Tagahabol* (a post always reserved for a woman), Datu for Health or *Malagbuhata*, and Datu for Peace and Order or the *Alimaong*.

The Higaonon seldom perform the dumalongdong. They only celebrate it when they feel the need for it. It usually happens when many of the leaders could no longer do the tasks expected of them by the community.

But the practice has changed these days because of influences by outsiders. With government and non-government organizations working in the communities, people celebrate a *bigola* (a gathering to strengthen an agreement), or a *salimpokaw* (a gathering to plan for the future) or a *pagtabol* (a gathering to repair the shortcomings done in the previous agreement) and call the celebration a “dumalongdong.” This is not supposed to be.

The responsibility of maintaining peace and harmony in a Higaonon village is not only limited to the datu. Everyone contributes to it. A Higaonon woman, Conrada Sumunda, recalls how the elders (both father and mother) teach their children every night to be good persons. Sumunda is a bai *mangangapog*, the one who prepares the ingredients needed for a ritual. She is not related to a babaylanon.

She chanted the *limbay* (lullaby) to make a baby sleep. “*Way libay sa bataay. Daw pabut-an kad yot payo. Otinaladay bangko nayoyogon kantag yangalasol. Kad tagsinolgaw, daw pabut-an kad yot payo* (Be still in your hammock. Don't cry. Don't disturb anyone. Sleep silently in your hammock).”

When they get sick, the Higaonon consult the *babalaon* (a small bottle containing secret herbs, of which only the holder knows). After the *pandalawit* the holder mentions several illnesses. If the *babalaon* moves (as in a pendulum) at the mention of particular illness, then it is that illness that is believed to be ailing the patient. But owning a *babalaon* is limited only to a few Higaonon. Usually it is passed from a husband to his wife or to one of their children. I never had the chance to see the *babalaon*. According to Bae Oroqueza Bulalakaw, not anyone, especially a stranger like me, could take a look at the *babalaon*. Otherwise the spirit residing in it would leave and the bottle would lose its efficacy. Even her children did not get the chance to lay eyes on her *babalaon*. “It is not yet time,” she said. As to the historical origin of the *babalaon*, no one in the community could trace where it had come from. They only knew that the *babalaon* can tell what is ailing the Higaonon people. It is even more effective than the medicine at the barangay health center, said a 34-year-old Higaonon woman named Lucina Sagayna. The nearest barangay health center is 21 kilometers away from Sitio Log Deck. A sick Higaonon had to walk this far only to hear from the health center personnel that their medicine cabinet simply ran out of stock. Except for the hall where the community held their meetings, no other government projects ever reached sitio Log Deck. Even the water system was given only by Tabang-Mindanao, a private outreach project. The existing literacy program was initiated by Catholic priests from Cagayan de Oro under the IPA.

But more than their lack of access to basic services, the Higaonon are concerned over their ancestral domain claim.

The Higaonon of Malitbog in sitios Log Deck, Impahanong, Bayawa, and Kagahaman organized the Impahanong-Amosig Higaonon Tribal Community Organization (IAHTCO) to unite themselves in protecting their ancestral domain. They submitted to the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) all the requirements for their Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) in 1997. But until our interview, they have not yet been awarded their CADT. The ancestral domain of the Higaonon covers some 46,000 hectares of lands in the sitios of Consolacion, Upper Gilanggilang, Paryente, Linabo, Victory, Impahanong, Bayawa, Logdeck, and Kagahaman in Malitbog, Bukidnon.

Datu Mantimongmong recalls the last time an NCIP personnel went to their area. The Higaonon people in his village went down the steel bridge to carve their name on a rock near the river. That rock was supposed to serve as landmark to let other communities who are also applying for CADT know the boundary area. The landmark only provoked conflict with neighboring Higaonon communities because it encroached into another claim. The NCIP told Datu Mantimongmong that the landmark was not permanent. The NCIP survey team did not go to the actual boundary, still two kilometers away. Mantimongmong said this was how serious the NCIP people were in doing their work for indigenous peoples. As a leader in Impahanong, Mantimongmong used to be the chairperson of IAHTCO. But he regretted passing on the leadership to someone named Mansaysayan, because he aid the new leader allowed mining firms into their ancestral domain.





the  
Mamaniva

*Life without the forest*



**H**ome to the Mamanwa are the hinterlands and mountain ranges bordering the provinces of Surigao del Norte and Agusan del Norte in northeastern Mindanao. Thus, the Mamanwa elders from different communities gathered in sitio Palalihan in barangay Mahanub, Claver, Surigao del Norte for this research.

Palalihan is an upland village that overlooks the coastal towns of Claver and Gigaquit. Only nine kilometers of rough roads from the center of Barangay Mahanub, the sitio is accessible by horse or motorbike or a four-wheel drive vehicle, which is a more comfortable means of transportation.

The Mamanwa presently living in Palalihan are grouped into two: the descendants of the original Mamanwa inhabitants in the upper portion of the village; and the migrants from Linaguran in the lower area closer to barangay Mahanub.

The settlers from Linaguran, a village of sitio Tiltlan, came to Palalihan for two reasons: their difficulty in bringing their produce from Linaguran to the market and the presence of New People's Army in Linaguran, making them easy target of suspicion and consequent harassments by government soldiers. The Linaguran Mamanwa migrants occupied the land of a Bisaya settler after obtaining permission from the owner.

But their relocation has not made life any easier for the Linaguran Mamanwa. They are more of a food gatherer than a land tiller. Like other Mamanwa, they are trying hard to adapt to the changes wrought by the logging and mining companies operating in their area. They make a living gathering rattan and selling them to lowland *compradores*. But with the forest area getting smaller, their supply of this cash-generating vine is also dwindling. Now, the the Palalihan Mamanwa have to walk for at least two hours to sitio Igang, where they could still find wide rattan varieties of *uliti*, *pajiti*, *pijag*, *mangigang*, *kuyapi* and *payaan*, and *hijud* to cut and sell in the market.

The Mamanwa are already into farming, while gathering rattan on the side.

Pablo Payapag, an elder in the community in Palalihan, said a man can cut an average number of 20 pieces of rattan a day. They usually do the cutting from Monday to Thursday. On Friday, they go to town to sell their produce. Tying their cuttings together in neat bundles and then carrying them on their shoulders, the men used to hike the 19-kilometer distance to the poblacion of Bacauag town to bring their rattan to the market. These days, however, they can hire motorbikes.

Battery-sized rattan (about two or three inches in diameter and 10-12 feet long) can sell at P7.00 a piece while the split *hijud* used as tying material can sell at P25.00 per bundle. Each bundle is made up of 100 split pieces.

But Payapag complains that the Mamanwa usually get paid only two days after they deliver the rattan. While they wait for payment, the Mamanwa have to camp near the stores, from where they get food, the cost of which will be deducted from what they will be paid for the rattan. During market day, on Sundays, they buy the things needed at home from whatever amount that remained of the payment after the deduction.

The Mamanwa already knew how to farm even before the settlers came. They did not learn farming from the settlers nor from the Manobo. But their method of farming requires them to transfer from place to place, to allow the soil to rejuvenate. After harvest, they go to another place within the ancestral territory suitable for foraging, farming and hunting. They only learned wet farming of rice from the settlers. Today, they could no longer roam around too much because most of the areas are already occupied by settlers.

Ironically, some Mamanwa work as tenants in the land of the Bisaya (mostly from Bohol and Leyte) to earn a living these days. Mabalaw Cayong Olesi earns for his family by tending to the falcatta plantation of a Bisayan settler. As a leader (mabalaw) of the Mamanwa clan in the sitio of Camamonan, he brought all his relatives to work with him in the Bisaya-owned plantation so that they would not be left in Camamonan without a leader. The 16 families who came along with him live in the shanties they built beside the plantation compound. When work stops at the plantation, the men go back to Camamonan to tend to their farms. They also get additional income by making boats for fishermen along the coast.

Mabalaw Ferdinand Librengo recalls that when he was about 15 years old, his father used to work in a ricefield owned by a Bisaya in sitio Buya, a lowland settlement in Gigaquit.

From what they earned, they bought three *salmonan* (cups that can hold about ½ kilo of rice in the present measuring system) of rice grains from his landlord and planted the grains in their farm in Tiltlan. Today, they continue planting *kalibre* (cassava), *gayay* (camote), saging (banana), rice corn, and coconuts. Cropping season starts from February to April.

The Mamanwa started working on the land in the '50s when the clans also started to build their settlements. In the past, they were highly mobile. In fact, they take pride in telling others that only the Mamanwa in the early part of the century had been to the Visayas, particularly in Leyte and Samar. Mabalaw Ferdinand talked about Inanohoy, the first Mamanwa to have reached Samar. Looking for a more abundant hunt, he settled in Calbayog in Samar after World War II. Many of the Mamanwa followed his example.

Since the Mamanwa are traditionally nomads, most of them have yet to get used to the contemporary Filipino rural life style that depends much on farming. Mamanwa rattan cutter Sander Inangkayan said that the Mamanwa in the past would stay in a place only for three months, long enough to harvest their crops. Then, they moved to another area much greener than the last. During the moving, the clan would rely on hunting and foraging for their daily sustenance. So, they were adept at constructing different snares and traps to catch animals: *balatik* and *tibaw* for pigs, *kagong* for birds, *laog* for monkeys, *bayod* for *milo* (civet cat) and rats.



Mabalaw Ferdinand remembers that animals were especially abundant during his father's time. While five of his father's balatiks used to catch five pigs, Mabalaw Ferdinand would be so happy today if his balatik could catch a mouse. Food used to be plentiful.

As excellent gatherers and foragers, the Mamanwa could easily detoxicate a poisonous yam called *kuyot* or extract *unaw* (starch) from a palm tree called *idyok*.

What they get from their hunt and whatever produce they get from the land are shared by the clan among themselves, and even with others, too. This is because the Mamanwa believe that the Supreme Being has given all the blessings for everyone to share. Elsie Cagampang, a woman of mixed Mamanwa and Bohol ancestry, relates how she and her relatives would go to a fiesta and bring home something for relatives who are left at home. Elsie is proud that many of the Mamanwa retain this attitude of sharing.

For the Mamanwa, land is not an item to be owned but a source of life to be shared with everyone. But the same belief caused their displacement from the land. In the '50s, the Bisaya started selling the lands already cleared by the logging companies. Wary of the settlers, the Mamanwa fled further to the hinterlands and then to the hills. Some Mamanwa stayed in the lowlands and mingled with the newcomers. Very few, like Mabalaw Ferdinand's father, got a position in the government. Mabalaw Ferdinand's father became a barrio police in the '70s. But when he lost his uniform, the *capitan del barrio* threatened to imprison him. Mabalaw Ferdinand's father paid for the lost uniform with five hectares of his land. Despite this, he did not get back his position as barrio police.

After losing their ancestral lands through fraudulent means, some Mamanwa turned to begging. For almost two decades now, bands of Mamanwa families are found in cities and town centers, not in their own provinces, but in other parts of Mindanao. As a kindergarten kid in the mid-'80s, I used to see about 20 Mamanwa men, women, and children surrounding the parish hall where we held our classes. They even occupied the place during the Christmas vacation. As the capital of Davao del Norte, the town of Tagum was about 10 hours away from Kitcharao, Agusan del Norte, where the band of Mamanwa came from. Some of them are still coming today.

In an article, "Resource Utilization and Management Practices of the Northern Mindanao Indigenous Peoples," Erlinda Burton (1996) observes that the loss of the resource base of the Mamanwa has driven some of them from the forests to the urban centers. The Mamanwa take the bus to any city or town, stay for two weeks or so camping around the bus terminal and going around the city begging for food, clothing and money. In Cagayan de Oro City, men go to the fish distributing center early in the morning to ask for fish from the dealers, or else, they proceed to the market for scraps of meat from butchers. In the afternoon, the women go around soliciting food for supper.

In 1986, the church apostolate of Tagum, some NGOs working for indigenous peoples and the office of the mayor, invited the Mamanwa to talk and reflect about their situation. Afterwards, they transported the Mamanwa back to Kitcharao. But Cynthia Nabayra Masinaring, the coordinator of the Indigenous Peoples Apostolate in the diocese of Tagum, said the effort seemed futile because every year they return to beg.

The Mamanwa elders from Palalihan, Pohagan and Balew were saddened by this trend. For them, begging only degraded the Mamanwa. No Mamanwa was a beggar in the past. But the elders blamed the destruction of the environment that also resulted to the breakdown of the culture of the Mamanwa.

Now, Sander Inangkayan laments hearing derogatory terms like “kongking,” an allusion to the gorilla in the film “King Kong” to refer to the Mamanwa; or the perception that the indigenous group is “lowly” just because their culture is different.

Like most people, the Mamanwa aspire to be recognized and respected. Dante Nanoy, a Mamanwa from Cantugas, Mainit worked hard as a convent boy in a Catholic parish to obtain an education. He finished a degree in agriculture in Surigao despite the difficulties he had to hurdle in school because of his being a Mamanwa. Now, he teaches children at the Mamanwa Training Center in Palalihan. The diocese started its mission in 2004. Together with his fellow Mamanwa teacher, Elsie Cagampang, he teaches reading and writing to 12 students whose ages range from 13 to 24. He dreams that the children will eventually grow up and follow through the Mamanwa’s long quest for dignity and self-determination.





## Mamanwa's CADT

On September 22, 2006, the Mamanwa's CADT was approved. It covers 48,879 hectares in the towns of Claver, Gigaquit, Bacuag, Tubod, and Alegria. In Claver, particularly in the sitios of Urbistondo and Taganito, an existing nickel mining project by the Taganito Mining Company has been operating since the early 1980s.

After the approval of the CADT, the Mamanwa of the five towns demanded their share from the company. In 2007, they received P500,000, which they agreed to divide among the 15 communities involved. Of the total amount, 80% went to the 13 communities and 20% went directly to the affected areas of Urbistondo and Taganito, where the mining firm operates. The Mamanwa plan to invest their shares in projects contained in their Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development Plan.

## Salekep, the Brave

Salekep used to live in a big mountain with his elder brother Dajangen. One day, an *ibu* (spirit guarding the river) appeared, giving Salekep three magical gems; namely: the *ya motja na gabon* (magical gem of the cloud), *ya motja na kilat* (magical gem of lightning) and *ya motja nga suga* (magical gem of the sun).



The gems were supposed to protect Salekep and his people from the Manobo. The spirit warned Salekep that the *mangajaw* (raiding parties possessed by a human eating spirit called *kaporoon*) will come from the Manobo to make the Mamanwa their slaves. The *ibu* also taught Salekep how to fight.

When the Manobo came, Salekep defeated all 400 of the fighters because of the gems. The *motja na gabon* covered Salekep, making him invisible from his enemies. The *motja na kilat* made him strike swiftly at his enemies. The *motja nga suga* made Salekep see in the darkness. After he defeated his enemies, Salekep threw all the raiding Manobo into the cliff.

At sunset, the *kaporoon* came and devoured the corpses. They sipped the blood from the ground. Salekep filled the leaf of a Balangti tree with water and threw the pack “*ka pinotos nga balangti nga sapa*” at the spirits. When the spirits were hit, they thought that the Mamanwa people only had water flowing in their veins. They thought the Mamanwa had no blood. They left the houses of the Mamanwa and went on to feast on the dead Manobo, instead.

the  
*Bagobo*  
of Mt. Apo



At 104 years old, Apo Iyawan Purok could still walk the distance from sitio Cabarizan to Davao City's Toril baranggay of Sibulan, the place which Apo Iyawan's people consider as the center of the Tagabawa settlement.

"*Tagabawa*," the Apo explained, is a strain of a larger group of people, the Bagobos. The Tagabawa live in the southern portion of the country's highest mountain, Mount Apo. "*Bawa*" in Bagobo language means "south." Apo Iyawan's clans are Bagobo living in the land south of Mt. Apo.

How the Bagobo came about is even a more interesting story: Apo Iyawan narrated how a long, long time ago, *Manama* (Creator) ordered a great, great ancestor named Lumabot to build a stairway they could use to go up to heaven to get the *batong bantiles*, a Bagobo version of the stone tablets that contained Manama's commandment. The *batong bantiles* is a pearly white rock usually found at the side of the hills.

The people of Lumabot's community were supposed to accompany him to get the *batong bantiles* but they were so busy with their worldly concerns so Lumabot went alone. When Lumabot came back, he found his people still preoccupied with their worldly ways. This angered Lumabot. He threw the *batong bantiles* to the ground. He was so furious that the hard rock broke into pieces. Thinking that the rock was gold, the people grabbed what they could of the falling pieces. In the resulting chaos, one man was pushed into a cave. He examined the only piece he was able to snatch and saw some markings he did not understand. Later, with the help of a stranger, he recognized the markings as "*bagobo*."



In her monograph, entitled “Tagabawa Bagobo,” Sonia Mangune (2001) wrote that the Bagobo is the largest group of people known to have existed in Davao City. She classified the Bagobo into three: the Tagabawa, the Guiangan or Attaw and the Tagakaolo. In the interview for this project, this researcher learned that the Clata people is also a strain of the Bagobo. His informants did not mention the Tagakaolo, who live further south at the tip of Davao del Sur province.

Pieter Jan Raats, SVD, in a paper entitled “Structural Body of Bagobo Myths and Rites” (1969), identified the land of the Bagobo as the “interior of Southeastern Mindanao specifically in the west and northwest of Davao Gulf and southwestern, southern and eastern portion of Mount Apo.” Today, the Bagobo live in Calinan, Toril and Baguio Districts of Davao City, in the towns of Sta. Cruz and Bansalan and the City of Digos in Davao del Sur and in Makilala, Magpet, Tulunan, and in Kidapawan in North Cotabato. The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) estimated their population at 484,467.

Today’s Bagobo are predominantly Christians, having been baptized in Catholic or Protestant rites. However, many of the Bagobo in Sitio Cabarizan, Balacayon and Tudaya in Toril District, Davao City take pride in their practice of their traditional religion, they call the *Sandawa Sarili Langis* (SSL). Now, they have five churches scattered in three sitios, their religious organization registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

Loreto Balido, an SSL member, said their religion has sadly been misunderstood as a cult. Their religious leader, 106 years old Apo Adoc from Tudaya, has assured them that the SSL is their peoples' original religion. Only that it was organized and named as Sandawa Sarili Langis by Apo Ingol in 1912. Inspiration came to Apo Ingol while he was wandering in the mountains of Apo. A deer came close to Apo Ingol. Entangled in the deer's horn was a small bottle that contained oil. Apo Ingol took the bottle home to Balacayon. Believing that the oil inside the bottle was sacred, given by the Diwata, Apo Ingol thought of ways how to produce more of the same oil. Asking guidance from his *abyan* (spirit guide), he told his trusted followers to look for *tamisa na lapo* (a coconut tree bearing only one fruit facing the east), seven *bulawan na lapo* (seven yellow coconut growing in the west of Apo Ingol's house), *malasom na wahig* (sour water from Binulag na Tubig streams), *salese* (a flower growing in Mt. Apo), and *unang salad ka ulan ka Mayo* (first rain in May); and mixed all these with the oil from the bottle.

Now, they use the oil in their liturgy, usually observed on Sundays and Thursdays. A woman presides the celebration. Only she can see and read the text directly coming from the bottle that contained the oil. The text teaches moral values to the Bagobo. After the readings, the woman answers questions from the participants.

The SSL appeared to be a modification of an ancient Tagabawa religion called *Pamula'k Manobo*, which Apo Ingol ended because it demanded human sacrifices from its believers. The human sacrifices used to be chosen from among the allang (slaves).

But whatever their religion—whether traditional or Christian—the Bagobo believe that Mount Apo is Apo *Sandawa*, using the term “apo” as a form of respect to one in authority. For the Bagobo, Mount Apo, or Apo Sandawa, is a sacred mountain. They believe that this is where *Mandarangan* or the Bagobo warlord, lives. Beside it is a smaller black mountain which the Bagobos call *Sandawangan* or the hat of Manama. Trapped inside Sandawangan is *meybuyan*, an evil spirit whose job is to guard the dead of the underworld. Mount Apo is a volcano but it has not erupted for a long time because the Manama poked his finger into the mountain creating a hole (the crater) to prevent eruption.

Hence, in the late ‘80s and early ‘90s, the Bagobo were among the indigenous peoples who protested against the geothermal project of the Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC) that tapped the geothermal energy from Mt. Apo. The *Philippine Daily Inquirer* reported on its February 29, 1992 issue about 8,000 demonstrators who marched through the main streets of Kidapawan to protest the resumption of operations of the controversial Mount Apo Geothermal Power Project and the alleged militarization of the project site.

The Bagobo’s agriculture system also relates closely with nature. In farming a parcel of land, the Bagobo always take into account the signs of the seasons, the sound of the *alimokon* (turtle dove), and other environment indicators. Today, their cropping calendar starts from January to April. By following this calendar, Bagobo farmers do not deplete the soil. Yet, the once-a-year harvest is large enough to last until the next cropping season. Besides, they also get their food from their swidden farms. Their nature-friendly farming methods and their rites offered to the Manama prolong their lives.

Tagabawa Bagobo call their traditional leader as *matanum*. He is chosen for his leadership qualities. He is also obliged to plant a bamboo seedling in a secluded place, pouring it with a man's blood so that the *Tigbanwa* (the spirit that guides *matanum*), may dwell in it. Another figure in the Bagobo leadership is the *magani* or *bagani*, who takes charge in securing peace and order in their village and in the neighboring communities. When his people is threatened, he defends them up to the last drop of his blood.

But the term "matanum" is no longer used today. Sibulan Baranggay Captain Eric Agus said that influences from some institutions turned the Tagabawa leaders into *datus*, patterned after some Moslem groups.

Today, the Bagobo's own political structure is threatened by the more dominant lowland culture. Only the elders and the older generation remain to practice their old customs and beliefs. The strong influences of the culture of mainstream Filipinos also make it difficult for them to transmit their cultural heritage to the younger generation.

The Bagobo recognize land and education as crucial agents in reviving their culture. Hernan Ambe, a young Bagobo who hails from sitio Cabarizan, envisions an education that will promote the cultural heritage of his people without alienating them from their roots. Another young Bagobo leader, Ines Balido, hopes that the young generation will be more enthusiastic in joining Sandawa Sarili Langis to continue their struggle towards self-determination. She believes that selling their ancestral lands to outsiders should be stopped.





the  
*Manobo*  
of Agusan del Sur



The elders of San Mariano in the town of Loreto, Agusan del Sur agree that even in their forefathers' time, their people have already been called Manobo.

Datu Bantuwasan, Datu Miguel Ago, Datu Mabutang and Datu Roger Habana said their people were the original inhabitants of the towns of San Francisco, Rosario, Bunawan, Veruela, Loreto, La Paz, Talacogon, Sta. Josefa, and Trento in Agusan del Sur. They were the first people of Agusan del Sur, Datu Mandabon of Johnson, Loreto, Agusan del Sur, confirmed.

But from their looks alone, the Agusan Manobo of today can hardly be distinguished from the Visayan settlers. On ordinary days, Manobo men and women wear the same style of clothes that the lowlanders wear. They live in houses whose architectural design and engineering structure resemble those of their Visayan neighbors. They are called by their Christian names, signifying that they have already been baptized in Christian churches. They also speak Visayan so fluently, without a trace of the Manobo accent.

However, while the Manobo may have lost some of their physical signs of being Manobo, they still retain their traditional values and practices. Before the interview for this project, Datu Mabutang conducted the ritual called Taghap to invoke the blessings of the spirits. The ritual also ensured a fruitful sharing and a sound mind among those involved in the research.

The ritual offerings included a white chicken, an egg, rice, a bolo, and betel nut. Each of these ritual offerings meant something: the betel nut to welcome the spirits to enlighten the minds of the researchers and participants; the egg to symbolize purity and innocence; the bolo to signify sharpness of mind and readiness to absorb the information; the rice to symbolize productivity and wisdom; and the chicken and its blood for cleansing and casting out of evil thoughts. During the ceremony, the chicken's neck is slashed and its blood offered to the spirit. The chicken is cooked after the ritual. Afterwards, the Manobo offer a prayer to invite the spirits, bless the chicken and partake of it for supper. It's only after supper that the discussion starts over glasses of *Kulafu* (a commercial wine brand).

The Manobo believe in the presence of the spirits around them; and that these spirits should be recognized and respected. They believe that human beings should maintain a harmonious relationship with these spirits, whether these spirits are good or bad. This particular belief makes the Manobo very respectful of nature.

Datu Mabutang said that lowlanders misconstrue many of the experiences and beliefs of the Manobo as "superstition." But the Manobo always sees these experiences as manifestations of the existence of spirits and they follow their beliefs to guide them.

Datu Mabutang has this story to tell:

“Once, I was with a team of loggers cutting timber in the forest. We were in a wooded area near a stream. Suddenly, a fish caught the attention of one of the cutters. It was as if the fish was inviting to be caught. The man laid his chainsaw down and waded into the stream. While trying to catch the fish, he was hit by a twig which fell off a balete tree. He felt a sudden pain, which started on his hips where the twig fell, and ran through his whole body. The pain was so unbearable that he had to be carried to their camp. They had to stop cutting for the day.

Knowing the cause of the pain, I requested the loggers to procure a pig. When the pig arrived, I placed it on the *halaran*, pierced the pig at the base of its neck, and offered the blood to the spirit, apologizing for the disturbance that the man caused.

After the ritual, the victim slowly recovered.”

The Manobo believe the *alimokon* (turtle dove) to be the messenger of Mother Earth. It warns people of what is to come. The eldest son of Datu Mabutang once failed to listen to the sound of the bird. He continued cutting a tree even if he heard the alimokon caw when he turned on the chainsaw. What happened next almost killed him. The timber fell towards where he was standing. Fortunately, he managed to shift to another place and avoided the falling timber.

Farming is the source of subsistence for the Agusan Manobo. They plant root crops, rice and corn for consumption. Today, cropping season starts in March or April. They conduct rituals for each phase in the course of planting their crops. These rituals include: *pama* to ask permission from the spirits to open a field for farming; *himon to mga duma* when they perceive signs of the spirits' approval; and *taphag* before the actual clearing to invoke the spirits' protection against accidents and to bless the farm implements that will be used. In the morning, the *baliga* or *pabulig* (working together) starts, unity and camaraderie can be felt all throughout among friends and neighbors joining the activity. The *baliga* is done when every farmer in the community maintain a farm of his own. They also work together during harvest. All those who participate in harvesting the crops, and even those who are not there, are given a share.

Another source of subsistence for the Agusan Manobo is fishing. The Agusan River which springs from the Tagugpo Range in Maragusan, Compostela Valley, provides abundant supply of freshwater fish like eel, catfish, mudfish, carp, banak, and tilapia. In the eastern and western portion of the Agusan River lie many swamps and lakes. Datu Kawayanon of San Marcos, Bunawan, Agusan del Sur named 17 of the 27 lakes. They include Bango, Kakabugan, Mandago, Yakpyakohon, Ibdon, Kanawnawan, Manliso, Kangne, Batangon, Kiasaw, Pigkaluyahan and Kalubidan on the right side of the Agusan river; and Mihaba, Kangilit, Tagsubon, Kabuayahan, and Taywanon on the left side. There is also the Agusan Marsh—19,196.6 hectares in all—that is home to 132 species of birds, 14 species of mammals, two species of crocodiles, 22 species of lizards, seven species of snakes, 65 species of butterflies, 47 species of reptiles and amphibians; in a rich vegetation that included 44 species of trees, 27 species of vines and 43 species of herbs and grasses.



But the well-endowed land also brings catastrophe to the Manobo. Declared as the most significant wetland in the Philippines by Presidential Decree No. 913, Agusan Marsh swells during the rainy season that usually lasts from December to March. Even the floods could become an opportunity for the people around the marshland to augment their income during the months when they could not grow crops. During these months, the supply of fish is abundant. The Manobo could row their boats through the Simulaw River to bring their catch to Bunawan for the Visayan compradors to buy. But usually, Manobo fishers lose to the more cunning competitors. In doing this research, the Manobo community organizer Joel Suwan and this researcher were about to board the motorboat that would bring them to the house of Datu Kandibuko by Lake Panlabohan when they were informed that the Manobo leader was in Tagum City. He had to bring one of his community members to the hospital. The man was stabbed when he reprimanded a settler fisherman for using poison for fishing. It was no use that the Manobo communities around the lakes and the marshland had a policy against abusive fishing.

Despite the implementation of such laws as the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA), the Manobo of Agusan have not yet been granted their ancestral domain title. A woman Manobo, Delia Reyes of Loreto, Agusan del Sur said they have organized themselves to claim their rights over their ancestral domain. But they have not received their CADT papers as of this writing. Yet, there are Ilonggo settlers who registered their names among other claimant groups.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Bajo (2004) stressed that the “term ‘Ata’ as used for the indigenous folks in Davao del Norte is different from the term ‘Aeta’ for the indigenous folks in Luzon.”
- <sup>2</sup> Kalahi, which stands for Kapit Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan, is a poverty alleviation project of the government that seeks to provide, among others, housing for the poor.
- <sup>3</sup> The office of the Presidential Assistant on National Minorities (PANAMIN) was created by former President Ferdinand Marcos under Presidential Decree 1414.
- <sup>4</sup> Taken from the field notes of Cynthia Nabayra-Masinaring in her 1998 interview with Bapa Mitin Guisang for their CADT application.
- <sup>5</sup> National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title No. RII-LAA-1005-035. During the writing of this book, this title has not yet been formally awarded to the Dibabawon claimants.
- <sup>6</sup> Tricom (1998) also defined the name *subanen* to mean river dweller. It came from the words *suba* (river) and *nun* (a suffix indicating origin or habitat).
- <sup>7</sup> Tricom (1998) mentioned how the Teduray believe they are related to the Maguindanao because they have descended from the two brothers, Mamalo and Tabunaway.

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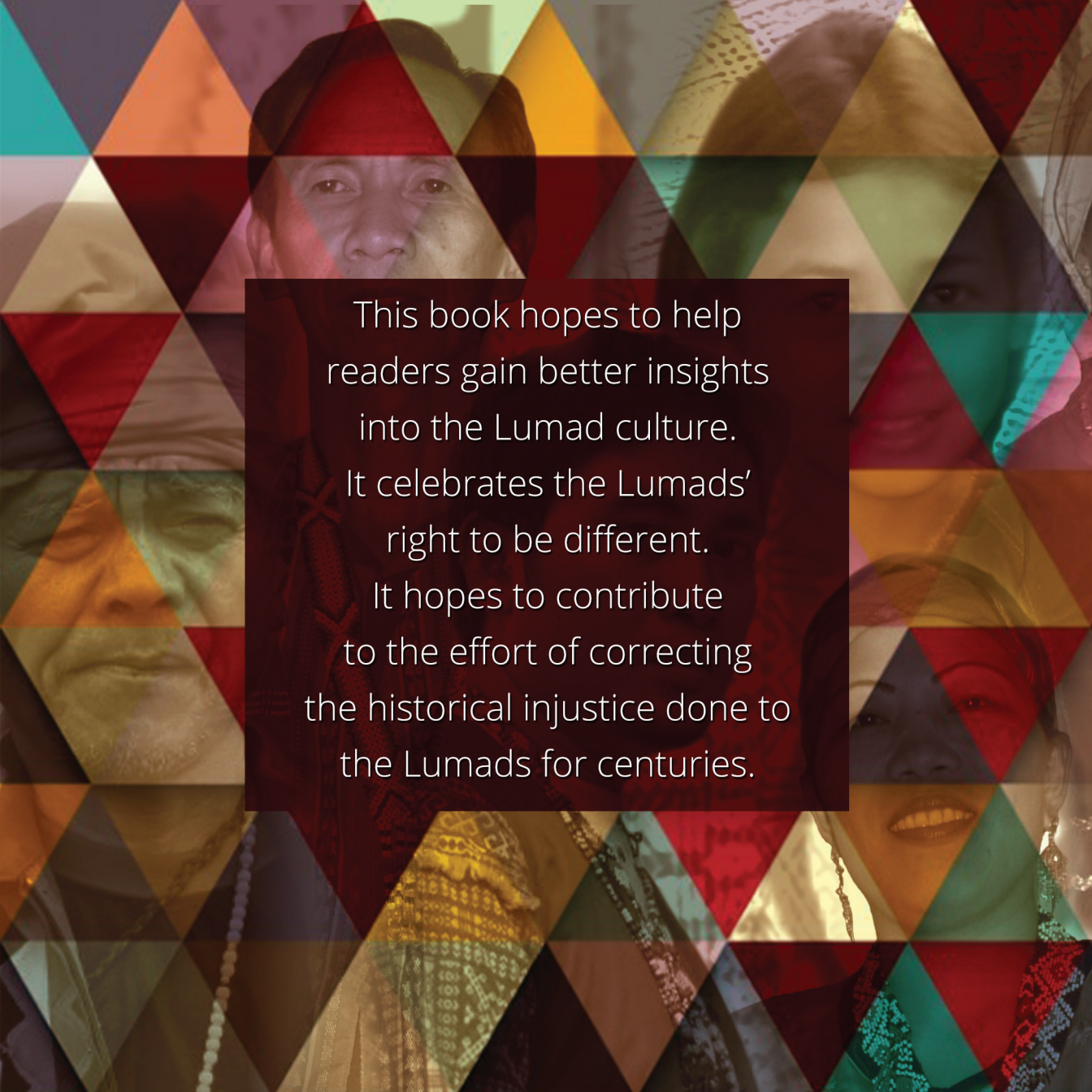
**NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORK**  
**DepED Order No. 62, s. 2011**

**Section 15(g)**

15. *Consistent with DepED's mandate to provide inclusive basic education for all, it shall be the policy of the Department to maintain an education system that will recognize, protect, and promote the rights and welfare of indigenous cultural communities/indigenous peoples ... education interventions are to be developed and implemented in consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples concerned in order to address and incorporate their special needs, histories, identities, languages, knowledge, and other aspects of their culture, as well as their social, economic, and cultural priorities and aspirations. Towards this end, the DepED shall:*

...

- g) ***Implement stronger affirmative action to eradicate all forms of discrimination against indigenous peoples in the entire Philippine educational system.*** *Within the framework of maintaining inclusive and effective learning environments, the DepED shall nurture, among all learners and DepED teaching and non-teaching personnel, respect for human rights and cultural diversity. In line with this policy, all concerned DepED offices and units shall also ensure that textbooks, supplementary learning materials, and other learning resources are free from discriminatory content and erroneous accounts, descriptions, and visual depictions, which misrepresent the history and culture of indigenous peoples or do not adequately acknowledge them. To promote greater awareness and appreciation of the indigenous peoples' cultural heritage and history – an integral, yet often neglected, part of the Philippine nation's cultural heritage and history – these shall be given due recognition and appropriately integrated into the learning content of schools and learning programs.*

The background is a vibrant collage of faces of Lumad people, each rendered in a different color (red, green, yellow, blue, orange, purple). The faces are arranged in a grid-like pattern, with some overlapping. A dark red square is centered over the collage, containing white text.

This book hopes to help readers gain better insights into the Lumad culture. It celebrates the Lumads' right to be different. It hopes to contribute to the effort of correcting the historical injustice done to the Lumads for centuries.