

The Maguindanao, literally, “people of the flood plains,” occupy the basin of the Pulangi River. The southern fork of the river flows towards Illana Bay. In the past the Maguindanao settled along the banks and in the valley regions of the river. Today they are found in several provinces. In Maguindanao province, which accounts for 76 percent of the total Maguindanao population, they are settled in Barira, Buldon, Parang, Sultan Kudarat, Kabuntalan, Dindig, North Upi, Matanog, Cotabato City, Buluan, Datu Panglas, Pagalungan, Ampatuan, Maganoy, Datu Piang, Talayan, Sultan sa Barongis, General Salipada Pendatun, and South Upi. In Cotabato province, they are found in Pikit and Kabacan. In Sultan Kudarat province, they live in Lebak, Palembang, and Kalamansig, all coastal towns. In 1988 the Maguindanao population numbered approximately 500,000 (Peralta 1988:7).

The Maguindanao language is part of a subgroup of languages called the “Danao languages.” The subgroup includes Maranao, spoken in the Lanao provinces; Ilanun (also Ilanun or Iranun), spoken by a group of sea-based people between Lanao and Maguindanao; and Maguindanao, mainly spoken in Maguindanao, Cotabato, and Sultan Kudarat (McFarland 1983: 96).

## **History**

In the early 15th century, Sharif Muhammad Kabungsuan, an Arab-Malay preacher from the royal house of Malacca, arrived in what is now Malabang, introduced Islamic faith and customs, settled down with a local princess, and founded a sultanate whose capital was Maguindanao. The other center of power in the area, Buayan, has an even longer history dating back to early Arab missionaries, who, although not able to implant the Islamic faith, introduced a more sophisticated form of political system. In Buayan, the transition to Islam took a longer time (Ileto 1971:3).

Spanish chronicles reveal that Buayan, and not Maguindanao, was the most important settlement in Mindanao at that time. In 1579 an expedition sent by Governor General Francisco de Sande failed to conquer Maguindanao. In 1596 the Spanish government gave Captain Rodriguez de Figueroa the sole right to colonize Mindanao. He met defeat in Buayan, and later, was killed in an ambush by a Buhahayen named Ubal. His forces retreated to an anchorage near Zamboanga (Angeles 1974:27-28; Ileto 1971:4).

The rise of the Maguindanao came after the defeat of Datu Sirongan of Buayan in 1606. From 1607 to 1635, new military alliances were formed. By the 1630s Maguindanao had become a coastal power (Ileto 1971:5).

In the early 17th century, the largest alliance composed of the Maguindanao, Maranao, Tausug, and other Muslim groups was formed by Sultan Kudarat or Cachil Corralat of Maguindanao, whose domain extended from the Davao Gulf to

Dapitan on the Zamboanga peninsula. Several expeditions sent by the Spanish authorities suffered defeat. In 1635 Captain Juan de Chaves occupied Zamboanga and erected a fort. This led to the defeat of Kudarat's feared admiral, Datu Tagal, who had raided pueblos in the Visayas. In 1637 Governor General Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera personally led an expedition against Kudarat, and triumphed over his forces at Lamitan and Ilian. Spanish presence was withdrawn in 1663, providing an opportunity for Kudarat to reconsolidate his forces. From 1663 to 1718, Maguindanao influence extended as far as Zamboanga in the west, Cagayan de Oro in the north, Sarangani in the south, and Davao in the east. In 1719 the Spaniards reestablished control with the building of the strategic Fort Pilar in Zamboanga (Miravite 1976:40; Angeles 1974:28; *Darangen* 1980:42-45).

The 1730s saw the weakening of the Maguindanao sultanate, as it struggled with civil war and internal disunity. Spanish help was sought by the besieged *rajah mudah* (crown prince), further destroying the prestige of the sultanate. Thus, Maguindanao power became increasingly dependent on Spanish support (Ileto 1971:11-15).

This deepening compromise with Spain led Maguindanao to its downfall. Fearing Buayan's reemerging power, Sultan Kudarat II finally ceded Maguindanao to Spain in return for an annual pension of 1,000 pesos for him, and 800 pesos for his son. Buayan, under Datu Uto, had, by the 1860s, become the power of Maguindanao. In 1887 General Emilio Terrero led an expedition against Uto; although, he was able to destroy the *kota* (forts) in Cotabato, he was unable to enforce Spanish sovereignty (Miravite 1976:42; Ileto 1971:16-29).

In 1891 Governor General Valeriano Weyler personally led a campaign against the Maguindanao and Maranao. In the next few months, Weyler erected a fort at Parang-Parang, between Pulangi and the Ilanun coast. This effectively stopped the shipment of arms to Uto, who died a defeated man in 1902 (Miravite 1976:42; Ileto 1971:94-95).

During the Philippine-American War, the Americans adopted a policy of noninterference in the Muslim areas, as spelled out in the Bates Agreement of 1899 signed by Brigadier General John Bates and Sultan Jamalul Kiram II of Jolo. The agreement was a mutual nonaggression pact which obligated the Americans to recognize the authority of the Sultan and other chiefs who, in turn, agreed to fight piracy and crimes against Christians. However, the Muslims did not know that the Treaty of Paris, which had ceded the Philippine archipelago to the Americans, included their land as well.

After the Philippine-American War, the Americans established direct rule over the newly formed "Moro Province," which then consisted of five districts: Zamboanga, Lanao, Cotabato, Davao, and Sulu. Political, social, and economic changes were introduced. These included the creation of provincial and district institutions; the introduction of the public school system and American-inspired

judicial system; the imposition of the *cedula* (head tax); the migration of Christians to Muslim lands encouraged by the colonial government; and the abolition of slavery. Datu Ali of Kudarangan, Cotabato refused to comply with the antislavery legislation, and revolted against the Americans. In October 1905 he and his men were killed (Che Man 1990:23, 47-49).

The Department of Mindanao and Sulu replaced the Moro Province on 15 December 1913. A “policy of attraction” was introduced, ushering reforms to encourage Muslim integration into Philippine society. In 1916, after the passage of the Jones Law, which transferred legislative power to a Philippine Senate and House of Representatives, polygyny was made illegal. However, the Muslims were granted time to comply with the new restrictions. “Proxy colonialism” was legalized by the Public Land Act of 1919, invalidating Muslim *Pusaka* (inherited property) laws. The act also granted the state the right to confer land ownership. It was thought that the Muslims would “learn” from the “more advanced” Christian Filipinos, and would integrate more easily into mainstream Philippine society (Che Man 1990:23-24, 51-52; Isidro 1976:64-65).

In February 1920, the Philippine Senate and House of Representatives passed Act No. 2878, which abolished the Department of Mindanao and Sulu and transferred its responsibilities to the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes under the Department of the Interior. Muslim dissatisfaction grew as power shifted to the Christianized Filipinos; it was one thing to be administered by the militarily superior Americans, and another by their traditional enemies, the Christian Filipinos. Petitions were sent by Muslim leaders in 1921 and 1924 requesting that Mindanao and Sulu be administered directly by the United States. These petitions were not granted. Isolated cases of armed resistance were quickly crushed. In 1912, for example, Datu Alamada resisted American rule after Datu Ali was killed. In Cotabato, Datu Ambang of Kidapawan attempted to incite a *jihad* (holy war) against the Americans and the Christian Filipinos. This, however, did not take place when the governor of the province mobilized government forces (Che Man 1990:52-53).

Realizing the futility of armed resistance, some Muslims sought to make the best of the situation. In 1934, Arolas Tulawi of Sulu, Datu Menandang Pang and Datu Blah Sinsuat of Cotabato, and Sultan Alaoya Alonto of Lanao were elected to the 1935 Constitutional Convention. In 1935, only two Muslims were elected into the National Assembly.

The Commonwealth years sought to end the privileges the Muslims had been enjoying under the earlier American administration. Muslim exemptions from some national laws, as expressed in the Administrative Code for Mindanao and the Muslim right to use their traditional Islamic courts were ended. The Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes was replaced by the Office of the Commissioner for Mindanao and Sulu, whose main objective was to tap the full economic potentials of Mindanao not for the Muslims but for the Commonwealth. These “development” efforts resulted in discontent which found expression in the various armed uprisings,

mostly in Lanao, from 1936 to 1941 (Che Man 1990:55-56).

The Muslims are generally adverse to anything that threatens Islam and their way of life. Che Man (1990:56) believes that they were neither anti-American nor anti-Filipino, but simply against any form of foreign encroachment into their traditional way of life. During World War II, the Muslims in general supported the fight against the Japanese, who were less tolerant and harsher to them than the Manila government.

After independence, efforts to integrate the Muslims into the new political order met with stiff resistance. It was unlikely that the Muslims, who have had a longer cultural history as Muslims than the Christian Filipinos as Christians, would surrender their identity. The conflict was exacerbated in 1965 with the “Jabidah Massacre,” in which Muslim soldiers were allegedly eliminated because they refused to invade Sabah. This incident contributed to the rise of various separatist movements: the Muslim Independence Movement (MIM), Ansar el-Islam, and Union of Islamic Forces and Organizations (Che Man 1990:56-62, 74-75).

In 1969 the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) was founded on the concept of a Bangsa Moro Republic by a group of educated young Muslims. The leader of this group, Nur Misuari, regarded the earlier movements as feudal and oppressive, and employed a Marxist framework to analyze the Muslim condition and the general Philippine situation (Tan 1977:118-122; Che Man 1990:77-78).

In 1976, negotiations between the Philippine government and the MNLF in Tripoli resulted in the Tripoli Agreement, which provided for an autonomous region in Mindanao. Negotiations resumed in 1977, and the following points were agreed upon: the proclamation of a Presidential Decree creating autonomy in 13 provinces; the creation of a provisional government; and the holding of a referendum in the autonomous areas to determine the administration of the government. Nur Misuari was invited to chair the provisional government but he refused. The referendum was boycotted by the Muslims themselves. The talks collapsed, and fighting continued (Che Man 1990:146-147).

When Corazon C. Aquino became president, a new constitution, which provided for the creation of autonomous regions in Mindanao and the Cordilleras, was ratified. On 1 August 1989, Republic Act 673 or the Organic Act for Mindanao created the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), which encompasses Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi.

## **Economy**

The Maguindanao are traders, farmers, and fisherfolks. They produce and sell brassware, trays, urns, and other native crafts. Those who own land, like the affluent *datu*, hire tenants to farm their plantations. The region’s economic

development has remained at a virtual standstill. About half of the urban families belong to the middle-income range, with the rest belonging to varying degrees of poverty. Trained labor, e.g., agricultural technicians, is scarce in the region, and this is exacerbated by the low wages. Unemployment is high. Due to the lack of market information, entrepreneurial activity in the region is limited (*Darangen* 1980:20, 126-127).

The excellent climate of the region makes farming a dominant economic activity. Rice, corn, and mungo are the main crops. Modern irrigation systems have systematized rice production, which is harvested two to three times a year. However, low-scale agriculturists still adhere to traditional farming methods (Glang et al. 1978:19).

Fishing is another important economic activity. In 1977 the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources counted a total of 17,067 municipal fisherfolk with 11,895 *bancas* from 38 towns and 436 barrios located along the sea coasts (Simeon 1977:62).

## **Political System**

A feature of Maguindanao social and political life is the system of *maratabat* (social ranking). In the past, distinctions were made between datu (nobles), *sakop* (free people), and *ulipun* (slaves). The Maguindanao described the *maratabat* in numerical terms: 1,000 sultan and datu or members of the royal lineage; 700 *dumatu* or lesser nobles; 500 *sakop*; and 300 *ulipun* or servants. The "O" rank was given to those outside the system and to the *banyaga* (chattel slaves). Today, classes include the datu, the *sakop*, and indentured free people or servants, who are mostly descendants of the *ulipun* (Stewart 1981:111-113).

Through *salsila* or written genealogies, the sultan and datu trace their ancestry to Sharif Kabungsuwan, himself believed to be a descendent of the Prophet Muhammad. The *dumatu* or lesser nobles are generally believed to be the descendants of Tabunaway, the younger brother of Kabungsuwan, who was supposed to have given up his sovereignty in favor of his older brother in return for privileges for his children. Others opine that the *dumatu*, who are called *bala bansa* (tainted rank), may have been members of the datu class who lost rank through, among other reasons, intermarriage with people of other ranks. The more common meaning of *sakop* is "follower," although the term is used nowadays to refer to free people who owe allegiance to a specific datu. Other names include *tinaua*, *timagua*, or *kanakan*. Their relationship with the datu is built on free consent and involves reciprocal obligations. As commoners, they have no claims to titles. A free person sentenced to a term of work service because of a criminal offense or indebtedness is called an *ulipun*, the rank being temporary. In cases of unfulfilled indebtedness, however, it may be inherited by the succeeding generations. Some impoverished *sakop* may sometimes willingly assume this rank

in exchange for the economic security involved, or as an exchange for the datu's future patronage (Stewart 1981:113-115).

Che Man (1990:116-124) categorizes Muslim leadership today into three groups: traditional, secular, and religious. The sultan, datu, and other aristocrats, who together constitute the traditional elite, continue to wield influence in Maguindanao society. Although stripped of temporal power, they are nevertheless seen as symbolizing Islam and *adat* (customary law). The highly educated professionals such as academicians, lawyers, doctors, engineers, and others, belong to the secular elite. Because of their education, they are able to exercise considerable influence. The religious elite consists of the *imam* (priest), *kali* (religious judge), religious teachers, and pious men. Most holders of government positions (regional, provincial, and municipal) belong to one or a combination of these elite groups.

Mednick (1975) claims that the national system has had varied effects on the traditional political structure. At the local level, the role of the mayor is given to those who can deliver votes for the dominant political party, maintain peace and order, and advise provincial and national authorities on municipal matters. The traditional sultan or datu often assumes this role, and in effect becomes the most powerful sultan in the area. However, national policies are rarely put into effect; and the sultan-mayor who implements national programs becomes unpopular. For example, tax collection is not well enforced; this has led to a deterioration in basic services.

By virtue of Republic Act 673 or the Organic Act for Mindanao, the provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi now comprise an autonomous region.

### **Social Organization and Customs**

The Maguindanao use the following terms of kinship: *mangaluks* (parents), *ama* (father), *ina* (mother), *manga wata* (children), *wata a mama* (son), *wata a babai* (daughter), *kaka wata* (oldest child), *ali a watalbungso* (youngest child), *geget* (cousin), *pakiwataan* (nephew/niece), *apo* (grandchild), *panugangan* (parents-in-law), *panugangan na mama* (father-in-law), *panugangan na babai* (mother-in-law), *manugang* (children-in-law), *manugang na mama* (son-in-law), *manugang na babai* (daughter-in-law), *ipag na mama* (brother-in-law), *ipag na babai* (sister-in-law), *pataliluan* (adopted child), *geget/suled* (relatives in general) (Llamzon 1978).

The social and religious life of the Maguindanao is reflected in the customs and rites attending their life cycle.

The Maguindanao believe that conception takes place after *pendulong* or *pagubay*

(sexual contact), and after the disappearance of the *basa* (menstrual flow). A native *walian* (priestess) is then consulted to verify the woman's condition. During pregnancy, the wife becomes more easily irritated and begins to crave for fruits and other types of food. Fruits are usually picked with the utmost care lest they fall and foreshadow a miscarriage. Certain social behaviors are also observed. The couple must see all good things in others. Her criticisms of others' faults may register the same on her child. She must avoid unusually shaped food to prevent deformities in the child. A ceremony called *pelekatsa lantay* is usually performed by the *walian* to ensure the safe delivery of the child (Glang et al. 1978:25).

During delivery, a piece of sharpened *bacayawan* bamboo is employed to cut the umbilical cord. Before disposing of the *inayanan* (placenta), the *walian* fills it with cold water and then empties it; this is believed to temper the child's actions when he/she gets older. More importantly perhaps, the water inside the placenta is believed to fill the child's life with success. On the seventh day, the local imam baptizes the child in a ceremony called *pedtabungawan* which includes the dyeing of the baby's hair and dipping it in a basin filled with water (Glang et al. 1978:27).

Upon reaching the age of five, both male and female children undergo *pag-Islam* (circumcision), a religious requirement. During childhood, the child is left to play with his/her peers. As soon as the child reaches his/her teens, he is called a *bago a mama*, if male, and *bago a babai*, if female (Glang et al. 1978:27).

Male pubescence is marked by hair growth on various parts of the body, the increase in height, a growing interest in the opposite sex, and other physical, psychological, and social changes. Among the girls, the first menstrual flow indicates the onset of adolescence after which she is called an *akilbalig*. There are, however, social rules to follow. For instance, visiting an unaccompanied girl is prohibited and is punishable by a fine (Glang et al. 1978:29).

The aim of traditional courtship is to establish a good relationship with the girl's family. The boy visits the girl and does chores for her family. The boy's intentions are declared by his family and arrangements are made to explore the possibility of marriage in a meeting called *salangguni*. Various topics are discussed—qualifications, the *sunggod* (bride-price), the *samaya* (fulfillment of a promise made for a wish granted), the wedding date, site, and procedures. If the girl's parents refuse the match, the case can be settled by the *datu*. If premarital sex occurs and the girl decides to live with the boy, the act is called *paguli*. If marriage is then arranged, the bride-price is diminished (Glang et al. 1978:31).

After the *salangguni*, the *kawa* (approximately 10 percent of the *sunggod*) is given to all mediators of the marriage as tokens of gratitude. After this agreement, the girl is considered engaged, her consent notwithstanding. The *enggulaña* (wedding) then takes place. While the groom is being attired, his female relatives go over to the bride's place to help her dress; they have to pay the *bungkal sa bilik* (guard of the room) in order to see her.

Led by the *pedsagayan* (native dancer) and a procession, the groom goes over to the bride's place, followed by the *unta* (a carabaolike structure manipulated by a person), and a group of people. In order to enter the bride's house, the groom has to pay the *lenan* (dowry) to the persons assigned to collect it. After the bride is fully dressed, she is accompanied to the marriage ceremony called *kagkawing*. During the ceremony, the groom sits away from the bride. The groom is required to perform the ritual ablution to purify himself, after which, the imam holds his hands while prayers are recited. The groom goes around the bride three times, and places his hands on the woman's head. This is the *pedsampay*, the solemnization of the marriage. Usually not well acquainted with his bride, the groom performs the *panguyao* (courtship) to woo her to perform her marital functions. An interesting practice among the Maguindanao is the foretelling of married life on the dining table. The groom is led to a piece of cooked and cut chicken which still looks whole. He is asked to pick a piece. If he picks the head, this is believed to signify that his own family will be successful, if he picks the feet, his own family will have no direction or *labet* (Glang et al. 1978:31-32).

Islamic and indigenous beliefs define the death and burial practices of the Maguindanao. When a member of the family dies, not much weeping is done. The corpse is cleaned and wrapped in a white cloth. It is then buried in a *tarking* (grave) about 1.8 meters deep, which is then covered with soil. Because of the belief in the resurrection, the top is not cemented. Pouring of water over the tarking completes the burial. *Pandiaga* or activities related to consoling the bereaved family take place after the burial; these are made on the following days after death: 3 days, 7 days, 20 days, 40 days, 50 days, 100 days, and on the death anniversary. When a family member dreams about the departed, the *pabatian* or celebration in memory of the dead is held (Glang et al. 1978:32-33). **Religious Beliefs and Practices**

Most Maguindanao follow standard Islamic beliefs and practices. The Quran is considered by all Muslims as the words of Allah (God), revealed to Prophet Muhammad through Archangel Gabriel, and as the source of all Islamic principles. Aside from the Quran, other Islamic sources of law include the Sunnah or Hadith (literally, "a way, a rule, a manner of acting") which recounts the deeds and sayings of Prophet Muhammad; and the Ijma and Iftinad, a revisable collection of the opinions of Islamic jurists. The Maguindanao believe in the six articles of the Islamic faith: (1) belief in the oneness of Allah; (2) belief in the angels of Allah; (3) belief in the books of Allah; (4) belief in all the prophets of Allah; (5) belief in the judgment day; and (6) belief that the power of good deeds comes from Allah alone.

The Five Pillars of Islam are faith in one God and the four obligations of praying, almsgiving, fasting, and pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in one's lifetime. The concept of jihad or natural right to self-defense finds expression in the holy wars of defense when Muslim land and religion are threatened. Warriors of jihad are guaranteed a place in *sorga* (heaven). The Muslims believe that the world divides



into two spheres—Dar-ar-Islam (Islamic Sphere) and Dar-ar-Harb (non-Islamic Sphere). The first subdivides into four territories: forbidden, namely Mecca and Medina; reserve, namely Iraq, Syria, the Arabian Peninsula, Iran, Egypt, Afghanistan, and other areas controlled by Muslims; canonical, where Muslims are allowed to practice their faith in a non-Islamic country like the Philippines; and irredentist, of which Muslims had control until they were forced out, e.g., Spain and Israel (Isidro 1976:46-52).

Although Islamic influence on the Maguindanao is supposedly deep, their religious culture has tended towards “folk Islam,” which has governed much of their ethics, politics, and social behavior. Alongside the Islamic beliefs, indigenous religious systems survive. There is the belief in evil spirits and devotion to gentler ones. Belief in magic provides the Maguindanao with security in the face of immediate danger (Glang et al. 1978:35-37). As early as the 17th century, the Englishman Thomas Forrest, noted that just as Islamic practices like circumcision are prevalent, indigenous practices like filing and blackening one’s teeth as acts of socioreligious devotion were still followed.

### **Architecture and Community Planning**

The town of Cotabato represents a cosmopolitan mixture with the Muslims no longer the predominant group. The earliest Christian settlers, the Zamboanguenos, are concentrated on the riverfront along the west side of town. Later Christian settlers are scattered throughout the better residential areas. The Chinese occupy flats above their stores in the business district. The majority of the Maguindanao live close by the river in villages and towns on the outskirts (Dacanay 1988:86).

The traditional Maguindanao houses are usually made of nipa and galvanized sheet roofing with bamboo wood for wallings and floors. The one-story structure is partitioned into various “rooms.” A ladder is used to ascend to the house (Dacanay 1988:86). Interesting features include the *okir* (carved) decorations, the steep and graceful roofs, the solid construction, the indigenous ornaments, the concern for ventilation, and the concept of space.

Today’s houses incorporate all these features but include modern materials such as well-galvanized steel, aluminum sheets, and glass.

While the general features of Philippine mosques approximate the traditional Islamic type of mosque, some of its elements are peculiar to the country. The *sahn* or wide enclosed courtyard, for example, is generally absent; instead, benches are provided outside the mosque where people may sit and talk while waiting for the next prayer. Also the *mimbar* or elevated pulpit is not as high as those of Africa and Western Asia. An elevated platform, a chair or any similar structure could take the place of the *mimbar* in some mosques.

Furthermore, the call to prayer was usually done until recently not on tall minarets but inside the mosques as in Indonesia. Suspended drums called variously the *tabo*, *jabu-jabu*, or *dabu-dabu*, are beaten to call the people to the mosque. Great care, however, is taken so that the sound of the drums in one mosque is not heard in nearby mosques; the same care is observed with respect to congregational prayers. While minarets may be present in Philippine mosques, they are usually not functional. The *bilal* (one who calls the prayers) may simply stand in the *mihrab*, found in the *qibla* or wall that faces Mecca, and call the *azan* there, with the help of a microphone and loudspeakers mounted on the domes or minarets, and traditionally with the beating of drums.

An interesting feature too of Philippine mosques is the almost ubiquitous presence of the crescent and star ornament on top of many graceful domes all over the land. The use of *okir* and the *burrak* (a mythical winged creature, half-human, half-horse) and other motifs in highly colorful designs are also local adaptations.

The *masjid* was originally a three-tiered bamboo or wooden structure similar to a Chinese or Japanese pagoda or a Balinese temple, a pattern also common in Indonesia and the Malay peninsula. Later on, a second style developed, which is the more familiar onion-shaped dome on squinches set over a carpeted square or rectangular hall that can accommodate at least 40 or 44 people at any given time, as in the case of Sulu. Perhaps this style emerged as a result of seeing Middle East mosques in the course of the Mecca pilgrimages.

Prominent contemporary structures in Cotabato are the Legislative Assembly Session Hall and the mosque. The first is a concrete edifice with a flaring triangular roof in the front, covering the reception area. At the peak of the roof, there rises a “tower” that resembles a *lamin* (a structure that served as hideaway for the sultan’s daughter). Also made of concrete, the white Cotabato mosque is topped by an onion-shaped dome, which also crowns a tower rising at the back of the building.

## Visual Arts and Crafts

As Muslim lowlanders, the Maguindanao possess a strong weaving and carving tradition (Casal et al. 1981). As with all other Muslim groups, the Maguindanao are prohibited from representing animal or human forms in art. This led to the development of an abstract form of artistic representation in Maguindanao carvings and textiles. These designs are also carved on the weaponry and musical instruments of the Maguindanao. For example the *birdo* (vine) motif usually embellishes the musical instrument called *kutyapi* (see logo of this article), which may be shaped like a mythical animal resembling a crocodile (*Darangen* 1980:112-113).

A typical Maguindanao blade is the *kampilan*, usually handled with both hands,

and used for cutting off heads or splitting the body from top to toe. The handle of the *kampilan* features the *naga* (“S”-shaped abstraction of a mythical serpent) in the form of a gaping mouth. The head above the mouth is usually adorned with reddish fibers, turning the handle into a manelike figure (Lane 1986:177).

*Oulan* (weaving) is traditionally done on a very simple backstrap loom. The process involves the methodical interlacing of warp and weft threads. The warp yarns or “verticals” are spread between two bars, one of which—the cloth bar—is fastened to the waist of the weaver by a string. The other bar—the warp bar—is affixed to a small tree, a post, or a wall. To apply tension on the warp, the weaver leans against the backstrap as she generates pressure against a piece of wood in front of her outstretched legs. The weft threads or “horizontal” are rolled inside a shuttle, which is passed, back and forth, through the warp openings. Additional decorations are made through supplementary warps and wefts inlaid over the basic matrix. The Maguindanao *batek* (color) and design process is basically resist-dyeing, the assumption being that uncontrolled color spread can be resisted by binding, knotting, stitching, or applying wax or paste to parts of the yarn. The technique produces the desired pattern, design, or motif (Casal et al. 1981: 130-132).

The Maguindanao *malong* (tubular skirt) displays more commonly the ikat (literally, “to tie”) design. Before weaving, the warp or weft or both yarns are secured with waxed threads. One common ikat design is the eight-pointed star, which is reminiscent of the “radiating core” motif (Casal et al. 1981:132-134).

Silver-inlaid *lutuan* (betel boxes), *gadur* (jarlike containers), and *panalagudan* (pot holders) epitomize Muslim brassware. Indicating wealth and status, these objects decorate the affluent Maguindanao home. The *gadur* come in pairs and are dignified objects with minaretlike tops. They are profuse with silver-inlaid scrolls and various geometric shapes. Betel boxes come in sets of four or at least have four compartments to accommodate the four betel chew: *bunga* (areta nut), *buyo* (fresh pepper leaves), *apug* (lime powder), and damp tobacco leaves. These brassware usually have either silver or white-metal inlay, and are ornamented with okir designs (Casal et al. 1981: 155)

Other metalcraft adorned with okir motifs are the *sundang* (sword), the *gulok* (knife), the *panabas* (long knife), the *dilek* (spear), the *badung*, the kris and the *bongalambot*, the hair clip worn by female royalty (Glang et al 1978:15).

The *baluyan* (carrying baskets) found in Maguindanao are usually open plaited with a cover and a handle, and are generally made of bamboo with some nito trims. Other basketry include the *salakot*, an example of which is the *tapisan* hat made of finely split soft-strip bamboo over a coarser bamboo frame. Indigenous designs are added either by changing one-over-one weaving to extended twill patterns, or by introducing into trims or smoked bamboo a contrast to the natural. The *tapisan* hat is worn over a turban. Another type of hat is the *binalono salakot*

made of finely woven reed, which, sewn together with thread, is shaped into a dome. A coconut shell and a piece of carved wood top the hat. Like the tapisan, the binalono salakot is worn over a turban.

The Maguindanao have recently developed their own mats, which are circular in shape and made from seagrass. Colors used are red, green, and blue. These mats measure 180 centimeters in diameter. Other types of basketry made from seagrass include colorful small containers—round or square—with covers and handles, and fans (Lane 1986:183-187).

Maguindanao *kadyun* (pottery or earthenware) include the *kuden* (cooking pot for rice and viands), the *lakub* (vessel covers), the *paso* (tub for washing rice and vegetables), the *buyon* (drinking water jar), the *kararo* (small drinking water jar), the *tampad* (jar for storing water or salt), the *baing* (open front jar for parching coffee or grains), the *simpì* (a covered *bibingka* or rice cake baking pan), the *dapurán* (elongated, floored stove), the *sinokuran* (steamer pot), the *binangka* (a buyonlike jar but with decorated shoulder), the *pamu-mulan* (flower pot), the *torsian* (coffee pot), the *ititi* (tobacco jar), the *tutugan* (square ember holder), and the *lagan* (cooking pot for fish) (Scheans 1977:74-75).

Maguindanao pottery is made mainly through the “turn-modeling” technique, where a turntable, as well as a paddle, an anvil, and a broken rim, are used to mold and shape the pottery (Jose-de la Cruz 1982:8-9).

## Literary Arts

The literary elements of the Maguindanao include folk speech and folk narratives. The folk speech is expressed in the *antuka/pantuka/paakenala* (riddles) and *bayok* (lyric poems), while the narratives may be divided into the Islamic and the folk traditions. The Islamic includes the Quran; the *salsila* or *tarsila* or genealogical narratives; the *luwaran*, an embodiment of customary laws; *Hadith* or sayings of the Prophet; the *quiza* or religious stories. The folk tradition comprises the *tudtul* (folktales), and the epics: *Raja Indarapatra*, *Darangen*, and *Raja Madaya*.

For the Maguindanao, riddles promote friendship in a group. They are also tools for basic pedagogy. The structure of a Maguindanao riddle consists of an image and a subject. There are four types of image: comparative, descriptive, puns or puzzles, and narrative. The Maguindanao believe in a basic unity underlying the various aspects of the environment, and this belief is reflected in the use of often conflicting image and subject in the riddles (*Notre Dame Journal* 1980:17).

Riddling involves a group of people, one of which is the riddler. If one volunteers to be a riddler, he/she has to have a riddle ready or else be subject to *dtapulung* (ridicule), which is given not as a criticism but as part of the riddling tradition. The Maguindanao consider bad riddlers as those who add to or subtract from the

“original” text of the riddle. Riddling can take place anytime and anywhere as long as there is some form of group activity in progress; it can be done during work or recreation or both.

Ambiguities of answers can be settled by an old man or somebody who is respected in the village. In this sense, riddles allow a certain flexibility in their solutions; that is, they point to various logically possible solutions, thus providing some form of basic pedagogy. An example of this would be:

*Entuden, niaden*

It is here, it is there. (Wind)

There are, however, other possible answers: cradle, for example. Riddles also represent the world view of the Maguindanao. For example:

Cannibal in the forest,

that eats only a head. (Hat)

Although cannibals and hats do not share anything in common, they are reconciled with the use of metaphors such as: “that eats only heads.”

Other beliefs involving riddling is that it should not be done at night, so as not to invite the participation of evil spirits. Another belief associated with riddling at night is the avoidance of the word *nipai* (snake). If the use of the word cannot be avoided, euphemisms are resorted to, e.g., “big worm” (*Notre Dame Journal* 1980:20-25).

Maguindanao verses are expressed through such forms as the *ida-ida a rata* (children rhymes sung in chorus), or through the *tubud-tubud* (short love poem). For instance:

*Pupulayog sa papas ka pumagapas apas  
Ka tulakin kon ko banog  
Na diron pukatalakin  
Ka daon kasakriti.*

*Kanogon si kanogon nakanogon ni ladan ko  
A pukurasai mamikir a ana palandong a dar  
Na di akun mapkangud a bologang ko sa gugao  
Ka Oman akun ipantao na pusulakan a ig  
O matao kandalia.*

Flying hard, the swift is  
Trying to catch up with the hawk  
But he cannot equal him  
Because he is far too small.

Woe, woe unto me  
Worried, thinking of a loved one  
And I cannot let my feelings prevail,  
    express my love  
Because everytime I want to reveal it  
Water gets in its way.

Composed in metaphorical language, the bayok is resorted to when a cautious and euphemistic expression is required. An example (Wein 1983:35-36):

*Salangkunai a meling  
A malidu bpagimanen,  
Ka mulaun sa dibenal  
Dun-dun ai lumaging  
A paya pagilemuan  
Ka mumbus sa hakadulat  
Na u saken idumanding  
Sa kaludn pun na is  
na matag aku 'ngka maneg  
di ku mawatang galing.*

Talking Salangkunai  
T'is  
hard to trust in you,  
For untrue leaves could sprout  
Dun  
-dun fond of chatting  
T'is hard believing you  
For  
cheating buds may show  
Once I [start to] fondle  
From the sea  
You would just hear from me  
My darling, close to me

Salsilas or tarsilas are family heirlooms that trace one's line of descent; they are used to ascertain noble lineages that may go back to the days of Kabungsuwan. For example, a tarsila recounts the adventures of Datu Guimba who leads the first group of Maguindanao to Labangan. According to the account, he marries the local princess Bai-alibabai and adopts the title Datu sa Labangan. The next to arrive at Labangan is Datu Buyan Makasosa Kanapia, an adventurer, who marries a Maranao. Together, Datu Guimba and Kanapia rule Labangan. Other datu arrive in time, namely: Datu Maulona Taup Consi and Datu Canao Sultan Maputi (Alfanta 1975-1976:4-5).

The Maguindanao Luwaran is a set of encoded adat laws that deal with murder, theft, and adultery, as well as with inheritance and trade. The laws apply to all regardless of class, and has since become the basis of modern Islamic jurisprudence (*Darangen* 1980:33).

The Hadith are the sayings and practices of the prophet Muhammad, collected, compiled, and authenticated by Islamic scholars. Hadith constitute one of the sources for Islamic law and jurisprudence. They are also used to explain and clarify certain points in the Quran. The language used is Arabic.

Religious quiza are stories written in Arabic, and are used by the imam to teach Islam to children. An example is the "Izra-wal-Miraj," which tells the story of why Muslims pray five times a day. The Prophet Muhammad is awakened one night by the angel Diaba-rail. The Prophet then rides on a burrak and travels to Masjid-el-Agsa in Jerusalem, where he sees a bright light that leads to heaven. Each layer of heaven has a different color. On the seventh layer, he hears the voice of God, and sees heaven and hell. On the way down, he is instructed by Moses to ask God that the number of prayers be reduced from 50 to 5 times daily. His request is granted.

Maguindanao tudtul are short stories involving simple events. Two examples are presented.

The "Lagya Kudarat" tells the adventures of the two children of *Lagya* (rajah) Mampalai of Lum who are blown away after Mampalai laments the lack of viable partners for his children. These two children are Lagya Kudarat and *Puteli* (princess) Sittie Kumala. Puteli Kumala is blown to a forest where she meets a *kabayan* (in all Maguindanao stories, this character is associated with an old unmarried woman). The kabayan adopts her, as she earlier did the prince named Sumedsen sa Alungan. Although Kumala and Sumedsen live in the same house, they never speak to each other. Later, because of peeping toms, Kumala leaves and Sumedsen goes with her. They find their way to Lum, where a happy reunion takes place. Sumedsen eventually marries Kumala. Meanwhile, Lagya Kudarat is blown to Kabulawanan. There he meets another kabayan who allows him to live with her. One day while hunting, Kudarat hears the game of *sipa* (rattan ball kicked with the ankle) being played. He proceeds to the direction of the game and is invited to play. Not knowing how to play, he accidentally causes the sipa to fall in front of the princess who is sitting beside the window. She throws him her ring and handkerchief. The marriage between the princess and Kudarat is then arranged. After the wedding, Kudarat feels homesick; his wife then suggests that they go back to Lum. There is a happy reunion. A week later, Kudarat and his wife returns to Kabulawanan to live with his in-laws (*Notre Dame Journal* 1980:3-6).

"Pat-I-Mata" narrates the story of two brothers Pat-I-Mata and Datu sa Pulu. The former rules Kabalukan while the latter reigns over Reina Regente. Pat-I-Mata is so called because he has four eyes; when his two eyes sleep, his other two are awake. He is also known for his cruelty to women, marrying them when they are beautiful and returning them after they have gone ugly. Because of this, the people of Kabalukan can no longer tolerate Pat-I-Mata's cruelty. They approach his brother and ask for his help. The Datu sa Pulu tries to advise his brother but

to no avail. He then decides to kill Pat-I-Mata. So he builds a cage. Seeing the cage, Pat-I-Mata asks what it is for. The Datu replies that it is constructed to protect them from an incoming storm. Being greedy, Pat-I-Mata asks for the cage saying that the Datu can make his own anytime. The Datu pretends to hesitate but later accommodates his brother's wishes. When Pat-I-Mata and his followers enter the cage, the Datu orders the door shut.

Realizing that he is tricked, he says before being thrown into the river: "Never mind, my brother. We would always be enemies and will never be reconciled till eternity. I would die but I pray that whenever you go riding on a boat in the river, my spirit will capsize it" (*Notre Dame Journal* 1980:7-8).

Maguindanao epics are chanted and antedate Islam, the elements of which were later incorporated. The epic *Raja Indarapatra* deals with various characters, many of whom are imbued with supernatural powers. One portion of the epic tells the story of how two brothers, Raja Indarapatra and Raja Sulayman, save Mindanao from terrible creatures (Gagelonia 1967: 288). Another portion deals with the birth of Raja Indarapatra, who is said to come from the union of Sultan Nabi and his cousin. The plot revolves around a trick the cousin, who is well versed in black magic, plays on the Sultan.

*Raja Madaya* is believed to be an original Maguindanao work since many of its elements—language, metaphor, objects in the tale—are Maguindanao. On the other hand, other elements in the epic point to foreign origins (Wein 1984:12-13). The epic involves various narratives one of which tells about the childless Sultan Ditindegen. In his despair, he prays for a child, promising to give it to a dragon. His wish is granted; but in time, a dragon appears to claim the now grown Princess Intan Tihaya. Hearing about Intan's plight, Raja Madaya comes to the rescue (Wein 1984:14). **Performing Arts**

The Maguindanao have many types of musical instruments: the *kutyapi* or boat lute (see logo of this article), the *suling* or bamboo flutes, the *kubing* or jew's harp, bamboo zithers and bamboo scrapers, and the most important, the *kulintangan* ensemble. The kulintangan ensemble consists of five instruments. These are the *kulintang* (a series of eight graduated gongs), *agong* (wide-rimmed gong), *dabakan* (goblet-shaped drum), *gandingan* (set of four thin-rimmed gongs), and *babandir* (small thin-rimmed gong). Taken as a whole, the ensemble is called *palabunibunyan* (an ensemble of loud sounding instruments). It is heard in various occasions like weddings, water baptism called *paigo sa ragat*, and curing rites called *kapagipat* (Butocan 1987:17).

The kulintang is arranged horizontally from largest (lowest in pitch) to the smallest (highest in pitch), and laid over an *antangan* (wooden frame). These are played by striking the knob of the gongs with a pair of *basal* (light wooden sticks).

The agong, played exclusively by men, is a large kettle-shaped gong. It displays a



high *busel* (protrusion or knob) and a wide *takilidan* (rim) of approximately 30 centimeters. Other parts of the agong include the *pakaw* (collar), *biyas* (face), and *bibir* (mouth). It hangs from a horizontal pole or wooden frame and is played when the player holds the knob with his left hand, and strikes the gong with a mallet in his right. The agong is also used to announce an emergency and to mark the time of day. Moreover, the sound of the agong is believed to possess supernatural power.

The dabakan is a goblet-shaped drum with a single head covered with goat, lizard, or snake skin. The instrument is played by striking the head with two thin bamboo sticks, each 50 centimeters in length. Traditionally, the instrument is played by a woman sitting on a chair.

The gandingan is a series of four graduated gongs with a thin rim and a low central protrusion. They hang in pairs facing each other, and are played by a woman who stands in between them. She uses two mallets, one for each pair, to strike at the knobs.

Finally, the babandir is a small gong with a thin rim and low central protrusion. The instrument produces a metallic sound when struck with thin bamboo sticks. There are three ways of playing the babandir. The first way is by striking the suspended gong with a pair of sticks. The second way is by striking the gong's rim with one stick while holding the rim with the left hand. The third way is by laying the instrument upside down and striking the gong's rim with two sticks (Butocan 1987:19-24).

There are four types of musical pieces played in the palabunibunyan: *binalig* or *sirong*, *sinulog*, *tidtu*, and *tagunggo*. The first three are heard in various kinds of festive occasions. When a performer plays in *minuna* (traditional style), the first piece should be a binalig, then a sinulog, then a tidtu. The tagunggo is used mainly in rituals, and is used to accompany the *sagayan* dance. Tidtu pieces are played fast to display one's virtuosity and are often heard in musical competitions. Binalig pieces are played to express different emotions like anger, love, and joy. Sinulog pieces, on the other hand, are played slowly in a flowing manner to express loneliness. It is said that sinulog pieces can make its listeners cry and is best played at night or early dawn (Butocan 1987:25-26).

A master kulintang player is Amal Lumuntod, who innovated and popularized the binalig style. Performing solo, he is known for "his sudden stops, the use of rests, more plays for the left hand, a fast right hand melody, and an unpredictable introduction traditionally done through a middle gong" (*Gawad CCP Para sa Sining* souvenir program 1991). Recordings of his music have been made. For his virtuosity Lumuntod has been invited to perform in Manila, Hong Kong, Iran, and Europe, and was given the Gawad CCP Para sa Sining in 1991. Among his students are kulintang performers like Danungan Kalanduyan, Madendog Kamangsa, and Ussop Tanggo. A group that has also distinguished itself in the

kulintang is the Maguindanao Lilang Lilang.

The epic chants are sung in Maguindanao in a generally melismatic style, employing tones of the Chinese scale. The religious chants, sung in Arabic, are also melismatic, and mostly use the diatonic scale. Some passages are played in penta and tetrachordal settings. Maguindanao love chants are of two types—the *sindil* which are “coloristic” and the bayok which are syllabic and tetrachordal. Lullabies are tetrachordal in form. Singers of epic and religious chants are semiprofessionals, while bayok and lullaby singers come from the general populace (*Music of The Maguindanao* 1961).

The Maguindanao dance is not a category in itself, but is a part of various ritual-dance performances. These rituals include several forms of movements: leaping, prancing, mock attacks, singing, yelling, poetic incantations, and even carrying a tray of embers. Within such symbolic performances are various “moments” involving religious ecstasy, a shifting of physical boundaries, a transformation of time itself and an element of uncertainty articulated in the concept of the frivolous, if not, malevolent supernatural beings. These different ritual dances are usually done to the accompaniment of the kulintangan.

One of the most important Maguindanao ritual-dance performances is the sagayan, a warrior dance depicting the exploits of Bantugan, a mythological hero-prince (Orosa-Goquingco 1980:178). The sagayan is performed for different reasons and occasions—for entertainment during wedding ceremonies, for datu-sponsored celebrations, or for the *paguipat* festivals held to honor the spirits and to cure the ills of Maguindanao. The dance features a warrior-dancer equipped with a wooden shield in one hand and shining kris in the other, who moves to the rhythm of the kulintangan.

Other ritual dance performances of the Maguindanao are the *asik*, the dance of the dolls for girls; the *kamayang sanusala*, a fan and kerchief dance highlighting the art of fan handling; the *dinggunda*, a courtship “dance-in-verse” where a male and female performer recite poetic lines translating them into physical gestures and poses; the *gardingan*, a counterpart of the *pangalay* dance in Basilan; and *kagsingkil* or *kadyasan sa singkilan*. The Maguindanao proudly claim that the *kagsingkil* originated from them (Orosa-Goquingco 1980:179).

Another dance is a “cock dance,” done usually for the sultan’s pleasure. The performers of this dance are garbed in red, green, and yellow “cock” costumes. They execute movements representing a cockfight. The kulintangan provides the necessary rhythmic cadence and guides the performers’ movements. The dance culminates with two competing “cock performers” one of which is left to claim victory.

A ritual dance is the solemn pre-Islamic walian dance. The music accompanying this dance resembles a Hawaiian or Tahitian tune. The dance itself involves a walian carrying fire on a tray (Orosa-Goquingco 1980:179). The ritual incantations are followed by the appearance of the male performers who represent the malevolent

spirits. The walian then prays that the good spirits send away the malicious ones, who are still thriving in the bodies of the deceased. • G. E. P. Cheng with C. Hila /Reviewed by S.K. Tan

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