

SOME NOTES ON T'BOLI HISTORY AND POLITICS

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Introduction

The present study came about a decade ago upon invitation by Fr. Sean McDonough, once a chaplain and lecturer in anthropology here at Mindanao State University Marawi City. We undertook two summers of field work in South Cotabato, first in 1977 and second in 1979.

My task in the said project was concentrated mainly on "*T'boli History and Politics*." The study was conducted through field observations and interviews. Key informants who can really provide the necessary data were selected. A regular T'boli interpreter was employed in order to transmit informations into either *Visayas Ilongo* or *English*. Interview schedules were prepared in English and translated into Visayan in the course of interview. For analytical tools and techniques, references on ethnological and cultural analysis were consulted during the field work.

The value of this work may be purely academic but can well serve with its informative data which the government in the locality can make use of in planning or in taking course of actions, as in the meaningful integration of the T'boli people into the mainstream of Philippine political life or otherwise.

The Setting

From the Surallah poblacion, the lake communities of T'boli can be travelled at the maximum of only about forty-five minutes ride in a public vehicle. The road is virtually impassable. It is cut off by deep streams and during heavy rains it would be extremely difficult for vehicles to cross. On both flanks of the route, settlements are rare except for some fragmentary homesteads and houses. At an altitude of about a thousand feet above sea level, the hilltops are beautiful. Along the edges of the mountain pass, the mysterious islets float on the placid water of the lake enlaced with the green forest which stirs the imagination to an abode in the fairlyland. This is the home of the T'boli.

The T'boli now are mostly dressed like the lowlanders except for many women who are still fashioned in their native costumes. Contacts with

the lowlanders and tourists from the outside have been so frequent through the facility of public vehicles. The acculturation of these people have been quite fast ever since the settler groups set their foot into the *Koronal* or *Allah Valley* area. At the heart of the Barrio Lake *Sebu* is a concentration of some Visayan (Ilongo) families who are now fortunate enough to run small or sari-sari stores; moneyed enough to put up advertisements/commercial bill boards; are terminal operators, and the controllers of the center of T'boli social and economic activities. The Santa Cruz Mission (SCM) is operating a school, a mission, and is an administration with multi-purpose functions which, to a greater extent, had redeemed the lives of the T'boli from their primitive ways. These are some of the irresistible forces working among the changing hill tribes and indigenous groups in Mindanao like the T'boli.

The distribution of T'boli settlements could not be shown exactly, as they are roughly scattered among the remote areas of Lake Sebu, the alleged homeland of the T'boli people. Of the 400,000 T'boli population scattered in Dadiangas, Marbel, Surallah, and in the forested hills and secluded areas of the South Cotabato province, there are approximately 65,000 of them comprising the present-day T'boli within Lake Sebu.

The T'boli in Myth

I have selected one of the few versions available on the myth concerning the origin of Lake Sebu and the T'boli beginning.

According to this version, there lived a couple named *Khudan* and *Boi-Henowu* in a habitat where the islet called *Tebowow* now lies. They were the first dwellers of the lake. *Khudan* was a hunter, and *Boi* was a princess. Hence, *Boi-Henowu* means princess Henowu.

Water then in their times was yet scarce and could be extracted only from rattan or coconut. Wandering one day, Kludan found a frog on his way and out of curiosity he lifted it up from its place. Then like magic, water gushed forth. Amazed, he returned the frog back. The water therefrom stopped flowing. With this discovery, he hurriedly went home panting. As he arrived home, his wife inquired, "What's the matter?" He answered, "On that side of the mountain there is a water-source to be found." The wife hastily went to see the site herself. She, too, saw the enchanted frog resting on a tree leaf and tried to raise it. Once more water spurted, and oozed endlessly until the place was inundated. Then and there the lake was formed.

While the whole habitation was being flooded, Henowu was seeking shelter in her *guno* (house). She was saved, being raised up to heaven. Those who remained in the lake were, however, transformed into animal species - either *sekokok* (bird), *mal* (witch), *obon'* (also a kind of bird), or *hek* (also a bird). The rest ascended to heaven together with Boi. Kludan, because he was left, was transformed into *beniteng* (a kind of crocodile with human and crocodile features), and his eight dogs became crocodiles. The ascension of Boi-Henowu was thought of as her elopment with *Lomogot Mangay*, an

angel who took her up to the eighth layer of heaven. And so today, the belief is that there were those who had been drowned in the lake because of Kludan's wrath in the banishment of his wife.

Kludan and Henowu are also supposed as the first dwellers of the lake. There is also the popular belief that this couple were the first T'boli ancestors, the "first T'boli man." From what has been told, the origin of T'boli in myth and the Lake Sebu legend seemed to have begun simultaneously. This myth, however, is subjective and does not lay any guarantee for acceptance as a decisive statement.

Along mythical lines though, we can assert two tentative hypotheses or assumptions: First, if Kludan and Henowu were the first T'boli, they were probably an outgrowth of the mass Manobo tribe or like kins;³ and second, if Kludan and Henowu were gainsayingly T'boli, they were probably from among the first Mindanao ancestors of the Manobo and their like kins. If the characters in the myth were simply symbolic or legendary, the assumptions will probably be acceptable from another context.

Apart from viewing the T'boli beginning in an exclusively mythical dimension, we can still delve further into the socio-historical context as a conceptual tool. In the main a general assumption can be put forward that man is a social being and more often than not does he live among people with whom he would not find peace and harmony. Hence, there was presumably a mass movement of people from the coastal front of the Pulangi pervading through the basin course, into the hinterland around or antedating the Islamic period in the history of Mindanao. (Kludan and Henowu in myth were part of this *diaspora*). After remaining in relative isolation in the remotest habitation where they took asylum, a span of time facilitated the difference in certain respects of culture and language from those of their original group. The myth on Kludan and Henowu cannot be isolated from historical facts and socio-logical conditions.

The T'boli people, in Lake Sebu tend to believe in Kludan and Henowu as their first ancestors and fostered claims as being their progenies. It is not a thoughtless exaggeration to give the foregoing statement, yet the myth on lineage is not at all a fallacy when speaking of man's common ancestry.

I deplore that at most, to trace the T'boli origin over little data in myth is mere conjecture. But since this is an initial attempt to treat the subject, it could serve merely as a tentative view subject to some future findings.

Historical Link

Though remaining in relative isolation in the hills and hinterland of Cotabato region, the T'boli ethnic group was not without link in history, and its expulsion from a central body was heaved by inevitable forces of history - a natural effect of causal relationships. Recalling such a link within an entire design is less than concrete and can only proceed in the manner

of historical imagination over little record or archeological data.

Some historical insights can help us reconstruct an idea on the peopling of the numerous islands scattered within the political boundary of the Philippines. The different waves of migration assumed two groups of people hailing from the south: Indonesian and Malayan. Both groups of people migrated to the Philippines by way of Borneo.⁴ It was supposed that these people settled in the island of Mindanao as well in other islands in the Philippines. These people then became the ancestors of some, if not most ethnic groups in Mindanao. It could be even said that all Mindanao aborigines descended from such ancestors. By any means the T'boli could be more linked historically with the Maguindanon Moro, Tiruray, Manobo, Bilaan, and others than probably with any other groups of people far from the surrounding area.

It may be recalled meanwhile, that during the first quarter of the sixteenth century (circa 1515 A.D.) when Mindanao entered into the Islamic period, there was immensely good success in Islamizing the Maguindanon tribe of the Pulangi basin. There was resistance too. There were some who became apostate and non-receptive to Islam and who were driven out of town into the hills with their wives and children by the faithful followers of Kebungsuwan and himself. These "*wicked ones*" who were then cast out were the beginnings of the tribes of the Tiruray and Manobo, who lived in the east of Cotabato. The T'boli are believed to be a sub-group of the Manobo tribe, the latter identified as *Ubo* in South Cotabato some of whom are actually T'boli. Another name of the T'boli is *Tagabili*, and the name is spoken of as related with other Mindanao tribes according to this source:

The inhabitants of Slangan, Maguindanao, Katitiwan, and and those of all the other settlements of the valley were pagans and were similar to the present Tiruray in language and worship. Those who adopted the new religion remain in the rich lowlands of the valley, but those who refused fled to the mountains and have stayed away ever since. Those who wavered in accepting the new terms of submission and who were later suffered to stay in the neighboring hills were called *Tituray*. Those who refused to submit, fled to more distant places, and kept up their enmity and opposition, were called *Manobo*. The pagans who are thus spoken of as related to the Moro of Mindanao in origin, besides the above, are the Bilaan, the Tagabili, and the Subanon.⁵

Another version which resembled closely to what has been quoted on the link of the T'boli with the Moro descendants and followers of Kebungsuwan is thus related:

After many months of travel and much fighting on both sea and land, he arrived and disembarked with part of his people at Malabang. Others of his people went on eastward

to Parang-Parang, and others again went still further, to the lower Rio Grande, where they built the town of Cotabato. So were the people of Kebungsuan divided; but he was still the ruler over all.

After a time it came to pass that Mamalu, who was the chief man next to Kebungsuan, journeyed to Cotabato. He found there that many of the people had ceased to regard the teachings of the Koran and had fallen into evilways. Mamalu sent to Kebungsuan word of these things.

Kebungsuan with a portion of his warriors went from Malabang to Cotabato and found that the word sent to him by Mamalu was true. Then he assembled together all the people. Those of them who had done evilly and disregarded the teachings of the Koran and would not swear to repent, live in the fear of God and obey the Koran, . . . he drove out of the town into the hills with their wives and children. These wicked ones who were then cast out were the Manobo, who lived in the east of Cotabato in the country into which their evil forefathers were driven. And even to this day they worshipped not God; neither do they obey the teachings of the Koran . . . But the people of Kebungsuan, who regarded the teachings of the Koran and lived in the fear of God, prospered and increased, and we the Moro of today are their descendants.⁶

T'boli Datuship

The bench mark in the study of datuship, at least among the early political institutions in the Philippines, could be well found in the works of early Spanish chroniclers. Claver noted in his study on datuship some of these men. Then there were a variety of sources ranging from travellers' reports to the Beyer-Holleman Collection and the works of Saleeby (1905), Orosa (1923), Christie (1909), Hurley (1936), and some others.⁸ Majul⁹ and Mednick¹⁰ also deserve to be mentioned of their studies on the Moro political organization. And there are works and studies of several anthropologists on the indigenous peoples of Mindanao which at all cannot be mentioned here.

Datuship institution in this part of the country began to flourish probably with what has been called "*the ten Bornean datus*" who, sailing from Borneo, reached the Visayas (circa 13th century). These Malayan datus were doubtfully Mohammedans, but their sultan in Borneo bore the Mohammedan title of "*Sultan*."¹¹

In Mindanao the rulers of the Mohammedan dynasty in Maguindanao assumed the title of "*datu*".¹² It is probable that this title came to be adopted by Sulu rulers a little earlier. It is probable again that the same title was

later shifted into the non-Islamized tribes in the interior of Mindanao through the influence of the Mohammedan, the Maguindanon Moro. Even after "*diaspora*" there was still possible contact between or among groups within the vicinity.

Meanwhile, if datuship had first flourished in the Visayas as earlier noted, its adoption among the Mohammedan must have probably taken another course and could have been only a direct importation from the Mohammedan Malay who were initially settled in Mindanao and Sulu. If datuship then had penetrated further into the non-Mohammedan tribes in Mindanao, it would have been probably through some linkages with the Mohammedan, and not just a recent Visayan usage of the term as one is prone to think of.

In my view, before the Islamic period in Mindanao area, chieftdom had been in existence but the term "datu" was still not in popular use in the political sense before the advent of the Mohammedan Malay, as shown again in Saleeby's writing as quoted:

Every settlement of these former pagan tribes had its chief. The chief was called *Timway*. Tabunaway was the last Timway of Maguindanao. Manumbali was the last Timway of Slangan. The Tiruray and the Manobo still call their chief Timway. The ruler of the Mohammedan dynasty assumed the title of datu. The noun datu means king or ruler, the verb datu means to rule.¹³

If the term *datu* was generally associated at first with the Mohammedan, it goes without saying that the legendary Bornean datus could have to some degree been Mohammedan who were just initiated into the beginning of Islamic reformation from the south during the 13th or 14th century.

Another legacy of Islamic institution in Mindanao was the *sultanate*, but it was more complex and powerful than datuship. Among the non-Mohammedan tribes of Mindanao, at no point in time could datuship, and to some extent, the sultanate, have been adopted. Mainly this influence could have come from their Mohammedan neighbor.

As it is true with a non-literate people, writing was naturally unknown to the T'boli. The lack of evidence on the adoption of T'boli datuship (except from the above speculation) can only be rested or relied upon cursory reports handed down with the best of the informant's deductive ability.

Here is the genealogy of datus in Lake Sebu as reported by Cayugan, a very old and probably the most informed person within Lake Sebu. Ligal was called "*datu*" by the T'boli. He was a popular and an influential datu of his time, no one was uncertain of his reputation. Even the T'boli high datu now also speaks with esteem of him. It was this high datu who, to my surprise, called Ligal "*selutan sa T'boli*", meaning *sultan* of T'boli. With such a reputation. Ligal illustrates a high rank within the political community where he was designated, though superficially, to the level of a "Mohammedan prince."

The use of the title "sultan" among the T'boli calls for some curiosity. Datu Lambong of Belahak was called as first "Sultan of T'boli" by "Selenti Melanau" (maybe *teniente* or lieutenant/army officer from Lanao/Maguindanao), an American who went to visit him. It was through here, Cayugan said, that Lugal also came to adopt the title. The T'boli, he further said, called Lugal "Selutan sa T'boli" after the demise of Lambong. Lugal and Lambong did not reign as two T'boli sultans for the same period. Datu Lambong had four brothers, namely: Dayal (eldest), Faan, Ma'Tikaw, Teme' Udo. All of them established independent datuship apart from Lugal, who became a T'boli sultan after Lambong. They were all datus, Cayugan said, of Lambong and his brothers.

Lugal's father was Bukot. Lugal's other two brothers were Seng and Tukan. Lugal had nine children and three of them had passed away; but three sons and three daughters are still living. These three sons are Kalahang, Langgong, and Cayugan (who is the informant himself). Ye' Fanang, with whom we became acquainted, is one of the still three living daughters.

The Political System

According to structural differentiation, the classification of datuship political system among the T'boli can be well placed under what political analysts call, intermittent political system, or what anthropologists further classify as segmentary political system.

The intermittent political system known to T'boli is rather a complex type than one can perhaps imagine of a simple band sitting around an evening campfire somewhere in a primitive land, but which may not be patriarchal in form like datuship in the sultanate of Maguindanao or Sulu. Due to the sequel of political socialization within its cultural environment, the T'boli social and political structure never was outlived but advanced more to the stage or type known to the anthropologist as segmentary political system.

Existing in this type of political system, the T'boli consists of a number of likely autonomous kinship or lineage units, and fostered by continuous cultural link. In a strict sense, however, one cannot be sure yet existing relationship is not an uncommon possibility among T'boli segments. One would finally be led into the conclusion that almost or all T'boli are kins.

By and large, the T'boli tribe has no explicit political organization and structure, and each of the component segment is a self-governing unit under the direction of community leaders (e.g., datus). If conflict ever arises between members of different segments of this tribe, a somewhat political machinery becomes necessary and available which makes it possible in resolving disputes and other cases in the best of diplomacy. This political machinery is comprised of the community leaders from their respective segments and therein reinforce or recommend solution of the conflict. Besides, the political machinery becomes like a legitimate authority and

performs multi-functional roles pertaining to community affairs.

In the sense of nationalization into the Philippine laws, the T'boli can still be classified as among the parochials set in the countryside and little affected by government laws. The T'boli political system can be also distinguished with two hierarchical levels made up of two units of local groups (with respect to each other) within the political community. But three levels of hierarchy can be established, from the local groups to the barrio level, then to the municipal, under the local government structure.

External Political Relations

Inter-political community relationship occurs between local groups from T'boli territory and local groups from the Ubo (Manobo) who are living in a common border. My sources confirmed the frequent contacts and association of T'boli and Ubo. The relationship within the neighborhood was not in any respect without misfortune, but it was only true in the past. Nowadays, misunderstanding and differences are being resolved with government interference.

Before the *Ubo* were often reported of their habits at coming into close encounters with the T'boli. They did this by advancing into T'boli territories, by plundering T'boli homes, by stealing their horses, young people, boats around the lake, and other material goods during the later part of the evening. The Ubo can camouflage in their amulet (*anting-anting*) so that while doing their acts they cannot be noticed and detected.

Accordingly, the Ubo's intention was not for anything at all other than commencing trouble or provocation. At times it was purposely for revenge in the non-payment of debts or monetary matters involved in the arrangement of a dowry for a girl. The desire for a girl, even of a man's wife, could be the cause for any evil attempt. These may be the factors that lead to the escalation of hostilities between two political communities.

My sources related to me an event which happened in Lem-ehk back in 1969 where he was an eye-witness. Here is the story:

There was an event which happened in Lem-ehk back in 1969. At that time I was still in the elementary grades. One evening there was a band of Ubo which plundered a T'boli home. It was known the following morning that three people were found without heads. I witnessed this tragedy here at the present site of the Santa Cruz Mission (SCM) medical center.¹⁵

To the upper Sepaka of the Surallah municipality, the local groups from T'boli are interlaced with the Maguindanon Moros. Insofar as T'boli informants are concerned, especially the older ones, no "trouble" cases between the two local groups could be recounted. The relationship of T'boli and Maguindanon had been generally peaceful and normal. It could be noted further, that if the T'boli and Maguindanon were in conflict, the development

came about only at the time when the settlers came in. If there was any trouble, it could have sprung from economic or agrarian problem. Accordingly, when the settlers came in, the T'boli and Maguindanon were plunged into trouble, which fired up the beginning of mistrust and suspicion. The settlers manipulated the T'boli, like in providing them with guns and used them in fighting back the Muslims. These cases prevailed during the Mindanao uprising sometime in the early 1970's. Aside from the agrarian situation, intermarriages also occurred between the T'boli and Maguindanon. As regards cultural influences, religious pressure from the Maguindanon Muslims against the T'boli was less significant in contrast to the pressure brought about by the settlers and visitors.

Trade relations with more distant political communities seem to be traceable. Accordingly before, the T'boli had a trading alliance with the Muslims (Maguindanon or Maranao/Iranon, since the T'boli term for said groups is "Melanau".) It is probable that the said local group is the Maranao, from the textile products which were traded). These products were enumerated as follows: ornamented mosquito net (*kelabo lanansay*), bladed weapon (*sudang*), Maranao cloth (*fandi nedol*), betel nut case (*bloga*), bolo (*tabas*), white cloth, black turban, gong (*blowon*), *kulintang*, *tabak*, (un-identified), betel nut tray (*guno demulak*). From the T'boli the Muslims obtained *t'nalak*, horse (*kuda*), corn, including slaves, and *khulot nato* (some-kind of a rubber tree). After the feuding captives from the Ubo were enslaved, most were sold to the Muslims. One slave was exchanged for four *gongs*. Some slaves when freed were fitted to social distinction; if a female slave was pretty or good-looking, she would be designated princess.

Considering the means of local transport and the economic prosperity derived from the exchange trade, the Muslims do not come frequently to the T'boli territory. They would come anytime bringing their products, riding on their carabaos by eights or more of resembling a caravan. It would take around four days for the Maranao traders to reach a destination in the place. The places reached by the Muslim traders were Tuko-galong, Belahak, Snolon (now Edwards) in the T'boli town.

There was a Maranao named Lembangan with whom Carado had occasion to exchange some goods at Dakilong in the Ubo territory. Carado exchanged *khulot nato* for some rolls of cloth with that Maranao: From Carado 25 roles of *khulot nato* were exchanged for 1 role of black cloth, 1 role of red cloth, and 1 role colored cloth with that Maranao. This event happened at the time when the informer was not married yet.

The Maranao were good trading-partners of the T'boli. From the Maranao, for instance, unlike the settlers who are a little bit reserved or selfish, the T'boli could beg for an extra gift. There were no occasions of fighting between the T'boli and Muslims. To recount, the Muslims were good people. They were "our first neighbor; we had had contact with them before the settlers came in." It is stated that now their (T'boli) relationship with the Muslims have been hampered due to Mindanao's trouble. Because of the settlers and their (T'boli) cooperation with these settlers, the T'boli had been disliked by Muslim neighbors.

Recruitment to Community Leadership

Oftentimes I found my informants quite bashful to tell when asked about the qualities of becoming a datu. Perhaps, the reason for that kind of feeling can proceed from some material aspect: they believe that it was shameful to tell and reveal oneself to be *datu* (rich) to an outsider whom they considered as probably rich. An atmosphere of intimacy was then reserved.

A field note can be recalled with a son of a popular datu whose place was just within the vicinity of Lem-ehk. After making some recordings/notes I pleaded to the interpreter, "Ask him how he became a datu or, why he is called datu (I supposed he was a datu by lineage). His (informant's) reaction was disgraceful: "We are poor", he answered meekly. He soon answered that he was (i.e., datu), after insisting on him to answer.

According to the same source, inheritance (*gubot*) was an essential requisite, too, for datuship. If the father was a datu, the son could inherit the same title. There are however, other qualifications or conditions to be considered. A son of a datu should seek to be qualified through merit other than just being the son of a datu. If he can maintain such prestige, he could continue the same. He may lose the title on account of poverty, but still he is "a son of a datu". Aside from material considerations, it was also mentioned that the ability to adjudicate trouble cases was indispensable for one who becomes a datu.

Among the T'boli a long list of qualities and merits in becoming a datu or community leader have been suggested by T'boli themselves, by informants ranging from datu personalities, community members, and youths, apart from a scholar's viewpoints. The manner of ranking was at all times interchangeable, although, by the summation of all the information the criteria could be enumerated as follows: wealthy, intelligent, witty, public speaker, influential, capable of mediating disputes effectively, merciful, possessing good moral character, generous, helpful, native of the place, and with rank of nobility. The status of possessing material security or, wealthy, is undoubtedly confirmed to be an eminent qualification. Next after this quality would be the ability to adjudicate trouble cases and legislation of the traditional law.

A would-be-community leader or datu may not have the many qualities aforementioned, but he may possess any of them for recognition. Not any member can just become a leader or datu notwithstanding his personal qualifications- be he rich, with mediator qualities or noble. It requires some dedication to perform such role or attachment to practice the tradition. A community member who would be lacking in wealth and with less qualities may well be a leader and datu if the community would look unto him as such.

Inasmuch as T'boli economic life is concerned, at least wealth is described as follows: land, domestic animals (cow, carabao and horse), and valuable items such as *Kemaji* (necklace), anklets, *blowon*, kris, kulintang,

gongs, antiques, plates, and the like.

A *datu* can assist a man in the payment of a dowry for a girl or in the payment of fines for murder cases. Only when a community leader is materially secure is he able to perform such roles. If he is not rich, sanction to datuship would be nominal and less significant.

Material security maybe obtained by a community leader through opportunity and wit. If he is witty he would be able to amass great wealth through some kind of dynamism or active participation in legal matters or wit to obtain wealth from other people in the negotiation. Another could be through his own industry and hard work in his farm and agriculture. Or maybe he could pile on booties to become rich.

As a community leader one should be able to perform the role of a judge or trouble shooter. His success as an adjudicator of justice increases his popularity. As a leader he should be expected to execute justice among the community members. Only then could such a leader obtain the respect of the community, and thus be esteemed as *datu*.

The ability to settle or resolve disputes in the *Adat T'boli* (T'boli tradition) is an essential attribute of a *datu* and is an exclusive juridical role. A *datu* is expected by his clients to perform such task; and in failures to do so, some people would have the tendency to move away from his jurisdiction to ask help or favor from others. Unless a *datu* possessed wealth would he be able to extend economic assistance or relieve his community members in the payment of fines in case of crime or in the payment of a dowry for a girl. Acting as a trouble shooter or judge, a *datu* must be eloquent in speech, keen and wise to give amicable settlement based on the principle of justice.

There is much debate on the nature of datuship as to whether hereditary or acquired. One observation has it that even the high *datu* of T'boli now has gone far up by way of performance or through meritorious achievement.

Community Leaders

The leaders of the T'boli political communities consist of men indiscriminately called *datu*. (The T'boli cannot render a term in their dialect for the head of the community). These *datus* are referred to as mainly traditional headmen and elders of the community in their respective local groups.

The political designation into the *datu*'s role is an informal process rather than through rite and ceremony as in other tribes. The exercise of legitimate authority is very democratic and a *datu*-leader has to abide within the framework of the traditional law. A *datu*-leader is never a tyrant ruler like in other political communities; he is instead helpful and merciful. The community members recognize him as a *datu*-leader mainly for his meritorious performance and virtues - like the role of an affectionate father to his children. He does not grab honor to be *datu* by oppressing his kins or members for being political opponents.

Fairly all T'boli informants subscribe to the idea that their political community is without dissension and the relationships of the T'boli is orderly and peaceful. Whatever is the degree of relationship, their attitudes show their political harmony. In abnormal cases, the datu maybe criticized by a sector of educated youths indoctrinated along non-traditional lines and perhaps by the settlers, but such objection against the datu-leader does not rest on his political role; it runs in the culture. Isolated and hidden differences among political leaders in terms of authority as to its legitimacy is not always possible to note but, it maybe expected as a natural consequence.

The social and political output in the inter-personal relationships and roles of the community leader-datus could be harmonized by fostering ties through the dynamics of their social institutions and through democratic nature within the political society. It would not be erroneous to tell, not without exceptions, that the T'boli community leader-datus are mostly related through kinship, consanguineal or affinal, and that community members are also related to their political leaders. An ethnologist observing a year's field study would not witness any feuding or trouble case: in our study area, I found no record of such after two years. The T'boli are peaceful and non-violent and dispute over political affairs was insignificant.

The leader-datu is hardly distinguished from ordinary members of the community by his names, manner of dressing, and human relations with the community members. When a dispute is to be settled or ceremony is to be performed, he would perform distinct roles from those of ordinary members but, after that he resumed to his businesses just like everybody in the community.

He goes to his farm together with his tillers; he maybe working whole day long and be off from the field about sundown. He is a hard-working man. He ordinarily mingles with all kinds of people anywhere. He does not tag along with his escorts, either casually or intending to adjudicate trouble in another political community.

He goes to the market place with or without any companion and secludes himself in an isolated corner not seeking distinction. He may walk on foot or ride a horse like many people are doing. In a social gathering, he maybe an eloquent speaker and a story teller but he talks ordinarily. His audience simply call him "*Temeh*" like a father or an elderly person in the community.

T'boli Concept of Law

In a local group where its social system is relatively naive, the nature of the society itself is a reflection of this system and for that matter in its concept of law. Being characteristically a non-violent society, the exigency of an established framework in the legal system is mildly wanted. In fact, one may ordinarily overlook the T'boli for not having any law at all. But the T'boli can be said to have law as yet.

Comparatively speaking, the practice of law in modern societies differs sharply from that of primitive societies. The reason for this is not due to innocence of law and practices in the administrative system of government. One can hardly understand logically that T'boli have law because of the non-existence of court and man-of-laws. Nonetheless, essentially the concept of law has been imbued in primitive peoples (of all races) and the enforcement of its rules was a very natural process even before the institution of government.

The community members in possession of legitimate authority in primitive society enforce the rules of that community so to say that primitive groups do not have law is inappropriate. Rules, enforcement, and authority are elements basically expedient in law. Hence, in whatever form, law does exist in T'boli legal system.

When a person commits an act contrary to the social norms sanctioned and inherent in the society, he would commit injustice and must, therefore, account for his act before a legitimate authority in the adjudication of justice between him and a plaintiff. If he hastens away to avoid capture, he would be marked infamous. The legal authority may even resort to physical force or even death or execution.

The law of private delicts seems to be present in the T'boli legal system. Restitutive sanctions are executed by the authorities in the resolution of trouble cases and, sometimes penal sanctions are reinforced. Actions currently existing which would be considered as private delicts include homicide, wounding, adultery, theft, and failure to pay debts (i.e., the payment for a dowry after marriage-divorce). Payments or fines restored to by the authority are usually in the form of animals, material goods, some other types of wealth, and possibly monetary terms.

The datu-leader in the community or within a local group functions to be an official authority who is empowered to intercede and adjudicate justice. He reinforces the legal system whose model or patterns of case resolution has been stabilized in the T'boli customs and tradition (Adat T'boli).

In its legal execution, if the culprit or defendant can not afford to make payment or material restitution to the plaintiff, the datu may assist him if the latter is so obliged on condition that such payment shall be reimbursed to the datu at the time when payment is to be made. If the parents or girl's party can not manage to return the payment, the datu may win her in marriage, if the girl is beautiful, or enslave him/her for life as a means of punishment/restitution. Before, if the defendant's party can not manage to return the payment, the authority may use physical force by killing the criminal.

"Before, like the case of Belahing Telabang, Keleh Kinum murdered him due to their conflict (i.e., involving a woman). And then, relative suspected Keleh Kinun to have murdered Melahing. And then, due to the government intercession he was caught. Keleh Kinun got into trouble. But then, the settlement of the case was passed into the legal proceeding of T'boli tribal ways — the datu system. The case was brought up to Lake Sebu, and was settled.

They were asked to pay some fines in the forms of horses.

"In the datu system, for instance, a certain woman has committed a crime and she is married (he meant adultery), if the parents of this woman can not afford to return all the dowry, the datu in order not to kill the woman, would save her in terms of material wealth. After that, if the father of this woman can not afford to return or give the dowry to pay the fine, the datu would marry the girl. Or if she can not pay, they would just kill her.

"Before, for example, I am a murderer, and then I went to the datu. And then I myself, had to stay in a secret place nowhere to be found by the relatives of those whom I have killed. And after that, ten horses or two carabaos; it just depends . . . they give those to the relatives of whom I have murdered."

Patterns of Conflict Resolution:

Case: Adultery

Culprit: 1) Gumbay Sula, the wife of Sula Antong

2) Melown, the husband of Mrs. Melown

Party to Whom the case was appealed: Datu Minggud Kuman, Barrio Council, Tuku-lufa, Lake Sebu

Party who appealed for the case: Mrs. Melown, the wife

Fine/Penalty: ₱ 1,500.00

Party who received the fine: 1) the wife

2) 5% went to the datu in the Barrio Council.

Case: Adultery

Culprit: 1) Belahing Telabang, the man

2) Kinab, the wife of Keleh Kinun

Party to whom the case was appealed: Datu Ma'Fok, Sitio leader, Lem-ehok, Lake Sebu. He brought the case to the Municipal court in Surallah.

Party who reported the crime: Keleh Kinun, the husband of Kinab.

Fine: ₱9000 (in kinds like horses, etc.)

Party who received the fine: 1) ₱ 3000 to the wife of Belahang.

2) ₱ 6000 to the parents of Keleh Kinun.

Case: Murder

Culprit: Minggud Abung (CHDF)

Murdered: Unknown

Party to whom the case was appealed: Datu Kiagung Ayaw, Barrio Council, Lem-alu, Lake Sebu.

Fine: ₱8000

Party who received the fine: 1) Went to the decaaed family.

2) 10% was shared by the Barrio Hall;
50% of this sum went to the datu.

Conclusion

As a concluding remark, therefore, the myth about the T'boli beginning remains indecisive but, it is a relevant story to start with. T'boli history is just a part and parcel of the history of the people of Mindanao, and to a larger extent, the history of its neighbors especially the Maguindanons, Manobos and Bilaans. The T'bolis were related with these peoples or groups at one particular point in time in Mindanao. But more and more historical data will be needed to construct an authentic and reliable history. This is always the limitation of many students who would get into historical writing, and I regret that I cannot fulfill said requirement as there had been less treatment on the subject about the T'boli.

Generally, the T'boli political life is normal and peaceful in relation to its neighbors, the Ubus, the Maguindanon Muslims, and Christian settlers. Their political system, like many Mindanao tribes ever since, is under what we might label as datanship. Datanship is the most continued and widely adopted political system among the Mindanao tribes.

NOTES:

1. The most probable estimate given during an interview with Fr. Rex Mansmann, a long time resident of the Santa Cruz Mission (SMC) in Lake Sebu.
2. A version derived from (Peter) Carado of Tuku-Sufuh (Lake Sebu) in April 1979. It must be noted that there are several versions or variations concerning the T'boli beginning in myth and legends.
3. It should be noted carefully that the term Manobo (Manuba or Mansuba, meaning dwellers of the river) is unquestionably loose in its application that it can be used indiscriminately for all Mindanao Tribes who dwelt about the hill and rivers in the hinterland of Mindanao. Refer to Dionesio Yumo, "Politics of Agusan Manobo," a paper read during the 11th Seminar on Mindanao-Sulu Cultures, CMU-Musuan, Bukidnon.
4. It must be noted that Malay or Indonesian migration has been disputed by F. Landa Jocano, in Teodoro Agoncillo and Milagros Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People*, (Quezon City: R.P. Garcia Publishing Co., c 1977), pp. 22-24.
5. Najeeb Saleeby, *Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion* (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1905), pp. 50-60. In Peter G. Gowing and Robert D. McAmis, *The Muslim Filipinos* (Manila, Philippines: Solidaridad Publishing House, c 1974), pp. 184-193.
6. Quoted from Samuel Lyon, "A Moro Fundamentalist: Some Teachings of Qudin, A Mahommedan Priest of Mindanao," *Asia*, February 1927, pp. 152-153, in Cesar A. Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1973), pp. 66-67.
7. Francisco Claver, Vincent Cullen, and William Biernatzki, *Bukidnon Politics and Religion* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila, 1973).
8. Cf. Claver, et al, *ibid*, pp. 51-54; also cf. Melvin Mednick, "Some Problems of Moro History and Political Organization," *Philippine Sociological Review* 5/1 (1957), pp. 39-52.
9. Cesar A. Majul, "Succession in the Old Sulu Sultanate," *Philippine Historical Review*, 1/1 (1964), 252-271.

10. Mednick, op. cit.
11. Agoncillo, et al, History of the Filipino People, op. cit.
12. From Malay/Indonesian term Ra (great) plus Tu (Man), which is possibly, in turn, a Chinese derivation.
13. Saleeby, Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion, op. cit.
14. Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, Jr., Comparative Politics (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966), pp. 217-222.
15. Derived from Floro Gandam, our regular T'boli interpreter and resource person/informant.
16. Seng Carado of Tuku-Sufu (Lake Sebu).
17. Cayugan, eldest son of once a famous datu Lugal in Lake Sebu.
18. From Augustin Yambok, resource person/informant; I knew of my informant who was vainly rich, he owned a number of vehicles and vast property, and he belonged to the datu's line, but he was not known as datu.
19. When speaking of the traditional system, local group is referred to segmentary unit often related by kinship; while local group is synonymous to sitio district when referring to the government political setup.
20. The Bukidnon has initiation rites for a bagani, a war leader, and in the Mohammedan society the Rumah Bichara formally groom a sultan if not, the law on primogeniture is observed.
21. Although, I have personally met and talked with a datu-leader (Ma' Kabading of Lake Sebu) who surrounds himself with a number of goons or bouncers.
22. I thought as in Sulu or other Mohammedan society, the rank of a datu was traditionally formal. Only true or applicable to Sulu society, the name datu was venerated. The hereditary datus are regarded sacred of their titles and it is blasphemous not to address them as such because they are descendants to the sultan.