

## INTRODUCTION

To write an introductory brief for a collection of essays which were written from as far back as late 1960's through the mid-1980's seems rather odd considering the range of the subject dealt with in these works. Perhaps the only common bond that may justify putting these papers in one volume is the author himself. However, as one reads through each paper, the relationship of one essay to the other can be readily discerned. Moreover, while these have been written within almost twenty years and though they are not arranged chronologically according to the year they have been written or published, they form a thread of continuity in terms of the various historical periods through which Mindanao and Sulu have passed.

These essays bring into focus the two most important cultural elements that have contributed to the shaping of Philippines or in more specific terms Mindanao and Sulu culture, namely the Indian and Arab (read Muslim/Islamic) overlays. Thus the first essay (1977) introduces this collection by presenting a broad view of the contacts of Mindanao and Sulu with the cultures beyond their shores. And the second essay (1971) tackles the problem of the movement of cultures, particularly that of the Indian, during the period between the late 7th and the late 13th centuries A.D. It is in fact an attempt to put in proper perspective the works of earlier scholars in the field, e.g., H.O. Beyer, V. Makarenko, F. Gardner, who had argued with seemingly incontrovertible proof of the "massive migration" of Indians into the Philippines at a very early period of its history - - pre and proto, to be more specific. This essay argues for a non-controversial view, that is, the presence of

“Indianisms” in Philippine culture was the result of a long standing trade and traffic between and among the nations in the past (see Francisco 1987).

As such, the third essay (also 1977) presents a very specific evidence of the extensive trade and commercial activities of the peoples of Sulu, whose language could not have escaped the influencing power of the cultural movement through the process of trade and traffic. This movement did not exclude its effect in another culture and element, viz. , literature, as the fourth essay (1969) indicates.

As societies are never static but dynamic and pulsating, a given society like the Maranao, while absorbing into its literary traditions a very Indian piece, did not merely take it in per se but also molded it into its own cultural literary image, so to speak, which I have called indigenization (Essay No. 5, 1986). Indeed, the process of indigenization could not have taken place within a decade or half-century; rather it could have been more than two hundred years. Without the common recognizable *Ramayana* episodes in the narrative, one would be led to the view that it is autochthonous. Or, there is the possibility that the indigenization process may have occurred before it reached the Maranao area, where it finally assumed its identity as a locally-produced narrative. And side by side with the Maranao *Darangen*, the Maranao version of the Rama Story has become a part of that Philippine National Literature that may be considered contributory to the cultural identity of the country (Essay No. 6, 1975). Let me illustrate in more precise terms, hoping I will be pardoned for pre-empting the reader, by quoting in this Introduction the last paragraph of the essay :

It rises above the confines of the Maranao locale; inspite of the forbidding barriers that the mountains around the lake area may have formed, through the many un-understandable means by which it may find its way outside these barriers, the *Darangen* shall form, if it had not already become, part of that identity with the greater and universal literature by which the Philippines shall be known. To give a more rheto-

rical analogy, the waters of the lake confined by the highlands around seek their unity with the Universal Water through the intricate gullies and pathways, which are unified in and known as the Agus River. As the waters return to the lake by way of the rain to replenish it, the *Darangen* returns again and again to the Maranao in the course of its being enriched through its journey along the National Literary Highways.

I had hoped, however, that the reader's curiosity, aroused by the brief quotation, will have been excited enough to continue on through the book.

It would be odd for one to find in this volume an essay which may not be relevant to the theme around which this collection had been melded, namely that works on Mindanao and Sulu by a single author being put together as to allow these to be readily available to those who devote their time in the study of the region without having to go too far afield to consult. Be that as it may, however, while reference to the Maranao *Sarimanok* design comes on towards the end of the essay, the artistic design is brought within the purview of its development in other areas within the region (Essay No. 7). It is also an attempt to illustrate that the artistic design's being one of the most important threads that binds the culture and history of Southeast Asia if it is taken in that spirit and vein. In other words the design is another strand in the cultural and social matrix that serves as bond for these cultures, if oftentimes are politically divergent.

In many people's perceptions the encounter of two ideologies, in whatever guise they may be, is marked with violence, as indeed "encounter" often presupposes violence! The eighth essay in the collection describes as well as analyzes the meeting of two religious ideologies — Hinduism and Islam — that for centuries dominated two of the most important if exciting geographic as well as political regions of the world. Divergent though these ideologies are, the essay attempts to illustrate how the two have come to terms on the highest level of cultu-

ral encounter without having to shed precious common blood.

The essay is a very small attempt to show that peaceful encounter, considering a few of the discernible evidences of accomodation, particularly on the level of day-to-day activity within the religious sphere that shows the very deep understanding of the meaning of the ideologies, fundamental philosophies. This could be defined as an indication of the best commentary of a people's highest level of tolerance with each other, divergent though their religious ideologies are.

While Essay No. 8 delves into the period of accomodation between two ideologies in which the earlier one, i.e., Hinduism, loses its importance in the daily lives of those who have accepted it in the past, Essay No. 9 attempts to illustrate the acceptance of Islam's influence in the people's lives. Islam has indeed been telescoped into the lives of the Maguindanao, Maranao and Tausog peoples and continue to influence their lives on all levels of their relations among themselves and those outside their ideological world.

When this collection was being organized, it was thought that the last essay in the main body should be one of those that have been written to bring into sharp focus the "period" during which the Muslim Filipinos may have reached the apex of their conscious effort to make Islam play an assertive reality in their lives. But on further thought it was decided that the essay could fit very well into the Epilogue of this collection, for it brings the Muslim Filipinos within the preview of contemporary developments not merely within the ambit of the Philippines but within the broad community that Islam has engendered from the time it took root in Philippine soil to its full fruition in current times, thus inevitably contributing to the enrichment of her culture and history.

Bangkok

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