

AN HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE JURAMENTADO/SABILALLAH RITUAL

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One of the most interesting yet misunderstood aspects in the history of Muslims in the Philippines is the institution known as *juramentado* among the Christian Filipinos and *sabilallah* among the Moros. Through the years, since the term's first inception in the 1870's in the Philippines, it has assumed a meaning which was misconceived for another phenomenon called amok or amuck.

Majul gives four levels of meanings to *juramentado*. He says that the original meaning of the term used to refer to:

1. Muslim warriors who, after specific religious rites and a night of prayer with *panditas*, would on the next day assault the Christian invaders with the determination to kill as many as possible and not to expect to remain alive. The hope of such dedicated warriors was to merit paradise as a recompense;
2. Muslim warriors who battled with such religious ferocity that they had been judged as fanatical by their enemies;
3. Any Muslim who killed someone in a heat of passion; and

4. Any Muslim who, instead of committing suicide, courted death by attacking and trying to kill law enforcement agents who were presumably Christians.

He, however, qualifies that the term *juramentado* which literally refers to "a person who has taken an oath" is more properly applied to meaning (1) than (3) and (4) which "do not have any religious motives involved and the use of the term *juramentado* in them represents a departure from the original meaning."¹

On the other hand, the Spaniards who fought relentlessly the Moors in the Iberian peninsula for almost seven hundred years, invented the term *juramentado* in the Philippines during the "Period of Decline" of the so-called "Moro Wars." Coming from the Spanish word *juramentar*, meaning "to take an oath," it was applied obviously with western bias "to the fanatical Moros who swore oath to attack the Christians without taking heed of the dangers that might accompany it."² Retana, a noted Spanish historian and bibliographer, says that the term is "said of the Moros of the Philippines who swear to kill Christians, in a hand-to-hand combat until death."³ The Jesuit priest, Fr. Pablo Cavalleria, who came to the Philippines in 1881, however, defines a *juramentado* as "the Moro ... who is determined to go to a plaza, that is, inside the town where usually there are forces, in order to kill as many as he could till he is killed. He is just going to die killing."⁴ In fact, it was he who gave at least four reasons for a Moro to become a *juramentado*:

... first, sometimes it is to offer to Mohammed some victims of the opposite camp, and, especially, if it is a Christian. At other times, the *juramentado* attempts to avenge himself of some affront, small or big, which he may have received in the town where he is going to die killing. Finally, the *juramentado* also usually attempts to defend his political cause and, if he can *make the foreign government which dominates the Moros withdraw in order to be able*

to be in plain control as in the past prior to being dominated. The *juramentados* of this kind sometimes volunteer freely but at other times, the authorities compel them for being already condemned to death for some crime. The Moro also becomes a *juramentado* frequently for some vexation or particular setback. (Underscoring mine--IRM)⁵

Miguel Angel Espina, a lieutenant-colonel in the Spanish infantry who culled reports from previous Spanish sources on Jolo, on the other hand, gives the following reasons why the Muslim in the southern Philippines becomes a *juramentado*:

... the race hatred, a *mandarin's* threat, reprisals, the desire to distinguish oneself before the eyes of their kin and heaping insults on them that are avenged. . .⁶

It was also Espina who categorized the *juramentado* into three classes, again with certain biases, religious and racial:

1. the mystic martyr who are by ancient legends or traditions consecrated to martyrdom because of their faith, who receive the bloody blows, are dauntless, fastidious, depreciative, arrogant, without complaint, or any lament, without precipitating the agony, or shouting in suffering until death;
2. the warriors who are not only contented with dying but also desire anxiously to kill, mixing religious fanaticism with political fury; and
3. the band of petty thieves who are more or less numerous committing assassinations, robbing the imprudent who venture in the forests among the cogon grass, in other words, the criminals.⁷

As to social class, the common man, in general, but rarely the *datu*, *panglima* (military leader), *sharif* (Ar. noble; title of descendants of the Prophet through Husain) or even an *imam* (Ar. priest) becomes *juramentados*. It can also happen that a noble or an authority becomes a *juramentado* in case of war, but not in the way referred to above.⁸

Most of the *juramentados* came from the districts known to be traditional oppositionists of the sultan, like Patikul, Maimbung or Luuk in Jolo. In Cotabato, the centers were Buayan and Talayan. They were subordinate datu followers who were either competitors or critical of the sultan's rule. It is personal pride for a Tausug or Sama warrior to die in order to save his datu's honor.⁹

Women can also become *juramentados* in extreme cases, but in the Philippines there is no actual recorded case, to the best of my knowledge, of one who became a woman *juramentado*, although the *Parang sabil* of Sulu records one named Putli Isara (Skr. *puteri*, princess) during the Spanish regime.¹⁰

The Chinese mestizos participated during the height of *juramentado* attacks on the Spaniards in 1877, as many of the bravest were "sons of Chinese who had married Sulu women." This was also true in the case of Cotabato during the expedition against Datu Utto in 1874, when again the fiercest *juramentados* were "sons of the Chinese who had caused many dead and wounded among the Spanish forces. . . they (were) the most terrible enemies of the Spaniards for they represented a new element obstructing the Spanish policy to conquer and pacify the Moslems."¹¹

The Making of a Juramentado/Sabilallah

How does one become a *juramentado* is a difficult question for a contemporary student of history to answer because of the dearth of primary materials, especially from Moro sources.

Data available are either conflicting, biased or utterly insufficient for reconstruction. However, in the opinion of this writer, the best way to present an historical reconstruction of the ritual, is the methodology of making a comparative and contrastive study of the different steps that went into the elaborate ceremony, as bases for establishing the patterns. Thus, various sources which included Spanish, American and Filipino have been culled and collated.

This paper attempts as much as possible to establish the ritual processes that a *juramentado/sabilallah* underwent starting from the gathering at the *masjid* (mosque), granting of parental approval, seeking of the sultan's permission, turning over to the *pandita* (Skr. *pendita*, a trained man, great scholar, "pundits") or *imam*, the performance of various rituals up until the preparation for the mission.

For purposes of documentation, sources used are abbreviated after each citation or citations in parenthesis, thus: Cav (Cavalleria); Esp (Espina); Ewg (Ewing); Gow (Gowing); Hur (Hurley); Kief (Kiefer); Lan (Landor); Maj (Majul) and Wor (Worcester). Tan of course is not abbreviated.

Historical Reconstruction of the Ritual

In the mosque, the *juramentado* gathers and hears the *imam* or *pandita* who tells of the olden days (Hur). A copy of the Achehnese *Prang sabil-ullah* (Malay, *Perang sabil Allah*, "holy war"--IRM) with stories of epic deeds and a description of Paradise is read (Maj).

The *juramentado* then asks his parents' approval. The family council grants permission for him to run *juramentado* (Hur). He needs permissions of parents or relatives who depend on him for subsistence and relatives pray with him (Kief, Maj). When granted his parents' permission for the act, he kisses their feet and hands (Ewg).

The Sultan's permission is then sought. He presents himself to the secular authority that they may approve of his decision (Cav). The *juramentado* asks permission from the Sultan to engage in holy war (Hur), but in recent times (i.e., 1950's) most *juramentados* neglect this formality (Ewg).

Having been granted permission, he is turned over to the *imam* or the *pandita*, the religious leader of the community. He presents himself to the *imam* in order that he may bless him (Cav), although Hur and Gow say that candidates are turned over to the *imam* or *pandita* for organization and instruction. Prayers are offered and each candidate places his hand on the Koran and repeats the following: *Jumanii kami hatunan ing kami ini magsabil karna sing tuhan* ("We covenant with God that we will wage this holy war, for it is of God"). The whole night is spent in prayer with the *pandita* who recites relevant portions of the Koran (Maj). Here, they are given all the rituals of final burial as washing, prayers, purification, while they are still alive (Kief).

Here begins the performance of the various elaborate rituals. This is what Tan describes as symbolizing the separation of the individual as a *sabilallah* whose aim is to die gloriously and meet paradise.

First, he washes his body very carefully, cleans his teeth and cuts and trims his nails (Hur). His teeth are filed and stained black and the nails of his fingers and toes are trimmed very short (Lan). The family of the candidate shaves his eyebrows (Hur, Wor) or his eyebrows are plucked (Kief). The hairs of his armpits are pulled out (Lan). The hair on his head is cut short (Hur), although Maj says it is "completely shaved" off. The eyebrows and nails are usually cut or trimmed (Cav). He has his head hair shaved, and his eyebrows are plucked and that night, he burns some *kamanyan* (Malay, *kemenyan*, benzoin, incense) and passes his *anting-anting* (Ar. *azimat*, amulet) through smoke, praying for success of his venture (Ewg).

Second, the candidate clothes himself in a white robe called *jubba* (Ar. *jubah*, a long surtout worn by *hajis* --IRM) and crowns himself with a white turban (Esp, Gow, Hur, Maj). A white inner garment is usually made and it is put on at the fixed day (Cav). Maj says he sometimes wears a small white turban. White is the color of mourning and the clothing symbolizing the burial shroud (Maj). He attaches an *anting-anting* or charm around his waist - (Esp, Hur). Esp says the *anting-anting* consists sometimes of stones, usually comes from animal intestines and is sometimes a prayer on which the *pandita* has inscribed charms (Esp). Maj says he also carries with him a few amulets, a practice which he conjectures to be of Sumatran influence, like the wearing of the white robe. Some of these amulets contain inscriptions of Koranic verses.

Third, he binds his genitals tightly with cords (Hur). He binds the vulnerable parts of his body including his testicles, (Esp, Tan), so that they would not bleed him to death if wounded (Gow). The penis is bound in an upright position in order to insure that he remains upright and not fall (Kief). Before this ritual, he goes to the river and bathes, at about four o'clock the next morning, reciting prayers the whole time. There is a belief that taking a bath makes the body strong and hard as iron, the veins becoming like stout wire. On emerging from the waters of the river, he ties his penis in an upright position with abaca hemp. One end of the cord is bound to the penis, while the other is tied around the neck in the belief that this will enable him to fight on even after having received many wounds (Ewg).

Fourth, after putting his clothes on, he returns to his house. He again kisses the hands and feet of his parents. Within the house, he shouts. "*O tuhan ko, doli tudo ako*" ("Oh, my Lord, bless me exceedingly!"). At the bottom of the house approach, he shouts: "*La Illah hai-lawlan Myamad adraswlah*" --IRM, meaning, "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is His Prophet" (Ewg).

Fifth, he beautifies and polishes his weapons (Hur). He goes girded with his *kris* (Malay, *keris* --IRM) or *barong* and sometimes a lance (Cav). He prepares a good edge on his *kris*,

barong or spear. One of these weapons is always chosen for the purpose, but the *kris* is the more commonly selected. The spear (*budjak awak-awak*), with a short shaft no more than a meter long, and a long blade, about 50 centimeters long, is also a popular weapon (Ewg).

After performing the above-mentioned rituals, the *juramentado* is thereby ready for his mission. On the day before he attacks, he goes to the outskirts of the town and, at the crack of dawn, makes his way to the marketplace. He usually goes to the market because it is the spot where people go to at the early hour (Cav). After all the needed preparations, he keeps himself out of sight until he is within the reach of his quarry, that is, the Spanish soldiers (Hur, Maj). Sometimes he announces loudly his sortie to get all Muslims out of the way. There is no intention of harming any but Christians. Killing was selective. Muslims are excluded if known; women and children are sometimes spared (Kief). His goal is to kill Christian males, preferably soldiers (Gow). If he ever looks for a specific individual, he goes to the place where the one whom he is attempting to kill usually goes. As soon as he sees the chance, he takes out his cutting weapon and cuts the head of the one close to him and keeps on wounding and killing until he is killed (Cav). Ewg says:

After arriving at the place he has selected for his execution of Christians, such as a crowded market place in the early morning, he grabs his weapon, removes it from concealment, and attacks any Christians available. The first time he strikes a victim, he shouts *Bismallah* (Arabic, *bismillah*, "In the Name of God"--IRM); but he does not repeat this when striking subsequent victims. If he approaches a Mohammedan or a group of Mohammedans, he warns them off by shouting *Simay Islam* (Mohammedans, keep clear) His intention is to kill as many Christians as possible...

The *pandita* buries the *juramentado* the Muslim way except that there was no ritual ablution (*ghusl*, Arabic, ritual washing esp. of the dead--IRM) or change of clothes, the

rationale being that anyone who dies for the faith dies a martyr (*shahid*, Arabic *syahid*, *sahid*--IRM) and was legally pure (Maj). His body needs no ablution and is buried in his bloody clothes for he is considered a martyr. According to Islam, the corpse of a martyr who dies in defense of the Faith was legally pure and that his bloody clothes serve as witness to his effort. The *pandita* and the *juramentado* believe that there is reward in Paradise for one who dies for the faith (Maj).

Difference Between Amok/amuck and Juramentado/Sabilallah

The term *amok* or *amuck* is always confused with that of *juramentado*. Amok is a Malay word, meaning, "possessed with a murderous or violently uncontrollable frenzy (of a soldier)."¹² It is a "furious attack..." Colloquially and in modern times running amuck means "indiscriminate murder by a desperate man who neither expects nor desires mercy."¹³

Earlier writers such as John R. White and Victor Hurley already made clear distinctions between *amuck* and a *juramentado*. Writing in 1928, White, then a retired American colonel of the Philippine Constabulary, says:

amok ...might be translated as ordinary, common or garden amuck. Now, a Moro in an ordinary state of amuck goes off, so to speak, by spontaneous combustion. One moment he is an apparently sane and respectable citizen, the next he is a dancing, frenzied fiend rushing frantically about to slay, blindly and indiscriminately, friend, relative, or foe, until he himself is slain. But a Moro who goes *juramentado* makes careful preparation of his bloody part, works himself into a state of religious fanaticism, is shaven and shaven by a Mohammedan priest, secrets weapons about his person, then quietly and methodically seeks the spot where Christians are mostly thickly gathered before beginning his business of beheading and disemboweling. *An amuck is a bomb-*

dropping Zeppelin: but a juramentado is the submarine that kills by stealth. (Underscoring mine--IRM)¹⁴

On the other hand, Hurley, in 1936, says:

Often confused with the practice of running *juramentado* was the custom, so prevalent among all Eastern people, of running *amuk*. Running *amuk* had no religious significance. Such a performance was called *manuju* by the Moros. The practice still persists in Mindanao and Sulu. To the knowledge of the writer, *amuks* have cleared the streets of Zamboanga within the last two years.

The practice of running *amuk* occurs when the natives have what is called a "bad head." The *amuk* is temporarily insane. The Malay is prone to brood and linger over imaginary ills and this culminates in the seizure of a kris and a mad slashing of every person in the *amuk's* path. Even the Moros are not spared when in the path of an *amuk*.¹⁵

Through the years, the two terms often confused writers, foreign and Filipinos alike, and worse, even Muslims. For instance, one writer from Sulu states:

In extreme cases, to uphold one's pride is to result in *Magsabil*. *Magsabil* is a term meaning running amuck. Many people outside of Sulu have asked why a native of this province becomes a *juramentado* or *amuck*. Most frequently he does so to vindicate his honor or sometimes he is reacting to an indignity committed against him...¹⁶

The former president of Mindanao State University (MSU), Dr. Antonio Isidro, added more confusion when he said:

The Spanish-coined term *juramentado* for the sworn killer or *amok* is not sanctioned as a *jihad* defense, even if the *amok* verbally professes a religious motive. To

the Maranaos, such a mental case is called *miakasiya* -- a simple suicide who acts not in the Way of God. Amoks or suicides do not necessarily know the real meaning of *jihad*.¹⁷

We can probably forgive the earlier foreign travelers when they confused the two terms and used them interchangeably or erroneously, as when Landor related his experience, thus:

These *juramentados*, when they run amuck (underscoring supplied--IRM), show a great deal of grit, and I have known one man actually attacking an entire troop of cavalry, while every soldier was firing at him.¹⁸

Probably the best explanation as to the confusion is this one posited by the Filipino Jesuit priest, Fr. Francisco Mallari, when he reasoned out that:

A *juramentado* differs from an *amok*, since the latter indulges in a killing spree without any religious motivation. But the real meaning of *juramentado* has so evolved over the years that, in popular conception, *juramentado* and *amok* have become mutually interchangeable terms...¹⁹

Serious students of Muslim Filipinos, however, have remarked "the high degree of spontaneity, the indiscriminate choice of victims, and an absence of the religious motive" as marks of an amuck. Gowing says that amucks "had no religious or patriotic significance whatever, but were usually poor wretches who had simply lost their heads and ran mad in the streets killing everybody and anyone in sight. The *juramentado* prepared deliberately and carefully for his mission. As best as he could... he limited his victims to infidels."²⁰ Tan makes a clearer distinction when he states that the *sabil allahs* (i.e., *juramentado*-IRM) "were individuals or warriors who took the vows of death regardless of status, age, sex, or origin."²¹

Tan identified four conditions that a *sabilallah* must satisfy:

(1) a period of conscious dying of all earthly desires and attachments, (2) a conscious loss of self in society, (3) a sober commitment to die for the faith, pledging to kill as many of the enemy as possible, and (4) a formal sanctification by the *pandita* or *imam*. The first three conditions represented the intrinsic requirements of purification.²²

Rationale Behind the Institution of Sabil Allah

According to Muslim constitutional law, the world is clearly divided into two: the *dar al-Islam* ("abode or territory of Islam") and the *dar al-harb* ("abode or territory of war"), that is, in the "world of Islam" and the "world of war." *Dar al-Islam* belongs to the territory under Muslim rule. Its people are Muslims, by birth or conversion, and the communities of the tolerated religions (the *dhimmis*) who prefer to practice their own cult, paying the *jizya-t* (poll tax). Here, the Muslims enjoy full rights of citizenship, although the *dhimmis* enjoy only partial rights and observe Muslim rules. The "world of war" consisted of all the states and communities outside of the "world of Islam." Its residents are called *kafirs*, that is, "infidels" or "unbelievers."²³

The aim of *jihad*, therefore, is to turn the "world of war" into the "world of Islam," and theoretically, the Muslim State is in a constant state of war with the non-Muslim world.²⁴ Indeed, when a Muslim country becomes a "world of war" it is the duty of all Muslims to withdraw from it, and a wife who refuses to join her husband is divorced.²⁵

The word *jihad* is derived from the Arabic verb *jahada* (from the abstract noun, *juhd*) which means "exerted." In its juridical-theological sense, *jihad* is the "exertion of one's power

in Allah's path," that is, the spread of the belief in Allah and in making his teachings supreme all over the world. The individual's reward is to attain salvation, as the *jihad* is Allah's direct path to paradise. This is actually based on the teachings of the Koran:

O ye who believe! Shall I guide you to a gainful trade which will save you from painful punishment? *Believe in Allah and His Apostle and carry on warfare (jihad) in the path of Allah with your possessions and your persons.* That is better for you. If ye have knowledge, He will forgive your sins, and will place you in the Gardens of Eden: that is the great gain. (Underscoring mine--IRM)²⁶

According to Khadduri, the *jihad* in the broad sense of "exertion" does not necessarily mean war or fighting, since "exertion in Allah's path" may be attained both by peaceful as well as violent means. It may be considered a form of religious propaganda that can be carried out either by persuasion or by the use of arms.

The spread of Islam by the sword is a religious duty imposed on the Muslims in general. If the "world of Islam" is invaded by unbelievers, which happened in Jolo in 1876 when the Spanish forces under the general command of Governor General Jose Malcampo y Monje, the *imam* may promulgate a general order calling all Muslims on the island to fight, and as the danger increases so may the extent of the orders until the whole Muslim world (as in the case of the Tausugs of Sulu and the Magindanaos of Cotabato) is involved. A Muslim who dies fighting in the "Path of Allah" (*fi sabil Allah*) is considered a *sahid/shahid* (martyr) and is assured of paradise.²⁷

The Muslim jurists distinguished four different ways by which the believer may satisfy his *jihad* obligation: first, by his *heart*; second, by his *tongue*; third, by his *hands*, and fourth, by the *sword*. The heart is about fighting the devil and escaping his persuasion to evil and is considered the greater *jihad*. The *tongue*

and *hands* are attained by supporting the right and correcting the wrong. The *sword* precisely means "war," and is concerned with fighting the unbelievers or infidels and the enemies of the faith. The Koran (LXI, 11) teaches that believers are obliged to sacrifice their "wealth and lives in the prosecution of war."²⁸

The *jihad* may be both a collective and an individual duty, that is *fard kifays* and *fard ayn*, respectively. Individual obligations like prayer or fasting must be performed individually by each believer and is subject to punishment if he fails to do his duty. The *jihad*, on the other hand, is considered by all Muslim jurists, with almost no exception, as a collective obligation of the whole Muslim community. They urge the obligation to fight. Women and children, as a rule, were exempted from actual fighting, although many women have contributed indirectly to the war effort.²⁹

If Islam is threatened by a sudden attack, it is the duty of every Muslim, including women and children, to rise up in arms in the defense of Islam. As a collective duty, the *jihad* is a state instrument; the *imam* as head or deputy head of the state, is charged with the duty of declaring it.³⁰

Parang Sabil: Literature of the "Moro Wars"

The imaginative literature that came out as an offshoot of the so-called "Moro Wars" during the Spanish regime (and persisting up until the Commonwealth period in the late 1930s) are the *parang sabil*. Kiefer notes:

These are long epic ballads which deal with the exploits of persons killed by Christians in warfare. The tradition derives from the institution of ritual suicide (*sabil*) which was incorrectly called *juramentado* by the Spanish which no longer exists in Jolo. The person intending to commit suicide underwent an adapted and shortened version of the normal rituals for a corpse while

he was still alive. His body prepared for death, he then went to a Christian settlement (usually Jolo or Zamboanga) and he began killing with his kris in a mad fury, until he was eventually dispatched himself. The major purpose of *sabbil*, however, was not to kill but to be killed by an evil person in such a way that the death could be considered an innocent one and it would guarantee a pleasant afterlife. *Sabbil* is done today only against some out-group still considered sufficiently evil to meet the requirements of the institution. Furthermore, any innocent death at the hands of government authorities is considered *sabbil*.³¹

Kiefer identifies the *langkit parrang sabbil* (*liyangkit parang sabil*) as "songs dealing with ritual suicide or death at the hands of Christians. They are epic ballads in the true European sense, glorifying the heroism of the man who "does what he has to do," often with considerable reference to fate and destiny. In fact, he was to record on 6 April 1968 "*Langkit Parrang Sabbil kan Apud*" (Ballad of the Way of God of Apud) at Bunbun, Patikul, in Jolo. The story of the *parang sabil* occurred during the Commonwealth period under President Manuel L. Quezon. It recounts the plight of the five young Tausugs Apud, Jumah, Makaram, Pisingan and Isnain who refused to be drafted as trainees in the fledgling Philippine Army and decided instead to become outlaws. They went around committing robbery and finally killed Jawali, a bus driver who squealed on them. In the end, all five and several of their relatives were killed in a skirmish with the Philippine Army.

The *parang sabil* describes Jawali's killing very vividly thus:

Ing sila nagkit/pagka sukay nasabbut
 sinyal pa abut-abut/ pagka kalis naabut
 ing sapiyul liyagut/ ing kalagut iyumpak
 ha abagaa nansipak/ ing hait namagakpak
 kibit duwa masipak/ kaduwa liyakbusan
 baran katibusan

(He and his companions saw each other
And when the fare was asked for,
He signaled several times,
Reached for his kris,
And hacked the driver
He jumped and slashed the driver's
Shoulder in two
The sharp kris swished through the air
Splitting his shoulders,
Both, hacked like cutting sugar cane.
His body jerked...)

Another student of Tausug culture and history, Gerard Rixhon, has this to say about the *parang sabil*:

The *parang sabil* is a traditional Tausug institution that has been strongly discouraged by most Sulu leaders, for the cause of *jihad*, or holy war in the defense of Islam, was often absent in most of the instances it was committed ...In doing a *parang sabil*, the Tausug seeks death at the hand of infidels (*kapil*, from Arabic *kafir*--IRM), in order to reach heaven with his great wealth of merits suddenly multiplied. The Tausug believes that a *sabil* merits him a journey direct to heaven on the back of a flaming white horse Arabic, *borak*; Tausug *burrak* or *sambalani*--IRM). Since being slain "in the path of God," singing of the *parang sabil* is considered also a religious activity.³²

Majul posits the possibility of Sumatran influence on the *juramentado* or *sabilallah* in the Philippines when he says that the reading of the *Parang Sabil-ullah* (Malay *perang sabil Allah*, "a Holy War"--IRM), use of amulets and white clothes (*juban*--IRM) were also found in Aceh during the war against the Dutch.³³

However, it appears that even earlier than the so-called Acehese Wars during the seventh century, it was already the

custom, for instance, before fighting started, to boost the morale of the army by using any of these methods:

By reading Qur'anic verses on the *jihād*, the reciting of chivalrous poetry by writers who actually took part in fighting, and by an appeal to certain emotional traits of the Arabs such as courage... Verses from the Qur'an and chivalrous poetry were recited even during fighting. Poetry was composed by fighting poets while they were taking part in battles. These poems were by no means of low standard; in fact some of the most excellent poetry was the product of great battles, *when the poets were at their highest level of excitement and passion.* (Underscoring mine--IRM)³⁴

Summary and Conclusion

We have seen that the *juramentado* is more or less the Christian term for Muslim *sabilallah* or just *sabil* or *saber*. It was born out of the desperate attempts on the part of the Moros to defend their ancestral lands against the onslaughts of the Spaniards which is encompassed in what Tan describes as the "Period of Decline." The earliest reference to the term "*juramentado*" insofar as archival records are concerned is dated 1876 and up to now this researcher has not encountered any document antedating it. In fact, the earliest available archival document from the National Archives in Manila so far is dated 24 October 1876 in Cotabato which records in detail the case of a Moro *juramentado* who wounded eight victims including a christianized Moro in the market of Cotabato. There might be documents earlier than this document, however.

So unique is *juramentado*/ *sabilallah* that a further in-depth study is necessary to trace the possible roots of this institution by means of comparative studies with other Islamic countries in Southeast Asia, like Indonesia or Malaysia.

The effect of *juramentado* on the Spaniards and the Americans is revealed in battle reports, memoirs, diaries and personal narratives, although most of them, if not all, are of course one-sided or biased. However, Filipinos should take a second look at themselves in this critical times of an upsurge in nationalism, and respect the zeal and courage of the so-called *juramentados*, *juramentado-an* or *sabilallahs*. Armed only with a *kris*, *barong* or *kampilan*, these *mujahids* attacked superior forces with superior weaponry like the Americans who produced a special pistol, the .45 caliber Colt, to put away quickly these frenzied attackers.

Because of the paucity of primary sources and the extreme secrecy of the rites and rituals in connection with the *sabilallah*, according to a recent interview, the reconstruction of the elaborate ceremony performed by the *sabilallah* or *juramentado* was only based on written sources left by the Spaniards, Americans and Filipinos. The reconstruction here presented is therefore a composite, if not an eclectic one. Despite the odds and difficulties met, this researcher feels satisfied as he was able to get a clearer picture of the otherwise hazy and confusing subject.

What was rewarding in preparing this paper was the fact that additional materials on the *sabilallah/juramentado* were uncovered. Witness, for instance, this recording of a fragment (six stanzas) from what may be a Sama *parang sabil* dictated by a Moro *datu* to the Dominican Fr. Jose Maria Ruiz in the late 1880s thus:³⁵

Pagcalanta aco isa/ Salibansanan dasa
 Sabab ann sucut dasa/ Tumulat aco salasa.
 Maluag can sanchata/ Pacucus in sacayan sa
 Bisan uay bantata/ Marayab panab quita.

Jari Salibansanan/ Matto pa Zamboangan
 Bisan nay dangan/ Midda pa subangan.
 Castila piangayn/ Simacat na tinuyo
 Catacus mangayo/ Inacujan sa nag buno.

Aco catcal magbuno na/ Ampa lasa-aun co na
Bant aco dumungu na/ Sagui na Bismilla.

Jida manung lasap/ Magcalis samsil dasak
Minsan co dugu nasak/ Limagut parran lisak.

(Un canto entonare/ Que es del Salibansanan
Que es del Salibansanan/ Para tener suerte
Al embarcarme el martes.
Busca las landacas/ Las armas en la embarcacion
Y aunque no haya enemigos/ Bueno es estar
prevenidos.

Este Salibansanan/ Va para Zamboanga,
Aunque no haya comercio/ Volvera pronto.
Al castila pido/ Subire yo con valor
Sus armas pido/ Y le abre las entranas en
la guerra.

Tengo gusto en hablar/ Esgrimire con valor el
cris afilado
Y aunque mi sangre corra por el suelo/ Tajeare
al oir tocar.)

Juramentado/ sabilallah as a regular institution ended with the coming of the Americans and the establishment of a civil government with the separation of the church and state as a major consideration, unlike the Spaniards. Therefore, the *panditas* who were very active before in agitating the people to fight the enemy have lost their influence. During the American period, most of them refused to be linked with the practice of *juramentado/ sabilallah*. The sultans, on the other hand, also lost their prestige in the eyes of their people as they equally lost their civil powers and hold on them as they themselves did not live piously.

Another reason for the decline in the practice of the *sabilallah/ juramentado* utilized by both Spaniards and Americans was burying slain *sabilallahs/ juramentados* with the

dead bodies of pigs, which was, of course, very insulting to the Moros.

Added to this, was the fact that the *panditas* who sanctified the *sabilallahs* or *juramentados* were themselves liquidated even as the members of the family of the *sabilallah* or *juramentado*, if known, were also killed in retaliation.

In spite of these, the *sabilallahs* / *juramentados* continued to pester both Spaniards and Americans for a long time, even up until the Commonwealth period as mentioned elsewhere in this paper. In contemporary times, the institution of *sabilallah* / *juramentado* seemingly was being revived. Proof of this was the case of a young fighter of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) who, on 7 February 1974, while dying in the Battle of Jolo, wrote in his own blood the following graffiti at the Notre Dame of Jolo College classroom wall:

"In kami *parang sabil*. Nagbaugbug kami sin hulah iban bangsa agama."³⁶

("We are doing this for the way of God. We are defending land, nation and religion.")

NOTES

1. Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, p. 353.
2. *Enciclopedia Universal Europa-Americana*, XXVII, 2d. pt., p. 3198.
3. Retana y Gamboa, *Diccionario de filipinismos*. He says further: "*Seusa mucho, y se ha usada mas, siempre en masculino, pues no se sabe juramentadas.*" "It has been our garrison's nightmare in Mindanao and Jolo. They have forced (themselves)

into the plaza many times, brandishing *kampilan* thrusts right and left until they are killed."

4. Cavalleria, p. 598.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Espina, p. 342.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Cavalleria, p. 593.
9. Majul, "Two Take on the *Juramentado*," 7:1697.
10. "The Parang Sabil of Abdullah and Putli Isara, of Sulu," p. 158.
11. Majul, "Chinese Relationships with the Sultanate of Sulu," p. 158.
12. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, p. 71.
13. Wilkinson, p. 25. It is cognate to the Sudanese *ngmuk*, "to fight furiously" and *pamuk*, "great fighter." *Pouok* is a proto-Philippine word meaning "come together, assemble in big number." Costenoble, p. 225.
14. White, p. 293.
15. Hurley, p. 130-31. External sources, however, identified the *amuck's* existence as early as the 17th century and even earlier in Java. See Majul, "The Institution of the *Juramentado*," in his *Muslims in the Philippines*, p. 353-54.
16. Bruno, p. 170.
17. Isidro, p. 151.

18. Landor, p. 51.
19. Cavalleria, p. 619, footnote no. 24.
20. Gowing, *Mandate*, p. 100. In a later work *Muslim Filipinos*, p. 100-101, he says: "Amucks are not unique to the Moros for they are found in many societies of the world. They are simply demented individuals."
21. Tan, *The Filipino Muslim Armed Struggle*, p. 13.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Khadduri, p. 52-53. See also Gibb and Kramers, p. 69.
24. Gibb and Kramers, p. 69.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Khadduri, p. 55-56.
27. Gibb and Kramers, p. 89.
28. Khadduri, p. 56-57.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 60-62.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
31. Kiefer, *Music from the Tausug*, p. 7.
32. See footnote no. 10. p. 160.
33. Majul, "The Institution of the *Juramentado*," p. 356.
34. Khadduri, p. 91.
35. Madrid, *Exposicion General de las Islas Filipinas, 1887, Comision Central de Manila Memoria*, pt. 2, by Fr. Jose Maria

Ruiz, p. 209-10. This book, together with pt. 1, of Fr. Francisco Sanchez, were ordered destroyed and banned by Archbishop Pedro Payo.

36. Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos*, p. 102.

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