

An Historical Journey of Peace in Minsupala

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This “historical journey” aims to survey the various peoples and societies that have prevailed in the Minsupala region. In each of these peoples, how did Mindanao fare in terms of the peace and order situation? . . .

The *Mamanua* from the Mambuti tribe in Africa, c. 28,000 B.C., in northeastern Mindanao (presently, Agusan-Surigao border). Source: traditional/legendary. There must have prevailed relative peace on the Island in the primitive state, as there was no competition for land and power. The leader of the tribe or band was *primus inter pares* (first) among the many of the members in the local group.

The *Proto or first Manobo ancestors* from the south Asian mainland (around Formosa), c. 4000 B.C., in northeastern Mindanao. There would have been relative peace on the Island among these food-gatherers and semi-sedentary dwellers. There was no competition for land, power, and prestige. Source: Linguistic reconstruction; archeological evidence.

Appearance of Proto-Manobo (the *first Manobo*) in northeastern Mindanao (presently Butuan) c. 500 A.D. There was relative peace and order in

* From a lecture presented during the 2nd Joint GRP-MILF Training-Workshop for the Capability-building of Local Monitoring Teams on 16-18 July 2002 at the Seagull Beach Resort, Matina, Davao City. Dr. Kadil is a professor in the Department of History and Department of Graduate Studies, CSSH, Mindanao State University, in Marawi City

folk society, as there was still no rivalry over land possession and power among the members of the various local groups within the tribe. *Bagani* (bravery and heroism) appeared to be the personal trait most valued by the leaders against opponents from within and other local groups. Source: Linguistic reconstruction; cultural evidence.

Sama Bajaw from south Asian mainland (Siam), c. 800 A.D., around the Samboangan peninsula. There was tranquility among the peace-loving adventurers that moved away from their original home on account of oppression by their tyrant rulers in the Asian mainland (Sina). Mindanao was blessed with boat peoples that inhabited mainly the shores and coastlines. They were desireless local groups that showed no competition for possession of land and had only little interest in power.

Appearance of the *Butuanon* (Sama-Manobo) speakers in Agusan, c. 1000-1300 A.D. According to scholars on the subject, from the *amalgamation* or inter-marriage of land-dwelling Manobo in Agusan and Sama-Bajaw seafarers that settled on the shores of Masaw emerged the so-called Butuanon speakers. Then, subsequently, branched out the Kamayo/Surigaonon speakers (south), Danaon speakers (west into Pulangi), Tau Sug speakers (farther southwest in the Sulu archipelago) and Visayan speakers (north in the splintered islands). As the population of the local groups in Butuan multiplied, Chinese-Butuan trade was declining. Consequently, there was a movement of local group members (families) in search of trade and market in Sulu. It was the beginning of economic competition and the tributary system with Celestial Empire of China. There was relative absence of conflict and warfare between and among local groups and peoples. Political tradition: *Kerajaan*. Source: Historical documents; cultural evidences.

Appearance of *Tau Sug* (Butuanon-Melayu) speakers in Sulu c. 1300-1500 A.D. Political tradition: *Kerajaan* of Raja Baguinda from Sumatra. Sulu Tribe: Buranun. Language: Bahasa Sug (Sinug). Source: Linguistic evidences; traditional/oral tarsila. There was a prosperous trade/economy; political order under *kerajaan*. There was relative absence of conflict and warfare.

Appearance of the *Danaoan* (Manobo-Iranun) speakers in the Pulangi, later Ranao, c. 1300-15—A.D. Political tradition: *Kerajaan* of Raja Indarapatra. Language: Basa Iranun (Iniranun). Source: Linguistic reconstruction; traditional/oral tarsila. There was a cultural development/enhancement, order under *kerajaan* and relative peace among aborigines and environment. The “tyrannical reign of beast” in the region was eliminated when Raja Indarapatra reigned as the “First Ruler of Mindanao,” according to tarsila.

Emergence of *Manobo-Subanu* (arrested Visayan) speakers on the Samboangan peninsula, c. 1300-150 A.D. Political Tradition: Timuay/Gumutan Humabon-Gabon (Raja Humabon). Source: Linguistic evidence; traditional/oral tarsila. There was conflict and defection between Subanu local groups and the mainstream Danaon Hindu-Malay political society.

Appearance of Muslim Malays with Arab descent that established the *Sultaniyyah* political tradition in Sulu in 1450 A.D. and Maguindanao in 1515 A.D. There was little opposition, relative absence of conflict and warfare between the Muslim “invaders” and the aboriginal peoples (part Manobo and Butuanon).

At its height, the Sulu sultanate prevailed over the Sulu archipelago, north Borneo, Samboangan peninsula, and certain parts of the Visayas and Luzon. At the time of Sultan Qudarat around 1645 A.D. or thereafter, the sultanate of Maguindanao prevailed in the Pulangi region, as far as Tagolook bay in Davao, north and east of Mindanao (Kagay-an and Caraga). Qudarat married the daughter of Sultan Raja Bongso of Sulu, who had both lineage with Brunei and maternal lineage with Butuan (Caraga). Military alliances were fostered between the Sulu ruler and Maguindanaon sultan in their resistance and opposition against Spanish colonialism, imperialism, and evangelization in the region. Source: Historical documents.

Appearance of northeastern Mindanao-Manobo (Proto or First Visayan) speakers in Butuan, Laiti, Bool, Dapitan (including Sugbu and Panai), c. 16th century. Political tradition: Kerajaan of Raja Siagi (Butuan), Raja Kolambu (Samar-Laiti), Shri Bantog (Panglao-Bool), Raja Humabon (Sugbu) and progenies of Bornean datus on Panai. There was drastic cultural change, from Hindu-Malay to western-Hispanic at the inception of Spanish colonialism (in 1521, 1565, 1596), thus the beginning of Visayan civilization or culture (religion and language) on the northern Mindanao and southern Visayan Basin (Mindanao Strait). Source: Traditional/oral tarsila, bayok; historical documents. There was a political expansion/conquest and hegemony of Manobo-Visayan in the northeastern Mindanao Basin, specifically Mindanao Strait settlements (Butuan, Iligan, Dapitan) and southern Visayas (Laiti-Samar, Bool, Panglao, and Sugbu).

Colonialism, Imperialism and Evangelization. Holding of the celebrated First Mass of Magellan’s crew with Butuanon-Manobo on Masaw (Butuan, April 1521), but did not prosper until 1596 with the Jesuits advancing into Butuan (Caraga). The first converted Manobos by the Jesuits, therefore, became (old, proto or first) Visayan that spread into the Visayas and established their hegemony there because of continued Moro depredations on the region, which for a time was under Moro hegemony in the time of Raja Sirungan

(Maguindanao, 1596) and Raja Bongsu (Sulu, 1628). Moro raids continued pursuing the "Visaya" (christianized natives, originally Manobo) on the splintered islands, and hence, the so-called Moro Wars (Spanish-Muslim conflict, 1565-1898) was fought between the Moros and the Spaniards, the protector of the baptized Spanish Monarch, King Felipe's (hence, Filipino) Visaya subjects (hence, Christians). The war epic continues. . .to date and the major player now is shifted to "imperial" Manila with mostly Tagalog-turned Filipino subjects (not any more the old-age Visayan Filipino subjects).

Political tradition: From Kerajaan (Hindu-Malay kingship) to Monarchy (Western-Hispanic kingship), in the case of the Manobo-Butuanon turned Visayan-Filipino subjects. From Kerajaan to Sultaniyyah, in the case of the Manobo-Butuanon turned Tau Sug-Melayu members of Islamic Ummah and the Manobo-Butuanon turned Danaon-Melayu members of Islamic Ummah. Peace and Order: 333 years of conflict with Spain; relative peace with the Americans; continued conflict with the Filipino rule and Imperial Manila, in the case of the islamized natives or Moros (turned warriors) by the Spanish; conflict in the Mindanao region between the Moros (turned warriors) and Old Visayans or christianized natives in northeastern Mindanao along with the migrant settlers from Luzon and Visayas (turned Filipino subjects) by the Spanish; relative peace, cooperation and harmony in the Mindanao region between the Old Visayan (turned Christians and Filipinos) and the recent migrant settlers from Luzon and Visayas (turned Christians and Filipinos); confrontation and conflict in the Mindanao region between islamized groups (turned Moro warriors) versus the Old Visayans or Christians (turned Filipino subjects/citizens); relative understanding and peace between the pro-Filipino Moro groups (filipinized Muslims) with the Filipino citizens, which is being worked out by the Philippine government in entering into peace agreements (e.g. Tripoli Agreement of 1976, Final Agreement of 1996, and Tripoli Agreement on Peace 2001) with the Bangsa Moro people. Source: Historical documents and traditional/oral tarsila; media (tabloid, TV, radio).

As a result of the above events, there has thus appeared a hispano-christian and westernized society on northeastern Mindanao, which serves as the jumping board for the future evangelization of the hinterlands (Caraga, Tagalook, Ranao, Pulangi, including Samboangan) with initial successes. These part Hispanic and part western peoples comprised the mainstream Filipino society today, along with the recent migrant settlers from the Visayas (Cebuano, Ilonggo) and Luzon (Ilocano and Tagalog). After the Mindanao colonization policy of the Commonwealth, which commenced in 1639, they now comprise the majority of the Mindanao population (over 20 million) and control over 80% of Mindanao economy, land and resources (in 1970's). Their Universal Church is

based in Rome and the western world (America) and their Universal Political culture is centered on Western Monarchs (Kings) and western Political Thinkers.

As part of the above events, there has prevailed and Islamic society, transformed from part Hindu-Malay, as in other parts of the archipelago, over Sulu, Mindanao (including Palawan). The population is still concentrated in the Pulangi and Ranao (lake) Region), in the heartland of Mindanao Island, Basilan and Sulu, as it has been since its inception to Islam in 1515 A.D. Its Universal Religion is based in Mecca (Arabia), the Quiblat (direction) of the Universal Islamic Ummah, with Universal Political culture established by the Khilafat-Imanat (with capitals in Medina, Damascus, Baghdad, Istanbul). The MILF, MNLF, and Abu Sayyaf Al Harakah form part of this ideological movement.

As part of the above events, there still remain the aboriginal Manobo local groups (with various geographical labels), or the so-called indigenous (Lumad) peoples in the hinterlands of Mindanao. They are part neither of the Islamic Society nor of the Western Hispano-Filipino society because of the absence of a universal system, other than their being "folk" societies still prevailing all over the island.

Cognizant of the above historical experience that Mindanao had undergone, the various peoples or societies therein must learn to understand and compromise in order to achieve harmony and peaceful co-existence as inhabitants of Mindanao and outlying islands. This is the aspiration of the peace-loving peoples of the region, and certainly, the ultimate goal of the GRP and MILF. The present participants of this LMT seminar-workshop must be able to work along this line.

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