

“Bagobo” comes from “bago” meaning “new, recent” and “obo/obbo/uvu” meaning “growth, grow,” so that the term refers to a recent formation of people along the coast of the Davao Gulf. When the Hinduized peoples from the south brought in Hindu culture during the Sri Vijayan and Majapahit penetration of Mindanao, these migrants mixed with the native population, forming a new society reflected in the name “Bagobo.”

The term may loosely apply to the coastal peoples of Davao Gulf, especially those native groups on the western shores of southeastern Davao. These groups include several ethnicities, such as the Tagabawa, Jangan or Attaw, and Tagacaolo. Spanish missionaries and early ethnographers tended to identify them all as one group because they had common articles of material culture, such as dress and ornaments, tools, blades, and musical instruments.

Immigrants from other places also tended to include the Manuvu among the Bagobo groups. The ascription is erroneous, for the Manuvu live in the upland areas northwest, north, and northeast of Mount Apo in interior Mindanao. Furthermore, all the abovenamed ethnic groups speak mutually unintelligible languages.

The Bagobo are light brown in complexion. Their hair is brown or brownish black, ranging from wavy to curly. The men stand about 158 centimeters tall, the women 147 centimeters tall. Although the face is wide, the cheekbones are not prominent. The eyes are dark and widely set, the eyeslits slanting. The eyebrows are deliberately shaved to a thin line by both male and female. The root of the nose is low, the ridge broad. The lips are full, the chin rounded. Population estimate of the Bagobo in 1988 was 80,000 (NCCP-PACT 1988).

History

The Bagobo were the first ethnic group in Mindanao encountered by the Spaniards at the end of the 19th century. Brisk trade already existed among the various groups and tribes. Horses were used to transport goods to the coast. The Bagobo were excellent riders and showed their pride in this skill by adorning their horses with beads and bangles. Their principal trade item was rice, which they exchanged for lowland goods like salt, fish, clay pottery, and for upland goods like resin, beeswax, and the lumbang fruit which was their source of fuel. From the Muslims they bought iron; they bartered with the Chinese for pots, beads, and other ornaments.

Sibulan is the ancient settlement of the Bagobo and was the center of all the Bagobo settlements when the Spaniards came. Datu Manib was the datu of Sibulan and, therefore, the foremost datu among all the other datu. He was between 45 and 50 years old when the Spaniards first came to Sibulan. He was able to trace his genealogy back 11 generations to Saling-olop, a legendary culture hero. Although he cordially received the Spaniards when they arrived, he was later imprisoned for defying the Spanish injunction against human sacrifices and refusing to help them capture a Bagobo fugitive.

When he was released, the Bagobo again held a human sacrifice and killed all those they perceived to have been responsible for their datu's humiliation. Then Manib and his followers destroyed their own fields and lay traps before abandoning their homes. Manib's leadership later weakened and he was replaced by Datu Tongcaling, the datu when the Americans came. Although maintaining friendly relations with the new colonisers, Tongcaling was able to preserve his people's indigenous culture.

Spanish colonization and Christianization founded some *reducciones* or colonized towns, such as Lobo (now Santa Cruz), Astorga, Daliao, Bago, Talomo, Daron, Binugao, Tuban, Cautit, and Bacolod. Permanent crop fields were mandated so that village life would become sedentary, even as *abonados* or merchants who were Christian Filipinos, penetrated the interior in search of goods to trade, thus facilitating colonial access. Generally, however, Spanish colonial efforts were more successful in the lowlands. Even so, native adaptation proved difficult and resulted in the gradual disappearance of the Bagobo from Santa Cruz.

The Americans moved deeper into Bagobo land, dramatically transforming native economic and political structures through the introduction of money economy, labor specialization, municipal and barrio governments, and an effective educational system. The Americans built more roads and extended existing ones into the forests and swamps. Roads were also built parallel to the coast. From 1900 to 1945, Davao became a plantation country, the site of endless rows of coconut trees, fields of abaca, wharves, factories, and more houses. During World War II, the Japanese built experimental stations. Migrant labor turned Davao into a melting pot.

Modernization boosted the economy but tended to exploit labor. It also ended traditions like human sacrifice, the *datu* system, and the *bagani* class although certain native beliefs persisted, e.g., the "Langis" (literally, "oil") worship which fuses ancient medicinal practices with colonial religious rituals. More changes occurred as Bagobo culture opened itself to the influence of neighboring ethnic groups. Through many generations, trade and war facilitated intermarriages and the exchange of customs and artifacts. During the Martial Law era, Filipino minorities like the Bagobo were incorporated into the revived barangay system. Today, militarization and insurgency have added yet another dimension to Bagobo society.

Economy

The primary means of subsistence is swidden agriculture. Rice and corn are rotated. Other products are copra, coffee and cacao, fruits, and vegetables. The traditional economic system ensured that every household was self-sufficient, producing for itself not only the staple food, rice, but also clothes, farming and domestic implements, and weapons. Hence, there was no clear division of labor, with the exception of the blacksmith, the *bagani/magani* (warrior), and the *mabalian* (priestess). Today, however, trade has opened intertribal and interracial relations. The money economy, while decreasing the level of self-sufficiency, has helped improve production,

transportation, and communication.

Both men and women strip hemp for the abaca trade and for domestic purposes. Blacksmithing, house building, and the making of kitchen utensils like rice mortars and meat blocks are done by the men. Basketry is done by both sexes. Some old men manufacture small shell disks used to decorate their clothing.

Political System

Traditional Bagobo society was divided into three classes. The bagani was the warrior class; the datu was the chief bagani and he inherited his position. However, he enjoyed no special privilege, except for the possession of his title and rank. His main function was to be a judge, an arbiter, and a defender of the tribe. As the bagani was held in high esteem, so his opposite, the *matalo* or a man who has never killed a person and has no desire to fight, was scorned. The bagani who has killed at least two persons was allowed to wear blood-red clothes and *tangkulu* (headkerchief) and a small bag for betel nut and lime, which was considered a property of the spirits.

The next class consisted of the *mabalian* or priestesses, elderly women who were usually distinguished as skilled weavers. They had first been selected through a dream or vision from a benign spirit who revealed the secret of a new cure for an ailment. Then they were apprenticed to the mabalian, from whom they learned, among other things, how to weave the clothes of the bagani. Like the bagani, they wore special clothes that signified their position.

The slave class was composed of women and children taken during raids. Slave women sometimes became concubines of their masters; if so, their children were considered free because their fathers were freemen.

The datu meted out punishment to all offenders. Crimes punishable with death were murder, incest, and refusal to serve in payment for one's debt. A cuckolded husband could kill his wife and her lover but must leave his weapon embedded in their bodies. Otherwise, the families of the victims could avenge the deaths.

Bongat was the practice of divination involving mysterious powders inserted into a chicken egg. This was believed to cause so much pain in thieves that they would be compelled to confess their crime. There were rules governing ceremonies and rituals, behavior in the vicinity of shrines, and the wearing of clothes reserved only for the bagani and mabalian.

Under Spanish colonization, these political institutions underwent drastic transformation. The indigenous settlement became a pueblo, which fell under the authority of the cabecera, the capital of the "Fourth Military District of Mindanao." During the American period, American soldiers who decided to stay were rewarded with plantations in Davao and became politically influential. The leadership of

Tongcaling, whom the Americans designated as datu of all the Bagobo tribes inhabiting the contiguous area from Sibulan to Digos, was not recognized by these foreigners. When the American period ended, political dynasties from the Visayas bought out the plantations from the American owners. Thus was a political organization characteristically Visayan created.

Under the Philippine Republic, the Bagobo settlement became a municipality within the provincial government of Davao del Sur. This municipality, which is divided into barangays, is administered by a mayor and a vice-mayor with the assistance of the municipal council, composed of the barangay captain of the poblacion, the Sangguniang Bayan members, the municipal development officer, and the municipal planning and development coordinator, and the Association of Barangay Captains, headed by the barangay captain of the poblacion and composed of the barangay captains of the municipality. At present, Sibulan, the traditional center of the Bagobo people, is merely one of the 15 barangay of the municipality of Santa Cruz, formerly the settlement of Lobo. The datu has been replaced by the barangay captain, who is elected and swears allegiance to the national government. Relative to the datu, the barangay captain has broader responsibilities (involving commitments to his political party) but lesser powers to enforce the law. This system of local government is also more prone to political aberrations such as graft, corruption, and opportunism.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

The Bagobo are polytheistic. They have a wide pantheon of *diwata* (gods) who reside in nine heavens above the skies, and to whom they allude in their songs and myths. Tiguiama, the creator, is assisted by the lesser gods like Mamale, creator of the earth; Macoreret, creator of the air; Domacolen, creator of the mountains; and Macaponguis, creator of water. Other gods are, dispenser of reward and punishment, and Todlai, patron of marriage and to whom are offered buyo and rice. The Bagobo also believe in a pantheon of demons: the great demon is Darago; lesser demons are Colambusan, Comalay, Tagamahng, Siring, Abac.

The daily activities of the Bagobo are marked by rituals. They offer areca nuts, betel leaves, food, clothing, and brass instruments, all placed on special altars for the blessing of their diwata, and for obtaining immunity from the *buso* (malignant spirits) and spirits of the departed. Along trails and in the forests there are platforms about 1 meter high and 30 centimeters wide that are *buwis* (shrines) to the buso. Even when the buwis is gone, its location is still known because a shrub called *daling-ding* is planted beside it.

The most distinctive feature of Bagobo religion used to be the practice of offering *paghuaga* (human sacrifice), especially in honor of Mandarangan and Tulus Ka Balekat. Mandarangan is the god of war, who resides in a lake in the volcano crater of Mount Apo. He is believed to grant courage and success to those who offer sacrifices to him, especially in matters of war and trade. He is the “chief of the war gods and patron of all who have taken at least one human life.” Tulus, the “one who knows everything,” is the

god of the *balekat* or “highest type of altar” employed in the most important religious ceremony called *gin-em/ginum* which used to involve a paghuaga. The sacrificial victim was a slave, killed by a lance thrust. The corpse was chopped by all those present and the pieces distributed for them to take home. It was believed that Mandarangan bestowed courage to the people who had contact with the sacrificial victim.

Children who participated in the ceremony were believed to grow up fearless. Nowadays, the paghuaga is replaced with animal sacrifices.

The local shamans are the male *matanom* and the female mabahan. When the matanom sees an omen, he carves the crude image of a man from a piece of wood and offers a small bag containing some rice. He prays to the gods to accept “this bit of wood which has our face.” Other offerings are the *tambara*, over which the matanom or mabalian pray. It consists of *bonga*, buyo, lime, and tobacco, all of which are placed on a dish on top of a bamboo stick fixed into the ground.

The Sibulan Bagobo believe that there are eight souls called the *gimukod* in everyone. When someone dies, four of the souls go to *pakakalangit* (heaven), a lush, sightless place where the gods Todlai and Tiguiama reside. The remaining four go to *karonaronawan* (hell). There are other Bagobo settlements where it is believed that the gimukod consists of only two parts: one in the right and the other in the left side of the body. One goes to heaven, the other to hell.

One important religious ceremony is that which begins the rice-planting season. The sign to prepare the fields for farming and to make the yearly sacrifice is the *balatik*, a constellation of seven stars making up a bow. Ceremonies are held at the blacksmith’s place, where the tools are consecrated. The offering of rice and chicken is cooked in bamboo, not in clay or iron pots. The ceremony begins with the blacksmith calling on the spirits to accept the offering and to watch over them in the fields. Then all eat a little of the food. For three days, any activity, whether work or entertainment, is banned. Then the fields are cleared and burned.

The breaking of soil and sowing of seeds begins when another constellation appears, signifying the start of the planting season. Upon entering the field at one corner, the workers walk toward the far left where they place a bamboo shrine called the *pemeg-ge*. The mabalian calls all the spirits, beginning with Manama. At the center of the field, another shrine called *parobanian* is erected for the spirit Tarogami to whom herbs, food, and bracelets are offered. A certain variety of rice called *malayag* is planted around the parobanian. The spirits are again invoked, this time beginning with the name of Tarogami.

Harvesting is done by women with a small knife called *gallat/gelat*. None of the prepared food may be eaten until the mabahan has cooked and distributed some of the rice to the various buwis. She also offers a few rice stalks to the spirits, again calling on them one by one.

Gatok-biaan or **pakakaro**, the ritual after the harvest, is the most lavish feast, done either individually or communally. This is the only Bagobo ceremony where the **agong** (knobbed gongs) is not played. Only the **bolang-bolang** (native guitar) and **flute** are played. Farm implements used for harvesting are placed in a large basket filled with rice.

The final ritual of the season is the **bagkes**. Before the ceremonial dishes are stored in the rice granary until the next festival, they are solemnly tied together with assurances to the spirits that they would be restored the following year.

Indigenous Bagobo beliefs now merge with Christian elements in a religion called “Langis”. A concoction of Mount Apo ingredients (coconut oil, herbs, wood, sulfuric rock, and wine or liquor) is believed to represent the sacred oil that annointed Christ. This is “langis” (oil), the Bagobo’s most successful attempt at syncretism. Begun in 1935 by Datu Bitil, this religion is well preserved today by Ang Chinhok and his followers. On Thursday and Sunday mornings, Saturday evening, and the first day of each month, **buwis** (monetary tribute) is offered. Then, in a ritual called **saksi** (witnessing), the worshippers plant bottles or drive nails into the ground near the can of offerings. A **pangulo** (priest or minister) performs the services before the langis or lawa in Chinhok’s house. Every year in December, representatives of the 22 churches of the “langis” make a pilgrimage to Mount Apo to gather ingredients for the sacred oil. The feast of the blacksmiths follows; farming tools are blessed for the planting season.

Architecture and Community Planning

The traditional Bagobo settlement is a cluster of individual farmhouses near a water source. The farmstead, consisting of both the residence and surrounding cultivated fields, is the Bagobo domicile. Hence, households of one settlement are dispersed rather than concentrated. In the past, the Bagobo built their house on top of a tree. Access was by a ladder that was pulled up after the owner had entered.

Smaller houses are made from available light materials, while bigger houses are of hollow blocks and wood with galvanized iron roofs.

Tambarra Incorporated is a modern Sibulan community planned like the older Bagobo settlements. Several huts are clustered around a larger one which serves as a chapel (characterized by the tambara or bamboo shrines on either side of the altar). Houses can be purchased from the corporation which owns the land and buildings.

At present, the traditional house stands on either stilts or piles several meters above the ground to keep enemies out. Housebuilders finish the roof first and then raise it to provide them with shelter until the whole structure is finished. The main support is provided by poles projecting 2.7-3.3 meters above the crossbeams and from the center of the one-room interior. An attic is created by loose boards laid on the cross beams.

The floor consists of *basag* (hardwood planks) hewn from the palma brava tree trunk. In times of strife, the hardwood protected the occupants from the enemy's spears coming from below. The posts and beams are also of basag. The roof is made of overlapping bamboo slats or thatched with giant *biga* (taro leaves) or *bulig* (banana leaves). On the roof are gutters of split-open bamboo. Walls, about 2 meters high, are of flattened, plaited bamboo, called *tinatang*. The interiors are dark, for the structure has no windows. However, *bobo* (small peepholes) allow occupants to see passersby. The constant kitchen smoke blackens the inside of the house, stings the eyes, and causes people to cough. But it keeps away insects and pests.

A platform makes up a second level, which is the sleeping area. It is also where guests are received. During social occasions, the platform is covered with native woven cloth, and pieces of large porcelain plates. Musical instruments like the agong are displayed conspicuously in the house. Other items on the floor are the stove, native jars, and bamboo water containers. Suspended above is a bamboo rack that holds Chinese plates or halved coconut shells used as dishes. Standing on a pedestal is a rice mortar.

The contemporary house is L-shaped, with the smaller area serving as the kitchen. In the kitchen is a *rebbong* (elevated firebox) above which firewood is stored. Although a fire hazard, this arrangement offers an effective way of drying the firewood. Except for meat, which is hung on a hook over the firebox, no food is stored. The Bagobo family gathers food enough only for the day. The house also contains various *sikado* (bamboo water containers), 1.3-2.3 meters long.

The larger section is the sleeping and storage area. Clothes hang from a *betill* (clothesline) suspended across the width of the house. A ledge, which separates the two sections, also serves as a bench.

Both the interior and exterior of the house are kept meticulously clean. A *rokok goli* (rice or corn granary) made of bamboo is built in the compound.

Visual Arts and Crafts

The women weave splendid decorations into their garments. The Spaniards once marveled at them and called them the "most handsomely dressed natives." The contemporary ordinary attire of the women consists of the tube skirt and a simple blouse. The skirt may have a floral pattern in earthen tones like russet, orange, or burnt sienna; or it may be in paisley and checkered prints. The blouse has short bell sleeves and simple lace edging around the neck, arms, and waist. The blouse is short enough to show the abdomen. Among the older women, this area of flesh is tattooed. For adornment, simple earplugs and a shell bracelet are worn. The men wear cotton drawstring trousers topped by an ordinary shirt. The older men wear a plain tangkulu or headkerchief.

Traditional clothes and jewelry are now worn only for village feasts and religious

ceremonies. The ceremonial attire of the Bagobo is most ornate and artistic. The Bagobo tie-dye abaca fibers in deep red, maroon, and black. The sheen of the undyed white fibers provides a sharp contrast. They weave these fibers into longitudinal strips with geometric designs representing nature and human beings. The motifs, spaces, and symmetrics are recalled from memory. They polish the fabric, called *tnalak*, with stones and shells to bring out a special luster and softness.

The men wear tnalak shorts, which are bordered by two wide horizontal bands, beaded with intricate designs. To keep the overlapped material secure at the waist, they use a wide, buckled belt of unique make, with close strands of interlinked brass or copper chains, at the end of which are handcrafted and multicolored brass bells. A second belt holds the bolo and knives, which the men always carry. These heirloom tools and weapons were decorated by a wax process that is now forgotten. Bagobo men wear a close-fitting undershirt, over which is their tinalak coat, finely beaded with complex designs around the neckline, sleeves, borders, front, and back. Its front flaps are left open. Personal belongings, such as the betel box of brass with copper and gold inlays, are secured in a tinalak shoulder bag also decorated with fine beads, tassels, and bells. They wear immense mother-of-pearl or ivory earrings (see logo of this article), which are unique to them, multistrand colored necklaces, and layers of bells below their knees. Their long hair is wrapped in a specially-dyed kerchief, the edges of which are bordered with fine, multicolored tassels and beads. The bagani is the only person privileged to wear the colored, closed shirt, and the tangkulu or the claret-colored turban. Completing the attire of the Bagobo warrior is the armor called *gindua*, which is worn over an inner armor made of abaca strips.

The women wear undecorated wraparound tinalak skirts, secured with an elaborately beaded belt or a strip of cloth. Like the men, they carry bolos hanging from their waists. Their blouses have a closed neckline and display very fine needlework, with antique shell disks and fine beads. Their head decor is made of fine white horsehair, beads, and small handcast bells. They adorn themselves with deeply incised and decorated brass armlets and leglets, dangling beaded earrings, strands of hanging multicolored beads under the chin, and more multicolored layers of beads for necklaces. Rows of bells around their ankles or grooved brass anklets with round brass pellets produce a tinkling sound as they walk barefoot.

The women's hair is brushed back and tied in a knot, into which a wooden comb, decorated with incised lines or beads, is inserted. Sometimes a narrow band of hair is kept in front so that it falls on the forehead and in front of the ears.

Teethfiling and blackening are practised by both men and women starting at the age of puberty.

Baskets and woven abaca knapsacks are likewise festooned with beads, bells, shell sequins, and cotton pompoms. A unique Bagobo basket is the bottle made of bamboo. Glass beads are sewn to an ikat-dyed abaca strip to which tufts of horsehair are also glued. The carrying strap is of tree bark, which is braided. A layer of split nito

reinforces the bottom corners.

Of different shapes and sizes, Bagobo knives include the *gallat*, *lawot*, *puko*, *guna*, *singngi*, *lagaraw*, *pananggutay*, *sangkit*, *sanggot*, and *kayog*. Each knife is sheathed in a basket of rattan strips woven to fit the scabbard snugly. Carved side panels provide reinforcement.

Even farming implements are elaborately decorated. On a sloping terrain, instead of plowing and furrowing, the Bagobo use the *todak* (pointed bamboo poles) to make holes for the seeds in order to prevent erosion. It is dyed, incised with geometric designs, and festooned with bells and feathers. At one end of the *todak* is a *pagakpak* (clapper).

Literary Arts

Bagobo folk literature is inextricably linked with their religious ceremonies and with significant stages in their lives. An exception to this, however, is the Bagobo riddle which requires no special or religious occasion. Riddling in Bagobo society may start almost anytime and anywhere—during play, when idling away the hours in conversation, during work, or after lunch. It usually starts with the younger members of the community, but it easily enlists the interest and participation of the older folks. There is, however, one period when riddling is discouraged—at nighttime. The Bagobo believe that malevolent spirits may join the riddling session at night. Examples of Bagobo riddles are (Manuel 1962:10-25):

*Atuka ru sa
Anak ta mahindanaw
Na ahad iddat saysay
Naddinog tadsinaggaw. (Ahung)*

You guess what it is
Maguindanao child
As far even as Saysay
Could be heard its cry. (Gong)

*Ad'ipanaw inis anak
Aruwa' rak... ka:mmas ta suddu'
Nad'uli' na idda reen. (Bavot kavi)*

When this man/woman leaves
He/she makes but two footprints
At the time he/she returns. (Carrying bag)

*Atukaru
Sekkaw warad tavod du. (Buyyag)*

Guess what it is
You would not be without your belt. (Parents)

Other Bagobo poetic forms include the metrical rendering by pregnant women of a list of saps and fruits—tuba, the stem of the buri, the fruit of *balisinan*, *dulian*, and so

forth—that should be eaten before the birth of the child. Each verse is alternated with the refrain, “very good to eat.” If the pregnancy is unwanted, the expectant mother reverses the formula by saying “very bad to eat” after each of the food mentioned.

The origin myths of the Bagobo were first recorded in the 1880s by the Davao Spanish governor, Joaquin Rajal, and the missionaries. Chief of the mythical beings is Mona, also considered an ancestor of the Bagobo people. Other versions of the origin myth refer to the Mona as the first families on earth which suffered from the scorching heat of the sun. The sun hung so low that the Mona lived in big holes dug into the ground. They could not stand on the earth and they knelt as they pounded rice. One day a woman called Tuglibong, who was trying to pound the rice, commanded the sky to rise, and the sky obeyed, taking the sun with it.

Tuglay and Tuglibong, who lived on Mount Apo, were the first man and woman to have been shaped from two lumps of earth by Diwata, who spat on them to give them life. (Other origin myths have Mona as the first woman and Tuglay as her husband.) One day Tuglay and Tuglibong told their oldest boy and girl to cross the ocean in search of a good place. The two children obeyed but their descendants, who were fair in complexion eventually returned to Davao. Soon after, Tuglay and Tuglibong died. A severe drought forced all but their two weakest children to leave. This pair stayed at Sibulan, while the others scattered in pairs. From them sprang all the other tribes. One day the weak man crawled out into the dry and empty fields and found a healthy stalk of sugarcane from which water gushed out endlessly. It nourished the weak pair until the rains came and the Bagobo tribe again increased in number (Gloria 1987: 20-22).

The Bagobo’s concept of life after death is defined by the story of Lumabat and Mebuyan. One day Lumabat had a quarrel with his sister, Mebuyan, because he wanted her to go up to heaven with him. She refused, insisting that she preferred to go into the underworld called Gimokudan. She sat on a mortar which she had filled with rice, and it started spinning into the ground. Sitting atop the spinning mortar, Mebuyan dropped rice by the handful onto the earth saying that each rice grain represented a human life that would go down with her into the underworld. Mebuyan now lives under the earth in Banua Mebuyan, where she is chief. Her whole body is covered with nipples, because she gives milk to all dead babies and children who have yet to be weaned. They remain with her until they are ready to eat rice. Then they transfer to Gimokudan where the spirits of their dead relatives live (Gloria 1987:22).

Saling-olop is a legendary culture hero who, it is said, was a giant the size of a lawan tree. He lived in the mountains of Sibulan and had three sons and a daughter named Panugutan. When the Spaniards arrived in Manila, they sent a battalion to subdue him. He was out hunting when the soldiers arrived, so they took Panugutan as hostage. They were ready for him when he came to her rescue but their bullets were useless. So they hit his legs with iron bars instead and he fell into the sea. Great waves arose as far as San Agustin because of Saling-olop’s size and weight. Panugutan was taken back to Manila where she married. Her two children were welcomed back to Sibulan and there was no more enmity between the Spaniards and the Bagobo (Gloria 1987:25-26).

A fine example of Bagobo marchen or magic tale is “The Woman and the Squirrel.” Once there was a woman who went out to look for water because the streams had dried up. She saw water on a leaf which she drank and used to clean herself. Her head began to hurt, so she went home and slept for nine days. When she woke up, she began to comb her hair, from where a baby squirrel emerged. The squirrel grew so quickly that in a week’s time, it was already jumping around. One day the squirrel requested its mother to take nine *kamagi* (a bead necklace highly prized by the Bagobo) and nine finger rings to the sultan as payment for the princess’ hand in marriage. On the mother’s first visit, she failed to tell the sultan of her son’s wish. When she returned home, the squirrel became angry and bit her with its little teeth. So the mother went back to the sultan and told him of her son’s wish to marry his daughter. The sultan consented on one condition: the squirrel must change the sultan’s possessions into gold. The squirrel then went to see its brother, the mouse, whose coat was made of gold and requested a portion of it. He returned to the sultan’s place and began to turn everything into gold. When the sultan woke up, he was so frightened that he died in about two hours. The princess and the squirrel were married and stayed at the sultan’s place for a month, after which they moved into the house of the squirrel’s mother. They brought with them a deer, a fish, and all kinds of food. After a year, the squirrel took off its coat and became a *malaki t’oluk waig*, literally, *malaki* meaning “good man,” *t’* meaning “the,” *oluk* meaning “source,” and *waig* meaning “water,” the term referring to a semidivine being who resides at the mythical source of the mountain streams (Eugenio 1989:145-146).

Performing Arts

Music is an essential component of Bagobo religious and festive occasions, and daily activities. The gong ensemble is called *tagungguan/tagunggo*. A 1907 document mentions an ensemble consisting of 11 suspended agong of various types: *matio* (gongs 1 to 4), *taraban* (gong 5), *mabagong* (gongs 6 and 8), *marobur* (gong 7), *luagongan* (gongs 9 and 11), and *bandi ran* (gong 10). These gongs are played by four people: one player for gongs 1 to 8, and a player for each of the other gongs.

Today the tagungguan found in Davao similarly consists of 11 gongs: a set of 10 gongs and a large gong called *bandi*. There is a cylindrical drum called *gibba*. The 10 gongs are suspended vertically on a tall wooden frame with the instruments’ knobbed surface facing the player. These gongs are arranged in pairs, with the two lowest-pitched gongs positioned at the bottom of the frame and the two highest-pitched ones on top. Also suspended on the frame is a bandi placed at the right side of the performer playing the 10-gong set. This tagungguan is played by three persons: one for the 10-gong set, another for the large gong, and a third player for the drum. In Davao City, a modern type of tagungguan has new mechanical devices attached to the wooden frame holding the instruments so that they may be played by one or two musicians only. The performer uses his/her hands to sound the gongs while his/her feet pedal the wooden bars which are attached to a mallet that strikes the bandi and gibba.

Other musical instruments that are played with songs and dances are the *kuglong* (two-stringed lute) and *sawray* (tube zither). The *kubing* (bamboo jew's harp), *lantoy* (ring flute), and *palendag* (lip-valley flute) are used for courtship.

Two instruments related to agriculture are the *bolang-bolang* and the richly decorated pagakpak. The bolang-bolang is a mortar with a board cover that is struck with a stick or pestle to accompany the dance during harvest rituals and feasts. The pagakpak is attached to the todak. When struck together, the split bamboo on one end produces a sharp but pleasant rattling sound. The decor and sound are meant to please the gods, so that they will reward the people with bountiful harvests. The pagakpak also drives the *maya* (sparrows) away and fills the air with lively noise as the farmers work the soil.

The Bagobo have advice songs, children's songs, lullabies, and the *gindaya*, a hymn in praise of competition sung during the gin-em festivals.

Dances are interwoven into Bagobo traditional activities. There are dances in the home of the bride in the evening and second morning after the *panalugan/ pamalugo* (purification of the bride and groom). During the *garuzza* (worship) where Bagobo mores dictate that the dance be initiated only by the bagani, the men dance intermittently to the sound of the gindaya during the gin-em.

Bagobo dance footwork is characterized by a series of syncopated stamps performed either as an initiating step, the close of a close-step, a transitional count, or an accent at the end of a measure. The stamp is done with the heel, although the whole foot is in contact with the floor. The foot rebounds in a flexed position. At times, the ball of the foot, with the heel raised, glides to fourth position in front, effecting a very intriguing contrast of silent beats for the duration of a count.

In their repertoire of steps, a travelling step stands out, seemingly symbolic of the Bagobo's reputation as one skilled with horses. It is a combination of the basic step: a cut and two long travelling chasing steps. The music accelerates to prod the dancer to be more daring by dancing faster, traversing space, improvising with turns, adding a sharper or greater bend of the body or knee. These bring to mind an animated horse at a fast clip or up on its hind legs to reverse direction.

In a pose, the body weight sits over the right leg, while the left with a bent knee is in an open fourth position. This allows the right hip to be prominent, giving it a lifted or jutting-out roundness. It is reminiscent of the posterior of a bird, a common inhabitant of their environment. One shoulder is held lower than the other. The arms hang diagonally downward with a natural roundness and are held away from the body. The head with the chin down bends toward the lower shoulder. The whole torso half-rotates and sways from the waist.

The following Bagobo dances are described in existing literature or in the repertoire of dance companies. *Karamay fo kawayan* is performed by a man who depicts the movement of bamboo trees in the wind. The *baliti* imitates the movement of the balet

leaves as the wind rushes through the branches of the tree. *Kulasog kenek kayo* mimics a squirrel running up and down a tree. *Lawin-lawin*, which imitates the *lawin* (eagle), traces the metamorphosis of the eagle from the vulnerable chick to the adult whose strength is gained from battles with its everyday adversary, the mountain winds. *Bulayan* dramatizes fear.

Sugod-uno is a dance performed by the magani in the annual cleansing ceremony of the gin-em festival. This ceremony begins with the pamalugo ritual, in which the bagani sheds off old jackets and trousers while bathing in a secluded stream in a forest. The old clothes, which have absorbed misfortune, bad luck, diseases, and failure, are allowed to float away on the river. The bagani are then helped by the womenfolk into their new, heavily embroidered jackets. The music is played on the *tagunggo* (brass gongs) and the *kudyapi* (native guitar). *Palagise* describes the agile maneuverings of the Bagobo warriors as they close in and inflict multiple wounds with their spear and *kampilan* (sword) on the human sacrifice for the gin-em festival.

Sulangayd is a dance honoring a Bagobo god. Ug-tube pays homage to a god-brother, who resides in one of the nine heavens above the sky. *Tangunggo* is an improvisational festival dance which features a man being courted by several women, one of whom is eventually chosen by the man. *Todak* exhibits the different stages in Bagobo rice production—from the clearing of the field, to the boring of holes in the ground with the todak, the planting of rice in the holes, the harvesting, threshing, winnowing, and pounding of the rice (Orosa-Goquingco 1980:121-122).

The musicians also display their agile footwork while simultaneously playing the numerous gongs of the tagunguan ensemble.

Ritual drama characterizes the most important religious ceremony of the Bagobo people. The ginem/ginum is a four-day celebration which originally culminated in the offering of a paghuaga, originally a human sacrifice now replaced by an animal sacrifice. Gin-em refers to the ceremonial drinking of *balabba* or sugarcane wine. It symbolizes the drinking of the sacrificial blood by the gods. This ceremony is held to honor the gods and appease the demons, prevent misfortune like epidemics and natural calamities, and assure prosperity. It is held at the datu's house, which is the largest in the settlement.

The three-day preparation involves much singing and dancing to the sound of the agong as the *awas* (preliminary prayers) are said. On the fourth day, just before the sacrifice is done, the datu prays to Darago as he holds a vessel of balabba: "Receive the blood of this slave, for I have paid for it to offer it to thee." A litany of all the other *darago* is chanted by the whole community. The other darago enter and make their presence felt. The sacrifice is also offered to the three deities Mandarangan, Tolus Ka Balekat, and Malaki Toluk Waig.

The bagani plays an important role in this ceremony. To the community's chanting of gindaya, the bagani recites a litany of their acts of valor, such as the number of enemies

they have killed. Around them are the *patannan* (spears attached to bamboo poles), textiles displayed on *balekayo* (bamboo frames), vast quantities of sugarcane wine, sacred food covered by the men's tangkulu and the animal sacrifice. • R.C. Lucero with C.G. Iñigo, F. Prudente, R. Obusan, and E.A. Manuel/Reviewed by S.K. Tan

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