The Jama Mapun or literally "people of Mapun," occupy the island of Cagayan de Sulu in southwestern Philippines. They call their island Tana (land) Mapun and their language, Pullum Mapun. The Jama Mapun are a Sama group and are often referred to as the Sama Cagayan by the Tausug of Sulu or as the Badjao or Orang Cagayan by the coastal Muslims of Borneo (Casiño 1976:8). The Jama Mapun can also be found in the islands of Bugsuk and Balak in southern Palawan, coastal North Borneo, and the many small islands in between. The Cagayan de Sulu municipality today consists of a main island and eight islets—Kinapusan, Pambelikan, Bisu Bintut, Bohan, Manda, Bulisuan, Muligi, and Mambahenawan. In 1970 the Jama Mapun were estimated to be around 25,000 (Casiño 1976:12).

Some features of the main island of Cagayan de Sulu which stand out are the two freshwater lakes, Ernestine and Singuwag, and a crater bay, Jurata Bay, which lie at the southern end of the Banga range. The two lakes are found to be 10 meters above sea level. Near the center of the island lies the hill Tabuli'an which is 300 meters above sea level.

History

History and legends suggest that Cagayan de Sulu was visited by Arab trader-missionaries as late as the 13th century. The Jama Mapun considered the Arabs as belonging to a higher culture, and hence, conversion to Islam was equated with cultural advancement (Casiño 1976:117). From the 15th century onwards, the principal Muslim groups were regrouped into larger collections. The Maguindanao, Maranao, and Sangil were oriented towards the Maguindanao sultanate, while the Tausug, Yakan, Palawanon, and the Sama groups, including the Jama Mapun, were more oriented towards the Sulu sultanate. This geopolitical setup helped shape the economic and political institutions of the Jama Mapun. For instance, the Sulu sultanate can be said to have consisted of three concentric circles each representing a political category. The innermost circle belonged to the Tausug from which the nobility came. The middle circle was dominated by the Sama speakers, and the outer circle by the non-Muslim traditionalists who were regarded as uncivilized slaves. The Jama Mapun, being a Sama people, belonged to the second circle. Although not part of the nobility, the Jama Mapun developed their own version of the local gentry or "notables" who had attained prestige through wealth or sociopolitical position (Casiño 1976:11, 27-28).

With political and economic ties more oriented towards the Sulu sultanate, the history of the Jama Mapun during the Spanish era can be told in terms of the hostility between the Spanish colonial government and the Sulu sultanate. The Sulu sultanate escaped colonial dominance at the onset of Spanish rule, for total conquest was not a goal of early colonial policies. In the mid-19th century, the colonial government sought to conquer the Muslim sultanates, especially that of Sulu. By then the British and the Dutch were extending their influence over the Southeast Asian world, and the Spaniards felt they had to secure their rapidly deteriorating empire. Spanish

authorities explained their new policy as a reaction to the piratical activities of the Sama group. Thus, the Spaniards launched their campaign of 1851 to devastate the Sama settlement of Tungkil, as well as to punish the Sulu sultanate. The campaign ended in 1876 when the Spaniards launched an offensive against the Sulu sultanate to finally settle the issue of Spanish sovereignty over Sulu. In 1878 the beleaguered sultan, Jama ul-Azam, entered into a peace treaty with the Spaniards. The treaty made Sulu a protectorate of Spain, but guaranteed the sultanate autonomy over internal matters and commercial activities (Majul 1973: 283-299).

When the Americans came, they intruded into the core of the Jama Mapun political system. Guns were confiscated and slavery, the source of Jama Mapun power and prestige, was abolished. Villages and districts were reduced to the status of barrios; headmen and chiefs became mere barrio captains. The visible agent of this transformation was Guy Stratton who was appointed deputy governor after Cagayan de Sulu was "pacified" by American troops in 1905. In 1910 he appointed a headman who was directly under his control. The first three headmen were local chieftains called *datu* (Casiño 1976:40-42).

The Jama Mapun nobles sided with the Japanese during World War II. During the Japanese occupation, one of the nobles assumed de facto rule over Cagayan de Sulu; this was confirmed by the Japanese based in North Borneo, and lasted until the end of the war (Casiño 1976:43). Under the Philippine administration, the appointive headman gave way to the elected mayor. In some areas, the period also witnessed the rise of the notable commoner; a battle for political dominance started between the notable commoner and the nobility. The situation was made more complex when district politics found themselves having to refer to provincial and national power centers for the much needed funds to implement electoral promises. A new element has been provided by the entry of non-Jama Mapun personalities into the political picture (Casiño 1976:42-43, 45).

Economy

The development of the Jama Mapun economy has been shaped by its physical environment, i.e., the island and the marine ecology. The introduction of coconut as a commercial plant, and the development of the *kumpit* (motorboat) as a technological innovation in sea trade has shifted the ecosystem of the Jama Mapun from one which was typified by the *uma* or multicrop subsistence farming to the *kabbun niyug* or monocrop market economy involving copra production (Casiño 1967b:4).

The precoconut ecosystem of the Jama Mapun can be characterized in terms of *padilaut* and *ngusaha* (fish- and marine-food gathering), *lomeh* (trading), and uma which was the basic economic activity. Produce from the uma included dry or upland rice, corn, cassava, camote or sweet potato, various root crops and vegetables, and fruit trees. It also consisted of various types of beans, watermelon, eggplants, *lara* (small pepper), tomatoes, and aromatic lemon grass (Casiño 1967:7-8).

A Jama Mapun family has adapted to this uma culture by adjusting its planting activities to the annual cycle of two rainy seasons. The first rainy season called *uwan taun* begins around June and lasts for about three months. The second rainy season, *uwan pulian*, begins sometime in November. The Jama Mapun plant their main crops during the uwan taun, and the minor crops during the uwan pulian. Other economic activities are the ngusaha, which includes fishing, shell gathering, and hunting for turtle eggs, seagull eggs, collecting birds' nest, and other marine resources (Casiño 1967b: 10-12).

The kabbun was partly stimulated by the Chinese trade. In the last quarter of the 19th century, the world demand for coconut oil began to rise. The Chinese began to purchase whole nuts and encouraged the islanders to cultivate them. The first American deputy governor of the island, Guy Stratton, promoted the copra industry. He encouraged, sometimes coerced, the islanders to plant coconut trees. This was in 1910, and by 1920, Stratton's company began to harvest and sell copra. By 1932, more than 50 percent of the island was planted to coconut. A measure of the success of the kabbun system is the mass migration of Jama Mapun families to nearby Palawan for new lands on which to plant coconuts (Casiño 1967b:21-23). The Jama Mapun have always been traders. In the past, they did not completely depend on their uma-produced rice. They traded their vegetables, fruits, root crops, and marine products for rice from Palawan. They also acted as intermediaries between the inhabitants of Palawan, Muslim merchants, and the Chinese. In Borneo, products from the Muslim merchants were bartered for Chinese products, such as cloth, iron implements, porcelain ware, brass gongs, and other commodities. Some of these products were retained for their own use, and others were exchanged for rice from Palawan (Casiño 1976:70-71).

The introduction of the *kumpit* (trade boat) changed the Jama Mapun trade system. Whereas bartering for staple food was the core of early Jama Mapun trade, modern trade is basically a complex of profit-oriented cash transactions for the exportation of copra which is produced by the whole island population. The produce is sold to the Chinese or rich copra traders who then export the same to Jolo, Zamboanga, Sandakan, and Labuan in North Borneo. If the copra traders also own the plantation, the same process occurs except that the tenant kabbun operators hand over their copra harvests to their landlords (Casiño 1976:79).

Political System

The traditional Jama Mapun political system consisted of three levels: the state, where the sultan, invariably a Tausug, the council of state, and prominent members of the Tausug nobility engaged in politics; the district, where the noble chiefs or notable commoners ruled; and the village, where the authority of the datu or headperson was supreme. Theoretically, the village headperson should be subordinate to the sultan, but practically, the political functions which divide the village headperson from the district chief were not substantial. This could be gleaned in their administration of public affairs

which was often nothing more than conducting kin-group affairs (Casiño 1976:24). In modern Jama Mapun society, these three levels have been subsumed under the national level. In effect, the region of the sultanate has been reduced to a province, a district to a municipality, and a village to a barangay. However, a distinction can be drawn between the concepts of politics and administration. While administration may now have passed to a modern bureaucracy, the power aspect of the system has been retained by the sultanates (Casiño 1976:24).

At the barrio level, the administration of justice involving *sara agama* (religious customary law) is made by the village headperson. Traditions are usually consulted when settling disputes. There are times, however, when decisions are made contrary to what custom has always dictated. It seems that law experts have a discretion to follow the sara agama, as the following case illustrates: Tima, Jose's daughter, went to Bondot's house and confessed that she was in love with Jangle, Bondot's son. Upon learning this, Jangle's sister immediately reported the matter to the barrio captain, Abirin, who quickly summoned Bondot to bring the girl to his house as a security measure. The sara agama allows the girl's parents to harm her and the boy, should she be caught in the boy's house. Moreover, taking her back would disgrace the boy's family. When Abirin was sure of Tima's safety, he sent a go-between to report the situation to Tima's parents, who arrived the next day demanding 500 pesos as bride-price for their daughter. Jangle's parents refused citing the sara agama principle that when a girl initiates an action towards a boy by going to his *mowe* (home), the bride-price should only be half the customary dowry. Abirin failed to make a decision and referred the case to another law expert, who ruled against the sara agama and required Jangle's parents to give the usual bride-price of 500 pesos (Casiño 1976:48-19).**Social Organization and Customs**

The Jama Mapun distinguish *dampahanakan* (family, or literally, "from the same womb") from *dambua luma* (household, or literally, "of the same house"). The former consists of husband and wife, their children. and their children's children. The household composition depends on the response to agricultural cycles. This is especially true during the planting and harvest seasons, when relatives come to help (Casiño 1976:21-22).

The Jama Mapun, from birth to death, are conditioned by their family and the community. Islam influences their human career through the *paki* (religious intermediaries) who represent the unifying structure of the community.

The Jama Mapun are highly child-centered. To ensure ease of delivery, the pregnant wife is enjoined to avoid sewing and to unlock all containers; the husband is enjoined not to participate in funeral activities nor wear anything around his neck for fear of harm to the child. Food which are normally forbidden to the wife are allowed, the belief being that the desire for such food springs from the child. During *maddi* (labor), a *baliyan* (midwife) is called. As soon as the child is born, the baliyan cleans the *batang ponsot* (umbilical cord), and cuts off a portion of the cord from the placenta. The remaining section is then tied into seven portions of approximately 2.5 centimeters

each. Normally, the batang ponsot drops off after three days; if it takes more than three days, it is believed that the child will become hardheaded. The child is then bathed in cold water and then wrapped in a *barung* (swaddle) from head to foot with pink or yellow cloth. The swaddling continues for a month or so; first the head is freed, then the rest of the body. It is believed that the body swaddle is to keep the child's legs straight. All swaddling is removed if the child can turn over on its stomach by itself (Casiño 1967a:36-37). If born in the morning, the paki is called on the same day to bless the child. If born at night or at dusk, the paki must be called early the next morning. The paki performs a ritual in which the Islamic call to prayer is whispered into the child's ears. This is officially known as the *bahng*, for male offsprings, or *kamat*, for female offsprings. (Casiño 1967a:37).

The *paggunting* is a community ceremony involving the cutting of some of the infant's hair, and weighing it against an equal amount of *timbang* (weight). Several paki are invited to pray and perform the ceremony.

After the paggunting, the Jama Mapun child enjoys no other ceremonies until *pag-Islam* or *pag-sunat* and *pag-tammat* (physical and psychological initiation into the Muslim community). Pag-Islam for a boy is circumcision. Psychologically, it affirms the child's solidarity with Islam. After the pag-Islam, the child undergoes a psychological initiation in which he learns the basics of Islam. Pag-tammat is the graduation ceremony of the preschool children, an occasion when the paki are invited to listen to the recital and performance of the new graduate (Casiño 1967a:39-40).

There is no recognized ritual marking adolescence, although the community provides a forum for the interaction of young Jama Mapun men and women. This is the *lunsay*, a community song and dance performed during weddings where young men and women can interact (Casiño 1967a:40).

The *ngawin* (wedding) ceremony is one of the most important. There are two steps before the marriage proper. First there is the *nuruk-nuruk* (exploration) to find out if the young woman is negotiable. A third party is often used in these negotiations. If successful, some token amount is left with her parents. After a few weeks, the groom-to-be's party returns to negotiate on the bride-price and to work out the details concerning the wedding.

During the wedding day, preparations are made concurrently at three houses—those of the groom, the bride, and a third party. While a jubilant procession leads the groom to the bride's house, the bride hides in another. Later, a second procession is formed to conduct the bride from this house to the groom's. There is much festivity involved: the sound of the *kulintang* gongs, the explosion of firecrackers or actual guns, the accordion music accompanied by drumbeats, and the parade of colorful flags (Casiño 1967a:41).

The religious significance of the event is stressed by the presence of many paki who lead the prayers before and after the central and symbolic part of the ceremony. This consists of two parts: when the groom is confronted by the *imam* (priest) and answers

the official questions on whether he is willing and ready to take in a bride; and when the groom walks over to the bride and removes the veil partly covering her face. He then presses his thumb against her forehead (Casiño 1967a:41).

The Jama Mapun believe that the dead should be buried at once. If they die in the morning, they should be buried before evening; if they die in the evening, they should be buried before noon the next day. The Jama Mapun show their reverence for the dead by carefully washing the corpse and wrapping it in new cloth. The Jama Mapun do not use coffins but make sure that the covering earth never touches the face and the body of the corpse. To accomplish this, the corpse is first inserted into a niche which is then covered with pieces of wood. Only then is the main grave covered with soil. The *kubu* or top of the grave is marked by stones; the *sunduk* or carved wooden markers (see logo of this article) are raised on two points, one corresponding to a point above the shoulder, and the other, to a point above the knees of the corpse (Casiño 1967a:42).

The Jama Mapun never refer to the dead by their names; they are assigned special terms, e.g., a dead datu is referred to as *lindung*; a dead *kalip* or *hadji*, as *wapat*; a dead commoner as *imua*. Death ceremonies are performed for religious and social reasons. The *doaa alua* (prayers for the dead) are offered by the paki, and the feasts given to the neighbors are features found in the death rituals. These are repeated several times during the first 100 days, and thence, once a year during the death anniversary (Casiño 1967a:42-43).

Religious Beliefs and Practices

The Jama Mapun believe in one God whom they call Tuhan or Allah. The latter is used in everyday prayers and in the official Friday liturgy, while the former is used in discussions of philosophy, morality, and ethics. Tuhan is believed to be the creator of heaven and earth, and of men through the first man, Adam, and the first woman, Eve, called Hawa (Casiño 1976:111).

Under the Tuhan are many spirit beings, both Judaeo-Muslim and folk animist in nature. Some of these are: *seytan* (evil spirit), *malaikat* (angels), *jin* (bodies of air or fire capable of assuming different forms and carrying out difficult tasks). Certain pre-Islamic spirits also enter the Jama Mapun mythology: *hantu* (evil spirits behind natural phenomena, equivalent to jin); *semanget* or *sumangat* (life force, soul); souls of inanimate objects, e.g., rice soul; *pananggalan* or *pananggahan* (birth spirit which preys on infants and pregnant women, equivalent to the Tagalog *manananggal*); and *tubangkit* (a person who dies in sin and returns to haunt the living). Other creatures feared by the Jama Mapun are the witch, *babah*; sea devils, *galap*; a malevolent creature that leads people astray, *kokok*; and giant, *gargasi* (Casiño 1976:113-114).

The Jama Mapun believe in two orders of existence—the *hal dunya* (this world or this life) and the *hal ahirat* (the next world or the next life). God's existence justifies these

orders and provides a foundation for the moral code which can be grouped into three categories: human acts, good or bad—among the *zakat, sadaka*, and *pitlah* or *pitrah* (good acts) are those associated with giving and sharing; *barakat, redjiki, pahala, sukud mahap* (rewards), material or immaterial, in this life or the next; *sah, dusa, bala*, and *busung* (punishments), also from God. The ultimate reward for obedience is happiness with God in heaven (Casiño 1976:114-115).

The overall metaphysics can be summed up as follows: God and man are related through command and obedience. Man can try to influence God's will, to seek God's blessing, and to avoid God's punishments through prayers and rituals. But God is in overall command, through the *magbaya* (divine will). This concept of God's will as fate is expressed as *takdir man Tuhan* (Casiño 1976:115-116).

Architecture and Community Planning

The traditional architecture of the Jama Mapun is a simple, one-story rectangular structure with walls and floor of bamboo, and roofs of nipa palm or thatch. Traditional furniture consists of colorful pandanus mats laid over coarser rattan matting with painted designs. At one end of the room, on top of the mats, are piles of red pillows which serve as cushions during the day and pillows during the night. There is an occasional chest for storing valuables in a corner of the room. Sometimes, a baby's cradle hangs from a bamboo pole.

The more affluent construct two-story houses made from wood with corrugated iron for roofing and glass for window panes. In the early days, the rich were distinguished from the poor with items such as better *kris* or swords, brassware, porcelain jars, and trinkets captured or bought through trade. Nowadays, the more affluent Jama Mapun own more items like trucks, radios, cassette recorders, tables, chairs, beds, and motorcycles (Casiño 1976:91-92).**Literary Arts**

Jama Mapun literary arts can be divided into three broad categories: those associated with agriculture, *tarsila* or *salsila* or *silasilah* (those associated with historical events), and religious-inspired literature.

Examples of the first include stories like the origin of rice and rice planting, of *ubi* or *yam*, and of *tubbu* or sugarcane. The origin myth of rice is especially significant since rice is the most important component of the uma.

Once there were only three people—Tohng and his two wives, Masikla and Mayuyu. One day Masikla took some grass and placed it in a pot which was on top of a fire. She then asked Mayuyu to look after the pot but instructed her not to open it. Mayuyu was curious and did not follow Masikla's instructions. She discovered that half of the pot contained grass, the other half, rice. When Masikla returned she was angry; had Mayuyu followed instructions, people would not need to plant rice. All they would need to do is to cook grass into rice.

On another day, Tohng left for the fields. Neither wife knew what he would be doing. Mayuyu, curious as ever, followed Tohng in order to spy on him. She was surprised and angry to see Tohng sitting under a tree doing nothing, while his bolo and ax were cutting down trees and slashing the underbush by themselves. Mayuyu came out of hiding and reprimanded Tohng for his laziness. Because of this disturbance, the bolo and ax fell to the ground and never again worked by themselves. Tohng was angry; had Mayuyu not interfered, people would not need to work with their hands. Because of what transpired, Masikla left for the heavens, followed by Tohng, then Mayuyu. They now appear as a constellation of three stars called *tonggong*, the appearance of which signifies the start of the uma season (Casiño 1976:108-109).

The story of the origin of the rooster has a moral significance. There was once an *alim* who was also a great teacher. His origins were unknown but he was said to have first taught in Cagayan de Sulu. There he married and begot children. After his *mulid* (students) had completed their studies, he was requested to teach in another place. Thus began a cycle of teaching, marrying, and begetting children. Years passed and he finally returned to the first place where he taught. Without his knowledge, the *budjang* (young maiden) he chose for his wife was in fact his own daughter. He had lost count of the number of his children. So for a couple of years, father and daughter lived as husband and wife. One day, while the daughter-wife was combing the hair of her father-husband, she discovered a *kebas* (bald patch) at one side of his head near the ear. She then remembered her mother's words that her father could be recognized by that patch. The discovery horrified both the girl and her father-husband. They sought for *hukuman* (judgment) from Allah. As punishment, they were asked to jump from their house to the ground. The daughter-wife went first and became a hen; the father-husband jumped and became a rooster. That is why today the rooster runs after its own daughter and sports a bald patch near its ear.

One of the more popular tarsila concerns the seven holy men who propagated Islam in Sulu. The Jama Mapun have their own version (Casiño 1976:117):

> The first alim was called Abubakar; he lived in Tawi-Tawi, later in Jolo. He travelled in a *lumpang bassi*, an iron vessel resembling a tub or basin. His grave is in Tawi-Tawi. The second alim lived and died in Pandukan Island, near the island of Pangutaran, north of Jolo. The third alim has his grave in Tahaw Island, located west of Sibutu off the coast of northeastern Borneo. The fourth alim has his grave in Leheman, a small island west of the Turtle Islands. It is near a geyser which spouts rocks and mud like a baby volcano. The fifth alim was buried in Parang-parang, a cogon or lallang grass field near Pulot, southeastern Palawan. The sixth alim died in Bakungan Diki [small Bakungan], an islet just on the Borneo side of the Malaysian-Philippine boundary near the Turtle Islands. The seventh alim lived and taught in Tana Mapun (Cagayan de Sulu). He was buried in Bulissuan near the village of Tanduan and Sikub. The Jama Mapun call his grave *tampat layag-layag* (burial place marked by white flags).

The main sources of religious literature are the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. One example is the story entitled "Allah and the Creation of the World," which is similar to the biblical Genesis account but which is liberally sprinkled with indigenous elements.

The creation story narrates that, in the beginning, there was only the sea called Baharun Nur (literally, "great waters light") and on it, a thing which looked like a ball. This thing was actually the abode of God who decided to split the ball into two to allow his preconceived creations to come forth. One half of the ball became heaven and the other half became the earth. From God's radiance, Nur Muhammad (a term designating the preexistence of the soul of the prophet) appeared. Seeing that he was alone, Nur Muhammad pronounced himself god. He said, "Arasturn Murabbikum" which means "I am God." Hardly had the words been uttered when a sound from heaven came, "Kahal Bala" (blasphemy), and Nur Muhammad disappeared.

Performing Arts

Outside the tradition they have in common with other Sama and the Tausug, the Jama Mapun have a unique communal song and dance called the *lunsay.*This is performed by young men and women forming two separate lines. In order to form a circle, the linking pairs at the end of the line hold either a handkerchief or a piece of wood to keep the men and women from touching each other's hands. The lunsay is also a courtship dance, an occasion to see and to be seen. In metaphoric language, the male performers sing of the charms of the girls they fancy, and the girls sing the appropriate responses. The singing is accompanied by the sound of stamping feet on two sets of bamboo floorings vibrating against each other. The direction of the dance changes from clockwise to counterclockwise. The tempo progresses from slow, plaintive singing in a clockwise direction, to vigorous steps and accelerated singing in a counterclockwise direction. The song and dance can go on all night with the participants falling in and out of line to rest. It is through the lunsay that young people often meet their future mates (Casiño 1976:99-100).

The lunsay has eight melodic patterns with alternating tempo and direction of movement. These are: *tugilah* (slow, clockwise step-left); *tinggayon* (fast, counterclockwise step-right); *nilabos* (slow, clockwise step-left); *halin taroh* (counterclockwise step-right); *palubu-labu* (counterclockwise step-right); *tinggayon* (clockwise step-left); and *moleh* (clockwise step-left). (Amilbangsa 1983:25).

Sample lyrics from the lunsay songs, the translation of which is not available, are as follows (Amilbangsa 1983:18-19):

> "Tugilah"
>
> *Nilabuan tugilah lunsay na ba dumagsah*
> *Nilabuan na kakasi lunsay maglamilami*
> *Tagnaan ta na 'ba lunsay kaapi siga ba malumbay*

Lainilami na ba nagnah kaam jama dambilah.

"Tinggayon"

Tinggayon tinggayon doh Batis pinaguyon doh
Kaam takka bahau Paantan na kampitu.

"Nilabos"

Halin taroh ba tunis na kaam siga gambina
Tattoh pakiyukiyum na mangkin ba
sinag litan na.

During the pag-Islam, the child learns to sing the *muhd* or commemorative songs, celebrating the *mauluden Nabi* (month of the Prophet's birthday). The muhd are sung solo; their tone is plaintive and melancholy; they are long and high pitched. Four types muhd are learned: the *janitla, jikil, a-sarakal,* and *tammat*. During the closingceremonies of the pag-Islam, the four muhd are sung by the child. The occasion is veryfestive. The heart of the ceremony is the recital and performance of the young graduate. He/she is attired colorfully and sits cross-legged on a colorful mat. The parents, relatives, and paki sit around and listen as the young graduate proves his reading skills and sings the muhd (Casiño 1976:99). • G.E.P. Cheng/Reviewed by S.K. Tan

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