

The term “badjao,” which means “fisherfolk” (Llamzon 1978), refers to the people who live on the seas or shores of the Sulu archipelago, which consists of Sulu province, Tawi-Tawi, and southern Palawan. Part of the bigger group called Sama, the Badjao are generally boat dwellers or “sea gypsies” whose religion is spirit worship, albeit with Islamic influences. Most consider that the Badjao are identical to the Sama subgroup Sama di laut/Sama ha laud/Sama Laut (sea-dwelling Sama) or Sama toqongan (real Sama). However, Blumentritt (1892) considers the Sama Laut and Badjao as two distinct groups, the Badjao having arrived after the Sama Laut, who originally inhabited the Samales Islands, located between Jolo and Basilan. Furthermore, the Badjao are distinct from the Sama de Lea/Sama Dea/Sama lipid (land-dwelling Sama) or Sama ha gimba (Sama of the forest), who are simply called Sama. The Tausug call the Badjao Luwaan (outsiders or outcasts) and Palau (floating people), from which is derived the name of the island Palawan. “Palau” may also be a variant of *para-u* (boat). The Badjao call themselves Sama (Nimmo 1968).

The Badjao, whose total population count is 24,330 as of 1986 (RR’s *Philippine Almanac* 1990) or 28,536 (NCCP-PACT 1988), may be divided into two groups: the southern Badjao, located on the islands of Tawi-Tawi, Sibutu, and Semporna (Sabah); and the northern Badjao, in Siasi, Jolo, Basilan, and Zamboanga. Before the spread of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) secessionist movement whose sense of nationality included those inhabiting these areas, the southern Badjao considered themselves one *bangsa* (people/nation).

Tawi-Tawi, also called the “back door of the Philippines,” lies at the mouth of Sulu and the Celebes Sea. It became a province on 21 September 1974. It has six Badjao villages: Tungkalang, Luuk-Tulai, Bandulan, Lamium, Tungbangkao, and Lioboran. Tungkalang (“place of coral heads”) or *tung* (point/in) *kalang* (sandbar), at the southern tip of Sanga-Sanga, is the largest Badjao village in Tawi-Tawi. It consists of about 85 percent houseboats and 15 percent stilt houses, some of which stand on a narrow sandbar and some in seawater near the shore.

Sibutu has the villages of Sitangkai, Tungnehat, Tandowak, and Omapoi. Semporna has two villages: Bangau-Bangau and Labuanghadji. The Badjao living on these two islands are house dwellers and use their houseboats only on long fishing trips. Siasi island, on the northern side, has five Badjao villages: Sisangat, Kud-Kud, Musu, Tuhog-Tuhog, and Laminusa.

The Badjao call their language Sinama, a dialect of the Sama language. Others, however, call it Bajau/Badjaw/Badjao, to distinguish it from the language spoken by the land-based Sama.

There are three types of Badjao based on their forms of residence: the sedentary, with commercial pursuits and permanent homes, such as in Sitangkai, a municipality in Tawi-Tawi Province; the semisedentary, who spend periods alternately between their houseboats and their village homes in Sisangat on Siasi Island; and the sea gypsies, who live in houseboats as itinerant fisherfolk in search of rich fishing grounds.

History

The origins of the Badjao are uncertain. According to a legend, they came from the shores of Johore, Indonesia, where they had already been living in clusters of houseboats. Anthropologist H. Arlo Nimmo (1968) believes, however, that the Badjao were originally of the land-based Sama group but branched off into boat dwellers as a result of their occupation. This practice might have subsequently spread to the area around Malaysia. Historian Najeeb Saleeby (1908) traces the Badjao to the Sama in Johore, who migrated to the Philippines in the early 14th century, before the coming of Islam. Another theory is that the Badjao were originally boat dwellers who eventually built stilt houses near fertile fishing grounds.

Spanish and American influence on Badjao social and cultural development has been virtually nil due to two factors: the Badjao live in the territory of the Muslim Filipinos, although they are also the least influenced by Islam; and they are itinerant travelers. Recently, some Badjao groups have traveled as far as Manila in search of livelihood, because their fishing grounds around the Sulu archipelago have been depleted.

Economy

The staple food of the Badjao are *panggi* (cassava) and fish. Rice is served only for dessert or on special occasions. They have no regular meals; hence, there are no Badjao words for breakfast, lunch, and supper. They eat whenever they are hungry and there is food.

For subsistence and commerce, the men engage in fishing, pearl diving, boat building, fish-trap making, and fishnet weaving. Their fishing methods require group or communal participation. The women engage in mat weaving and, together with their children, gather clam, snail, seaweed, and so forth, at low tide.

Local loggers provide the *tukang* (boat maker) with the body of the para-u or vinta, which is made of *casco* (timber or log) already cut in various sizes. The *tukang* then refines the basic structure according to the stipulations of the buyer.

The Badjao interact with the Sama only when they go to the village market to sell or barter their catch of fish for cassava and matches. Otherwise, great pains are taken to avoid their Tausug and Sama neighbors. They gather fresh water from the well at night when there is no one else about, and they do not send their children to school. Occasionally, they offer themselves as farm hands to the Sama so they can use the land to plant cassava.

Some Badjao villages evolved a sedentary lifestyle with the arrival of fish buyers on their islands. The Badjao no longer had to travel across the seas, especially to Jolo, to

sell their catch, because the resident fish buyers provided a ready market on their own islands.

Political System

A Badjao settlement or community consists of a kawman (moorage), the equivalent of the land-based purok. The head is the *panglima*, whose main functions are to settle disputes, collect fines, and officiate at weddings. The position is usually inherited, but the title is conferred by the sultan. At present, the panglima's influence is waning because of the presence of the municipal mayor or the barangay captain. However, he is still consulted on matters of marriage and divorce and on the schedule for fishing boats to cast off. The moorage is composed of several nuclear families jointly organized into work teams. The Badjao consider as their leader one who is an expert in a specific occupation, such as boat building or fishing. Hence, the expert boat builder is the leader of the boat building team; the expert fisher is the leader in the fishing team.

Social Organization and Customs

The kinship system of the Badjao is central to their life and is shown in the various terms they have for different types of blood relationship. *Dakampungan* is the generic term for "relative" but it may also mean the alliance of related families "who regularly tie up together at a moorage" (Teo 1989:41). *Dakau-man* means "of the same group or moorage." *Magdadanakan* means all siblings. *Magtau tai-anaak* means the family, including the offspring down to the great grandchildren. *Dalahah* means "of the same blood." And *dapo-onan* means "of the same descendants."

The *magdanakan* (nuclear family) may not include any other close relative if its members live in cramped quarters: a houseboat typically measures 3.5 meters long, 1.7 meters wide, 1.3 meters deep. If they live in a stilt house, the parents and grandparents of the married couple may stay with them. They marry very young the girls at age 13 or 14 and the boys at 15—and soon after the wedding live independently. The boy has his own fishing boat and/or builds his own stilt house with the help of the community.

When a woman becomes pregnant, ferns are forbidden in the dwelling, because they are believed to cause poor health in the infant. Certain beliefs and practices show the people's affinity with the sea. When the moon is out, the pregnant woman bathes on a fishnet or on a paddle, so that the child will be brave and strong and know his way about the sea.

During childbirth, the father keeps a torch burning at the door to drive away evil spirits attracted to the blood expelled during delivery. The placenta is placed in a coconut shell and, as a man takes it to the shore, the people in the house call to him. He is not

supposed to heed them, for if he looks back, the baby's head will face backward all its life. The placenta is buried deep enough in the sand so that animals cannot dig it up. The placenta is considered the infant's twin; throwing it away will distress the infant.

The infant is named after a place, event, or anything related to the circumstances of its birth. The boy's family name is the same as his father's first name; the girl's family name is her mother's first name. The children usually wear no clothes until they are about 10 years old.

Some Muslim practices of the Sama have been adopted by some Badjao, such as male and female circumcision and female ear piercing. The *panday* (the medicine man or woman) is called to assist in childbirth, to heal women who have miscarried, to prescribe herbs for abortion, and to perform the *pagsunnat* (female circumcision).

Pagsunnat, rarely practiced now, is done before the girl's first menstrual period. It is a solemn occasion, attended by community ritual singing and dancing, called *eleng* and *igal*. The girl is dressed and made up in traditional style. Hidden from public view with a blanket, her clitoris is slightly scraped to decrease the possibility of sexual arousal. A prayer is made that her virginity and chastity be preserved until her wedding day.

Pag-islam (male circumcision) is done on the boy when he reaches puberty. It is a special occasion, with festivities beginning on the eve of the ceremony. All the relatives and friends are invited to the merrymaking, where the young people dance the *pag-igal*. The next morning the imam takes the boy, who is covered only by the *tadjong* (an oversized tube-shaped garment), to a corner of the house where the *pag-islam* is performed. The boy recites the *angang-gasa* (dedication to the girl he loves) to distract himself from the pain. The wound is treated with ashes and covered with white cloth. The boy's initiation into manhood culminates with a string of advice on his obligations to his family and proper conduct in society. Lunch is then served to the guests, relatives, and friends. The boy stays home until he is healed, for it is believed that stepping on animal feces would prevent healing.

Marriage arrangements are made after the girl's third menstrual period. The boy is about a year older. Early marriage has evolved as a solution to the cramped living conditions in the houseboat. Soon after marriage, the young couple live on their own, with the boy fishing for his own family's subsistence. Although polygyny is allowed, it is very rare because it is not economically feasible. Hence, the Badjao are monogamous because of economic, not religious or ethical, reasons.

Prewedding arrangements proceed in several stages. In *amnik bih*, the first stage, the boy's parents send an elderly woman to present the initial proposal. The girl's parents accept after getting the consensus of their relatives. *Pang-angbat/pagtunang* (engagement period) begins with a lavish celebration. The boy's parents invite relatives and friends to a repast, after which they go to the girl's house in a fluvial parade, to the sound of gongs. They bring presents of cash and food. The boy's

obligation to offer services and goods to his future in-laws begins. However, the betrothed couple are not allowed to speak to each other. The *pagbua-mamah* (final engagement) follows after a month or two. Negotiations for the bridewealth take place between the spokespersons of the two families. Demands by the girl's uncles and aunts are included in the bridewealth. The wedding date depends upon the length of time the boy's family will need to accumulate the cash and goods for the bridewealth.

The wedding ceremony is the most festive occasion in a Badjao community. Women and girls, in their most colorful tadjong, dance aboard the boats to the accompaniment of the *gabbang* (native xylophone) and improvised drums. The bride's parents provide the *maligai*, which is a small replica of a bamboo hut, filled with pastries and decorated with peso bills arranged like flags. This is the final expression of their consent to the marriage.

While the dowry is being brought to the bride's home, girls dance on boats underneath the house. Anyone of the family, except the bride, accepts the dowry.

The first ritual of the wedding ceremony is the bathing of the bride and groom, done separately by the imam or religious leader. The bride first emerges from her aunt's house and sits in public view on a boat. At each end of the boat, a large flag with a dragon design is hoisted. The imam takes a few strands of her hair and blows on it three times. He chants a prayer asking the Supreme Being to grant her a happy married life, and then he pours water on her. The bride is then helped to change from her wet clothes, with a tadjong hiding her from view. She enters the nipa hut built on the boat, where the groom's mother and aunts will prepare her. The groom undergoes the same bathing ritual; he is then taken to his bride's family boat, where he will be similarly prepared.

Under the fascinated gaze of children and young women, a wedding cosmetician prepares the bride by applying white powder on her face and shaping her eyebrows and bangs with a razor. The groom is similarly made up on a separate boat. The couple wear their ceremonial traditional attire.

If the wedding takes place on a boat, a tadjong is drawn over the boat so that the bride is hidden from the groom's view. Only the bride's father is aboard the boat with her. The groom, borne on his friend's shoulder, leads the procession toward the wedding boat. They stop just outside the boat. The imam chants the prayers, to which the bride's father replies from behind the tadjong. The groom stands on the boat while the imam asks on his behalf that he be welcomed into the bride's family. When the father assents, the tadjong is removed. The bride's father takes the groom's right forefinger and places it on the bride's head and then on her chest. This ends the ceremony. The couple are carried to shore amid the cheering of the crowd. The bride dances the *pag-igal*.

If the wedding takes place in the stilt house, it is done at the bride's home. The imam walks with the groom to the side of the bride, who is covered with a tadjong. Two

singers, representing the bride and the groom, answer each other with the traditional wedding song. The couple sit on a pillow or cushion while the imam goes around the bride and then the groom. He steps slightly on the groom's big toe and sits in front of the couple. A piece of white cloth is used to cover the imam's and the groom's thumbs which are pressed together. The imam chants the prayers and the ceremony ends.

Wedding gifts are then received by the couple, the bride accepting the gifts from the groom's family and the groom accepting those from the bride's. They descend the house to the shore, where the bride dances the *igal*, while the groom dances the *kuntaw* (martial arts dance). The celebration continues for three days. On the first night the *paglibuhan* ("circle of crowd") is held in the bride's home. Dancers coming from both families perform the *pag-igal* till late into the night. On the second day is the *bina-iran*, the reception for the couple at the groom's *kawman*, where his own friends and relatives are waiting to welcome the bride. A second *paglibuhan* takes place that night. The third day is the *mag-indih baid*, when everyone returns to the bride's home. The groom takes his belongings with him, for the young couple will live with the bride's family until they are ready to live independently.

In case of divorce, the bride-price, or a fraction of it, is returned to the groom, the amount depending on the length of the marriage, number of children, and cause for divorce. A long marriage requires no settlement.

Upon death, the corpse is bathed with a mixture of freshwater and seawater, or in coconut oil. This ritual is called *parolihun*. The corpse is covered with a mat or a white and orange blanket. It is believed that the orange color will prevent contamination of the medicine man or woman. A *bahangi* (all-night vigil) is held, with the imam leading the prayer-chants for the soul of the deceased.

If the deceased is a man, the coffin is made from the hull of his fishing boat cut lengthwise or at least from parts of his boat. If a woman, a log is cut lengthwise and hollowed out, with the top serving as cover. The possessions of the deceased, such as betel-nut containers, bolo, and hats are buried with him. Burial grounds are seashores, such as those in Kabingaan Island in Sulu, Bilatan Boon, and Bunabunaan in Tawi Tawi.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

Badjao religion is characterized by ancestor worship, with *Omboh* (ancestor) as the Lord. The Badjao pay homage to the Omboh Dilaut (Lord of the sea), with a *pagdu'-salamat* (thanksgiving ritual) in the panglima's house after a big catch. They then drop household items, such as a plate, bowl, and saucer, in that part of the sea where the bounty appeared.

When a person dies, the *umaggad* (spirit companion) may haunt the cemetery islands

or any other place. The *panggauh* (an evil person's ghost) is not allowed into heaven and therefore remains a frightening specter on earth. Bongao Mountain is believed to be enchanted and the dwelling place of the ancestral spirits.

Religious practices have been influenced by Islam, the predominant religion of the area immediately outside Badjao territory. For example, the healer also doubles as the imam; hence, the practice of healing and curing is mixed with some Islamic rituals.

The night before the full moon, a *pag-jin* ritual is performed to drive away the *saitan* (evil spirits) which cause illness, misfortune, bad weather, and death. During an epidemic, the imam/panday calls upon the whole community to participate in a rice ritual. In every stilt house, uncooked rice is placed in a pot and set on the topmost corner. On every houseboat, it is placed at the bow. All the household members sleep with their faces turned toward the pot. The next morning, the oldest woman of every household cooks the rice and shapes it into a cone. This is placed in a bowl and brought to the panglima's house. The imam prays to the ancestral spirits to accept the rice offering and to bless their living relatives. The healer takes some of the rice from each bowl, mixes it, and invites all the children to partake of it. This ends the ritual. The head of each household then takes back his share of the rice which is eaten at home.

Medicine consists of leaves, tree bark, and roots. Illnesses whose causes are not readily discernible, such as asthma, migraine, diarrhea, and so forth, are attributed to evil spirits dwelling in the sea or forests.

Because healing or curing sessions are also religious rituals, there is a prayer for every illness. For example:

*Bang itu saytan tahik alaan ka pakagis
Bang itu saytan baliyu pasigay kam manilu
Aku ya pasaliyu
Magay ka palimbu-limbu
Tanda ko mata itu*

*Otoan ka u magpapanjari
Pamulungan makami
Askaduan na ilaha ilaw la
Dua barkat la ilaha ilaw la*

If you are an evil spirit from the sea
If you are an evil spirit
Go away from there
Why are you barring the way?
I can see you

Oh, God the Supreme Being
Help us
God the Almighty, God the merciful
We long for your blessing.

Architecture and Community Planning

The Badjao metaphor for “mooring place” is *samboang*, literally, “a stake to which they tie their houseboats.” *Palaw* is their native term for the place where they permanently settle or their “traditional moorage.” These two terms are the root words of the place names Zamboanga and Palawan. The Badjao, whether nomadic or settled, consider their hometown the kawman in which they were raised. A kawman consists of several related nuclear families, with a male elder as the panglima. A larger moorage consists of several clans, with the panglima of the original kin group serving as the overall head.

The biggest house in the kawman belongs to the panglima. On the rooftop, a white pennant, measuring 70 centimeters x 1 meter, proclaims his position. Stilt houses are connected to one another with footbridges or catwalks made of loosely nailed boards; this village structure has been described as a “cluster of stilt huts woven around... like a cobweb” (De Henning 1973). Relatives live near one another in the same neighborhood.

Sitangkai is said to be the Badjao’s main settlement, consisting solely of stilt houses. *Lepa/lipa* (houseboats) are used only as temporary lodging for fishing trips.

Tungkalang, the oldest moorage in Tawi-Tawi and said to be the most traditional or conservative, consists of both stilt houses and houseboats. Although it is a stone’s throw away from the Sama Dea community, its structure and features are distinctive.

Dwellings are of three kinds: the *luma*, stilt house, and *palaw*. The *luma* is a house standing on the seashore. It is made of sturdier material than the stilt house. Posts are tree trunks that can withstand seawater. The *harun* (ladder) is a log into which notches are carved to serve as steps. One end is buried in the sand and rises about three notches above the water; the other end leans on the footbridge, which serves as the landing leading to an open doorway. The house has a long frame, about 4 meters wide. The roof is of tin sheet, nipa, or coconut leaves. The walls and floor are made of wooden boards sawn from logs found floating on the sea, lying on the seashore, or felled in the inland forests. Two window openings are cut out of the front wall and a third window, out of another wall.

The living room also serves as the sleeping area, toilet, and storage space for the household possessions. On the inner walls are attached as many mirrors as there are children in the family. Mirrors are believed to drive away evil spirits. A roof beam holds the fishnets. A second doorway leads to the kitchen, which is a separate structure from the main house and connected with a footbridge. The kitchen contains the stove, consisting of three rocks arranged in a triangle and set atop a round metal sheet. Other kitchen paraphernalia are pots, a water jar, kerosene can, coconut grater, and a flat-bottomed basket containing fruits, cassava, and coconuts.

The footbridge that connects the kitchen to the next house forms part of the flooring of that house. A *pantan* is an extension where fish is dried. Laundry and dishwashing are done with the person sitting on the ladder's last step above the water and using the sea as the wash basin. Clothes are hung to dry from poles stretched across the landing.

Stilt houses, also built along the shores, are of lighter materials, such as bamboo posts and nipa, which are free or cost very little. Labor is also free, because relatives and neighbors help build the house.

The Badjao have two kinds of boats, the hulls of which are made of single tree trunks: the *dapang* or *vinta*, used for short fishing trips, and the *palaw*, which may either be a permanent dwelling place or temporary lodging during fishing trips. The *vinta* is a speedy and sleek sailboat with bamboo outriggers and a sail attached to a tripod mast made of bamboo.

The *palaw* is of two types: the lighter and speedier *pidlas* or *lepa*, and the bigger and heavier *djenging*.

The *pidlas/lipa* has no outriggers. The hull is a log that is hollowed out, called a dugout, about 20 meters long with a beam 2 meters tall. Planks are laid across the hull to serve as the foundation on which the *palaw* (nipa hut) is constructed. These planks are not securely fastened so that they can be raised to allow storage of household objects in the hull. Sticking out above the roof may be the owner's fishing spears and harpoon gun. The *palaw* has a framework of poles over which thatched nipa palm is rolled to form a curved gable. The structure is about 1 meter high, just right for a seated person. Mats are stretched from end to end between the bow and stern to keep out the rain. Living in the *palaw* has curved the posture of the Badjao, who stand or walk with protruding buttocks, especially the women who are more housebound.

The *djenging* has been described as a "floating Sulu barong-barong" (shanty) (*Folk Architecture* 1989). In 1968, Nimmo observed that the *djenging* was found only in Tawi-Tawi, for it had by then been replaced by the *lepa*. Unlike the *lepa*, the *djenging* has outriggers. Its hull measures 13-17 meters long and 2 meters wide. Its house structure, a wooden cabin, is meant to last longer than that of the *lepa*. Its walls are made of wooden boards fastened with nails, and the roof is made of galvanized iron sheets. There are windows and a doorway. The size of the *djenging* varies according to the owner's economic status.

The kitchen is at the bow, which is the front part of the boat. It consists of a clay stove set atop a tin sheet on a plank, and a rack for dishes, pots, and pans. Clothes, fishing nets, sails, and drinking water are stored at the stern. Hanging from the posts are burlap bags containing food and condiments.

Visual Arts and Crafts

The traditional attire of the Badjao consists of either everyday wear or elaborately embroidered costumes for special occasions. The *patadjung/tadjong* has many uses.

Among the Badjao, it is large enough to fit any person and is worn by both men and women as a skirt or a gown tucked in place at the chest level. It can serve as *putung* (headcover), waistband, sash, blanket, hammock, shoulder bag, cradle, pouch, hood, or pillow. Check and stripe patterns are woven into the patadjung. More elaborate ones worn for special occasions may have batik prints or tie-dyed floral and geometric patterns. The *sawwal kantiu* (loose trousers), also worn by neighboring ethnic groups, is made of plain or printed cotton cloth for everyday wear. The *sawwal* made of richer fabric is reserved for special occasions and worn by the women with a *sablay* or an *allabimbang/badjuh*. On such occasions, men wear it with a *badjuh-lapi*, a hip-long collarless jacket with long, tight sleeves, which is always worn open in front.

The women's *sablay* is a loose-sleeved blouse reaching down to the hips. A *simpay* (band) forms the front opening and extends to the back to form a small collar. Whether the *sablay* is for everyday wear or special occasions depends on its fabric. It is fastened in front with ordinary pins or a *karusang* (a set of three brooches). The *sablay* is worn with a patadjung or a *sawwal kantiu*, and topped with either a *kamban* (silk or brocade shawl) or a *papanda* (scarf of filmy material). A blouse worn for special occasions is the long-sleeved, tight-fitting *allabimbang*, open at the midriff but reaching down to the hips. The *panyuh* (a large handkerchief) is worn to modestly cover that which the blouse leaves open. Embellishments consist of hand embroidery, sequins, or *tambuku* (small metal or gold buttons). The *allabimbang* may be worn with a *siyag* (a more elaborately embroidered patadjung), which is worn with one corner slung over a shoulder or arm.

The men roll up the patadjung or *sawwal kantiu* and tuck the upper corners at the waistband to make the *bahag*, which is more convenient to wear at work, such as pearl diving, fishing, or wood carving. For special occasions, the *sawwal kuput-mahabah* (long, tight-fitting trousers) are worn. It is held at the waist by a strip of cotton cloth called a *kandit*. A tasseled *kandit*, made of *katsa* (muslin) and embroidered in vibrant colors at both ends, is the *saputangan*, worn on religious occasions. During the wedding ceremony the bride and groom exchange waistcloths. Worn with the *sawwal* is the *badjuh-lapi*. Both sides of the opening are decorated with colorfully embroidered strips, and the sleeves are embroidered with cross-stitches at the wrists. The *pis* is a large handkerchief, folded and draped to make several variations of headgear, or used as a handkerchief, carry-all, or sling. The plain yellow *pis* is the most common among the Badjao males, although the *pis siyabit*, with handwoven geometric patterns, may be used by the relatively well-to-do.

The cone-shaped *saruk* (male's hat) is made of woven nipa or pandan leaves, whose natural creamy color is retained. Geometric, spiral, or concentric lines are sometimes painted on the hat. The wide-brimmed *salakut* (female's hat) also has a cone-shaped top. Its materials and weave are like those of the *saruk*. Although usually woven in the natural colors of the leaves, there are those that are "richly dyed and exquisitely crafted" in Sibutu (Amilbangsa 1983). The *taming* is a fish-shaped shield made of woven rattan and now used solely as part of the paraphernalia for the Badjao fight dance *magsangkil*.

Women's accessories are jewelry and colored combs. The *gallang* (bracelet) is the most popular ornament. The most common is that made from *sulau* (letter cone) or *kima* (tridachna gigas). Other pieces of jewelry are the *gantung-liug* (pendant), *aritis* (earring), *singsing* (ring), *hukut-liug* (necklace), and *galungsung* (anklet). Metalcraft designs can be classified into three kinds: the repousse, relief hammered from the reverse side; arabesque, incision of interlocking curves; and filigree, tracing with thin gold, silver, or brass wires. Although the favorite ornamental material is *bulawan* (gold), precious and semiprecious stones, turtle shell, colored glass, nacre, and black coral are also used.

The *sudlay* is the ornamental comb made from wood, coconut, or turtle shell, and inlaid with jewels. The *tambuku*, which are 100 or so small buttons encrusted on an allabimbang, may range in shape and style from the simple round to the embossed floral or filigree design. The *sulakengkeng*, long artificial fingernails made of gold, silver, brass, or tortoise shell, are used only for dancing. The *panumping*, a crown worn by a bride or as part of a dance costume, is made of paperboard covered with tinfoil of all colors, sequins, beads, and tassels.

Badjao painting and carving are integral to the people's life cycle. In wedding ceremonies, the wedding beautician must be adept at applying the special makeup on the bride and groom. With a razor blade tied with thread to a split bamboo twig, the beautician shapes the bride's eyebrows into a triangle and carves tiny bangs on her forehead. Lampblack is used to outline a rectangle on her forehead and this is emphasized by yellow ginger juice. The outline is then filled in with *borak* (white powder), which is made of ground rice. The rest of the face is smeared with the white powder, creating a white mask. Black dots are outlined horizontally above the eyebrows and/or beneath the eyes with the pointed end of a coconut midrib. The hair is sleeked with coconut oil, pulled back in a tight bun, and decorated with small paper flowers. The groom is attended by another beautician and his face is made up the same way.

Tepo, which refers to either mat weaving or the mat itself, is done with pandanus, buri, and other native fibers. It has two layers: the underside is plainly woven, whereas the topside consists of strips dyed green, orange, red, violet, and blue, and woven into intricate geometric patterns. Utility bags and pouches are woven from these materials, with inwoven designs like rick-racks, stars, and diamonds. Cotton tassels dangle from the edges of the pouches. The women of Laminusa, Siasi, and Sulu are especially known for their elaborately designed tepo, which they barter for food. The *boras* is another kind of mat made of rattan and painted with the same geometric designs as the pis siyabit (large kerchief).

Ukkil refers to either the art of wood carving or the particular design which characterizes the textile, wood carvings, mats, and metal engraving in Sulu and Lanao. The ukkil design is a "combination of stylized scroll, leaf, and vine elements in a seemingly infinite range of abstract variations" (Szanton 1973:33). Badjao wood

carving is distinctive for its more massive, bold, and unrestrained designs.

Wash basins are carved out of solid wood and painted with green, white, blue, red, and yellow vines that crawl and grow in curling tendrils. The *gabbang*, the indigenous xylophone, has a frame carved in the likeness of a bird, fish, or lepa and is incised with geometric patterns or curlicues. The prows of the houseboats are carved in combinations of dragon and sarimanok designs, or curvilinear designs such as rising leaves and flowers. The bows feature shafts imitating a crocodile's gaping mouth. When the head of the family dies, this carved part of the boat may be sawed off to serve as his grave marker.

A *sundok* (grave marker) may also be especially fashioned from a separate piece of wood. It may carry the same designs as those on the boat. It is 60 centimeters high and stands on a heavy wooden base placed over the grave. It is carved into an animal form, such as a dragon, serpent, sea horse, or bird, which will carry the spirit into the afterlife. A male marker is distinguished by a column topped with a fez, a stylized umbrella, or a stylized human face. The female marker is marked by a flat triangle, sometimes with scalloped edges, and incised with lavish floral designs. The grave is fenced around and covered by a *luma-luma* (canopy) and festooned with paper parasols and multicolored buntings, which the panglima and imam stick into the ground as they chant prayers over the dead.

Literary Arts

Badjao literature, except for the *kata-kata* (narrative forms) and riddles, seems to have been created primarily to be sung. Or it may be that their spoken form of literature is indistinguishable from that of the Sama, to whom is attributed such forms of oral literature as animal tales, trickster tales, numskull tales, magical tales, and novelistic tales.

Badjao riddles collected in the Semporna district of Sabah have a set opening: *daing-daing ai*, "what kind of fish." Sather (1965) observed groups of young men playing these guessing games at night, each side even betting some money on its answers.

Daing-daing ai bang kekita, angekit kita? (Lerah)
What kind of fish, when we bite it, bites us? (Chili pepper)

Daing-daing ai embal tandata atassata? (Baliu)
What kind of fish is it that we cannot see but can feel? (The wind)

Daing-daing ai sali sali daheya-daheyana? (Taiung)
What kind of fish looks the same
when seen from all directions? (A sea urchin)

Daing-daing ai ania dua guntingna? (Kagong)

What kind of fish has two pairs of scissors? (A crab)

A Badjao tale says that the ancestors of the Sama ha Laud came from a fishing clan in Johore, Indonesia. A group of boats sailed in search of richer fishing grounds. One night a typhoon came and they had to moor by a sandbar. As they were about to rest for the night, their boats suddenly started bucking up and down. They realized they had tied their boats to the nose of a giant manta ray, which had begun to swim round and round in a frantic attempt to unloosen the boats tied to its nose. The fishers managed to untie their boats, but by then, they had been flung in various directions. And that is why the Badjao are scattered in the islands of Siasi, Jolo, Zamboanga, and Tawi-Tawi.

A slightly different version is that the villages of houseboats were buffeted by strong winds at Johore. The leader tied his boat to a pole that he stuck into the sea floor. The villagers, in turn, tied their boats to that of their leader. As they slept that night, the sea floor moved out into sea toward the Sulu archipelago. When the villagers woke up, they did not know where they were. They realized too late that they had secured themselves to a giant manta ray.

Another origin story involves the Princess Ayesha of Johore and the Sultans of Brunei and Sulu. She preferred the Brunei sultan, but was betrothed instead to the Sulu sultan. Escorted by a fleet of war boats, she was sailing toward Sulu when a Brunei fleet, led by their Sultan, intercepted them and took Princess Ayesha away. The Princess' retinue, fearing to go on to Sulu or return to Johore, stayed on the sea, mooring only at uninhabited islands. Some turned to piracy and established pirate dens along the North Borneo coasts.

The Badjao have a song for almost any activity. All, except for the *lugu* (wedding song) and the *panulkin* (song for the dead) have improvised lyrics. An excerpt from the lugu follows:

*Sail kami malallay-lalay
Mag-ambit kami dua manaytay
Maid kami limabay
Kumita kilai hi rayang
Mabaya kami limabay
Hamot sin sumping malay
Bangsila makapag-hambuok
Makapag simun tamus.*

We are walking very slowly
The two of us will cross the bridge
So that we can catch a glimpse
Of the eyebrows that are hidden
Let us pass by
As fragrant as flowers
And after the wedding
They may then kiss each other.

The *leleng* is a song for all occasions:

*Katulak ni Manila
Sakayan bangka-bangka
Pag ambal na kita tanda
Atay ku na magkobla-kobla.*

When I go to Manila
Aboard a banca
When I no longer see you
My heart will pound with fear.

The *binoa* is a lullaby with improvised lyrics:

*Bua bua binoa
Tulibakaw utu manok-manok
Bati kaw ti mi gauk
Matay na aku a nga luk
Bang tangis nu mag-alud
Bua-bua*

I am rocking you
Sleep like a hen
Wake up crowing
I am tired, stop
Your loud crying
I am rocking you.

The *tenes* (ballad) below shows a borrowing from the English language in the phrase “litel gel,” i.e., “little girl.”

*Tenes kinambaya bai taga Jalidua
Tulaku ni Sabah baka alama lama
Kita ilu karua umbal na mag-unda sadya
Tabanaka dangan-dangan na
Baikita maglata-lata
Intomon pain si lanla (2x)
Baikita magbeya kadua
Baikita na maglata-lata
Landiar lata tenesanta
Mikilana susa lahat si litel gel itu
Halam na tanda.*

Tenes don't be sad;
When I leave for Sabah
We will seldom see each other
And you will be left alone.
We used to tease each other.
Remember this young man (2x)
When we were together,

When we used to tease each other.
Now our tenes-tenes is over;
I will no longer see your home.

The Badjao musical instruments may be improvised as their songs. Drums are anything on hand that can be beaten, such as plastic water containers or the wooden floor. However, the most distinctive instrument is the gabbang, whose frame is carved like a lepa. Its bars are made of bamboo carefully chosen so as to produce a pleasing mellow sound. The length of each bar determines the pitch; hence, the bars are arranged from the longest to the shortest, i.e., from the lowest tone to the highest. These bars are beaten with a pair of wooden pieces wrapped in thick cloth. It is used to accompany singing and dancing. Also used for dancing are the bola-bola/bulah-bulah, which are pairs of bamboo or shell clappers that are held in both hands.

Performing Arts

The Badjao have five types of song: leleng, binoa, tenes, panulkin, and lugu. Except for the last two, the lyrics are improvised and sung to a traditional tune. The leleng is sung for any occasion, by anyone of any age: children at play, a boy teasing a playmate, a youth singing about a faraway sweetheart, a man fishing or resting. It is also sung for special occasions like weddings, haircuts, or circumcisions. The chanting is monotonous and is similar to the tune of the *pasyon* (Lenten chant on the life of Christ). A specific type of leleng is the *lia-lia*, which a little girl sings to express her resentment against her parents' perceived wrongdoing.

The binoa is similarly chanted as the leleng. The tenes-tenes is a ballad whose tune changes with the lyrics. It may be sung for any occasion and by anyone, but especially by a young man for his sweetheart. The melody of a known tenes may be used for a different set of lyrics. Some tenes are love or courtship songs, fishing songs, and even songs addressed to sharks.

A woman sings the lugu at a wedding as the imam or panglima walks with the groom to the bride's side. The lugu's lyrics are verses from the Quran; it has a traditional and melancholy tune. The panulkin is sung only by the imam and has traditional tune and lyrics. It is sung during the vigil for the dead, from 7 P.M. to 1 A.M. It is a way of keeping awake and of making the community aware that someone has died.

The Badjao dance traditions have much in common with the other ethnic groups of Sulu, especially the Sama. The basic traditional dance movement is the igo or *pangalay* performed by the female. The costume for the igo is the allabimbang and the sawwal. The hair is preferably pulled back in a bun, although it may also be allowed to hang loose. The dance is accompanied by any drum (such as a plastic water container) or a gabbang.

The *sinalayan* is the beginning of the dance. The hands are held in front, making a

scooping motion. They alternately go up and down, with one palm facing down as it descends while the other hand is being raised. In the meantime, the feet make the *palalay-lalay*, shuffling steps with the knees bent. After this first movement, the dancer may choose from any of several wrist, hand, and elbow movements. The *nilimbayan* (to swing) is of two types: the *nilimbayan nidakan*, with the arms stretching outward from the chest as the palms face outward; and the *nilimbayan nibukutan* (to swing backwards), with both hands behind the lower part of the body. In the *sinagang/pataud-taud* (rocking), the arms make a pushing motion from the elbows to the fingers. In the *niliboran tanganku* (circular movement of the hands), the wrists are rotated. In the *binaliku* (to fold), the hands are a short distance from the chest, and palms alternately circle while facing outward. In the *magdambila* (both ends), the hands shift from left to right and vice versa.

The fingers are kept together while they are stretched as far upward and backward as they can go, especially the thumbs. The hand movements are done together with the *nikelengan/maglingad-lingad* (tilting of the head) to look at the movements of one's hands. The hands are constantly making either *nileboran* (circular motion) or *nilimbayan* (swinging motion). The torso does not move, but the posture is *pinatuddih* (buttocks protruding).

There are five positions of the feet: *tinukunan* ("to stop"), with the feet at a standstill during the dance; *nidaganan* ("to pull someone to go with you"), which is a walking movement; *deyo-deyoan* ("to go down"), with the knees in a bending movement; *nilangkahan*, with the knees bent while dancing, related to the *langka*, the basic position of the kintaw; and the *pabolibod*, the circular movement of the feet while standing in place.

The dancing style is smooth and flowing, i.e., no pauses should mark the change from one movement to the next. There is also no marked ending, although the dance always begins with the *sinalayan*. There is no fixed sequence of movements, no fixed number of dancers. The *igal* is performed to mark the various stages of the life cycle, such as the child's first haircut, ear piercing, male and female circumcision, or a wedding.

The basic male dance movement is the kintaw, a stylized imitation of the indigenous martial arts. It is said that this form of martial arts was taught to the Tausug by a Malaysian warrior, who had been stranded in Sulu in the 16th century. The basic position of the kintaw is the *langka*, with feet apart, knees bent, arms raised to the level of the chest and stretched a bit to the front, palms facing outward. It is related to the *nilangkahan* movement of the *igal*. The performer's kintaw movements may vary from tender and graceful to energetic and warlike. He invariably begins with the "greeting-and-obeisance" movement, in which he flips his hands at chest level, skips and lands cross-legged at a deep knee bend, and flips his hands again at chest level. A variant is to slap his hands overhead, bring them down to ear level with palms facing outwards, slap his hands again at chest level, stretch his arms sideways, bring his palms together at the chest, pivot, flip the hands, and finally, bow.

Almost all traditional Badjao dances are variants of the pangalay/igal and kuntaw. These dances may be classified into the religious or ceremonial, occupational, and entertainment or exhibition dances.

Any person may break into dance as a form of prayer to the Omboh. For instance, one observer has recorded the dance of a sick man who believed his illness to have been caused by angry spirits because of an offense he had committed against another man. Before the *magomboh* (dance of exorcism), the stricken man, covered in a sheet of green cloth up to his neck, sits on his lepa. Then to the beat of the gabbang played by young mothers and their children, he leaps from one boat to another as he shrieks and flings his arms about convulsively. He is wearing the spirits' favorite colors: green sarong and a white shirt. The man he has wronged is dressed similarly and sits on another lepa. This second man breaks into the same frenzied movements while speaking loudly in "the language of the spirits." Talcum powder is thrown at them and then they fall in a daze on two other men. A third man revives them with a prayer whispered in their ears (De Henning 1973). The atmosphere throughout is not solemn, as the community cheers them on with much shouting and laughing.

The *sambulayang* or *pangantin* is a wedding dance in which the bride is hidden from the groom's view by a sambulayang (flag) tied to a bamboo pole. She is followed by the groom who indicates his readiness to defend and protect her by continually touching the hilt of his kris or *kalis* (sword). The male carrier of the bamboo pole does the same. The dance is highlighted by the groom's retrieval of the bride's *sulangkengkeng*, which drop to the floor one by one as she flicks them off her fingers. The dance ends with the groom ceremoniously handing the *sulangkengkeng* back to his bride.

The *magsangkil* is a mock fight between two dancers who each carry the fish-shaped *taming* (shield) and a *sangkil* (spear). The movements are uncharacteristically slow and graceful. An entertaining dance is the *bulah-bulah*, a pangalay in which both male and female performers use the shell clappers. The Badjao of Sitangkay have evolved the *tariray*, in which the *bulah-bulah* is clicked alternately with brass percussions played in staccato rhythm.

Occupation dances are also mimetic, imitating the actions of people at work. One dance that was originally Badjao but which spread to the Sama and Tausug is the *tawte tawte*, in which dancers simulate the movements of fishers trying to pursue a school of fish around a rock. They use the sap of *tubli* (poison vine) to catch the fish. Another fisherfolk's dance has the lone dancer seated during the entire performance comically pretending to catch fish that are attacking him.

In some Magomboh rituals an effigy of the Omboh is made out of a basket through which a piece of wood, representing the arms, is inserted. The effigy is then dressed with a sablay. The panglima or imam dances about while carrying the Omboh and imploring the spirit to enter the Omboh. He then holds a dialogue with the Omboh, which is believed to answer his questions with signs which only he can decipher.

The *magjin/pagjin* is performed on the 14th moon to drive away an unfriendly *jin* (spirit). As the moon begins to emerge, the whole community assembles on a porch that has been covered with boras. The male dancers wear green sawwal kantiu and white *badjuh-kulung*. After the thanksgiving prayer, the panglima or imam dances around while anointing the performers with a green lotion called “tonix.” The participants alternately dance until they begin to be possessed. The panglima slaps them awake with his headkerchief.

The next day, the *pag-duwaa* (thanksgiving offering) is held. It begins with another prayer by the panglima in front of a miniature lepa festooned with buntings of white, yellow, and green, the favorite colors of the spirits. Offerings of yellow rice, a live chicken, eggs, betel nut, and native cakes are placed on the lepa, which is then allowed to sail, a fitting form of worship for people whose lives are defined by the sea. • R.C. Lucero with notes from J. Barrios

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