The Tboli, also known as T'boli, Tiboli, and Tagabili, are an old indigenous people living in South Cotabato, where the southwest coast range and the Cotabato Cordillera merge to form the Tiruray highlands, in an area circumscribed by a triangle formed by the towns of Suralla, Polomolok, and Kiamba. Located within these boundaries are three major lakes which are important to the Tboli: Sebu, the largest and the most culturally significant; Siluton, the deepest; and Lahit, the smallest.

Population estimates of the Tboli range from a low of 100,000 to a high of 227,000 (NCCP-PACT 1988). The 1980 census gives a figure of 7,783 Tboli-speaking households, comprising an estimated total of 38,915 Tboli. The National Museum census, as of November 1991 in South Cotabato, records 68,282 Tboli.

History

The Tboli, according to their myths, are descendants of La Bebe and La Lomi, and Tamfeles and La Kagef, two couples that survived a big flood after being warned by the deity Dwata to take precautions. Taking a huge bamboo that could accommodate countless people, they filled the vessel with food. When Mount Hulon was inundated, the four got into the bamboo while the rest of the population drowned in the swollen waters. When the floods subsided and the days grew warm, the fortunate couples split the bamboo open and emerged into the sunlight.

La Kagef and Tamfeles begot 12 sons and daughters: Sudot Henok and Nayong who begot the *tau sequil* (lowlanders); Dodom and Eva who begot the *tau mohin*, the sea-dwellers from Kiamba; Bou and Umen who begot the *tau sebu*, the uplanders of Lake Sebu and Sinulon; La Bila and Moong who begot the Bilaan of Tupi; Dugo and Sewen who begot the Ubu (Manobo); and Kmanay and Sodi who begot the people who became Muslims. From the loins of La Bebe and La Lomi sprang the Ilongo and other Visayan groups, the Ilocano, and the Tagalog.

Anthropologists say that the Tboli could be of Austronesian stock. It is believed that they were already, to some degree, agricultural and used to range the coasts up to the mountains. With the arrival of later groups, however, these people were gradually pushed to the uplands.

There is reasonable speculation, however, that the Tboli, along with the other upland groups, used to inhabit parts of the fertile Cotabato Valley until the advent of Islam in the region, starting in the 14th century. The Tboli and their Ubu (Manobo) and Bilaan neighbors resisted the aggressive proselytizing of a succession of Muslim warrior-priests, the greatest of whom was Sharif Muhammad Kabungsuan from Johore in present-day Malaysia, who subsequently established the sultanate of Maguindanao during the early 16th century.

Muslim oral accounts called *tarsila* claim that those who accepted the new faith remained in the Cotabato Valley, while the others retreated to the relative safety and

isolation of the mountains (Saleeby 1974:184-193).

Conflict between the Muslims and the non-Islamized tribes continued with constant slaving raids by the former upon the latter. It is no wonder then that in Tboli folk literature, the Muslims figure as perennial villains. Nevertheless, a regular volume of trade emerged despite the strained relations.

The fierce resistance of the Muslims against Spanish incursions served to insulate the Tboli from contact with Christianity and Spanish colonization. Only when the Americans were able to bring the Muslims under their sway, through a combination of military prowess and civil and religious accommodation, did Christian elements penetrate Cotabato and subsequently the hinterlands. Instrumental in this development was the collaboration of Datu Piang of the Maguindanao, whose family was to exercise considerable political power over the region during the American regime.

In 1913, 13,000 hectares of the Cotabato Valley were opened up for settlement and the first waves of Christians arrived. The trickle of immigrants gradually increased into major streams of Christians, especially from the Ilocano, Tagalog, and Visayan regions, when the Philippine government, in an effort to alleviate land pressures and arrest the concomitant rise of revolutionary movements in Luzon and the Visayas, opened up 50,000 hectares in Koronadal Valley for homesteading in 1938. From February 1939 to October 1950, 8,300 families were resettled by the National Land Settlement Agency.

These migrations adversely affected the Tboli. In the wake of homesteaders came commercial ranching, mining, and logging interests. Armed with land grants and timber licenses, these entities increasingly encroached upon the Tboli homelands and disenfranchised those who had resided on the land since time immemorial, but who, not having access to the instruments of ownership recognized by the Philippine government, did not obtain legal protection from the latter.

Economy

The Tboli have been classified as a people in the mature hunting-gathering stage while being already horticulturists. Hunting used to be one of the prime sources of Tboli livelihood, supplying them with wild pigs, deer, monkeys, snakes, frogs, birds, and bats. The forests have also supplied them with rattan, bamboo, wax, honey, and other wild fruits and plants for their own use and as items for barter with neighboring groups and lowlanders. The rivers, lakes, and streams of the region supply them with fish, shrimps, and snails caught with fishing rods, spears, nets, and other traps. Ducks are also raised along lakeshores.

The Tboli practice kaingin or *taniba* (slash-and-burn) method of clearing land for farming. Fields are usually cleared on hilltops where Tboli establish their homesteads. They plant corn, upland rice, sweet potatoes, and various vegetables. They raise

domestic animals, the most distinctive being horses, which enjoy a singular stature. Possession of horses is an indicator of financial and social prestige. Much of the produce is kept for the use of the household; some to barter with certain necessities, like salt. The Tboli are also skilled in textile weaving and metalwork which enable them to produce the distinctive Tboli cloth known as *tnalak* and various metal artifacts ranging from swords to musical instruments and figurines.

Progressive contact with Christian lowlanders patterns Tboli life. Increasingly, Tboli hunting grounds have been constricted by expanding Christian communities in the lowlands. Barter is also giving way to a money economy. Household utensils, cosmetics, and certain fabrics are already being bought from stores in the lowlands, rather than made by the Tboli households or bartered from other tribes. Lately, the sale of Tboli products has become a profitable business; the products are sold to tourists or sent to outlets around the country.

Pressure has also been brought to bear upon the Tboli to open up their lands to contract-growing schemes for pineapple and other cash crops, a strategy adopted by the local government for lowland Christian farmers who have either abandoned their traditional crops or become employees of giant multinational fruit companies like Del Monte. The upland climate and soil of the Tboli homelands have been determined to be suitable for pineapple, coffee, and cacao.

Political System

The concept of the village is nonexistent since every house or household cluster operates rather independently, except during marriage and funeral feasts. The Tboli have the *datu* (chieftain) to whom people go for interpretations of Tboli customs and traditions and for the settlement of intertribal disputes. Wisdom and a proficiency in the knowledge of Tboli traditions are the deciding factors that make litigants consult one datu and not the other. The position of datu is not hereditary. One datu does not enjoy primacy over the others, nor does he exercise specific jurisdictional control over specific areas or groups. Other datu might accord deferential treatment to one of their members, but this is not a sign of his superiority over them.

The Tboli are governed through a rich layer of custom law and tradition. There is no body of written laws nor do the datu rule by decree. Custom law and tradition are usually inculcated among the Tboli in the numerous folktales and folk beliefs that are transmitted orally from childhood. Transgressions of the custom law or *sala* do not have a corresponding penalty in the penological sense. Rather, offenses are penalized by *tamok* (fines). If unable to pay the tamok, which is usually in the form of land, horses, cattle, money, or other movable or immovable property, the offender must render service to the aggrieved party for a period of time.

Grave felonies and transgressions of custom law which would bring harm to the community can be punished by ostracism and, in extreme cases, death. Furthermore,

the Tboli believe that violations of custom law and tradition are also punished by the gods, so the perpetrator is doubly penalized. Disputes arising from contract, quasi-contract, and the interpretation of custom law are decided by the datu after consultation with elders of the tribe who are known to be well-versed in tribal tradition.**Social Organization and Customs**

The Tboli are organized around the household and rarely settle in a cluster larger than three to four houses. The father is the head of a household, and he enjoys the right of patria potestas. Tradition dictates, however, that this power should not be arbitrarily exercised and that his word is absolute only in major decisions. For example, he cannot treat his wife like a slave.

The Tboli are very solicitous of their pregnant women. For one, they are not left alone, lest they be preyed upon by the *busao* or evil spirits. Thus, a pregnant woman is warned: "Bathe not in the lakes nor rivers or the busao will kidnap your child and turn it into a fish." A pregnant woman is spared most household and fieldwork tasks, even such routine chores as cooking, because she might "bear a child with huge eyes."

Likewise, her food intake is regulated. She cannot eat twin bananas, lest she bear twins or triplets, forcing her to choose one (regardless of sex) and bury the other(s) alive to prevent bad luck. Nor can she eat the legs of pigs, chicken, or deer, otherwise the unborn child will be toothless or have enormous teeth. Eating chicken gizzards or leftovers is believed to lead to difficult childbirths.

Some beliefs are similar to those of other regions. For instance, a woman should be cheerful and careful in preserving her good looks so that her child will be born pretty and good. Conversely, an expectant mother should not listen to stories about the busao for her child will be born evil.

A pregnant woman who comes across a snake in the fields will die in childbirth. Those who are fond of sitting near the hearth or the stairs will have difficult deliveries. During childbirth, the umbilical cord must not go to the baby's head or the child will grow up to be antisocial. If this happens, it is better to kill the child.

Even the man has to observe certain practices during his wife's pregnancy. A woodcutter, for example, must arrange his logs well, lest his child be delivered feet first.

Prenatal care uses augury techniques to deliver diagnoses. To determine the cause of a pregnant woman's premature pains, an old woman versed in the healing arts places a white chick under the house, immediately below the spot where the patient lies. Should the chick chirp, the child is deemed to be sick; otherwise, it is the mother who is sick. The old woman then prepares the necessary concoctions to relieve the ailment.

The Tboli have no compunction performing *matung* or abortion. A woman resorts to

abortion for various reasons, such as: her husband has abandoned her and refuses to give support; she has more children than can be fed adequately; her honor has been stained; she merely wants to be spared the difficulties of delivery. The woman goes to the *tao matunga* or abortionist who gives her concoctions. Failure of the latter usually results in drastic measures such as mutilation or walking around with heavy stones tied to the womb. The extreme abortion technique is suicide.

The moment the mother-to-be experiences labor pains, a monkey's intestines are placed on her abdomen in the belief that this will ease childbirth, because monkeys always have easy deliveries. The husband assists the midwives during his wife's delivery, and he places personal items, like his *tok* (sword) or *kafilan* (long knife) by her side as *desu* or offering to the gods in supplication for easy childbirth. Another tok is used to cut the baby's umbilical cord. This tok has a mystic life-bond with the child and must never be lost, lest the child die.

The mother wraps the child in her *luwek* or tube skirt and allows no dressing to be applied on the newly severed umbilical cord. Henceforth, she resumes her normal routine, free from the *lii* (taboos) that governed her pregnancy. The child is allowed to remain naked until it decides to emulate its elders and dresses accordingly.

The child is usually given a name according to its physical characteristics at birth, such as *bukay* (white or light-skinned), *udi* (small), or *bong* (big). Sometimes, the child is named after important ancestors, forces of nature, or animals. If the child is a first-born, the parents are identified by the child's name. Thus, the parents of a child named Fok come to be known as *Ma'Fok* (Father of Fok) and *Ye'Fok* (Mother of Fok).

Disrespect or disobedience to parents may result in the child being bartered, a practice known as *habalo*. Destitute parents may also resort to this to meet their credit obligations. Filial obligation, however, dictates that the relatives of the parents buy the child themselves, or buy back the latter should he/she be sold to a non-relative. Once sold, the child ceases to have all relations with the original family.

Tboli upbringing is not strict. The indoctrination of the child into the rigid rules of Tboli society is subliminally and relentlessly pursued through the numerous folktales and beliefs that are told and retold. These didactic exercises contain various lii. Among the beliefs expressed are a whole class of injunctions against eating: *bedak* or langka growing against the branch, so that the children will not grow up to be rebellious and insubordinate; the head of a pig, to prevent hardheadedness; frogs' heads, to prevent talkativeness; burnt rice sticking at the pot bottom, to prevent laziness and unruliness; chicken wings, as the boys will be unable to build a house and the girls unable to weave; and rats, so that the children will not grow up to be thieves.

Succession is exclusively reserved for men. When the father dies, his responsibilities and rights go to his eldest son or, if he has no son, to his eldest brother. Daughters are generally considered inferior to the sons and do not inherit property.

Tboli *kesiyahan* or marriage is a long process that may be conducted in three major stages: childhood, puberty and adolescence, and the crowning celebration called the *moninum*. Marriages are prearranged by the parents and may be contracted at any age, even immediately after the child's birth.

Most child betrothals are the result of a child's sickness. If a child is sick, an augury is made, using a pendulum made of a handful of soil wrapped in a piece of cloth tied with a string called the *hamkowing*. The question of whether or not the child is banahung, or "in need of a life-partner," is asked. The hamkowing replies by spinning clockwise or counterclockwise. Another way of determining if a child is *banahung* is for a medium to make measurements using the palm or *dmangao*. If the child's pinky does not meet the medium's pinky at the end of the measurements, then the child needs a spouse.

Once the child is known to be banahung, the parents seek a spouse of suitable age, family background, and economic standing. When the prospect is known, the sick child's parents borrow a piece of the chosen child's body adornments from the latter's parents. This is placed first on the healthy child, then brought to the sick child over whom it is suspended, then struck.

Upon the sick child's recovery, its parents go to the prospective spouse's parents and make arrangements for the celebration of the first of the marriage ceremonies. On the date set for the latter, the parents of the girl go to the house of the boy and discuss with his parents the *sungod*, the bride-price, and the *kimo*, composed of movables and immovables to be given by the families of the bride and groom which will comprise the paraphernal property of the bride.

This is done over a drawn-out feast called the *mobulung bahong* lasting 3 to 7 days. Once the sungod and the kimo are agreed upon, the contract is sealed with the promise of delivery by the boy's parents of the sungod, which usually consists of horses, carabaos, *agong* (gongs), land, or other valuable properties. Afterwards, the boy and the girl sleep together and are covered with a *kumo* or handwoven blanket.

The next phase is the *mulu*, a reciprocal feast hosted by the girl's parents. Again, the betrothed sleep together. The mulu lasts exactly as long as the mobulung bahong. At the end of the mulu, the date for the wedding is set, which may well be far into the future. At this point, in the eyes of Tboli society, the child-spouses are already married. The period between the conclusion of the contract and the solemnization of the marriage is called the *gatoon*.

During this period, the boy visits the girl's house, performs various chores for his in-laws, and, if he so desires, sleeps with his spouse. His parents, on the other hand, gradually fulfill the provisions of the kimo. Should one of the children die, a close relative is made to take the place of the deceased, a practice called *lomolo*. If the other party should not accede to this substitution, the kimo is returned. Short of death, the marriage may still be called off, and the sungod returned.

Years later, when the children shall have reached puberty, the exact date of the solemnization is set, usually on a full moon when no rain is expected, as the marriage is celebrated at night in the bride's house.

For the occasion, the house would be spruced up, with displays of swords and *kumo magal* (handwoven blankets) on the walls and rafters, and *igam* (mats) and *tilam* (cushions and pillows) on the floor. The boy and the girl dress up in their respective houses: then, they go separately to their respective venerable elders, who sprinkle water on their feet, hands, and face. As they return to their respective houses, they must be careful not to break a twig because this would presage bad luck. All throughout the afternoon prior to the ceremonies, and as the preparations get under way, there is continuous playing of the *agong, hagalong,* and *tnonggong*.

The groom is informed when the bride is ready in all her wedding finery, and he proceeds to the house of the bride at the head of his entire entourage. The bride awaits her groom seated on a cushion in her house's *lowo* or central space, with another cushion placed beside her. She is covered with a kumo immediately prior to the entry of the groom. From that moment on, no one may go near her except for the old person who had sprinkled her with water earlier in the afternoon.

The groom enters the house accompanied by his sister or any other female relative who directly goes to the bride, removes the kumo, and kisses her. The kumo becomes this person's property, and she in turn must give the bride a gift proportionate to the value of the blanket she has just removed and acquired. The groom is made to sit on the empty cushion next to his bride, taking care not to touch her. Only then are the groom's other relatives and guests allowed into the house. They are made to sit on the groom's side and may not talk or mix in any way with the bride's relatives and guests until the marriage ceremonies are over.

The bride's sister or other female relative reciprocates the "unveiling." She removes the groom's turban and lays it beside him in a ceremony known as *hamwos olew*.

The wedding feast is initiated by the elders who sprinkle water on the bride and groom. The bride's elder feeds the groom and vice versa. The two elders initiate the first touch between the couple by making their knees meet. This becomes the operative act of union, which is followed by the couple eating from a single plate, an event accompanied by hearty applause and approval from the assembled guests. This then is the cue for relatives of the bride to seek out "partners" from the groom's side to feed. The latter show their appreciation by giving a gift to the person feeding them. Throughout the meal, everyone is careful not to drop anything. Silence is kept and sneezing suppressed, as a sneeze is considered bad luck for the couple.

After the meal, the parties of the groom and bride, represented by their respective *hulung telu* or singers, engage in the *slingon* or debate in song. The topics invariably lead to a comparison of the qualities of bride and groom, becoming an occasion to

finalize negotiations on the final amount of the sungod and kimo.

The *klakak*, or the chanting and singing of the exploits of Todbulol, an epic Tboli hero, follows after the slingon; this lasts until daybreak.

The following morning, the delivery of the kimo is completed while the groom ventures to the woods and cuts a tree branch. He puts this in the hearth of the bride's house. The young couple can stay in the bride's house, where they are taught the ways of married life until the branch dries up. This period of their marriage is known as the siyehen. After the *siyehen*, the couple move to the groom's house, where the marriage ceremony done at the bride's house, except for the removal of the kumo and the turban, is repeated.

The moninum is a series of six feasts, hosted alternately by the families of the bride and the groom. Done over a period ranging from 2 to 6 years, the moninum is an optional celebration which usually only the wealthy Tboli can afford. Each feast runs for 3 to 5 days and nights.

For each occasion, a gunu moninum is built to house the guests who would be coming from all over. Along the long wall of the *gunu moninum* where the entrance lies, a wall consisting of kumo hung side by side is set up. These are the contributions of the bride's relatives. Opposite the gunu moninum, a *tabule* or portable houselike structure is built where contributions by the groom's family's relatives are hung or attached. These items include plates, cloths, umbrellas, agong, and horse bridles.

The first day is invariably given to accommodating the arriving guests. The festivities begin on the second day. There are *koda seket* (horse fights), pitting horses from the groom's party against horses from the bride's side, with each party waging bets. The matches are one-on-one affairs, but each side has about 15 to 20 horses, sometimes even more. The horses fight until one flees from the field; in which case, a new pair is brought in to do battle. Horse fighting enthralls the Tboli as much as cockfighting does other Philippine ethnic groups. There is continuous feasting and the nights are devoted to singing the exploits of Todbulol.

Aside from the horse fights, dances are performed on the square. One such dance is the *tao soyow*, where two men, one dressed as a female and representing the groom's side, stage a mock fight. The dance lifts the lii or taboo from the kumo. The climax of the festivities comes when the party of the groom lifts the tabule and carries it across the square, "penetrating" through the wall of kumo hung on poles lifted by relatives of the bride. This manner of entry purges the lii that the groom and his relatives were under.

Polygamy is allowed among the Tboli, a practice resorted to especially by chieftains and the wealthy. The Tboli adventures of Todbulol usually end with his gaining an additional wife. A man may take another wife with the consent of his first wife. This is seen as prestigious and advantageous, as extra wives mean extra hands in house

and field work.

The grounds for divorce include incompatibility, sterility, or infidelity. In cases of adultery, an unfaithful wife caught in the act may simply be killed on the spot as was the case with Ye Dadang, a married woman who was hacked to pieces by her irate husband when he caught her and her lover. The event was made into a popular Tboli song. Another consequence of divorce is the return of the bride-price should fault be with the girl.

The Tboli do not regard death as inevitable, rather it is the result of a trick played by the busao or evil spirits, or punishment inflicted by the gods. This is rooted in the belief that one's spirit leaves one's body when one is asleep, and one awakes the moment the spirit returns. Thus, should the spirit not return, death occurs. The Tboli refrain from crying upon a relative's death, hoping that the dead person's spirit has just strayed and will soon return. It is for the *tau mo lungon* (literally, "the person who makes the coffin") to determine if the deceased is indeed dead.

When the tau mo lungon arrives, he feels the hands and feet of the deceased. Once convinced the person is really dead, the tau cries aloud. Only then do the members of the dead person's household start weeping.

Disposal of the dead may take the following forms: burial, abandonment in the house, cremation, or suspension from a tree in the case of small children. Wakes last anywhere from a week to five months, depending on how much food and consumables the dead person's family has, since all these must be consumed before the corpse is buried or abandoned.

Tools for making the coffin are provided for the tau mo lungon, which subsequently become his. He measures the corpse, summoning and invoking the deceased person's spirit. The tau mo lungon then goes into the forest and fells a tree, from whose trunk the coffin or lungon is to be fashioned. Before cutting down the tree, the tau mo lungon asks permission from Fun Koyu, god of the forests, through a short invocation. After the tree has been felled, the tau mo lungon and his companions sit down to eat and apportion part of their meal as an offering to Fun Koyu.

After the meal, the tau mo lungon and his party start carving the lungon. As the lungon takes its final shape, it is beaten along its convex exterior with *tubol* or pieces of bamboo to drive out the busao and prevent them from inhabiting the hollowed-out cavity before the corpse is laid in.

The finished lungon is beaten anew for around an hour, then brought up into the house. The deceased is laid inside the lungon with all of its most important personal possessions, which are believed to be necessary in the afterlife. Then the relatives and friends file past the lungon and touch the corpse as a gesture of farewell. When all of the friends and relatives have touched the corpse, the lungon is closed. Once the lid is put in place, all the grieving and lamentations stop to prevent the dead person's spirit

from returning. The lungon is tied firmly with three rattan strips and hermetically sealed with *damay*, a very strong glue, to seal in the smell of decay.

The lungon of a prominent and beloved datu is suspended over a fire and the *salo* (grease) that seeps out through the wood is gathered into bowls. This is then served as a camote "dip" which the people partake of, in the belief that the qualities of the datu will be passed on to them.

The lungon are then decorated with symbols of the man or woman's occupation. The tau mo lungon has to sleep three nights in the house of the deceased after decorating the coffin, lest he becomes ill.

The wake lasts until all movable properties are sold off and the harvest is consumed. To conserve anything would offend the dead person and cause the person's return.

During the wake there is singing and dancing, and the chanting of *nged* or riddles to provide entertainment, so that people do not fall asleep. The Tboli fear that the busao will steal an unattended corpse.

On the morning of the funeral, the tau mo lungon fills a *kobong* (bamboo container) with water and suspends this over the lungon end corresponding to the corpse's head. If the level of the water falls in the course of the day, another death will be forthcoming.

The Tboli bury their dead in the night. Before the lungon is brought out, the coffin maker splits the kobong wide open, prompting the mourners to shout aloud. Then the coffin is carried around the house and taken out. Only the male relatives proceed to the *gono lumbong* (burial site), taking turns at carrying the lungon. The tau mo lungon leaves the house last, taking with him a cock in the bend of one arm and a jar full of cooked chicken. If the cock escapes, he has taken an evil spirit with him.

After the lungon has been buried, the mourners partake of a meal, a portion of which is left at the grave. After the meal, the mourners return to the dead person's house in a single file and by a different route. Upon reaching the house, the mourners must leap over two swords stuck in the ground in the form of an X to rid themselves of evil spirits that may have accompanied them back. Then, the bereaved household and all those who went to the burial bathe themselves in a nearby river, thus rinsing off all the evil spirits that have clung stubbornly to them.

Afterwards, the house of the dead person is burned or abandoned completely. This effectively ends the death rituals as the Tboli do not as a rule mourn their dead, for fear that the deceased would come back to life.**Religious Beliefs and Practices**

The Tboli's supreme deities are a married couple, Kadaw La Sambad, the sun god, and Bulon La Mogoaw, the moon goddess. They reside in the seventh heaven. They beget seven sons and daughters who end up marrying each other. Cumucul, the eldest

son, is given a cohort of fire, a tok (sword), and shield. Cumucul is married to Boi Kabil. Sfedat, the second son, is married to the second daughter, Bong Libun. This marriage produces no progeny, leading to Sfedat's despondency. One day, he asks his wife to kill him. His corpse becomes land from which sprout all kinds of plants and trees. Dwata, the third son, is married to two of his sisters, Sedek We and Hyu We. His request for one of the powers granted to Cumucul is refused. Thus, he leaves the sky with his wives and seven children from Hyu We: Litik, the god of thunder; Blanga, the god of stones and rocks; Teme Lus, the god of wild beasts; Tdolok, the god of death; Ginton, the god of metallurgy; Lmugot Mangay, the god of life and of all growing things; and Fun Bulol, the god of the mountains; and six from Sedek We. For a place to stay, he asks Bong Libun for the land that was once Sfedat's body. Bong Libun agrees on the condition that she marry one of his sons. Dwata spreads the land, and plants the trees and other vegetation; the result is the earth.

The first people are created after Dwata breathes life into the day figurines made by Hyu We and Sedek We. When Dwata does not fulfill his side of the bargain with Bong Libun, because his sons will not have her as wife, Bong Libun marries her youngest brother Datu Bnoling. With him she has seven sons, who become scourges of the earth: Fun Knkel, god of fever; Fun Daskulo, god of head diseases; Fun Lkef, god of colds; Fun Kumuga, god of eye afflictions; Fun Blekes, god of skin disease; and Fun Lalang, god of baldness. To alleviate the damage done by these scourges, the divine couple Loos Klagan and La Fun assume the role of healers.

One of the most influential figures in the Tboli pantheon is the *muhen*, a bird considered the god of fate, whose song when heard is thought to presage misfortune. Any undertaking is immediately abandoned or postponed when one hears the muhen sing.

The Tboli also believe in busao (malevolent spirits) which wreak havoc on the lives of human beings, thus causing misfortune and illness. Desu or propitiatory offerings of *onuk bukay* (white chicken) or *sedu* (pig) are made to placate or gain favors from these evil spirits. Tboli rites are normally presided over by a morally upright elder who is proficient in Tboli tradition. Often enough, the datu themselves preside.

To the Tboli, all objects house a spirit. They continually strive to gain the good graces of these spirits by offering them little gifts. Before crossing a river, for example, they may throw a ring. If spirits or gods need to be appeased, the Tboli make desu or offerings which may consist of cooked food, the agong, and the kafilan.

The Tboli afterlife has several destinations. Murder victims and warriors slain in battle go to a place called kayong, where everything is red. Entry into kayong is announced by the sound of agong, *hagalong*, *klintang*, and *dwegey* (violin). Thunder and lightning during a burial signify a spirit's entry into kayong. Suicides go to *kumawing*, where everything sways and swings. Victims of drowning become citizens of the sea. Those who die of an illness go to Mogol, where day is night and night is day.

The Tboli welcome rain after a death, the belief being that the deceased has crossed the bridge to the afterlife with no intention of returning.

Architecture and Community Planning

The Tboli consider the household as the basic social and economic unit; hence they do not have villages. At most, they form clusters of three or four houses whose occupants are close relations. Most Tboli houses are built on hilltops, primarily for security. Tboli houses are not permanent because of taniba or slash-and-burn farming, which exhausts the land after a number of years; the kimo, the transfer of property on the occasion of a marriage; and the practice of burning or abandoning houses and moving whenever some member of the household dies.

From afar, a Tboli *gunu bong* (literally, “big house”) appears all roof on stilts. The roof eaves overhang beyond 1 meter over the side walls, making the latter, which are barely 1 meter high, hardly noticeable. The stilts are nearly 2 meters above the ground, making the house look like it is “hovering over” its site. In the *laan gunu* or space underneath are tethered horses, a valuable Tboli resource.

The average gunu bong is about 15 meters long and 9 to 10 meters wide, and about 6 meters high, from the ground to the roof’s peak. The roof has a low slope of 30° with the horizontal.

The Tboli roof is made of cogon or other dried grasses which are strung and sewn to the bamboo rafters with strips of raw abaca or way ng *yantok* (rattan strips). The stilts are of bamboo, except for the rooted tree stumps used occasionally as posts for the inner portion of the house floor. The walls of the house are usually of *lasak*, a very elementary type of sawali consisting of bamboo split from the inside and flattened out, or of woven bamboo strips called *lahak*.

The interior can be broken down into roughly seven areas: the *lowo* (central space), *blaba* (side areas), *desyung* (area of honor), *dofil* (sleeping quarters), *dol* (vestibule), *bakdol* (entrance), and *fato kohu* (utility area).

The lowo is the main feature of the Tboli house. Measuring approximately 5 x 7 meters, its flooring is 20 centimeters lower than the floor level of the surrounding spaces. The lowo serves as the central space around which all household activities take place. At night, it serves as extra sleeping space. The floor of the lowo is made of the finest lasak.

The blaba lie on both the long sides of the lowo and are around 2 meters wide with flooring also of lasak. The blaba are for sitting, working, and conversing. The meter-high walls of the blaba have *tembubong*, sections made of lasak hinged onto the blaba floor, which can be released outwards, looking like an extension of the blaba floor.

Opposite the entrance area, the desyung completes one end of the gunu bong, adjoining the lowo and the two blaba. At its center, adjacent to the lowo, and under the *klabu*, is the area reserved for the head of the house—the place of honor that commands the view of the entire house's interior. The klabu is a curtained canopy adorned with a wide band of appliques and tassels. This canopy is bought from Muslim traders and its quality is an indicator of the Tboli family's wealth and stature. On either side of the klabu are spaces considered places of honor on which igam are spread and tilam piled as seats for important guests. The number of igam piled one on top of the other is an indication of the family's standing. These mats are left permanently spread out. To tuck them away, the Tboli believe, would cause the death of a household member.

The dofil lie at the back and either side of the desyung. *Lahak beng*, sawali partitions that extend up to the roof, separate the dofil from the blaba. The entire desyung-dofil complex occupies one end of the house, spanning the entire width, and is about 4 meters deep. The floor is made of lasak laid crosswise. Lahak beng at times divide this area into cubicles for each of the wives, who sleep there with their respective children.

The dofil can often include or be transformed into a *tbnalay*, which serves as sleeping quarters for the young unmarried women in the household or for the first, or favorite, wife. The tbnalay is elevated almost 1 meter above that of the lowo's level. This attic like area is enclosed with lahak beng, with an opening either towards the lowo or the rest of the desyung-dofil area. The space underneath the tbnalay, is often used as a working area, especially for households engaged in metal working.

The dol lies opposite the desyung, at the entrance end of the lowo. At one end of this 2-meter-wide area that crosses the whole width of the house is the *bakdol* and, at the center of the remaining three-fourths, the *kohu* (hearth). Although on the same floor level with the lowo into which it opens to the right (as one enters), the dol area should be classified as a different section of the house. It is the only portion of the house that is floored with heavy planks.

The hearth or kohu is defined from its surroundings by its four posts and a beaten-earth floor on which fire is made for cooking. These four bamboo posts, which support the roof, like all the other bamboo posts in the interior, also support the hala. This is a shoulder-high rack on which pots, baskets of different sizes, ladles made of coconut shell, and other cooking utensils are placed or suspended.

Suspended from the hala or from any of its posts is the *kalo*, a loosely meshed network of rattan strips shaped according to the contour of the plates and bowls kept in it. Until some decades ago, antique Chinese plates were commonplace in Tboli households. They were used for meals, and may still be seen in some houses. At present, the Tboli ordinarily use tin plates or cheap china bought from the lowlanders' *sari-sari* or variety stores. These antique plates, some of which are beautiful Ming dynasty pieces, are highly valued by the people and play an important role in the

establishment of the bride-price. They are heirlooms acquired by Tboli ancestors through barter with lowlanders from Kiamba.

Not far from the hala, one usually sees a *lihub*, a round, wooden container carved out from a block of wood. It has a lid and is used for storing rice.

Anywhere near the surrounding area of the kohu, one may also see jawbones of wild boars, weapons used for hunting, and fish implements hooked onto the posts or against the sawali walls. The jawbones are kept as trophies of the number of wild boars they have captured. The weapons are usually inserted into the crevices of the sawali walls or beneath the cogon roof itself, far from the reach of the children.

One enters the Tboli house by way of the bakdol level through a trapdoor emerging from under the house and into the interior, as from a big chest with its lid open. The *tikeb dol* (lid to the entrance space), also called *lingkob*, is left open during the day. At night it is lowered and closed just as one would a chest. Most houses make use of the *aut*, common bamboo ladder with rungs called *slikan*. The more traditional Tboli ladder, although now less commonly used, is a single bamboo pole with spaced, notched-off sections that give one a foothold.

The fato kohu completes this end of the Tboli house, opposite the desyung, and is about 2 meters deep. The fato kohu is about 20 centimeters higher, just like the blaba and the desyung areas adjacent to the three sides of the lowo. The floor is made of lasak, laid crosswise.

The Tboli house has no toilet facilities but a *kotol* or outhouse made of bamboo. For bathing, they go to the lakes and rivers.

To house guests during the moninum (marriage festivals), the gunu moninum, a huge structure, is built. The gunu moninum can accommodate hundreds of people. It is made of bamboo and sawali. While it looks like a giant gunu bong, its floor plan only retains the lowo or central space, around which the fringes are partitioned with light bamboo screens to mark out the sleeping spaces. Furthermore, unlike the gunu bong, its entrance is not through the floor but through a door built along one of its long sides. This long side opens into a square where the moninum festivities are held. At the other side of the square, the tabule or structure bearing the contributions to the kimo by the host party's relatives is erected, framed by Tboli spears and bamboo poles.

There are other structures that the Tboli build. The *lowig tnak* is a shed constructed in the middle of the farm as shelter from the sun and the rain; it has a roof but no flooring. The *hafo* is a tall, skeletal tower built in the middle of the rice fields made of bamboo and thatch where the farmer or his children stand to watch when the grain is ripe. The hafo is the control center of a bamboo-clapper network devised to scare the birds away when they descend on the ripe grain. The watchers pull the strings of the clappers to rattle them. To store grain, a structure with proportions markedly different from the gunu bong is built. Although elevated from the ground as much as

a gunu bong, the *fol* is smaller; its side walls are higher and windowless.

Visual Arts and Crafts

Among the many ethnic groups in the Philippines, the Tboli stand out for their marked and characteristic penchant for personal adornment. This is evident in their costumes, body ornaments, hairstyle, and cosmetic practices. According to Tboli belief, the gods created man and woman to look attractive so that they would be drawn to each other and procreate.

Tboli women learn the skills of looking beautiful from an early age. It is not uncommon to see five or six-year-old girls fully made up, like their elder sisters and mothers. Eyebrows are plucked and painted and a *mtal hifi* or beauty spot is placed on one cheek. The face is powdered with a mix composed predominantly of lime, and the lips are enhanced in color from the fruit of a tree. Tboli women wear a traditional hairdo with the hair parted laterally along the axis of the ears. The hair along the front is allowed to fall in bangs over the woman's brow, with some tufts allowed to hang loosely along the cheeks, and the rest pulled backward and tied into a bun at the nape. A *suwa*t or comb is stuck across the back of the woman's head. Tboli women are not satisfied with one earring in each ear. The more earrings, the better. Thus, their ears are pierced not only on the lobes but also along the outer rim.

Tboli men and women regard white teeth as ugly, fit only for animals. Thus the Tboli practice *tamblang*, in which they file their teeth into *nihik* or regular shapes and blacken them with the sap of a wild tree bark such as silob or olit. To indicate their wealth, prominent Tboli, such as a datu or his wife, adorn their teeth with gold, a practice adopted from the Muslims.

Tboli have themselves tattooed not just for vanity but because they believe tattoos glow after death and light the way into the next world. Men have their forearms and chests tattooed with *bakong* (stylized animal) and *hakang* (human) designs, or *blata* (fern) and ligo *bed* (zigzag) patterns. The women have their calves, forearms, and breasts tattooed in this manner.

Another form of body decor is scarification, achieved by applying live coals onto the skin. The more scars a man has, the braver he is considered to be.

The Tboli woman has different attires for different occasions. While working in the fields, she wears a *kgal taha soung*, a plain black or navy blue long-sleeved collarless waist-length, tight-fitting blouse, with a *luwek,* an ankle-length tube skirt worn like a *malong*. For everyday wear, she has a choice of the *kgal bengkas*, a long-sleeved blouse open at the front, with 3-centimeter-wide red bands sewn crosswise onto the back and around the cuffs and upper sleeves; or the *kgal nisif*, a more elaborately decorated blouse, embroidered with cross-stitched animal or human designs, and geometric patterns rendered in red, white, and yellow, with bands of zigzag and other designs. She completes her wardrobe with a *fan* de, a skirt of red or black cloth, nowadays bought from the lowlanders. For formal wear, she has a *kgal binsiwit*,

an embroidered blouse with 1-centimeter triangular shell spangles. This is matched by the tredyung, a black pinstripe linen skirt. The binsiwit is usually worn during weddings.

The Tboli use of body ornaments definitely follows the idea that "more is better." A pair of earrings is certainly not enough. They have to wear several sets. She has a choice of wearing the *kawat*, simple brass rings; the *bketot*, a round mirror, 1.5 centimeters in diameter, surrounded by small colored glass beads; the *nomong*, a chandelier-type earring consisting of 9 to 12 ten-centimeter lengths of brass interspersed with horsehair links having little clusters of multicolored glass beads at the end; and the *bkoku*, which is composed of 5-centimeter-long triangular pearly nautilus shells which dangle over the woman's shoulders.

A characteristic ornament that stands out is the *kowol* or *beklaw*, a combination of earring and necklace. It consists of several strands of tiny, multicolored glass beads, suspended gracefully under the chin, from the left earlobe to the right. From the bottom strand of beads dangle about 7.5-centimeter lengths of black horsehair links with 2.5 centimeters of brass links at each midsection and clusters of tiny, multicolored glass beads at the ends. These individual lengths of chain are suspended vertically, next to one another so that the jaws and chin of the woman appear to be framed by some delicate and exotic veil.

There are three types of necklaces: the *hekef*, a 3-centimeter wide choker of red, white and black beads, with occasional yellows; the *lmimot*, ranging in thickness from an adult's thumb to a child's wrist, and consisting of attached strands of red, white, and black glass beads; and the *lieg*, a necklace made of double- or triple-linked brass chains fringed with pea-size multicolored glass beads and hawkbells, often tasseled with more of the same. Most lieg are heirlooms passed from mother to daughter, and much valued.

The *hilot* or girdle comes in several varieties. The ordinary hilot is a chain-mail belt with a width of 5 to 7 centimeters and 10-centimeter lengths of chain dangling side by side along the entire lower edge of the belt. The front is adorned with two 5 to 7-centimeter square buckles entirely covered by characteristic Tboli designs. The hilot can weigh from 2 to 3 kilograms. To the ordinary hilot may be attached hawkbells or *tnoyong* at the end of each dangling chain length. This makes the wearer swish and tinkle as she walks.

The *hilot lmimot* is different from the generic hilot in that it is made of solid, unremitting beadwork in red, white, black, and yellow, rather than brass chain mail. Tnoyong finish off each of the 10-centimeter dangling strands of beads into a bravura of color and design.

There are two types of brass bracelets: the *blonso*, around 6 centimeters thick and 8 millimeters in diameter, 15 to 20 of which are loosely worn at the wrist; and the kala, thicker than the blonso and worn tightly around five to an arm.

Like the bracelets, there are anklets that are worn tightly on the calves, 5-centimeter flat black bands called the *tugul*. There are those which are worn loosely, called the *singkil*, of which there are three types: *singkil linti*, 10 centimeters in diameter and 6-10 millimeters thick with simple geometric ornamentation; *singkil babat*, a more ornately decorated version of the *singkil linti*, using cord and zigzag designs in high relief along the outer edge; and *singkil sigulong*, 15 millimeters thick but hollow and filled with tiny pebbles which make it rattle softly. Their external surface is decorated all over.

Tsing or rings are worn in sets of five on each finger and toe, often with the brass rings alternated by carabao-horn rings. The rings can be plain or compound bands with simple triangular ornamentation.

Crowning the Tboli woman's head are the combs which come in several varieties, four of which are the *suwat blakang*, made of bamboo; *suwat tembuku*, a short comb decorated with a piece of mirror as the central decorative motif; *suwat lmimot*, a short comb decorated with colored glass beads; and *suwat hanafak*, made of brass. Aside from combs, Tboli women's headgear include the *kayab*, a turban formerly made of abaca; but Tboli women have taken to wearing "Cannon" towels on their heads acquired from lowlanders' *sari-sari* or variety stores. In this item, no "traditional" colors are followed; they acquire the most wildly colorful towels.

For farmwork or traveling, the *slaong* kinibang is worn, a round salakot (wide-brimmed hat) 50 centimeters in diameter woven with bamboo strips and entirely covered by a geometric patchwork of red, white, and black cloth, each hat always unique and original. Underneath, the slaong kinibang is lined with red cloth that hangs down along the sides and back when worn, to protect the wearer from the sun's glare. Some slaong are decorated with two long bands of fancy beadwork with horsehair tassels at the ends. Known as *bangat slaong*, these are worn on special occasions.

While the women retain much of their traditional costumes, Tboli men don their costumes only on special occasions. They ordinarily go about in shirts and trousers like any rural Filipino. Their traditional costume, which is made of abaca, consists of the *kgal saro*, a long-sleeved, tight-fitting collarless jacket; and the *sawal taho*, a knee- or ankle-length pair of pants the waist section of which extends up to the shoulders, secured with an abaca band along the waist and made to fall, like a small skirt, covering the hips and upper thighs.

The men's headgear range from the simple *olew* or turban, to the *slaong naf*, a conical but very flat hat decorated with simple geometric designs in black and white, done on woven bamboo strips and topped by a *fundu* or decorative glass or brass knob. The inside lining is woven rattan. The *slaong fenundo* is less flat than the slaong naf, with a cross section resembling a squat Tudor arch; it is made of straw-colored, even thread-thick, nitolike material sewn down in black, minute, even stitches.

Part of the accoutrements of the Tboli male is the hilot from which his kafilan is

suspended. A datu often wears the *angkul*, a sash of thick cloth that is a mark of authority.

Tboli missile weapons are generally made of *yantok* (rattan) and bamboo, and tipped with brass arrowheads or spearheads. While there are special applications for the different types of bows and spears, these are not usually decorated.

It is in their bladed weapons that the Tboli focus their decorative skills. The *sudeng* or swords have long blades and hilts made of hardwood called *bialong*. The types of sudeng are the *lanti*, whose brass hilt is ornamented with geometric designs and 5-centimeter lengths of chain with tnoyong attached to their ends; the tedeng, which has no decoration; the kafilan, a bololike sword; and the tok, which, because of certain ritual associations, is the most decorated of Tboli sudeng. The tok has a 60-70 centimeter single-edged blade decorated with geometric designs, and a richly ornamented hilt with 5-centimeter lengths of chain attached to its edge, with hawkbells at their ends. The tok's scabbard is made of wood held together by three to four metal bands. A geometric design is etched on the black surface, which is highlighted by the wood's natural light color. Tboli kabaho or knives are as richly decorated as the tok and come in a variety of shapes and sizes.

The Tboli metalcraft tradition distinguishes Tboli culture and is linked to Ginton, the god of metalwork, who occupies a stellar place in the Tboli pantheon. The Tboli, however, give no indication of having ever possessed any knowledge of mining their own metals. Whatever metal there is to work on comes from scraps that the Tboli manage to get. Thus, in the case of brass or bronze, there are no standard alloy proportions. Copper was once obtained from one-centavo coins, while steel came from the springs of trucks abandoned along some highway in the lowlands.

The Tboli forge of *gunu lumubon* has afos lubon (bellows) made of bamboo cylinders 70 centimeters high and 15 centimeters in diameter, which have rattan pistons fitted with chicken feathers at the end of each piston head. Air comes from a 5-centimeter diameter bamboo section attached to the bottom of the afos lubon; held at the other end by the *kotong lubon* are stones which surround the furnace. The *tau masool* (smith) tempers the metal in this furnace and beats this with a *solon* (hammer) on a *lendasan* (anvil).

After the initial forging, the blades are honed and polished with whetstones and further tempered over the fire. Once the basic blade is complete, it is decorated with brass or copper inlays or etched with geometric designs.

For artifacts with more intricate designs such as sword hilts, betel nut boxes, girdle buckles, anklets, and hawkbells, the cire-perdue or lost-wax method is used. Beeswax is applied over a clay core until the desired thickness is achieved; this ranges from 1 to 3 millimeters. The designs of rows of uniform triangles, double spirals (S-shaped), cord-bands, and other geometric figures are impressed on the wax original, while kneaded wax cords are attached in high relief onto their proper places in the

overall design. Once completed, this *snofut* (model) is covered with fine clay, leaving only an outlet that flares out through the day. This is left to dry and harden for five days, after which it is fired and the molten wax poured out through the outlet. Molten brass or bronze is then poured into this nifil or clay mold. The metal is then allowed to cool, after which the *nifi*l is broken, revealing the finished artifact.

The third major area of Tboli metalwork consists of bracelets and solid anklets and the chain mail for the hilot worn by the women. This is made by drawing a superheated *olo* or raw bronze bar through a *gono hagalus* (metal gradator) with holes of varying diameters to produce wires of different gauges, from the thick diameters of the blonso to the fine hilot chains. These wires are then wound around a bar corresponding to the diameter of the ornament desired.

A recent product of the metalwork tradition is the Tboli figurine. Developed through the same old cire perdue process, these 7.5- to 10-centimeter statuettes portray Tboli men and women in their characteristic attires, and engaged in typical chores.

Tboli weaving is another skill that has been raised to the level of art. Their traditional cloth, the tnalak is made of *krungon* (abaca fiber) extracted from the mature, fruit-bearing, wild abaca. Each fiber is carefully dried in the sun and stretched on the *gono smoi*, a comblike wooden frame with teeth pointing up, to preserve the length and silkiness of each fiber.

After all of the fibers have been neatly smoothed out, they are transferred to the *bed*, a 50- to 400-centimeter bamboo frame, onto which they are evenly and closely spread, after the other, as in a loom. These are held evenly in place by the *tladai* (wooden bar) laid across, and directly over the fiber, which will be set in this exact position (in relation to one another) once the dyeing process would have been finished, this being the warp of the cloth to be woven. It is while the fiber is evenly stretched on the bed that the traditional Tboli designs are knotted into them according to the tie-dye technique.

The areas of these *fibers* (warp) that must remain free from dye, are covered with little individual *lendek* (knots), tied with separate pieces of thread treated with wax, so that when the woof is immersed in the dye, only the exposed parts are dyed. This lasts for weeks, as knot after knot is tied into place. Tboli women do not sketch or draw the design on the warp before them but merely follow a mental picture of a traditional design. Symmetry and distance are indicated and checked out in the process by the following measurements: dangaw, a hand span, from tip of thumb to tip of the little finger when extended; *gulem sigu*, a cubit, from middle finger to elbow; *gulem imak*, a yard, the distance between the armpit and the tip of the same arm's middle finger; and *difu*, the span between the tips of the middle fingers of both extended arms.

At the end of this stage, the fibers stretched on the bed look as if it were entirely covered by a tightly knit swarm of black ants. These are then removed from the frame for the actual dyeing.

Traditional Tboli tnalak has three colors: deep reddish-brown, black, and white. This means that all the reddish-brown and all the white sections of the design are protected within the innumerable individual knots, when the woof is boiled for the first time in earthen pots with black dye. Then, the set of knots on the sections meant to be reddish-brown (according to the pattern) are removed one by one, and the woof is dyed all over again, this time in red dye. The red dye does not alter the sections that have been previously dyed in black. The last step in the dyeing process—which might well last about three weeks—is the removal of the remaining set of knots which have all along protected the sections they covered, from both the black and the red dyes. The creamy white natural abaca color of these sections is left as is. The dyed fiber (warp) is then given a final washing in the river.

The traditional vegetable dyes the Tboli use are color fast. The material to be dyed black is simply boiled in water with leaves of the *knalum* tree, and the material to be dyed red is similarly boiled in water with pieces of root from the *loko* tree. These dyes, the only two the Tboli know of, are permanent.

The dyed and dried fiber (warp) is now set on the *gono mowol* (backstrap loom) in the exact position that each fiber had occupied while stretched on the *bed.* The design is painstakingly dyed if it is to remain unaltered. One end of the gono mowol is hitched to a post or a wall in the house and kept taut by the weaver's own weight as she reclines against a waist strap called a *dlogong*; this is slung onto the small of her back, and attached to her end of the warp.

The width of the Tboli pieces of tnalak varies according to the reach of the individual wearer's arm, as she sends the *lungon* or shuttle from right to left and left to right, weaving in the wood. According to an unalterable tradition, the thread (woof) fed by the lungon as it shuttles back and forth can only be black. Once the woof has been completely woven into the warp, the finished piece is rubbed with *smaki* (cuttlefish bone) into its final, evenly coruscating gloss.

The weaving of the tnalak piece usually takes about a couple of months or more. A longer time is necessary for putting together the kumo, the typical Tboli blankets that play an important role at the moninum or marriage festivals. These kumo consist of three pieces of finished woven material, their edges stitched together, lengthwise, with the side bands framing the rich medley of Tboli designs at the center.

As is typical in all tie-dyed material, both sides of Tboli cloth can serve as the front. The designs are exactly the same, stitch for stitch, on either side. Tnalak, however, is best appreciated not in strong, harsh light but in the soft half-light so typical of Tboli house interiors, where the designs come to life and pulsate with esoteric messages.

The framework for tnalak designs are normally interlocking zigzags, triangles, rhombuses, hexagons, chevrons, and other geometric patterns. Within this framework are varying motifs such as the *kleng* (crab); the *saub*, the *kofi*, and the *gmayaw* (bird-

in-flight pattern); the *tofi* (frog); the *klung* (shield); the *sawo* (snakeskin); and the *bangala* (human figure within the home pattern).

Samples of Tboli decorative painting may be found in the lungon of dead Tboli. The paintings reveal the nature of the deceased person's occupation. If the dead was a farmer, the lungon would be festooned with pictures of rice, camote, corn, and farm implements. If the dead was a *hulong kulo* or poet, the lungon would be painted with representations of the moon and stars. If the dead was a metalworker, one would find *solon* (hammer), *sufit* (pincers), *indasan* (anvil), and fire among the designs.

Literary Arts

Tboli folk literature reflects the typical beliefs, customs, and traditions of their society. Practically every aspect of Tboli life is governed by folk beliefs and sayings. These proverbs are often based on nonsequiturs, and the non-Tboli who tries to decipher them might be perplexed. While cooking and eating, this is spoken:

> Don't throw rice away,
> otherwise there will be a famine.

while hunting:

> If you catch a wild boar, eat its heart,
> or you will never catch another.

and while planting:

> Plant during low tide,
> otherwise you will not have a harvest.

Lessons are taught through countless folktales. In "Ana ne Tau Bawik" (Ana and the Spirit of the Dead), the husband learns never to leave his pregnant wife alone to the wiles of the busao; in "Walo Nga Libun" (Eight Maidens), "Bulol Hulon" (Mount Hulon), "Oko ne Ye'en" (Oko and His Mother), "Kwaay," "Kramel," and "Krongoy," the children are taught methods of hunting.

The Tboli folktale "Why Animals Are Afraid of People" explains the relationship of animals and human beings. There was once a time when the people did not have to hunt because a wise man, Heye We, befriended the animals and convinced them to share some of their meat with people. This the animals did by allowing Heye We to slice off portions of their flesh. But one day, an evil man, Sidek We, began killing the animals because he wanted to eat all of their meat. Despite the animals' pleas, Sidek We would not listen. Afraid for their lives, the animals ran away into the forest, and from then on, human beings had to hunt them.

Another story excoriating greed is about a prosperous but selfish male witch,

Mekeen, who had a big farm planted to rice, camote, sugarcane, bananas, corn, taro, and other food crops. When a famine fell over the land, only Mekeen's farm had food. Not wanting to share his food, Mekeen surrounded his farm with deadly blatik or traps. The chieftain, named Tubra Logi, who could not bear to see the people starving, led them to Mekeen's farm, avoided the *blatik*, and ate the food. Angered, Mekeen cast a spell on Tubra Logi and his people, and forced them all into a sack. As Mekeen was bringing the sack to feed his family with the people inside, Tubra Logi's people felt sick and defecated what they had eaten in Mekeen's field. Later, they escaped through a hole in the sack. When Mekeen fed his family the remaining contents of the sack, they all fell sick and died. Tubra Logi and his people then took over Mekeen's farm and lived happily ever after.

Although Tboli gods and goddesses show all of the foibles and frailties of mortals, Tboli mythology and folktales inculcate Tboli values and deal with Tboli mores. One example is the treatment accorded Cumucul, the eldest of the sons of the supreme deities, Kadaw La Sambad and Bulon La Mogoaw. As the eldest, he is given his father's prized possessions: the cohort of fire; a sword and shield; and the magical horse, Kaunting, who can be as small as a mouse when not being ridden and who can be kept in a box. This reflects the honor given by the Tboli to eldest sons and the value they accord horses.

The epic *Todbulol* is the core of Tboli folk literature and the foundation on which Tboli identity rests. This epic, sung in its entirety only at important occasions, such as weddings, may last up to 16 hours, depending on the number of versions sung. *Todbulol* is normally sung through the night. The rapt Tboli listen to the singing of the epic in silence, with the children also rapt in wonderment. Young girls shed tears of empathy as the epic unfolds and the singer continues into the night. There are spontaneous shouts of joy and admiration from the people.

Performing Arts

The Tboli have a variety of musical instruments, including the tnonggong, a deerskin drum; the agong, 25- to 40-centimeter diameter gongs exclusively played by the men; the klintang, a set of eight gongs played by men and women on festive occasions; the dwegey, a " violin " fashioned from a 50-centimeter-long bamboo attached to a coconut shell at one end; the sloli, a bamboo flute; the *kubing*, a bamboo jew's harp; the few, a small horn made from a short section of rice stalk, around which a strip of palm leaf is wound in the form of a slender cone; the *sludoy*, a bamboo zither that consists of a section of bamboo with slivers excised lengthwise from, and at regular intervals, around its exteriors; and the hagalong, a long, slender, and spindle-shaped two-string guitar.

One of the hagalong's strings is for the melody while the other, called the drone, has a monotonous, trance-inducing sound. Strummed with a small, sharpened bamboo sliver, the hagalong's strings are made of abaca. The frets of the hagalong consist of small pieces of bamboo held upright with beeswax, and thus can be adjusted at will.

Through the hagalong, the Tboli convey ideas, emotions, and feelings. One good example of the instrument's versatility is found in "Ye Daddang," a tale of a woman hacked to death by a jealous husband, where the strings are made to imitate the argument of husband and wife. It ends with a plaintive lamentation of the wife's name, "Ye Daddang, Ye Daddang, Ye Daddang." Other examples are the *otom klelet* which imitates the antics of the klelet or woodpecker, and the *otom smakwin taksatu* which portrays a man hoeing the field.

The Tboli have a wide repertoire of songs for all occasions; joyous, sad, or momentous, like weddings; or ordinary, like fishing in the lakes. Aside from these songs, which have fixed lyrics and melodies, the Tboli also improvise their own songs by using traditional melodic patterns at the end of a phrase or a sentence.

The Tboli also have pieces meant for solo instrumental rendition. One such piece about a horsefight is interpreted through drums, with the latter simulating the thundering of horses' hooves.

Tboli dances may act out relationships between suitor and beloved or between bride and groom. In the courtship dance, a boy pursues a girl, who taunts him with an unfurled *kayab* or turban, which she holds by the ends and sways side-to-side, following a musical beat. On the other hand, a woman may tell of her affections for a man through the *kadal herayon*. Through various "flirting gestures," the woman expresses what she otherwise cannot say.

At wedding feasts, the dance called *tao soyow* is traditionally performed by two males engaging in mock combat, one dressed as a warrior, representing the party of the bride, and another dressed as a woman, representing the party of the groom. The warrior struts around and rattles his shield, while the "woman" sashays back and forth. The dancers go about provoking and taunting each other, getting near, but never really touching, then retreating. With hilarious steps, the dancers wriggle in the ground provocatively, yelping and screeching at each other. Another war dance performed in a man's life cycle is the *kadal temulong lobo*. The dance is narrative as the performer's movements tell how he has killed his adversary, who may have been his rival for a girl's affection.

At rest or when nursing a bruised heart, a woman plays the *hegelung* and moves around almost aimlessly. This dance, called *kadal hegelung*, should be differentiated from the *kadal be hegelung*, which also involves the hegelung but includes the *klutang* as well. The latter is performed in the farm to celebrate a good harvest.

Other dances of the Tboli imitate animals. In the *kadal iwas*, any number of dancers, following a relentless beat, mimic a bunch of monkeys removing nits and lice from each other. A variation of this dance mimics a monkey who sits on an anthill by mistake and is attacked by angry ants all over his body (Orosa-Goquingco 1980:143). It may also feature boys or men attired in banana leaves as "monkeys," romping around and

performing simian antics to the delight of the audience. The *kadal blilah* or bird dance, represents the blilah, a mythical bird which, according to Tboli tradition, has the colors of all other birds. Here the female dancers make continuous hopping steps to the sound of gongs and drums, leaning to the left and to the right as they insert their hands into the ends of the malong hanging around their necks, and make undulating movements, simulating the wings of a bird in flight. Another bird dance is *kadal tabaw*, performed during planting and harvesting, and which simulates the flight and hops of the bird *tabaw*.Two ritual dances are the *kadal slung be tonok*, done to exorcise evil spirits that harbor illness and bad luck; and the *kadal tahu*, described as the "true dance of the Tboli." The second dance is accompanied by a drum, which is believed to hold a spirit. To release the spirit, the female dancer touches the drum with her ankle or right foot as she sways to its rhythm. The dance continues until the performer signals her fatigue by throwing the *lewek* (a piece of cloth) to the drum. This ends the dance.

• G.S. Casal with D. Javier/Reviewed by S.K. Tan.

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