

## HISTORICAL TOURISM

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### **Introduction**

I coined the words, "Historical Tourism" for the purpose of this symposium. Although the overall seminar theme is the Philippine Revolutionary period in its local setting here in Eastern Mindanao, what we are commemorating is not the revolution per se but its significance to us, the Filipino people, and our struggle for nationhood. As such, historical awareness and knowledge of history are two very important and powerful tools for forging our nationhood. A people without history is not a people but a collection of individuals with no common purpose and direction. We have known this in hindsight and now we must learn it again in earnest in order not to repeat the mistakes of the past.

The value of history for instilling pride in one's own past need not be confined to classroom or academic discussions. In many countries where tourism is a successful industry, history and culture are intensely cultivated as the main thrust of tourism. Since the same is the thrust of Philippine Tourism today, then a very close collaboration between history and culture, on one hand, and tourism, on the other, should be crafted. We need to highlight a fact of our history and culture which is unique in the Philippines. **Ours is the only country in Southeast Asia where the Christian and Western traditions have blended with**

those which are indigenously Asian in origin. **Philippine Tourism can showcase both these traditions, the Western and the Southeast Asian, by adapting history and culture as a framework.**

### **Historical Events as the Orientation of Philippine Tourism in Mindanao**

To begin with, let us take into consideration certain features of our history in Mindanao as orientation. Unlike the rest of the Philippines, Mindanao was not fully and effectively colonized by Spain. For this reason, the landscape of Mindanao appears quite different from that of the rest of the westernized and Christianized Philippines. Instead of stone houses and cathedrals, that are legacies of Spanish architectural style of the Medieval Period in Europe, our cultural landscape is devoid of the homogenizing characteristics of a highly pronounced Spanish colonial past or background. All over Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago are found Muslim and even animist communities who have retained their age-old traditions, little affected by the mainstream or westernized culture. **I suggest that we highlight this cultural diversity in Mindanao by celebrating both the mainstream or western tradition as well as the bystream or indigenous cultures.**

### **A Brief History of Samal Island, 1866-1894**

The previous papers read during the Session on Cultural Heritage gave us an idea of what the indigenous peoples of Mindanao were like before many of them changed their cultures.

The following is a brief historical and archaeological background of the island of Samal.

I wish to to make an example of Samal Island because this is presently the focus of tourism development. The indigenous peoples of the island were the Sama or Samal hence, the name of the island. The Sama are probably related to another indigenous group, the Sama of the Sulu Archipelago. In the past, the Sama were a sea-farming people, as all our Malay Ancestors were, they being skilled boat-builders. A culturally similar group of people are the Badjao, or the sea-gypsies. Some Samal groups, like the Jama Mapun, are in-land dwellers and agriculturists.

Of the various ethnic groups in the Davao area, the Samal are the only one known to practise cave burial. Some sources said they maintained a small graveyard in Punta Island, a smaller island nearby. Their coffins were made of hollowed-out logs which were kept in caves. The coffins were shaped like bancas or boats fashioned from hardwood trees. The cover of the coffin, made from one-half of the tree trunk, was bound to the other half by rattan vines. The corpses that they contained were wrapped tightly, like mummies, in several layers of **dagmay** (native cloth) which in turn were wound by several mats.

When the Spaniards arrived in 1860, Samal Island was inhabited by two other groups of natives, a Muslim (probably Maguindanao) and the Mandaya-Mansaka peoples who were paying tribute to the Muslims. The Samal were not then converted to Islam. This was the reason why they played a significant role in the Spanish conquest of Davao in 1847. Led by their old chieftain, Taupan, the Samal aided Uyanguren

(the Spanish conqueror of Davao) against the Muslims of Hijo. However, later on, when the Spanish governor of Davao proposed their conversion to Christianity, the Samal replied that they had no wish to become Christians.

Ten years later, another missionary, Fr. Mateo Gisbert of the Society of Jesus founded the first Christian town in the island. This was Habongon which was renamed San Jose. A chapel was built but the missionary was disappointed by the very few Samal who came to be baptized. There were rumors being floated around that anyone who submitted himself for baptism would be beheaded. When one woman presented herself to Fr. Gisbert for baptism, a whole delegation of Samal objected. The Samal further expressed their disappointment with the Spanish colonial administration, saying that they expected to be exempted from paying taxes because of their having supported the Spaniards under Uyanguren, who made a promise to the Samal to exempt them from paying the hated tribute and other taxes of the colonial administration. However, the priest stood his ground, threatening the Samal with the words, "Those who did not respect Christians are guilty of offending the priest, the governor of the District and the King of Spain and deserve to be punished severely".

By the end of the 19th century, Samal already had six resettlements (**reducciones**) waiting to be founded into towns: San Ramon, Algecira, Peñaplata, Cervera, Tarifa and Carmona. However, the political situation was far from satisfactory. After the death of Datu Taupan, his son Severo was not recognized by the islanders as the rightful chief of Samal Island. They elected Batuton as their chief and on the day of his proclamation fourteen Muslim datus from all over the Davao Gulf area attended the celebration.

## HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SAMAL TOURISM ESTATE

### 1. Markers\*

- 1.1 For the town of San Jose, whose old name was Habongon, as the first Christian town to be founded on Samal Island in 1866.
- 1.2 Malipano Caves - In the seventies, three (3) cave burials, with assorted porcelain jars, were found at the western tip of Malipano Island.
- 1.3 Tagbobo cave on the west side of Samal where students of the University of Mindanao had excavated and were said to have found the remains of an ancient man.
- 1.4 Libud Caves, south of Samal, where remnants of boat coffins burials were found.
- 1.5 Kamuanan Caves at Talikud Island where a number of used shell fragments or implements were found. A few small stone artifacts, which were flaked like the shells, were also collected. No grinding or polishing of the shells or stones was noted.

\* Wilhelm Solheim III, Avelino M. Legazpi and Jaime S. Neir, S.J., **Archaeological Survey in Southeastern Mindanao**, (Manila: National Museum of the Philippine and the University of Hawaii, 1979), pp. 7-11.

2. Historical Pageants for special occasions such as Kadayawan or Araw ng Dabaw.

2.1 The Coronation of Batutun

2.2 Baptism of Taupan

2.3 Uyanguren's conquest of Davao, with the help of the Samal, under Taupan

3. Revival of Festivals

3.1 The Mandaya Balilig or Talibong, a festive divination ritual

3.2 The **Kanduli**, an elaborate feast along the shore

3.3 A Samal Wedding

3.4 A Mandaya-Mansaka Wedding

3.5 Kemulu, A B'laan Wedding

3.6 The **Pakakaro**, a Bagobo thanksgiving ritual

3.7 Manobo harvest festival

4. For display

4.1 Balanghai (boat)

4.2 Boat coffins

4.3 A Badjao graveyard

4.4 A Mandaya village showing several huts built on poles of 9-15 meters long and connected to each other by hanging bridges 9-15 meters above the ground.