

DISCUSSION OF D. CORONEL'S PAPER

An apparent fondness for descriptions of a nicely-laid out and well-kept public park or square which is lined with trees, and palace-like buildings appeared to imply a culture and people among whom a clean and orderly surrounding was highly valued. The term, *suminemdeb a inged* ("a well-planned, well-developed and progressive place") appears repeatedly in the Darangen. The dying wish of one of the characters, Matanda, for his wives and children is to take care of the *lama*, a playground, and to keep it as clean "as a mirror" at all times because being a public place, it is intended to be used by whole community. As such it has to be maintained in a clean and well-ordered condition.

A question was raised as to how much "merging of consciousness" might have taken place here as may be deduced from the above. Arguably, a clean and well-ordered environment is a value or concern of a more sophisticated and urbanized, (e.g. Arabic) culture, whereas the Darangen is a document of a pre-Islamic and ordinary people. The speaker explained that the notion of a clean and well-ordered environment was not necessarily limited to urbanized cultures. Among the Bukidnon, the concept of *guman* evokes a very close comparison with that of the Darangen's *lama* - a clean, well-ordered playground. The ideas of cleanliness and orderliness seem to be well-ingrained in the indigenous pre-colonial Philippine culture.

Water is considered precious, if not sacred, in the Darangen. The waters of Lake Lanao, and the lake itself, are a precious inheritance or treasure since they are gifts from God. For this reason, everyone is free to partake of the lake's waters. Today's Maranao are outraged at the way the waters have been impounded and collected into a dam, depriving many people of their precious use.

The *tonongs* are not gods, they are spirits. No worship is given to them and they are considered servants of men. In one sense, they can be compared to guardian angels; each person has his own *tonong*. For a man, his *tonong* is a woman; conversely, a girl's *tonong* is a man. The *tonong's* functions are to give advice and see to it that, one day, the person it serves will go to heaven. However, one is free to heed its advice or disregard it without fear of any untoward consequences such as punishment, for in the Darangen a person is given free will.

ECOLOGY AND CREATION ACCORDING TO THE BUKIDNON OF CENTRAL MINDANAO

Francisco Demetrio, SJ.

Introduction

Bukidnon is a land-locked province in north central Mindanao. It has an area of 803,810 hectares. Its capital town is Malaybalay 60 kilometers by air or 104 kilometers by road, southeast of Cagayan de Oro. It is 850 kilometers by air from Manila. On the west it is bounded by the provinces of Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur. The two Agusans bound it on the east, Cagayan de Oro and Misamis Oriental on the north, and Davao City and North Cotabato on the south. It rises abruptly to a height of 900 feet above sea level. It has many plateaus, canyons, plains and valleys. It has high and long mountain ranges. Mt. Kitanglad (2,380 meters), is an extinct volcano, and is found on the center and dominates the Bukidnon plateau. Mt. Kalatungan (2,287 meters) and Mt. Tangkulang (1,678 meters) are the highest peaks in Bukidnon.

Bukidnon has many rivers and streams. The headwaters of the Pulangi are found near the foot of Mt. Kimangkil in Misamis Oriental, enlarged by tributaries like the Sawaga, Manupali, Tigwa, Maladugao and Muleta rivers. The Pulangi flows southwards to Cotabato. From the slopes of Mt. Kitanglad flows the Cagayan River, stretching through the western and northern borders, gently flowing through Cagayan de Oro and joining the sea at the western side of Macajalar Bay. The Tagoloan River springs from Can-ayon, east of Malaybalay, and is fed by tributaries like the Mangima, Kulaman and Atugan rivers. It winds northward and flows into the southeast coast off of Macajalar Bay. The plateau is practically covered by *cogon* (*Imperata cylindrica*), *bagukbuk* and *talahib* grasses and is ideal for cattle raising.

The people of Bukidnon call themselves by several names. Those who live by rivers call themselves by the rivers' names. Thus there are the Tagoloanun, Pulangi-on and Umayamnun.

Others call themselves Higaunon from the Binukid word *ga-un*, meaning "away from the river." When the Spaniards came they were called *monteses* from the Bisayan word *bukidnon* or "people living in mountain areas." Jose Maria Clotet, a Jesuit missionary in Talisayan, describing the *monteses* writes as follows:

The Monteses, recognized in Mindanao under the name Bukidnon (people of the mountain), are found in the district of Misamis, and can be considered as divided into three main groups. The first group embraces those who extend through the mountains and fertile plains bathed by the Tagoloan, Cagayan and Iponan rivers. The second comprises those *colindantes* with the Manobo of the Agusan between Gingoog and Nasipit. Those living on the right bank of the Pulangi river and along some of its tributaries form the third group.¹

In this paper, I shall draw mainly from Dr. Carmen Ching Unabia's MA thesis, presented to the Graduate School of Xavier University in 1976. Her thesis was titled "*An Exploratory Study of the Bukidnon Folk Literature.*" But more important are the three volumes of text: volume I on the poetry, volume II on the folk narratives, and volume III on the epic, *The Olaging*.

In this paper, I have looked into the folk literature and examined the Bukidnon idea of creation and ecology.

I shall examine first the folktales, then the legends, third the oral lyric poetry, and fourth the epic or *Olaging*. In the last I shall limit myself to the early portion of the *Olaging* where the place of Nalandangan - its people, its river, its trees, and the surrounding seas are described. Again, it is the sense of place and the place as cosmos that are given focus.

The Sense of Place

Historians of religion tell us that primitive man's experience of the earth as a divine hierophany, or manifestation of the sacred, is

¹ Emma Blair and James Robertson, (eds.), *The Philippine Islands*, Volume XLIII, pp. 1670-1700.

not what is commonly called *chthonian* (from the Greek word, *cthon*, for black loam, especially proper to peoples after the discovery of agriculture in the 10th century B.C.), but of the earth as cosmic, i.e., as the broad, permanent thing which, with amazing fertility, carries on its lap: the black loam; the streams and rivers and lakes; the trees and the plants; the rocks and stones; the mountains, the caves, the shadows, as well as the animals and human persons. In brief, the earth as the environment. The earth conceived this way is seen with all the forms of existence found in their proper place, as comprising a cosmos or an ordered universe.

Again, historians of religion teach that the history of the belief of the origin of children also bolsters the theory that man's earliest concept of the earth was cosmic rather than *chthonian*.

Before the physiological causes of conception were discovered, the child was believed to have come only from the mother. Woman's giving birth was a very early experience of man. Yet, the child was not entirely from her alone. The child was said to have originated from some animals or some objects in the country around. Sometime before the birth, the child was inserted magically into the womb of the mother. The father had nothing to do with the conception. If children were not his nor the mother's solely, whose were they? Eliade tells us,

...they were either brought by water animals (fish, frogs, crocodiles, swans or some such), or they grew among rocks, in chasms or in caves, before birth, they began life in water, in crystals, in stones, in trees, or they live in — an obscure, pre-human form as "souls" of child-ancestors — in one of the nearby cosmic zones.²

Part I. Folktales

1

Coming closer to home, we have at least four Bukidnon folktales that seem to corroborate the ancient belief of children as the product

² Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1958).

uct of the place. The first story, "The Legend of Adam and Eve", says that after Magbabaya had created Eve out of a rib from Adam's back, they both fell asleep. In sleep Adam dreamed that God ordered him to go to the middle of the waters and to pick up a fruit of the wild orange tree there. He complied and afterwards cut it into two halves: one he gave to Eve to eat, the other he ate himself. Then they fell asleep again. Upon waking up, Eve noticed her belly was getting bigger. Adam wondered and said it was the orange she ate that enlarged her belly. Afterwards Eve said: "If my child will be a girl let her pass by my right. If a boy, by my left." Soon after, a baby girl was placed beside her on her right. Here the lime fruit seems to be the bearer of the child. But not only the fruit, but also the waters, because the wild orange tree grew in the middle of the waters.

2

The second story is entitled: "The Birth of Walo and His First Adventure." The setting is Bukidnon when it was still thickly covered by the *bilayong* (*Azelia homboidea*), *tugas* (*Vitex parviflora*), *tangili* and other hard woods. Also found in these forests were wild beasts: lions, tigers, big snakes and monkeys. There were two kings: the lion and Amoay, the monkey.

In a little house in the forest, roofed by thick rattan, there lived a very young and beautiful lady by the name of Maraguay (*May dagway*, i.e., she with the beautiful face). She was the daughter of the king of the mountains of Bukidnon. Her father was killed by a giant. But an eagle rescued her from the giant and played as mother to her. The eagle was a servant of Amoay.

The eagle raised Maraguay up as his own child. As she was growing up to become a lovely lady, Maraguay felt some strange, undefinable feelings welling within her. She felt so confined inside the small house. So she rushed out in order to breathe more freely. As she was walking in a clearing, she noticed a whirlwind coming her way. As the whirlwind drew nearer, she heard someone whisper: "Do you love me?" She was astonished but having felt the strong emotions in her heart, she answered: "Yes, I do." She looked around but she saw no one.

She hurriedly returned to her house and slept. A few months later she began to hanker for sour fruits. She also noticed her body becoming bigger. After nine months she gave birth to a baby boy who grew up to be a handsome and sturdy lad. Because his father was not known, they called him Walo. He learned how to use the bow and arrow. Wishing to explore the wider world around, he asked leave of his mother. So he left, swinging from tree branch to tree branch, following the eagle.

In one place he visited, there was a king who wanted his daughter to marry the bravest warrior. The task of the suitor was to kill a fierce cimarron which would be used for the wedding feast. A handsome brave named Kala volunteered to kill the young carabao before the wedding day. But he never returned. When they looked for him, he was impaled between the two horns of the animal. The place since then has been called Kalasungay, the town, just before Malaybalay, from Cagayan de Oro.

Walo did not know how fierce the animal was. He went near it. The carabao, instead of attacking him merely shook its head and strode away. It was clear Walo had some magic powers. He took his bow and arrow, aimed at the cimarron and hit it in the heart.

Walo continued his journey, swinging from tree to tree. He arrived in a place where the king had two handsome young sons. But they were very lazy. He ordered them to hunt wild pigs and deer for their wedding after they had searched for a wife. The two did not budge. So he beheaded them and threw their heads away. From one head grew a mountain called Kitanglad. From the other, another mountain called Kalatungan. When Walo came upon the scene, he hunted all the pigs and game for the wedding feast. He advised the king to assuage his loneliness by marrying another wife.

3

The third story is the "Childless Couple". Here the representative of Magbabaya asked the childless couple to look for a lime tree bearing only one fruit. The wife was advised to eat the fruit. The wife, after eating this lone fruit, conceived and brought forth

a child. Here again we can see that the origin of the child is attributed to the mother's eating the fruit of the lime tree. We cannot exactly explain how the undeveloped child was contained in the lime fruit or in the waters. But we know women have been known to conceive after taking a bath in a stream or river. The point is clear however: The child is sired by some element in the surrounding environment : fruit, water, or whirlwind..

4

A fourth tale is "The First Baybayan Tale". This tale also recounts the birth of the hero from a mother who was unmarried. For she was still cloistered, living in the *pinaiyak*, the secluded portion of the *tulugan*, where the Bukidnon virgins live. One day, however, she took a bath in the river. She said half of a lime fruit float by her. She picked it up and rubbed it on her delicate skin. Then she became pregnant. Three hours later, she gave birth to a baby boy. And a few hours afterwards, the infant grew up to become a young lad.

Once again the birth is attributed to the waters in the river and the half of a ripe lime fruit eaten by the maiden.

Part II. Legends

Place As Cosmos

After the sense of place, which is linked with the belief of children as originating from the country around and, in their incomplete condition, being brought by objects like fruits or animals, or as found in the waters or in caves, we now come to place as forming a whole or a cosmos. In it people, plants, animals, work together for the increase or preservation of life.

I present two legends which are quite similar. They both speak of a peace-pact that took place in Central Mindanao. The first was held in Sungku, which was part of Bulan-bulan in the land of Datu Malengmeng, a descendant of Saulana. And the other peace-pact in the land of Ampidu in Tikalaan. But the officiating datu

was Capetan Pedo Tayagbong, datu of Lambagowon or ancient Cagayan de Oro, and therefore a descendant of Aplidu, brother of Ampidu, also a son of Saulana. So the reason why Malengmeng and Capetan Pedo could officiate at the peace-pacts was their relationship with Saulana who had been commissioned by Agbibilin to keep the jar of oil which he was to pour on the tangled hairs of his brothers. In other words, Saulana and his people were to act as peace-makers in times of trouble.

The *The Folk History of the Peoples of Central Mindanao* tells us that, when Agbibilin became very old, he called in his four sons : Saulana, Alauya, Kabungsuan and Sabuntung.³ He addressed them thus:

Listen and remember this: I shall call your eldest brother, Talaandig, which comes from the root word *talaan*, meaning marked, trustworthy and respectable. Then he turned to his eldest son: 'You, Saulana, and your generation will increase, so with Alauya's, so with you, Kabungsuan, and Sabuntung's. Saulana, whose hairs will be entangled, go to them, put oil and comb their hairs. This is your *tulugan*, and since the jar of oil is kept here, you shall call it *liib* or Alanib.'

The Folk History of the People of Central of the People of Central Mindanao continues.

5

At the time of Datu Malengmeng, the famous datu of the *tulugan* of Palintawan, and a direct descendant of Saulana, a great war occurred in Central Mindanao. To fulfill the duty entrusted by Agbibilin to his people, Datu Malengmeng settled the dispute. To do this, he went up the Kitanglad mountain and gathered the rattan called *balagun ha lintukan*. It was called *lintukan* because it bore the riddle of peace settlement. When measured by *dangaw* (handspan) it did not exceed nor was it less than eight *dangaw*;

³ Unabia, Bukidnon Folk Literature, Appendix A.

when measured by *wasay* (inches) it was never more nor less than eight inches; when measured by *dupa* (fathom) it never exceeded nor fell short of eight fathoms.

Malengmeng split the *balagun*; and, from its split skin, he tied a *kedao* (a knot) which he called *balighut ni Saulana* or knot of Saulana. And he sent the tied rattan to the Maranao, Maguindanao, and Manobo tribes through a messenger, Datu Pigtalian, who was an honorable, trustworthy, just, intelligent, wise, eloquent, and brave man. Thus he could answer all the questions asked him by the datus and sultans he was sent to.

Before he left, Malengmeng had instructed Pigtalian to bring back the *balagun ha lintukan* immediately when the four knots had been tied. At that time, the sultan of the Maranao was Bagunsaribu. The sultan of Maguindanao was Maliwanag, and the datu of the Manobo was Datu Gepao. Soon the fourth knot was tied in the territory of the Manobo, in Lumagwas, near Kalilangan.

"When the *balagun ha lintukan* was brought back to Datu Malengmeng, he was extremely glad. It meant that a peaceful settlement was possible. His next move was to send a *manawag*, an invitation message, through the *balagun* with the *kedao* or knots indicating the date of the proposed Peace Conference. Those who should agree to the date would tighten the knot end; those who disagreed, would untie it.⁴

Finally, on the proposed date of the peace treaty, three datus arrived with their spouses at Palintawan. They took with them a *bihagun* (chicken) for the ritual. On that occasion they also held the *tampuda hu balagun* (peace treaty ceremony). Afterwards the *panampulut* (fellowship meal) followed. At this significant event, the *balagun ho lintukan* was called the *balagun ha malayhay*, which means, the rattan which is the way to peace. Said completely in verse it went:

⁴ Ibid., p. 182.

Balagun ha malayhay
Ta iyan pig luan-luan.
Manluan-luan su kag suled.
 (Rattan is the way to peace.
 It has the power to unite
 The unity of brothers.)

But before the formal ceremony, Datu Malengmeng of the Talaandig stood up and said, "It was not good for us to fight each other since we come from the same parents, Agbibilin and Ginamayun."

Sultan Bagunsaribu answered, "Datu Malengmeng, I will agree to your proposal if my wish would be granted." Upon being asked what his wish was, Sultan Bagunsaribu demanded: "I want to own the greatest and the most beautiful of your ladies, Bai Kamayugan."

Bai Kamayugan was then sitting at the center of the group. She had the privilege to hold on her lap the ceremonial wine jar in recognition of her greatness. She was young and unmarried, yet she had already won the title, *bai* (female datu), for she was renowned for her wisdom and unique ability to settle disputes. She was also known as Gawhanen and daughter of Datu Limbubungan of the Dungguan *tulugan*. Datu Bekbekan, Kamayugan's brother, who was at the ceremony, gave his consent.

Likewise, Datu Kayaguwa, the representative of Sultan Maliwanag of the Maguindanao tribe stood and said: "Datu Malengmeng, I will agree to your proposal if you will also give me Bai Mayebag." Bai Mayebag was the daughter of Datu Kisalem, a woman of great beauty and sister of the fierce warriors Patilekan, Salanayun, and Dalabahan. Datu Kisalem, who attended the ceremony, gave his consent. The wedding ceremonies took place immediately. It was called *kasal he dalagun* (not going through the traditional method).

After the wedding ceremony, the peace treaty ritual followed. They sipped the rice wine from the big jar planted with eight *usuk* (or slender reeds which served as straw). Eight *usuk* were placed about the jar to symbolize the laying down of arms, and as a

pledge of peace. (It is believed that these symbolic *pinute* are tied together and still kept somewhere among the Tagoloanon today.). The sacredness of the place, despite the great war, was maintained. Bulan-bulan was spared from its violence and terror. Because the ground was sacred, no one could kill nor be killed on it.

It had been the practice of the various tribes that, whenever the warriors set foot on the land, they stopped by the river and fixed themselves. Thus, Maguindanao warriors who approached the place put their spears on their shoulders, combed and knotted their long hairs by the rivers Pininanga and Linangdang near Sungku, as a gesture of respect. In the same manner, those from the east set aside their weapons as they crossed the Babahagun river, near Bantuanun, while those coming from the south did the same at the Manupali river.

6

The next legend was gathered in the area of Tikala-an. Here, too, we can see that the ancient tradition appointing Saulana and his descendants to pour the jar of oil over tangled hairs and to comb them to bring about peace is still maintained.⁵

Capetan Pedro Tayagbong was approached by the young incoming datu of Tikalaan, a Tala-andig (or Higaunon), to send the *kedao* to the various chiefs of Central Mindanao, asking them to be present in Tikalaan for the assumption by the young datu of his office, as well as for a celebration of the *Tampuda hu Balagon*.

Was the Tikalaan datu authorized to call upon the intervention of Pedro in his case? Certainly. Because, after all, Pedro was a descendant of Aplidu, brother of Ampidu, who were both sons of Saulana. We know this from the folk history of the Talaandig which says that:

⁵ This folk history of the people of Central Mindanao was supplied by a Talaandig, the late Datu Kinulintang, Anastacio Saway.

Among Saulana's sons were Aplidu and Ampidu. Ampidu's children lived within Bulan-bulan, the *tulugan* of Mayuntudug, Guntung-ganun, Balimbingan, Landang, Lumang-talubu. These places now are respectively called Sungku, Victory, Kibugtung, Malinao, Kusina ...

Aplidu's descendants spread in the area between the Tagoloan river and Macasandig in Lambagu, now Cagayan de Oro. The *tulugan* of this generation was known as the Dungguan. From this district emerged great leaders such as Mambalahuba, Mankingkatel, Mankingkakeb, Limbubungan. Limbubungan's offsprings were Gawhanen whom Bagunsaribu married earlier and Bekbekon whose grandson was Mansikiabu, father-in-law of Katandeg.⁶

The next legend, was gathered in 1972 in Tikalaan, Bukidnon. It relates the peace-pact that was gone through by the leaders of five tribes then dwelling in Central Mindanao. The main point of the legend is the mutual loyalty to one another pledged by the five tribal leaders: Capetan Pedro Tayagbong, the datu of Lambagowon (ancient Cagayan de Oro) who was a Christian; the datu of Tikalaan, an animist, who was assuming his new datuship in the presence of his fellow Central Mindanao leaders; the datu of Tagoloan (also an animist), the datu of Dodsaaan, near Marawi, who was a Muslim; and the sultan of Maguindanao, also a Muslim.

In order to have his assuming the office of datu of Tikalaan, verified by his peers in Central Mindanao, the young datu of Tikalaan approached Capetan Pedro (Gaa) Tayagbong, datu of Lambagowon, because he was the senior of all the datus. He asked Pedro to send messages to the three other leaders to be present in Pusod ha Dagat on a particular day in order to partake in the celebration ratifying his datuship and also to take part in the peace-pact of the Cutting of the Vine Branch or the *Tampuda ho Balagon*. Pedro, besides bidding them each to bring a *cimarron* (carabao) for the celebration, also requested them to bring something for the *Tampuda*. Pedro, who was a Christian himself, brought his Bible.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 178 - 179.

The sultan of Maguindanao was asked to bring along a Qur-an, the sultan of Dodsaaan, a durian fruit, and the datu of Tagoloan, a measure of green *balagon* (a vine like unto rattan which can be used for tying things together. The datu of Tikalaan supplied a white chicken (*ugis*) for the ritual.

At the height of the festivities, one of the leaders suggested that the peace-pact be gone through in order to preserve peace and harmony among them. So a hole was dug in the ground. Into it were placed the Qur-an, the Bible, and the durian. Then the white chicken was slaughtered and its blood smeared on the things inside the hole. Then Pedro took the green *balagon* and put it across the hole. He positioned himself between the two groups of animists (Tikalaan and Tagoloan) on his right, and the Muslims (Dodsaaan and Maguindanao) on his left. Then, addressing his fellow leaders, he said; "My dear brothers, this is solemn moment when we pledge loyalty to, and harmony with one another." Then, unsheathing his *kampilan*, he added: "Whoever among us would prove false to this peace-pact through any act of treachery, let him beware for he will suffer the same fate that the *balagon* now suffers." Then he cut the green branch in the middle, and mincing it further threw the pieces into the hole, and covered it with soil. Afterwards the gathered throng joined in a shout and continued their feasting to ratify the assumption of his datuship by the datu of Pusod ha Dagat or Tikalaan.

Today, in Tikalaan, stands a durian tree which all peoples of Central Mindanao look upon as a tree of friendship. My colleague and friend, Dr. Nagasura Madale, assured me that the same tradition is preserved by the lake dwellers in Lanao del Sur. Here we can see that the five tribes of Central Mindanao considered themselves related to one another. Central Mindanao is considered by all of them as "their place."

It is worth noting that this Tampuda was held after the coming of both Islam and Christianity (Qur-an and Bible). But the use of the *balagon* and the blood of the white chicken and the durian antedate both Islam and Christianity. They witness to the earlier religiosity of the Central Mindanao people. The pledge of mutual loyalty and harmony are as old as human nature itself and the best insights of man in favor of justice and peace.

I would like to point out the cosmic sense of the earth manifested in this legend. The earth itself, as the wide, pervasive support of all forms of existence, was participant to the peace-pact when they dug a hole in it. Then they threw into it the best symbols of their new-found faiths: the Qur-an and the Bible. The fruit tree in the durian, the vines and plants in the measure of *balagon* for tying things together as one are also represented. And the blood of the white chicken smeared over the contents in the hole signifies the "inspiring," or the putting of spirit or life, into these offerings. Of course the five *cimarrones* that were slaughtered for the festivity and the sacks or bags of palay that were pounded and cooked all partook in man's quest for loyalty, harmony, peace, and justice among fellowmen.

In Central Mindanao, the egalitarian treatment of men and women is also evident, since very early times. We should mention how women were held in high esteem by the Bukidnon and other tribes. Bai Kamayugan of Cagayan or Lambagohon, whom Sultan Bagunsaribu of Maranao married, although young, was much respected by her people because of her unique ability to settle disputes. She was privileged during the peace negotiation to hold on her lap the jar of the ceremonial wine. Her title *bai* meant female datu.

Part III. Poetry

Vegetation is often used by the Bukidnon, especially in their oral poetry, as something to compare human life with. Sometimes, too, the waters are used as metaphor for bravery and self-forgetfulness. The place for fetching water for drinking is often described as oily. Could this be due to the presence in the place of many betel nuts oozing with oil are always falling?

The mountains also feature in poetry and song. It is the gods who made the mountains the boundary between them and mortals and which the spirits of the dead go around. Indeed, the Bukidnon believe that Mount Balatukan in Oriental Misamis is where the souls of the dead go for final judgement.

The rejected one asks the beloved not to disown him in public but to disown him in the roaring waterfalls so that he could fall

upon the stones below and die, "...and the guardian *bulalakaw* will cry out to my rejected spirit. And my love will be trapped among the cogon grass at the place for fetching drinking water. And the cogon where I'm trapped can brush against my cruel darling and not even the shamans can diagnose the cause of my darling's illness."

Thus in "Reflection on Life and Death" the poet says:

Our life is hard. We are like pilgrims in this wide world. Like plants we have our times, willed by Diwata. When we have fulfilled our time, the plant of life withers away in the soil of Kana-an (Paradise) where it was planted.

Men would cling to life. But we cannot refuse the order of God who wills everything.

So we go down the stream of death, spend a night at Andowon, entone the song of the pilgrim soul as it travels towards Mt. Lupiagan. Thither the prophets and the *baylans* return and also the soul that walks alone.

As I walk through the way of death I know the verdant place is far from the sheath of my body.

When the soul reaches the bright queen at the gate of death, she will say, "Ah, pilgrim soul, you strive to enter the gate because you have sacrificed so much."

Then the soul is shadowed by the cool *kilala* tree planted by the God of the Underworld, so that the dead will forget the bright home when he comes, so that he will never return to his former home.

And the poet also says: "So I can only pray to Almighty God that if it is my destiny that the plant of life that he has planted will wither, that God sprinkles it with the oil that restores life so that the tree of life planted in Kana-an will live again. And spotless white clouds will shade it, so that even if drought comes, the heat of the sun will not affect it.

And thus the souls would be freed from the clasp of the prison of Diwata. And should a great storm come, the souls will be winnowed, the chaff will be blown away. The pure souls will remain and peace will reign in the future days to come. "For it will be the will of the guardians, and God shall will that we enjoy eternal life."

Remarks

1. There are two journeys spoken about: the journey through life and the journey to the land of the dead. No judges are mentioned. Only the bright queen at the gate who speaks encouraging words.

2. There are also two plants: One, the plant of life, planted by Diwata in the land of Kana-an and the other, the *Kilala* tree, planted by the God of the Underworld, so that the pilgrim soul standing under its shade will no longer hanker for its former life.

3. The poet prays that, should his plant of life wither, Diwata will sprinkle it with the oil that restores life to make it live again. And that spotless white clouds will cover it and it and it will be protected from the sun's heat.

A Reflection on the Past

It is no longer like in days gone by when thunders faced each other, as the very guardians of the Center of the earth, watchers of Bulan-Bulan which I have read, like the shining *batunlinay*, or the glittering *banat-i* which lights the earth, as if it were being treasured as the oily place for fetching water. It could be likened to the loudest *agung* that vibrates and echoes clearly far and near. How do we know this? Because then they were still living: our grandfather Man-etab, our forefather Manpayayap, assisted by Manlapagon and Mampayandung.

But since the place of our custom was named, the root of our beliefs was changed. The star that was the symbol,

that lighted the earth, was slowly covered in the obscure heaven. And when it was so, the oily place for fetching water also started to billow. At the center of the *agung*, at the middle of the *mungmungon*, the grasses were rippled as though hit by a strong wind. They started to cover each other, the true relatives began to separate back to back. They became silent, voiceless, the roaring sound which cannot be hidden, the oily place for fetching water, the good reputation which cannot be covered. The oily place for fetching water.⁷

The Center of the Earth is no other than Bulan-bulan. The thunders facing each other were the four *lantungs* or guardians that watched over the gates to the Talaandig, to Maranao, to Maguindanao, and the Manobo. In the generation of the great war and its settlement, the guards were Datu Malengmeng (Talaandig), Datu Maliwanag (Maguindanao), Bagunsaribu (Maranao) and Datu Gepao (Manobo).

The Center of the earth then was like the shining *batunlinay*, the glittering *banat-i* which lights the earth. Bulan-bulan was then treasured as the oily place for fetching water. It was like the loudest *agung* that vibrates strongly far and near. And why was it so? Because they were still living then, our grandfather Man-otab, our forefather Mampayayap who was assisted by Manlapagon and Mampayandung. These ancestors made our ancient place renowned.

Yearning for Afterlife

My gentle voice, if only I were a genius and a man of wisdom, it would be worthy of you to listen to words coming from my mouth.

I wish I were a matured thorny bamboo in my old age. I would then live in that famous land, there I will stay in that famed home. "And I will find my worries / And

⁷ Anastacio Saway, Lantapan, Bukidnon.

search for my troubles / The problems of my thoughts /
And the worries of my mind. (These will all be solved!!!)"

Swear dearly beloved that it is the desire of my soul to live with the gods, who vanished in the mountains, and the goddesses, who ascended and disappeared in the mountains.

The mountain is the boundary made by the gods or *diwatas* or spirits. The mountain is for going around there where the spirits go about. "Since I was brought up by 'Gininawan Binatug' to the heaven of happiness / To the heaven of enjoyment where life is eternal."

Songs

Song for the Dead

It is difficult for us human beings, for once the hour of fulfillment has come and the true order given, we cannot refuse. Once the *olong-olong* or the *lugalu* will break, we cannot refuse.

That is why it is revealed that the molded earth is only a temporary place for pilgrims. That is its essence.

Thus it is a blessing for the dead one to leave someone with true love and / Real affection / For it will never fade in the mind / Like grass that would be touched / By the one to take its place / Like grass it would always be moved / It would become a lasting memory / Of the numerous orators and / Of the thousand narrators. This sala shows a high esteem for poets who leave behind their poetry which is a meaningful legacy and a lasting monument of their true love and concern for their people and culture.

Courtship Song

My dearest, now that you've made it clear that you have erased me out of your life, I beg you, "Do not cast me aside there/ In the middle of the hall," i.e., during the wedding arrangement where his parents, relatives, and the *datus* who serve as go-between will be present.

Better cast me aside / In the roaring waterfalls / In this way the forsaken one could cry as he is carried away. And he will fall upon the stones below. And the moan of this rejected one, my soul and my spirit, the "*bulalakaw*," who watches the boundary will cry out to the soul of the forsaken one. And my dying love will feel trapped / In the place for fetching water. My dying affection like the cogon could brush on my darling who is cruel. When she goes to fetch water in the spring I will cause her worries. When the shamans try to determine the cause of her illness, they will never discover it. It will only worsen the loneliness. It will increase the affection of the rejected one.⁸

A Song of Brotherly Love

Real blood brothers are like hair knotted together. When they are separated from each other, like *balubung* or grass growing apart, still like paths that cross, they will soon meet at the wide sandy place. They will embrace each other in tender love, for they are genuine brothers. But it will be very harmful if cursing will be uttered, "If they are not closely bound / By the strong rattan called *lintukan* by the sturdy rattan that pacifies as it is scribbled on the palm. Because brotherly love binds people together, the unity of the tribe depends on it. When brotherly love is lost then unity, camaraderie and peace are also lost.

⁸ Victorino Saway, Lantapa, Bukidnon.

Song From Someone Hurt

The loved one (a girl) who is bidden to cry for Sawaden or *Muyibasen* (the rejected one) will pass by. The rejected one comes from *Mugingen* or *Bulangitien* (names of trees). The beloved will not get lost because "I will bend the stem or twig as a sign." *Balubung* or *tumbak* (name of fern) is so beautiful.

My beloved, in your loneliness you will not be sad because of my *hapuyut* (or footprints on the grass, one foot high, upon which one walks). My *hapuyut* of my bitter pains. At the drink of death, my beloved when you are worried, there you will meet the direction of my sentiment.

The lover says that before he leaves (to die?) he would first plant the *Kalamigyas* at the edge or boundary of his beloved's garden. When lonely thoughts come, she only needs to look down from her window and see the *Kalamigyas* that her lover has planted.

When the *nangul* or *patula* vines grow then expect the return of the belittled one. But if the flowers or blossoms begin to fall, then know that my soul is deeply hurt. And I shall live in the crying stream, the place of the forsaken and abandoned.

But don't be surprised; for like a stone when I am kicked I will roll. And I will proceed to the bronze *Bunsudan* or *Tamanan* (place of death). And I will go beyond the raging sea; and, as is related in the stories by my ancestors, I shall stay at the end of the universe. There will be no more clouds or mists. There the *sayaw* (small maya bird), or the *lawanes* is no longer lost. And like the *pitpit*, I shall be among many who are lost and have disappeared. And we shall be enjoying the flowers of the cogon.⁹

⁹ The natives associate it with the grass that grows in the other world, according to Manuel Himaus of Maluko, Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon.

Song of Unrequited Love

This love of mine cannot be expressed by pen or pencil. It is difficult, like the seed of the *dinog* fruit or the seeds of the Yambagu.

We are compared to clothes bought on credit. My sister, whom I love, likens me to the rejected clothing she sells. But someday things are difficult. "If my beloved will only strum / Her *takumbo* as I am about to fall on the stairs of trouble." If she will only play music when I am about to go down the stairs of perdition / And so look down on the one who loves. And look with pity (on me) the forsaken one who passes by, who comes from Kamugingnon or *balagtien*.

My beloved, when you feel sad, at the guarded portal of death, you will find the footprints (*hapuyut*) of my broken heart. And you will not get lost / For I will place a sign by bending the glistening fern. The way where I pass or break the stem of the sparkling ferns. Along the way where I pass. But before leaving my happy home / I will first plant / The very bright *Kalamigyas* at the edge of your garden. And, when sad, look through your window at the *Kalamigyas* or *Kudaweng* I had planted. And, when the new leaves of the *patola* grows, then / You can expect the rejected one will return. But if the young leaves and the flowers fall, then the soul of the one who wanders shall suffer pain. Then I shall stay at the bank of the moaning river and I shall drink refreshing water. But I shall not tarry or linger there. For, like a passing storm, I shall proceed / To the treasured end of the world. Then when I arrive beyond the raging ocean, and, as revealed by my ancestors, there I shall stay where there are no more clouds nor mists. There, where neither the *sayaw* nor the *lanaw* vanishes, nor shall I be sad for I will become like a weaver bird, among the many who stray, and be consoled. By the "cogon blossoms, by the flowers of the cogon."¹⁰

¹⁰ Manuel Himaus, Malaku, M.F., Bukidnon.

This sala is full of sentiments for being unloved by the beloved. But it is full of nobility and selfless love. And, if in the future his beloved is sad, he assures her of his ever abiding love which leaves its footprints (*hapuyut*) on the young cogon grass over which a traveller walks in the field. And when it is the beloved's turn to die, she will not get lost because his footprints will be evident on the glistening ferns which he has purposely bent thinking of her. Then he assures her that though rejected, he will not leave without planting the *Kalamigyas* plant at the edge of her garden. And in sadness, she should look at the plant. When new leaves grow I will return. But if the leaves fall, my soul is in pain. I shall stay on the bank of the river of death. But I shall not linger long. I shall proceed to the ends of the world as taught by our ancestors. And I shall be comforted by the flowers of the cogon grass.

To be noted is the way the Bukidnon poet uses the environment around him: the grasses, the flowers, the ferns, to express his feelings; though full of pathos, it is also hopeful of finding solace in the life after death. Once again the cogon grass is used as a symbol of hope.

Conclusion

We have seen that the Bukidnon, in their folktales, show vestiges of the pre-agricultural vision of the earth which is cosmic and centered, not on the black loam or soil, but rather on the expanded and permanent thing holding on its lap the soil itself, the grasses, the trees, the rocks, rivers and lakes, including animals and human persons. This view of the earth is connected with the idea of "place" or "our place". In the history of religion, too, this concept of the earth as place is linked with the history of the belief of the origin of children. There the child is primarily attributed to the mother into whose womb the child is inserted and develops until it is ready to be born. But in its pre-natal condition or in its undeveloped stage, the child is thought to be produced in the caves, or the ferns or the waters, and is inserted in the womb of the mother by the action of the waters or by the animals. The whole country around is thought of as the parent of the child.

This reference to the place where one is born, rather than to its limited family, is seen also in the medieval as well as in modern west. A person noted to have achieved a measure of eminence, either as a hero or a saint, is generally named after his place of birth. Thus, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Thomas of Aquinas, Catherine of Sienna, Teresa of Avila.

In *The Folk History of the People of Central Mindanao*, we have seen how the Bukidnon identified themselves with Bulan-bulan or Palintawan. We have also seen how everything in the environment conspired to bring about peace. The same is true in the Peace Pact in Tikalaan. The place where the *tulugan* (or the communal house) was built was also a point of reference. Thus, Palintawan for the Bukidnon in Ampidu's territory and for the Bukidnon in Aplidu's land as Dungg-an or Macasandig.

The place as cosmos is made up of people, plants, animals, rivers, rocks, air and soil. Each in its ordered place helps to bring about peace and harmony among the inhabitants of Central Mindanao both as a single unit and as a collectivity or region.

In Sala A4, which is a reflection on the past, Bulan-bulan is referred to again. The place is likened to an oily place where people draw drinking water (therefore life-giving). It is also likened to an *agong*, vibrating when hit and spreading its sound far and wide. Such was the good name and honor of the people of the place.

In the first part of the Olaging epic, we also saw how the inhabitants and singer of Nalandangan or Yandang identified themselves with the place. For it was noted for the beauty of its women, the bravery and skills of its warriors, the music created by its various trees when ruffled by the winds, and the creativity of the inhabitants in using their environment to defend themselves against foes, human and natural, or to improve their human lives as responsible persons.

We cannot, therefore, but bewail the desecration of the once rich forests of Bukidnon, the pollution of its rivers, and the rift which the wedge of commerce, industry and consumerism has created in the one-time harmony and solidarity between human beings, the animals, and the environment of Bukidnon.

Appendix

We can also see, by reading the *The Folk History of the Peoples of Central Mindanao*, why Capitan Pedro Tayagbong, the Christian datu of Lambagowon (or ancient Cagayan de Oro), could call upon his fellow leaders to pledge loyalty and harmony at the Tikalaan Tampuda hu Balagun. For, indeed, they were descendants of one and the same ancestor, namely, Nabis ha Agbibilin, the fourth son of Nabis ha Panggulu. Pangulo, together with his three sons, was ordered by Magbabaya to ascend to heaven and to watch how he purged the people on earth for their sins by sending the flood. Nabis ha Agbibilin, before the waters covered the earth, was ordered by Magbabaya to climb up Mount Dulang-dulang (later Mt. Kitanglad) while the rains and flood took place. Magbabaya also ordered the third son, who was with his father at the gates of heaven, to sing the first *sala* or "poetry in song." He thereby recounts the events and the harrowing experiences of the people:

Full of consuming grief
The people who were created
Dying of the great catastrophe
Extremely suffering
The people who were created
The people who were created.

On top of Mt. Dulang-dulang, Agbibilin listened to his brother's song and later generations knew that Mt. Kitanglad was never covered by water.

After the waters were created, Magbabaya said to Agbibilin, "We know how lonely you are for you have been alone. Go and climb that other mountain, for a woman has survived the flood."

He obeyed and found Ginamayon, who had saved herself by riding on a Kalatung, a percussion instrument made of hollowed wood covered at the end with animal hide. This mountain eventually was named Kalatungan.

Agbibilin married Ginamayon who gave him eight children: four boys and four girls, who were born at intervals. They settled in a place called Bulan-bulan (a sacred place known to be situated

at the center of the world. It is sacred because it was the place whence Nabis Ha Panggulo and his three sons ascended to heaven.) The children of Agbibilin built their tribal house (*tulugan*) at Palintauwan.

When the children reached marriageable age. Magbabaya instructed Agbibilin, "In order to increase, let your children marry each other, but they should be passed by intervals." Then Magbabaya taught them the ritual called *pamalas* (a ritual for casting away bad fortunes, by putting chicken blood on the palm of the persons concerned, and on their foreheads, to cast away the *sumbang* (or curse due to incestuous marriage).