

The Political Biography of Dalama: From Binukot to Revolutionary

Ma. Arve B. Bañez

(based on the accounts of Ma. Luisa Posa-Dominado)

*Paper read at the Conference-Workshop on Panay and Negros Indigenous Peoples
with the theme "Cultural Alienation, Conflict Resolution and Gender Issues"
held at Iloilo City on 15-16 April 2002.*

My Subject Position

I would like to make a confession. Initially my motivation for writing the story of Dalama was purely academic. I was then a Political Science Instructor at the Social Science Division of University of the Philippines in the Visayas (UPV) in Miag-ao, Iloilo. I needed to come up with a research output to add to my points to get a permanent item or plantilla position.

Now, I am out of UPV but I feel I have a social responsibility to write Dalama's story. When I left the academe, I embarked on a series of exposure trips to the Tumanduk communities in Tapaz and Jamindan, Capiz. The exposure trips bore to fruition a project proposal for a functional literacy program for the Tumanduks.¹ More importantly, those exposure trips have made me an advocate of the Tumanduk people's right to self-determination.²

I have to admit that during the initial stage of writing the paper, I was drawn to the exotic practice of binukot. A binukot is a girl cloistered by her family from the age of three to puberty. She is taught the Tumanduk's oral traditions, and learns to chant the epics and dance the binanog. Keeping a binukot gives a family prestige because it means that it can afford to exempt a child from labor. As the repository of the community's oral traditions, the binukot commands a very high bride price.

But I realized that my interest in the exotic was part of my bias as a lowland researcher, so I rejected this line of study.

I have chosen to analyze the binukot from a Marxist-Feminist perspective³ because of the influence of my primary storyteller, Luisa Posa-Dominado, who is a Marxist. Her accounts about Dalama, a

binukot who became a revolutionary, entailed some analysis of the binukot from the Marxist standpoint. I provide the feminist perspective.

The Subject Position of My Storyteller

My primary storyteller, Ma. Luisa "Luing" Posa-Dominado, was a member of the New People's Army (NPA)⁴ during the Marcos dictatorship. A comrade, confidante, and friend of Dalama, Luing is qualified to tell Dalama's political biography. Their friendship spanned eight years. It began in 1977 when they worked together as members of a unit of the New People's Army (NPA). They were still single at that time. They again had another chance to work together in an auxiliary team⁵ in 1980. By this time, they were already married and had children.

From 1981 to 1985, they were assigned to different fields of work, but they met frequently and shared many stories. By 1985, Dalama was already leading an NPA platoon, while Luing was a member of the Instructor's Bureau.

Luing and Dalama were more than comrades in the national liberation movement. On a personal level they were co-journeymen who saw each other go through difficulties as mothers and wives waging a national revolution. Having shared Dalama's life and struggles, Luing has earned the right to be the keeper of Dalama's story.

Storytelling as Research Tool

I chose to employ storytelling as method of gathering data because of my feminist consciousness. Storytelling as a research method was empowering to my research partner Luing. Storytelling allowed Luing spontaneity. We talked at the feeling level; we listened to each other, and laughed over anecdotes. Luing clarified matters when she shared her analysis of what she thought I was doing. She affirmed some points of my analysis and challenged some of them. In storytelling, we experienced an exchange of personal stories.

In storytelling, personal disclosures by the researcher and the research partner are inevitable. In the beginning, I had to clarify my subject position to Luing. At the end of our last storytelling session Luing told me that after hearing herself tell Dalama's story, she felt that Dalama's story was really worth telling and writing about.

Our storytelling sessions would begin with promptings like "Luing, ano ang istorya ni Dalama sang siya binukot pa (What was Dalama's tale

when she was still a binukot)?" Apart from this, we talked about common friends, and a sundry of topics. Storytelling as method is informal. The issue of power relations between researcher and the researched is blurred.

Truly, Luing is a partner in this research undertaking because she staked her own life story as a former NPA during the Marcos dictatorship. As a feminist conscious of the ethical issues in research, I am aware of the issue of confidentiality. I salute Luing for freely consenting to tell Dalama's story.

In the oral tradition of the Tumanduks, storytelling is also the primary medium of transmission of knowledge. The choice of method hews to the Tumanduk tradition.

Imagery as Important Tool in Writing

My mentor Tomasito Talledo (Professor of Sociology at UPV Miagao campus) shared with me the imagery approach in writing. When I was writing about Dalama the imagery of the *ubaran* was a controlling image. The *ubaran* is a friendship bond of the Tumanduks made of the forest vine of the same name. I was actually weaving the story of Dalama as retold by my storyteller Luing. My analysis weaves the personal story of Dalama to the bigger story of the Tumanduk people's struggle for self-determination and the Filipino people's struggle for national liberation.

I feel I share a special bond with Luing and Dalama after the research. Just like the *ubaran*, our lives have become interwoven through our stories.

The Political Biography of Dalama

Dalama, The Binukot

When Dalama was born, her father Sardin named her after her mother who had also been a binukot. Her father chose Dalama as the binukot of the family because she closely resembled her mother. Dalama remained a binukot until she turned 15 years old.

Dalama told Luing that as a binukot her mobility was confined to the immediate vicinity of her home. Play was limited among her siblings and immediate family members. While growing up, she envied her siblings who were free to explore and play anywhere.

Since Dalama stayed at home most of the time, she performed household chores. She helped her mother cook, wash the dishes and

clean the house. She learned to sew and to make jewelry by stringing colorful beads together.

Her mother taught her how to dance the binanog, a graceful depiction of the movement of the hawk to the beat of the native drums and gongs. Luing recounted that when Dalama danced the binanog it seemed that her aura would change. She danced as if possessed by a spirit-dancer. Luing recalled that compared to other binanog dancers, Dalama was the most graceful during her time.

Dalama was allowed to bathe in the nearby spring before sunrise provided that a sibling or her mother accompanied her. She washed her own clothes and collected a limited amount of drinking water. Although she did some housework she was prohibited from doing tasks that required much energy or exposed her to the blazing sun.

Luing noticed that a binukot always had a companion in the house. Usually, it was her mother or female sibling who accompanied her. The companion was to answer the call of visitors. When they have unannounced visitors the binukot has to go to her room. Otherwise, she is free to interact with the immediate members of her family.

Economic considerations necessitated Dalama's decision to terminate her status as binukot. In 1968, Dalama's father Sardin led a *panambi*, a bloody territorial war against the Akeanon. Sardin was incarcerated in Muntinlupa and the family needed an extra hand in the *kaingin*.⁶ Dalama told Luing that her family accepted her decision to participate in farm work. She was fifteen (15) years old when she ceased to be a binukot.

A Marxist-Feminist Analysis of the Practice of Binukot

In my conversation with Luing on the practice of binukot, I opined that Dalama must be empowered because she personally decided to terminate her status as binukot. Also, by her decision, she challenged her own cultural tradition. Luing explained that in the 1970s the practice of binukot was a dying tradition among the Tumanduks. The decline started in the 1960s due to the national economic crisis that also affected the mountainous areas of Capiz, home of the Tumanduks.

It had become impractical to maintain a binukot. In the case of Dalama's family, their difficulties were aggravated by the fact that Sardin was imprisoned. And he was the principal food provider of the family.

Luing explained that the practice of binukot grew out of the relative economic abundance experienced by the Tumanduks in the past. Families were able to maintain a binukot because they had surplus yield

in the *kaingin* and could invest in the binukot who commanded a high bride price.

Dalama's decision to terminate her status as a binukot was borne out of the economic necessity to help in the *kaingin*. It was a practical decision made to answer a basic need of economic survival.

Luing observed that the practice of binukot changed through time. During the time of Lola Elena Gardoce, the oldest living epic chanter and binukot, a binukot was forbidden to have her bare feet touch the ground. She had to be carried by somebody when she left her house.

Maintaining a binukot in the family was very expensive. A binukot did not contribute to the generation of food and income for the family, and was therefore totally dependent on them. But she repaid them once betrothed as she was worth several farm animals and other material goods.

At first glance, it would appear that a binukot was a "bird in a gilded cage." Her space was confined to the vicinity of her home. Her social relations were limited to the immediate members of the family. However, since she was taught and trained to chant their epic, lore and dance, she became a bearer of traditional culture and keeper of her people's history. As such, her vistas expanded as she learned the beginnings of her people and the exploits of their heroes. She knew about the skyworld, the underworld, the middle world and all their inhabitants.

As a binukot, Dalama performed some household chores. She washed her own clothes and fetched a limited amount of drinking water. This runs counter to the accounts made by Prof. Alice Magos in her paper entitled "The Binukot (well-kept maiden) in changing socio-political perspective 1850s-1993" in which she states that the binukot was "treated like a 'princess' and did not perform household chores."

Dalama's limited interaction with the immediate members of her family was enough to expose her to the actual realities of life. She experienced poverty in like manner as her family. Her family accepted her decision to help in farm work because it was the pragmatic thing to do. They could have hastened Dalama's marriage, which was an option if they had wanted to improve their economic standing. At 15 years old, Dalama was already eligible for marriage.

Dalama's case points to the fact that it was her father who decided that she become a binukot. Sardin acted like a typical patriarch who determined the fate of her daughter. His decision exemplified the view of patriarchy in which a daughter is treated as property that he can sell to the highest bidder.

Dalama/Randa: From Binukot to Revolutionary

In the early 1970s, Dalama had initial contact with the NPA. According to Luing, in 1971, the NPA set up a revolutionary school near Dalama's residence in Aglupacan, Tapaz, Capiz. Dalama attended the revolutionary school at the age of seventeen until she was eighteen years old. The revolutionary school taught the rudiments of writing, reading, and arithmetic. It was here where Dalama learned literacy and numeracy skills. As socio-political issues were discussed among the regular attendees, Dalama had her early politicization there.

In 1972, Martial Law was declared by then President Ferdinand E. Marcos. Many activists were forced to go underground, among them Luing, my principal storyteller. During this period Dalama started helping out in the NPA camp near their residence. She had a suitor, a lowlander, who was a member of the NPA. The suitor, one of those student activists who were forced to go underground went to the extent of performing the *pangagad*. This is the Tumanduk custom where the groom-to-be does errands for days for the family of the bride-to-be before the wedding. Unfortunately, the groom-to-be was wounded in an ambush and was captured by the forces of the Philippine military when he sought treatment in Iloilo City.

In 1977, Dalama decided to join the New People's Army. According to Dalama's story to Luing, her mother discouraged her from joining the NPA because she was a woman. Her mother reasoned that she did not have the physical stamina of a man. Dalama argued that she was more adept than the men (members of the NPA) who came from the lowland who had to crawl clumsily when scaling the mountains.

In Luing's recollection, Dalama said that had she abided by her mother's decision she would have remained in their kaingin. She told Luing how thankful she was to have studied in the revolutionary school because of the socially relevant education she imbibed.

Luing reminisced that it was in 1977 when she first met Dalama. They were together in a unit which was composed of four women. Luing was the only one from the urban area; the three others were Tumanduks of which Dalama was the lone former binukot. Luing and Dalama were of the same age at twenty-two.

Luing said that during this period in the national liberation movement, the women were confined to the camps. They had to convince their male comrades for them to join the mobile units. In the unit, there were some conflicts over certain policies. They were prohibited from wearing slippers while on the road. However, Luing

insisted that the soles of her feet hurt and she would wear slippers during their hike. Dalama would consent but their two other companions resented this. Dalama had to explain to her fellow Tumanduks that Luing's feet were not as callused as theirs so they should show more compassion.

In another instance, Dalama showed that she was more adaptable than her fellow Tumanduks in the matter of personal hygiene and grooming. Accustomed to using shampoo and bath soap, Luing complained against a policy making them use detergent bar only for bathing. Luing's family provided for her personal necessities, including bath soap, shampoo, clothes, etc. In those days, her actions were criticized as "binurgis." Dalama explained to her fellow Tumanduks in the unit that they should not begrudge Luing these minor things. To resolve the matter, all four were given the liberty to use bath soap and shampoo for bathing. For Luing, this showed Dalama's flexible character.

Luing helped Dalama improve her skill in reading comprehension. She tutored Dalama in writing. Luing described Dalama as a diligent and enthusiastic student. Painstakingly, she copied the Red Book and other revolutionary reading materials to practice her writing skills. Luing observed that with her diligence her handwriting greatly improved. Her penmanship was even better compared to Luing's. In their correspondence later, Luing noted that Dalama would occasionally use some English terms. Luing considered this a major achievement as Dalama was mentored in reading comprehension and literacy in the Hiligaynon language.

According to Luing, Dalama espoused the official line of the NPA for expansion (organizing) in the Akeanon area. Dalama belonged to the Panay-anon people, and the two communities have a long history of panambi or bloody territorial wars. She helped broker peace between the two warring communities by explaining to the Akeanons that they must unite to fight the common enemies of US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism personified by the Marcos Dictatorship. Although she helped settle the long-standing conflict between the Panay-anon and Akeanon, she remained extra watchful whenever she crossed the border to the Akeanon, being the daughter of Sardin, convicted of the panambi of 16 Akeanon.

Luing was first captured by the Philippine military in 1978. She escaped from detention in 1980 and rejoined Dalama as part of the auxiliary team of the NPA. They were together for seven or eight months during this period. The task of the auxiliary team was to do political

mass work, which involved organizing and conducting propaganda. This was at the height of the "antifeudal campaign" of the revolutionary movement in southern Iloilo.

During this period, Dalama had assumed the nom de guerre Randa and had two children with Baran (the nom de guerre of the man she married), a fellow revolutionary who came from the lowland.

Luing related that in this antifeudal campaign, they succeeded in reforming the wage system in the countryside. Prior to the campaign, the peasant got the 10th canister of coffee beans, and the 8th bundle of palay as the prevailing wage/sharing system. As a result of the campaign, the peasant got the 8th canister of coffee beans, and the 6th bundle of palay.

From 1980-1981, Luing observed that the national liberation movement was reaping successes in recruitment and logistics (which included firearms and ammunition). The morale of the entire revolutionary movement was high. Periodically, Dalama experienced the dilemma of a mother wanting to be with her children. However, the high morale of the revolutionary movement helped ease her longing to be with her children.

Dalama would be assigned as Commanding Officer (CO) of a subteam when the NPA unit split into smaller units. As CO, she led them to escape from dangerous situations, deciding which route to take when they traversed Panay. By this time, Dalama was already an instructor of some courses taught inside the revolutionary movement.

Luing recalled that she was more comfortable in teaching Marxism, particularly dialectical materialism, when her partner was Dalama. Luing could explain dialectical materialism theoretically, while Dalama provided the illustrative example, which was closer to the experience of their participants. Luing remembered that Dalama used as analogy the river Pan-ay and its various streams to explain the concept of universality and particularity. I told Luing, in the course of looking for a term to describe Dalama's intellect, that probably she was an organic intellectual.⁸

In 1981, Luing had to be transferred to another area, and she and Dalama would be reunited for the last time in 1985. In 1985, Dalama was leading a platoon of NPAs (approximately 40 people). She was Commanding Officer (CO), her husband was the Political Officer (PO), and Luing was a member of the Instructor's Bureau.

Luing related that Dalama was a veteran of a number of tactical offensives (ambuscades, encounters, raids, etc.). As CO, she carried the Browning automatic rifle (BAR) and was known as the BAR woman.

Normally it was a man who carried this kind of firearm. A BAR, including several magazines of ammunition, weighs about 30 kilos and she had to carry a knapsack of equal weight.

Luing related that her male comrades described Dalama as a fearless "red fighter." The men found it extraordinary that a woman could carry a BAR weighing 30 kilos in what was considered difficult terrain. There were instances when she displayed more courage than her male comrades in the platoon.

Dalama told Luing her problems concerning her children, in-laws and her husband. She longed to spend more time with her children, but she could not get them from her in-laws because her own parents were very poor.

Also, her parents-in-law feared for her children's safety and so disapproved of the idea that they visit her in the countryside. They also reasoned that she had the option to give up the armed revolution to be with her children.

And so as time went by they grew far apart. Whenever she visited her children she felt at a loss. A source of anguish was accepting the disparate lives she and her children lived. She recognized the fact that her children were accustomed to a comfortable urban living. As a mother, Luing felt deeply for Dalama. She was luckier though as she had the liberty to be with her children as often as she wished.

Dalama almost succeeded in getting closer to her children when her parents-in-law relented and allowed the children to live with Dalama's own parents for a time. However, Dalama's in-laws did not like the way the girl was being made to work, and so, they took her daughter back with them.

Dalama also had some conflicts with her husband Baran, and Luing would mediate between the two whenever the couple had problems. Luing described Baran as dominant, but he did not have Dalama's ruggedness. Dalama's complaint was that Baran would readily accept Luing's explanation but would not accept her (Dalama's) view even if it was the same as Luing's. Luing described the couple's marriage as difficult owing to their differences in upbringing and culture.

In 1987, Dalama was killed in an ambush in Maayon, Capiz. She was 32 years old. According to Luing this was a time of military adventurism⁹ in the underground revolutionary left. The NPAs were overstretched and they suffered casualties in military offensives.

Luing expressed admiration for Dalama's military skills which equaled that of Nanay Waling-waling (Coronacion L. Chiva). Luing

imagined that if Dalama were alive today she would have made a significant contribution in the Second Rectification Movement of the Left.¹⁰

An Analysis of Dalama's Political Biography

Dalama's life and struggle spanned more than three decades – from the early 1950s until the late 1980s. She was raised as a binukot in the 1960s when the practice was already a waning tradition among the Tumanduks.

As a binukot, she enjoyed more liberties compared to her predecessors. The traditional binukots were forbidden to set foot on the ground and had to be carried whenever they went out of the house, a tradition still followed by Lola Elena, the oldest living binukot in Panay who is in her 90s. Dalama, on the other hand, was allowed to leave the house to wash her clothes, or to fetch a small amount of drinking water. Compared to the other binukots, her transition from binukot to non-binukot was easier since she was used to doing some household chores, and occasionally going out of the house. As a binukot, she was not treated like a “princess” who shunned doing house chores.

The contemporary struggle of the Tumanduks concerns their right to self-determination. At the heart of this struggle is their legitimate claim to remain in their ancestral domain.

The Tumanduks, as they prefer to be called (which means native in Hiligaynon) are scattered in the mountainous areas of Panay. They build their communities along the headwaters of Pan-ay River and most of them are called Pan-ayanons.

In his thesis, noted anthropologist F. Landa Jocano refers to them as the Suludnons. He includes the indigenous communities in the mountains of Jamindan (Capiz), Calinog and Lambunao (Iloilo) as part of the Suludnons. The Office of Southern Cultural Communities (OSCC) and academicians from UPV and Central Philippine University (CPU) list the Tumanduks as Suludnon-Bukidnon and/or Pan-ayanon-Bukidnon. But some Tumanduks find the classification derogatory and insulting, preferring to be known as Tumanduks.¹¹

In 1962, President Diosdado Macapagal declared the Tumanduk ancestral land as a military reservation through Proclamation No. 67. Since then, the Philippine military has considered the Tumanduk people as “squatters” and for years has deprived them of their rightful claim to their ancestral land. More than 33,000 hectares of Tumanduk ancestral land are being arrogated by the Philippine Army's 3rd Infantry Division (PA 3ID) in Camp Peralta, Jamindan.

In March 1995, the army shelled the Mt. Danao area from their position in Mt. Dangula, Sitio Binuktutan, Jaena Sur. The shelling caused the evacuation of some 188 terrified families who sought refuge in makeshift huts in the forest. The others fled to nearby areas and stayed in the homes of relatives in Jamindan. Many children and adults got sick because of trauma and exposure to the elements.

I remember taking part in the Sulod Mercy Mission on 27 March - 2 April 1995 as volunteer for the Children's Rehabilitation Center (CRC). I documented the psychosocial therapy sessions with children who experienced psychological traumas from the artillery shelling and evacuation.

The military operations were directed to eject the Tumanduks from their ancestral land. Of the 33,000 hectares reserved for military war games and weapons testing, 20,366 are in Tapaz and 12,956.5 hectares are in Jamindan. At the height of the army's drive to eject them, the different Tumanduk communities resolved to remain in their ancestral domain. To quote what a Tumanduk elder once said, “It is sweeter for us to be felled by bullets than to perish of hunger in a strange land.”

During Dalama's time, the struggle for self-determination took the form of reduced land rent and the non-payment of land rent or *tumado*. As a result of Proclamation No. 67, some lowlanders including elements of the Philippine military were able to claim private ownership of portions of the Tumanduk ancestral land. They exacted *tumado* for the use of kaingin land. The Tumanduks were required to pay two sacks of rice for every sack of palay planted. When the farmers were unable to pay the *tumado*, they were obliged by these “fraudulent landowners” to render service like cutting brush for days depending on the amount of rice due. The practice of paying *tumado* persisted until 1992.

Lowlanders also exploited the Tumanduks in the form of a highly usurious system of payment. In case of poor harvest, the Tumanduks were forced to borrow rice for planting from the lowlanders. The user would demand one sack of rice for a loan of six gantas of palay. In the 1970s the term of payment was changed. A sack of palay borrowed was repaid with two sacks of rice. Later, the *sagahay* was adopted, whereby a sack of palay was paid back with one and a half sacks of rice.

The system of land rent was reformed due largely to the campaign launched by the NPA. Dalama was part of this campaign and the Tumanduks as a people benefited from these reforms.

It is ironic that the Tumanduks were made to pay rent on land owned by their ancestors long before the Spanish conquistadores

colonized the Philippines. Given their exploited and neglected condition as a people, Dalama saw hope for the Tumanduks when she joined the NPA. But her concerns did not remain ethnocentric. She recognized that the struggle of the Tumanduks for self-determination was organically linked to the larger struggle of the Filipino people for national liberation. She directly experienced this when she took part in the anti-feudal campaign in Southern Iloilo. She asserted that the peasantry in the South was as exploited as the Tumanduks, who were mostly peasants.

Steeped in this class consciousness, she was instrumental in brokering peace between the Akeanon and Pan-ayanon to bring an end to a destructive aspect of their culture, the panambi. Her father Sardin had once been incarcerated for leading the panambi against the Akeanon. When she made peace with the Akeanon, she transcended her personal tragedy, and even her traditional cultural conditioning.

Admittedly, her comrades in the national liberation movement influenced her ideas. Luing expressed that during the resolution of conflict between the Akeanon and Pan-ayanon Dalama carried the official line of the NPA. Moreover, her consistent position about this matter was also reflected in her actions. She crossed the borders that separated the Akeanon and Pan-ayanon to bring this peace to fruition. In an article, Diosa Labiste, editor of *The Visayan Examiner* (a Community Newspaper in Western Visayas), writes about Dalama's efforts to end the practice of panambi.

She apologized for the conduct and cruelty of the Panay-anons. (She was afraid that) the Akeanon would put poison in her food. And while at first she was ignored by the Akeanon, she was later well received and listened to. For a long time, these two communities respected the peace that Dalama helped institute. Even when Dalama's father Sardin was released, the bloody territorial wars did not spark anew.

Later, the Philippine military exploited the traditional ethnic hostility and encouraged the formation of the Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) on both sides of the mountain border.

Her unwavering commitment to the struggle of the Tumanduks for self-determination and the Filipino people's struggle for national liberation was unquestionable. She dedicated her life and made personal sacrifices to create a better future for the Tumanduks and the Filipino people.

My Advocacy

I chanced upon the story of Dalama when I attended an orientation for a trip to the First Sulodnon-Bukidnon Assembly on 25-27 October 1996. The gathering was organized by Task Force Sulod to "highlight the plight and culture of the Sulodnon-Bukidnon people and to foster stronger unity among the different Sulod communities. These are along the direction of empowering the Sulodnon as a people to enable them to be artisans of their own liberation and to partake in the struggle for transformation of society."

I was present for this orientation because in the preceding year, I had participated in the Sulod Mercy Mission from 27 March to 2 April 1995. The purpose of the mission was "to give support to the Sulod in their resolve not to leave their ancestral domain; to render immediate material, medical and psychosocial assistance; and to gather data that can be used in information campaign in favor of the Sulod." My experience during the Sulod Mercy Mission encouraged me to participate in the succeeding solidarity campaigns in defense of their ancestral domain claim. During that time I was a volunteer-worker of the CRC and we rendered psychosocial therapy sessions to the children who experienced militarization.

Since my participation in the various Tumanduk people's assemblies, their struggle as a people has become a personal advocacy. When I left the academe I wanted to pursue cultural work with the Tumanduks. Writing the story of Dalama is part of this. It was in 1996 when I first heard about her story. Now, I have written part of her story. Thanks to Luing.

Today, the Tumanduks are facing a new challenge. Since the early 1990s, there have been talks about the construction of a hydroelectric dam in Pan-ay River. Foreigners have been surveying the river for the site. In 1999, then Representative Vicente Andaya (District II of Capiz) conducted a consultation with the people of Barangay Nayawan on building a road and planting trees for the protection of the watershed in relation to the proposed dam. The people agreed to the proposed road construction, but expressed their opposition to the dam.

Today, from 15 to 20 April 2002, a team of scientists from the Center for Environmental Concerns-Philippines, the media, and NGO and church workers are conducting an Environmental Investigation Mission (EIM) in Brgy. Nayawan in Tapaz and nearby barangays. It is in

these barangays where the proposed hydroelectric dam is going to be constructed by a French dam builder.

The EIM aims to ascertain the potential danger that the proposed hydroelectric dam poses to the communities and the environment. It also attempts to know the consensus of the Tumanduks on the issue and express support for whatever actions they would take.

I would have wanted to be a part of the EIM. However, the schedule coincided with this paper reading. Let me take this opportunity to enjoin you to take part in this advocacy campaign for the Tumanduks: To assert their right to self-determination that they may live, practice and preserve their cultural heritage as a people.

You can express support by:

- demanding from government to respect the indigenous people's right to ancestral domain;
- joining campaign activities promoting the indigenous people's rights and interests; and
- contributing financial and material resources that they may use in their struggle.

You may forward your financial and material support to the Center for Relief, Rehabilitation, Education and Economic Development (CRREED) at Room 203 La Salette Building, Valeria St., Iloilo City.

Thank you and good afternoon.

Notes

¹The Tumanduk people of Capiz are found in the heartland of Panay. Their ancestors built their communities along the great Pan-ay River and along the mountainous borders of Aklan, Capiz and Iloilo Provinces. The Tumanduks practice a rich culture that can be traced from the time of the Malayan datus more than 300 years ago. The Tumanduk people of Capiz are the largest ethnolinguistic group in Panay and the whole of Western Visayas. The Tumanduks have an internal classification based on the geographical location of their settlements. The Panay-anons are the Tumanduks who reside in the Capiz area and the Akeanon are Tumanduks who reside in the Aklan area.

²As a result of colonization, the indigenous communities in the Philippines have been pushed to the margins of mainstream Philippine society. The cash economy of semi-feudalism exploited their land and labor, which bred a new generation of trisikad drivers, houseboys, housemaids and farm hands for lowland areas. Years of government neglect led to their struggle for their right

to self-determination. Their assertion of self-determination centers on their claim to ancestral domain. In addition, they also assert to continue practicing their traditional beliefs and traditions.

³Marxist-Feminism is a stream of thought in Feminism where class and sex-gender systems are employed as factors for analysis. From a Marxist-Feminist perspective, gender oppression is rooted in class oppression.

⁴The New People's Army (NPA) is the revolutionary armed group of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the National Democratic Front (NDF) waging a national liberation struggle in the countryside. Its more than three decades of existence in Tumanduk areas is mainly based on its fight for retention of Tumanduk land for the Tumanduks against the encroachment of the Philippine Army reservation.

⁵The members of the auxiliary team are mostly women who carry short firearms in contrast to the NPAs who carry high-powered firearms.

⁶Kaingin or swidden farming is a highly labor-intensive and climate dependent method that requires extensive land area and demands the participation of all able hands.

⁷A bastardization of the French word bourgeois. The term connotes a person's middle class background, therefore, contrary to proletarian consciousness.

⁸A term used by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci in his book *Prison Notebooks* to refer to intellectuals who did not have formal schooling. Their intellectualism is described as innate, indigenous and native.

⁹Military adventurism is an error of overestimating the capacity of your army to launch tactical offensives against the enemy.

¹⁰The Second Rectification Movement within the Left happened in the 1990s when the underground left was split into two factions: the Reaffirmist and the Rejectionist. Those in the Reaffirmist faction had an internal campaign to rectify errors of military adventurism, etc. Armando Liwanag in his article, "Reaffirm: Stand for Socialism Against Modern Revision," outlined the rectification process within the underground left.

¹¹I recall that during the 2nd Sulodnon-Bukidnon Assembly on 25-26 October 1996, one of the Tumanduk elders articulated this sentiment during the seminar-workshop.

References

- Brewer, Carolyn and Anne-Marie Medcalfe, eds. 2000. *Researching the fragments: Histories of women in the Asian context*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers.
- Edaniel, Karen G. and Marie Iris G. Inoceto. 2002. *External and internal factors on the class and gender relations of the Tumandok of Central Panay*. Unpublished undergraduate thesis. March 2002.
- Eviota, Elizabeth Uy. 1992. *Political economy of gender: Women and the sexual division of labour in the Philippines*. Philippine reprint by the Institute of Women's Studies, St. Scholastica's College, Manila: Raintree Publishing, Inc.
- Jocano, F. Landa. 1930. *Sulod society: A study of kinship system of the mountain people of Panay*. Published in 1968 by UP Diliman Asian Studies Center, Quezon City.
- Labiste, Ma. Diosa. 1996. "Common ground: Dalarna". *The Daily Informer*. 25 October 1996.
- Magos, Alicia P. 1993. *Binukot (well-kept maiden): A changing socio-political perspective 1850s-1993*. Paper read at the Conference on West Visayan Studies, UPV, October 1993.
- Maynard, Mary and June Purvis, eds. 1994. *Researching women's lives from a Feminist perspective*. London: Taylor and Francis Ltd.
- Task Force Tumanduk. *The Tumanduk Panayanon, Jaluadnon and Akeanon people And their struggle*. Primer.
- _____. 1996. Assembly reports. Unpublished.
- Villareal, Noede R. 1996. "Suludnons of Tapaz: a living past". *Halaran supplement, Panay News*. 26 October 1996.

Storyteller

Ma. Luisa Posa-Dominado, 46, married, resident of Iloilo City.