



CHAPTER VII: LITERATURE IN ARMM AND ZAMBOANGA PENINSULA



Objectives:

- Study the historical background of Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) Zamboanga Peninsula literature.
- Read literary texts representing Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) Zamboanga Peninsula.
- Analyze and evaluate the great literary works from Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) Zamboanga Peninsula.
- Write analysis and reflection papers on literary texts.
- Express appreciation in reading Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) Zamboanga Peninsula s literary



Lesson 1: Literature in Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)

The Muslim cultural communities may be classified into thirteen (13) major ethno-linguistic groups. These are the: Jama Mapuns of Cagayan de Tawi-Tawi; the Iranons

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of Cotabato; the Kaagans of Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur and Davao Oriental; the Kalibugans of Zamboanga; the Maguindanaos of Maguindanao; the Maranaos of Marawi; the Palawanons and Molbogs of Palawan; the Samas of Tawi-Tawi; the Sangils of Sarangani; the Tausugs of Sulu; the Yakans of Basilan, and the Bangingis of Tongkil and Zamboanga.

The Iranon, Kaagan, Kalibugan, Maranao and Maguindanao live in mainland Mindanao. The rest of the Muslim cultural communities such as the Jama Mapun, Palawanon, Molbog, Sama, Sangil, Tausug, and the Yakan reside in the island provinces, except for the Bangingis, who can be found both in mainland Mindanao, that is, in Zamboanga and in Tongkil, which is an island municipality of the province of Sulu.

Each Muslim cultural community has its own inventory of folk literature, which, in more ways than one, displays unique and peculiar traits, features, and qualities. These distinctions distinguish one Muslim cultural community from another. Yet, all these communities are unified by their Islamic faith, which has already pervaded many aspects of their folk literature since Islam is a way of life. Regardless of cultural community, all Filipino Muslims belong to one Ummah Muslimah.

In general, the folk literature of Muslim cultural communities in Mindanao, the Philippines, may be in prose or in verse. But the style and form of expression may vary from one Muslim cultural community to another, what with the various languages that the people speak. These oral literary forms may be didactic, hortatory, entertaining, instructive, or informative.

Folk literature in Mindanao Muslim cultural communities as in other Filipino groups follow the oral tradition in that folktales, myths, legends, epics, poems, riddles and proverbs are handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. Moreover, as is true of folk literature of other people, folk literature in the Muslim cultural communities has a participatory audience. The audience listens, reacts, and retells what he or she hears to another audience, thereby ensuring the transmission of the folk literary material to others. Authorship is not individual; it is collective. Apparently, what the Muslim cultural communities must build and develop eventually is a body of written literature just like other Filipinos.

Folk literary genres in Muslim cultural communities may include folktales, myths, legends, fables, ballads, poems, riddles, proverbs, and epics. Basically, the problem that easily comes to mind is the lack of access to the textual materials of these oral genres, if not their absence. Most have yet to be collected and documented. Some literary scholars and researchers have started doing so, but their efforts come far



between. Worse, many of these scholars hail from foreign lands. For the efforts to be sustainable, the Filipino Muslims themselves must spearhead the move to protect and preserve their folk literature, which is an integral part of the Filipino national literary heritage.

The people themselves are not seemingly aware that their cultural products are fast vanishing. Literary preservation and development have seemingly taken the back seat. At present, what seemingly preoccupy the people are mundane considerations such as politics and economics. While these are indeed important, the Filipino Muslim cultural communities must realize the significance of their literature in their lives in that it helps preserve the richness and uniqueness of their respective cultural identities.

Another sad reality is the difficulty in locating literary cultural bearers. Many are getting older each day; others have moved out of their original cultural communities for one reason or another. Others are dead. The earlier the indigenous peoples realize this, the better.

The Folktales

The various Muslim cultural communities are indeed proud of their cultural heritage. Each one of them has a number of cultural products such as the folktales, which are on every raconteur's lips. From Marawi to Tawi-Tawi, every Muslim Filipino has a story to tell, which has been transmitted to him or her by word of mouth across generations. It can be a fairy tale, an animal tale, an anecdote, or a trickster's tale.

Every Muslim cultural community has a number of raconteurs bearing two or three or more folktales. You can find them in the rural Muslim cultural communities or in even urban centers. Their stories have been transmitted to them by older members of their respective families, friends, and acquaintances, some of whom have already died. Raconteurs can be young and old, men or women.

Besides their entertainment value, the folktales serve other purposes. They preach and prescribe. To researchers of antiquity, they may shed light on the changes that their creators have seen, learned, and experienced in their cultural milieu through time. This is so because the tales are of multiple existence and authorship, and contain the cultural elements, features, or traits prevalent during which they have been told and retold across generations even as raconteurs belonging to another time or milieu integrate cultural features prevalent in their own age or epoch.

Folktales of the Muslim cultural communities are indeed dynamic – a far cry from their written counterparts, that is, the modern short stories, which are dormant, whose contents remain fixed once recorded or published. Moreover, short stories are read in the privacy of the readers' rooms. Conversely, the folktales are told to a lively audience, who reacts and asks questions in the process of telling or retelling.

It seems that closes geographical proximity and closely related ancestral past manifest in the way cultural communities identify their folktales. The Jama Mapun and Sama, for example, call their tales as kana-kana – a slight difference from how the Tausug calls theirs, which is katakata. As to who imitated whom or as to who dominated

whom in the past thereby commanding the influence cannot be easily established without getting into some prejudiced trap. Hence, it is enough to say that the Jama Mapun, Sama, and the Tausug used to belong to the same province until former President Ferdinand E. Marcos issued Presidential Decree No. 302 on September 27, 1973, segregating Sulu (where the Tausug live) and Tawi-Tawi (where the Jama Mapun and Sama come from) as separate provinces.

How the Maranao, Maguindanao and Iranon call their tales is parallel to the Tausug, Sama, and Jama Mapun experience. The Maranao call their tales as totol; the Iranon, tudtol; the Maguindanao, tudtolan. It is improper to say which group dominates. But in the field of politics and education, the Maranao seem to have the upper hand. The Kaagan of Davao Oriental, Davao del Sur and Davao del Norte call their tales as oman-oman. Note that the term is reduplicated – similar to the kata-kata of the Tausugs and the kana-kana of the Jama Mapuns and Samas. Any links? It is interesting to discover that some Kaagans have roots in Sulu.

The most common folktales among the Tausug are those revolving around the lives of the people's sultan. A tale about one sultan, for example, has many variants or versions in different parts of the province of Sulu. One version found in the municipality of Indanan is entitled Manuk-manuk Bulawan. Other versions of this folktale are entitled Agta' and Datu' Dakula'. Other municipalities have, likewise, produced new versions.

For the Maranao, the agamaniyog folktales are quite popular among the people. These tales are, to a large extent, about their sultans and their families and their relationships with their subjects. Their way of life, their customs and traditions, and other cultural features found in the Maranao cultural inventory are reflected in the agamaniyog folktales.

The trickster's tales are also common in practically all Muslim cultural communities. In Sulu, these are identified as the Posong or Pusung tales. In the Tausug trickster's tale, the key character Pusung always deceives the sultan and gets away with it. He also succeeds in tricking other members of the royal family including the sultan's wives and his beautiful daughters. Apparently, trickster's tales in the Tausug community are meant to entertain by making the audience laugh. Some local analysts, however, say that this is one way to get even on the part of the commoners, considering the immensity of the sultan's powers and the grandeur of his position and person.

Myths and Legends

If folktales are purely secular in nature, myths and legends as far as the Muslim cultural communities are concerned, have religious overtones. The people identify myths and legends as cut out of the same cloth. Some would even subsume them as folktales. How they are called differs, however, from one cultural community to the other.

Again, Muslim cultural communities having close interaction, whether social, political or economic, make use of the terms used in a cultural community, which is fairly dominant in number. Those who live quite far-off from the major Muslim groups have

evolved their own literary terminology. The Kaagan of Davao and Sangil of Sarangani are obvious examples. They are rather influenced by other groups, which are geographically accessible. For instance, the Kaagan call their legends as kapunopuno or kasugod sugod, which sounds Bisaya. Myths to them are oman-oman or gugudanun. The Sama of Tawi-Tawi adopt the Tausug terminology. The Jama Mapun call their legends as uduhan, the term having a slight resemblance to the Tausug's usulan.

Striking similarity is observed among the three mainland Mindanao Muslim groups, which are geographically proximate: the Iranon, Maguindanao and Maranao. They do not seemingly have a distinction between myths and legends. Some Maranao would call myths and legends as toltol as they do with folktales. In terms of legends, the Maranao call these as toltolan. The Maguindanao and Iranon have evolved a slightly different name for legends; they call these as tudtolan. Why the Iranon use the Maguindanao word and not the Maranao word, perhaps requires some explaining to do, which could be in the realm of cross-cultural linguistics.

The Tausug, Maranao, and Yakan consider important landmarks in their provinces as source of legends. They may be their highest peaks, lakes, or their very own provinces.

The Tausug call themselves as the people of the current. Tau means people and Sug means sea current. Their favorite legend is the "kaawn of Bud Tumantangis." Bud Tumantangis or Mount Tumantangis is the highest peak in the province. It stands above sea level by 853 meters. Tumantangis comes from the root word tangis, which means to cry in English, and bud means mountain. Many Tausugs say that Mount Tumantangis is called as such because sailors almost always cry when they lose sight of it as the ship sails away; or when they return, upon seeing even just its silhouette from afar.

The Maranao Lake is loved not only by Maranao but by other Filipinos as well because of its grandeur and grace. Looking at it from the Mindanao State University main campus, one is prone to think it is an open ocean. To the Maranao, it is a source not only of pride but also of their origin. They are called Maranao because they live around this great lake.

On the other hand, it is somewhat difficult for the Iranon to associate their legend with their province. Their legends are closely related to those of the Maranao and Maguindanao. But as other Muslim cultural communities do have many legends about well-known and favorite spots in their areas, so certainly do the Iranon.

The Yakan call their legends, as usual, quite similar to the Tausug's usulan. Yakan legends revolve around their province, which is Basilan and why they are called Yakan. One informant says that the word Basilan comes from basi' meaning iron and lan meaning way or road, which is due to the Tausugs.

As for the Yakan, referring to the people of Basilan, many legends are being alluded to as why the Yakan are called as such. One informant says it is derived from Yakal, which refers to durable timber in Yakan and which abounds in Basilan. Another stresses that it is originated from Spanish source, which relates a story about a Spaniard who met a Filipino soldier referring to a child nearby as "iyak ng iyak." So, the

Spaniards called the people as Yakan. This has produced the present motto that Yakans are no longer the crying tribe, but a rising tribe, since the provincial leaders are now all Yakan.

Epics, Ballads, and Poetry

Many informants in the Muslim cultural communities would summarily call compositions in verse as instant compositions. This could be due to the fact these are already mastered by the chanters, reciters or singers, who can perform at the spur of the moment. Then, too, epics, ballads, and poems are interchangeably chanted, sung or recited, depending on what particular Muslim community the chanters, reciters or singers belong to.

Epics in most Muslim cultural communities are yet to be found, collected, identified, and consequently documented. Apparently, this sad reality is spawned by the lack of informants or tellers. It could also be due to the absence of enterprising researchers. In other communities, epic bearers have died or have moved to another place as a result of the deterioration of peace and order and other reasons.

As of the present, three major Muslim groups have identified their epics, through the help of enterprising researchers. The Maranao have their Bantugan; the Maguindanao, Indarapatra at Solayman; and the Tausug, Parang Sabil hi Abdulla iban hi Isara.

Some literary personages, in the case of the Tausug epic, have refuted that Parang Sabil hi Abdulla iban hi Isara is an epic; to them, it is just a mere ballad. But we must bear in mind here that in some communities, ballads and epics could mean the same thing. Aliyanapiya could be a possible Tausug epic, too, but its text has yet to be found. The Parang Sabil hi Abdulla iban hi Isara could very well qualify as a Tausug epic because it is also sung and in verse.

Ballads may be classified as folk songs, because they tell stories as they are sung. They, likewise, belong to the narrative genre. Ballads of other nations are oftentimes lyrical. Just like other folk literary genres, ballads are handed down by word of mouth. Ballads in the Muslim cultural communities rhyme. They are always solo and sung with gabbang, kulintang or biyula as simple accompaniment. In the Muslim cultural communities, ballads, more often than not, suggest a story. When we speak of ballads in the various Muslim cultural communities, we refer to the traditional ones, which are handed down from one generation to the next by word of mouth.

Most ballads in Muslim cultural communities are more of the historical type than lyrical. These are usually sung and arranged in quatrains. Historical ballads usually feature important historical personalities, whose heroic deeds inspire the natives.

Contemporary ballads as in the case of the Tausug ballads reflect recent and famous Tausugs, who have made history in their political and ideological struggles.

It is a fact that particularly all facets of folk narratives have already been pervaded by the people's Islamic faith. As such, there are many religious ballads as there are many historical ballads. These religious ballads tell of the virtues of Islam as a

religion. If the ballad narrates a historical personality and his deeds, these are oftentimes in the defense of Islam and its propagation. Religious ballads in Muslim cultural communities are, therefore, hortatory or didactic.

The fact that epics, ballads and other poems are in verse makes some Muslim cultural communities, if not all of them, call these by the same name. In the Tausug Muslim cultural community, the singers would usually reel off their performance by saying “Hi tarasul ta hi kissa, in manga waktu masa....” (let’s compose it in poems or ballads, a time long past...) Maranao and Maguindanao informants, when asked by what name they would call their epics, would cite the names of their epic heroes such as Indarapatra at Sulayman or Bantugan instead of saying the equivalent of “epic” in their own tongues.

Ballads are called in Tausug as kissa. The Jama Mapun and the Sama adopt the Tausug term. The Kaagan call it the darangan or bayok. The Maguindanao and Iranon call their ballads as dayunday and sometimes bayok, too. The Palawanon call their ballads as toltol, the same name they would use for folktales. For poems, the Maranao call them bayok, and so do the Iranon. The Maguindanao call poems as bayokan. Tarasul is the Tausug term for poems, and the Jama Mapun and Sama use the same term to signify a body of compositions called poetry. The Kaagan calls their poems as dawut by which the same name the epics go.

Considering the various musical forms that they render, the Yakan could be considered as the music lovers among the Muslim cultural communities. The following are various Yakan songs: the katakata, which is a lackadaisical melody that reflects the pain and suffering of somebody who has lost a loved one; the lunsey, a top tune of sort that resembles the Tagalog harana; the sail, which relates a story and may be sung during weddings and burials, the subject matter suited to the nature of the affair; the nahana, which relates an ancestral story; the kissa, which is about royal families; and the jamiluddin, which is a person’s name in Tausug, is a song to the Yakan, usually sung in a game called magdarapanyu’. The katakata for the Tausug is an oral narrative, which is told to an audience. But to the Yakan, as indicated above, it is a song.

Proverbs and Riddles

Proverbs and riddles abound in the Muslim cultural communities. When asked how these are called in their communities, informants would be able to give answers without staring blankly at the sky. Proverbs and riddles in the Muslim cultural communities as are in other cultural groups are the simplest genres of folk literature. Both forms of oral literature strike a kind of intellectual exercise on the part of the audience. They are highly figurative in the use of language, and they possess an intense quality that stimulates the mind.

The Kaagan of Davao, despite their distance from their fellow Muslims in Lanao, Maguindanao and Cotabato, use almost the same term for riddles. They call them antokanon. Note that the Maguindanao calls their riddles asantoka. The Maranao have three different names for riddles: kapamagantoka, antoka, pasoalan, or limpangan. The

Iranon call their riddles as kapagantoka, which is quite close to kapamagantoka of the Maranao. All these cultural communities live in mainland Mindanao.

Living in the islands accessible to each other, the Jama Mapun, Sama, Tausug, Molbog, and the Palawanon of Palawan call their riddles by almost the same names, if not identical. The Palawanon call their riddles as igum. The Tausugs Samas, and Jama Mapun call theirs as tigum-tigum. There is another name for tigum-tigum in Sulu: tukud-tukud. Both the Sama and the Jama Mapun are, likewise, familiar with the term tukud-tukud. Knowing why the Palawanon have shortened the reduplicated tigum-tigum into just igum could be very interesting. Have they derived this from tigum-tigum, or is it the Tausug, who has reduplicated igum into tigum-tigum? The migration of Muslim from one community to the other may shed light on this development.

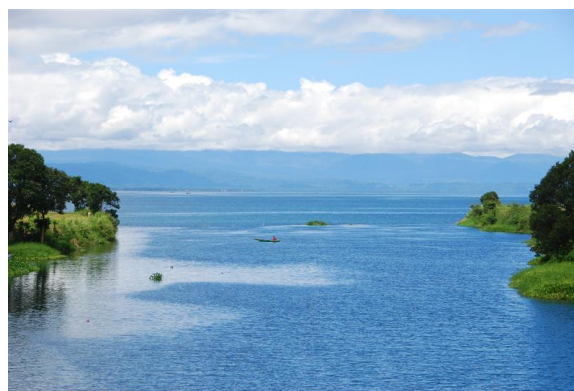
Just like other Muslim Cultural Communities, the Yakan also have their folk speeches such as the proverbs and riddles. Proverbs are called saknahan or dalilan, quite different from the Tausug, who call proverbs asmasaalla or dalil akkal despite their geographical proximity. The Yakan call their riddles as untukan, which slightly resembles the Kaagan's antokanon and Maguindanao's antoka.

Famous Literary Works in ARMM

Ancient literature (Legend): "How the Angels Built Lake Lanao"

How the Angels Built Lake Lanao

Long ago there was no lake in Lanao. On the place where it is now situated, there flourished a mighty sultanate called Mantapoli. During the reign of Sultan Abdara Radawi, the greater grandfather of Radia Indarapatra (mythological hero of the Lanao Muslims), this realm expanded by military conquests and by dynastic marriages so that in time its fame spread far and wide.



The population of Mantapoli was numerous and fast increasing. At that time the world was divided into two regions: Sebangon (East) and Sedpan (West). The mighty sultanate of Mantapoli belonged to Sebangon. Because this sultanate rapidly increased in power and population as well, the equilibrium between Sebangon and Sedpan was broken.

This dis-equilibrium soon came to the attention of Archangel Diabarail (Gabriel to the Christians). Like a flash of sunlight, Diabarail flew to the Eighth heaven and told Allah, "My Lord, why have you permitted the unbalance of the earth? Because of the power of Mantapoli, Sebangon is now larger than Sedpan."

"Why, Diabarail," replied the Sohara (Voice of Allah), "what is wrong with that?"

"My Lord, Mantapoli has a vast population countless as the particles of dust. If we will allow this sultanate to remain in Sebangon, I fear that the world would turn upside down, since Sebangon is heavier than Sedpan."

"Your words show great wisdom, Diabarail," commented the Sohara.

"What must we do, my Lord, to avert the impending catastrophe?"

To this query, the Sohara replied, "Go right away to the Seven-Regions-Beneath-the-Earth and to the Seven-Regions-in-the-Sky and gather all the angels. I will cause a barahana (solar eclipse) and in the darkness let the angels remove Mantapoli and transfer it to the center of the earth."

Upon receiving the mandate of Allah, Archangel Diabarail, traveling faster than lightning, rallied the millions of angels from the Seven-Regions-Beneath-the-Earth and the Seven-Regions-in-the-Sky. With this formidable army, he presented himself to Allah, saying, "My Lord, we are ready to obey Your command."

The Sohara spoke, "Go to Sebangon, and lift the land of Mantapoli."

Diabarail, leading his army of angels, flew to the east. In the twinkle of an eye, the sun vanished and a terrible darkness as black as the blackest velvet shrouded the universe. The angels sped faster than arrows. They swooped on Mantapoli, lifting it with great care and carried it (including its people, houses, crops and animals) through the air as if it were a carpet. They brought it down at the center of the earth, in accordance with the command of Allah. The very spot vacated by the sultanate of Mantapoli became a huge basin of deep, blue water-the present Lanao Lake.

The waters coming from the deep bowels of the earth rose higher and higher. Archangel Diabarail, seeing the rising tides immediately returned to the Eighth Heaven and reported to Allah, "My Lord, the earth is now balanced. But the place where we removed Mantapoli is becoming an ocean. The waters are rising fast, and unless an outlet for them can be found, I fear that they might inundate Sebangon and drown all your people."

In response, the Sohara said, "You are right, Diabarail. Go out, then, and summon the Four Winds of the World: Angin Taupan, Angin Besar, Angin Darat, and Angin Sarsar. Tell them to blow and make an outlet for the overflowing waters."

Obedying the Master's command, the faithful messenger summoned the Four Winds. "By the Will of Allah," he told them, "blows your best, and makes an outlet for the rising waters of the new lake."

The four winds of the world blew, and turbulence swept the whole eastern half of the earth. The surging waters rolled swiftly towards the shores of Tilok Bay to the southeastern direction. But the towering ranges impeded their onrush. The Four Winds blew, hurling the waves against the rocky slopes but in vain; no outlet could be cut through the mountain barrier.

Changing direction, this time eastward, the Four Winds blew harder driving the raging waters towards the shores of Sugud Bay (situated east of Dansalan, now Marawi

City). Once again, the attempt to create an outlet failed because the bay was too far from the sea.

For the third time, the Four Winds changed direction and blew their hardest. The waves, plunging with ferocity, rolled towards Marawi. Day and night, the Winds blew as the waters lashed against the shoreline of Marawi. This time the attempt succeeded. An outlet now called Agus River was made, and through the outlet, that water of Lake Lanao poured out to the sea, thereby saving Sebangon from a deluge.

It came to pass that there was a high cliff at the outlet, and over the cliff the waters cascaded in majestic volume. Thus, arose the beautiful falls which, aeons later, was named Maria Cristina, after a famous queen of Spain.

Lesson 2: Literature in Zamboanga Peninsula

The Zamboanga Peninsula is Mindanao's smallest region. Located in Southwest Philippines, its 958 islands and islets make up the Diadem of the Philippine South. Two bodies of water form a ring around it, the Sulu Sea to the north and west, the Moro Gulf to the south.

Three provinces and five cities make up the Zamboanga Peninsula Region. The provinces of Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, and Zamboanga Sibugay; and the cities of Dapitan, Dipolog, Pagadian, Zamboanga City, and Isabela. Zamboanga, Pagadian, and Dipolog are the major hubs of trade, commerce, industry, and education in the region.

The region hosts one freeport and special economic zone and an international airport in Zamboanga City. Ten other secondary airports operate in the region.

About a third of the Peninsula's population is made up of ethnic communities that give the region its unique culture and color. These include the Tausugs, Samals, Yakans, Badjaos, and Subanens. The Tausugs, Badjaos, and Samals were fishermen; some still roam the seas. The Maranaos and Yakans were traders and artisans; they've left their imprint on traditional weaves and fabric that are still produced today.

Roughly half of the population speaks Chabacano, a dialect heavily influenced by Spanish settlers. Spanish-speakers are sure to pick up on quite a few familiar words.

Each part of the Zamboanga Peninsula shines on its own, but there is a common heritage. This is a region of beauty, history and culture. It's been blessed by nature. It is cherished by its people.

This is what the early Chinese and Malays saw when they came over and made Zamboanga the cynosure of Southern Philippines centuries ago. Up to today, the Zamboanga Peninsula has an undeniable allure.

Famous Literary Works in Zamboanga Peninsula

🌈 Ancient literature (Epic): "*Ag Tobig Nog Keboklagan*"

The folk epic “Ag Tobig nog Keboklagan” (The Kingdom of Keboklagan) was collected among the Suban-on who live on the western slopes of the mountain range that runs like a backbone and divides the Zamboanga Peninsula, above Sindangan Bay.

Ag Tobig Nog Keboklagan
The Kingdom of Keboklagan
(Suban-on tribe of Northwestern Mindanao)

Timoway, a datu of Sirangan, had a wife who was about to give birth. But he wanted to go to other places “to sharpen the tools” of chiefs and increase his income. His wife refused to allow him to go because there would be no one to assist her in her labor. But her husband insisted since they did not have anything to support their child with. So the wife finally consented.

Timoway left the kingdom with Kasanggolan (a datu of lower rank who acts as an assistant to a higher datu) and fifteen of his men. At the seashore, he and his men got into a boat but the boat would not move. They took this as a sign that a sacrifice was called for. Timoway then beheaded one of his companions and after that the boat glided fast over the sea.

They dropped by the village of Sakabandar whose wife was also pregnant. Despite her condition, he also left her and went with Timoway.

While they were on the deep sea, they were seen by Diwata Pegderaman, goddess of wind, lightning and thunder. She invited them to her abode but they refused. Pegderaman got angry and she sent out the wind and the thunder. Big waves appeared on the sea and their vessel broke into two. They all perished.

The boat, although broken and with no passengers, sailed back to Sirangan and informed Timoway’s wife of the incident. The wife wept capiously until she felt labor pains. She gave birth to a baby boy, at the same time that the wife of Sakabandar also gave birth to a baby boy.

Timoway’s son (Taake) grew fast at night and became handsomer at daytime. At seven months, Taake cried aloud without stopping and this disturbed the whole population of Sirangan. “Gagongs” were beaten and so each one came to render assistance. Just then the baby spoke and asked his mother if he had a father; and if he had what his occupation was, what he did daily, and whether his death was caused by an offense committed by someone. When the boy learned the real story, he was glad that his father had died without being killed by anyone.

His mother later gave Taake the hook and line, his inheritance from his father. With this he went fishing in their own waters. With the help of supernatural powers, he caught plenty of fish. He was soon famous for fish.

But a time came when he asked his mother for better clothes because he had decided to go fishing in distant waters. This surprised the mother since this was the first

time he had ever asked for clothes. He told her he was ashamed to have no decent clothes whenever he met some Visayan or Muslim girls.

Thus clothed he ventured out to fish again. This time he drifted to the deep sea. There he saw a fish as big as a hill with golden scales. He hooked the fish but it fought fiercely. It pulled him for seven months. In the seventh month Taake heard the explosions and roar of the big waves. He was then on the deep sea. An eel barred his way. The eel told him to go home for the place was dangerous and added that it was willing to conduct him home back to Sirangan. He struck the eel instead with his sword and the eel drowned. Big waves came and later Taake lost his balance and fell into the sea. He went down, down until he saw a horse with his hook and line in its mouth. He ran after the horse with his “karisan” (sword-like knife) but it ran away.

Here at Keboklagan he looked around and saw a high tower. He ran up the ladder made of golden rungs till he reached the top of the tower. There he saw a beautiful girl almost naked. When she saw him, the lady of Pintawan invited him in and offered him “mamaq”. They chewed, and day after day he wooed her. After seven days of wooing, she consented to his offer of marriage and they lived together.

The news about the coming of the Suban-on was soon known by two men named Towan Salip Satoron Domatong. Angered, they summoned the people through their gagong to kill Taake and offer him as a sacrifice.

The lady of Pintoqan, who was like a sister to the lady of Pintawan (wife of Taake) advised Taake and his wife to return to Sirangan. Taake refused on the ground that he had not done anything wrong. He wanted to face the datu and explain his presence there. But the people of Keboklagan were already preparing to kill him. So he had no other recourse but to fight, and he did so with his natural strength assisted by his supernatural powers.

Back in Sirangan, a datu named Tomitib Manaon, son of Sakabandar, who was born at the same time as Taake, dreamed that he saw a Suban-on fighting alone in the Keboklagan kingdom. He prepared to set off in order to help him. He went to see if Taake was at home but the sons of Balo Laki and Bata Tobig informed him that they had not been home for sometime. He proceeded to Keboklagan while the other two datu followed. Immediately, Tomitib rushed to the place where Taake was fighting and there charged at Sorotan Domatong until the latter fell.

Taake saw Tomitib and stopped him. He confronted the latter and asked him why he had fought at once without first inquiring about the cause of the fight.

Later, when the girls of Keboklagan saw Saulagya Maola, a datu of the place, they explained to him the cause of the whole trouble. Maola remembered a promise he had made to his sister, the lady of Pintawan, that anyone who could go up the ladder of “karis” (with knife-blades for rungs) be it a dog or a pig, should marry the girl.

He then called all his datu to a conference and told them about the promise. Nevertheless, the datu insisted on fighting. So, Saulagya partitioned Keboklagan into two parts: one-half deciding to fight, the other half belonging to him agreeing not to participate in the fight.

When the datu of Liyo-Liyo heard of the fight, he rode on his horse and went to the battleground. As the fight went on, Saulagya Maola kept on bearing the drum, the gongs and the kolintang. The people fought hard while the datu of Liyo-Liyo and Tomitib Manaon were engaged in hand-to-hand combat. They continued fighting until all the people died. The Sirangan datu then proceeded to other kingdoms to fight further.

They first went to the kingdom of Dibaloy. They challenged its chief, Datu Bataqelo, to a fight. Lilang Diwata, sister of Bataqelo, gave Taake a name. He called him Malopanyag, meaning, "he fights in all places." In this kingdom, Taake and Tomitib led the fight until half of the people had died. Then they felt pity for the place so they proceeded to another kingdom. They passed by the kingdom of Pimartisan because the people of that kingdom were their kin. They went to the kingdom of Todongtodong. Here, they were invited first to a mamaq session before they started the fight. They fought hard until all in the kingdom became lifeless.

Then the conquering datu convened and agreed to move on the kingdom of Walo Sabang ruled by Egdodan Magsorat and Egdodan Sabagan. The eight datu refused to fight and instead they let only their subjects fight. The subjects fought hard, but their datu just looked on. The Sirangan datu were surprised to see that the men who were killed became alive again. After seven months of fighting, Taake got tired and fell asleep on the battleground. Tomitib fought alone. Just then Taake dreamed of a pretty girl telling him to go to the tower of Walo Sabang in the guise of Towan Salip Palasti to get their powerful medicines and amulets. He followed the instructions in detail. When he came back, armed with the medicines, the people whom they had felled did not return to life anymore and those cut to pieces died.

The god Asog this time looked down and saw that the other world, the world of sinners, was very quiet for there was no life and no fire burning. He went down to earth and told Malopanyag to stop fighting and to return to Sirangan. Asog urged him to hold a buklog upon arriving home, where each of them would be given his partner in life. Asog fanned the kingdom with his kerchief and all those who had died lived again.

The datu then conferred and agreed finally to go home. Upon their arrival at Sirangan, they saw that Taake's mother was dying because of her pain in waiting, longing for her son. When Taake kissed his mother and told he was her son, she was revived. The whole kingdom of Sirangan came to life, trees stirred, birds sang, and everything grew more alive.

They then prepared for the buklog. All the datu of the different kingdoms were invited and there they were given partners in life by their god Asog.



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For further reading please refer to the link provided:

Philippine Literature: Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)

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How the Angels Built Lake Lanao

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mt3Shi1L9DU>

Zamboanga Peninsula Literature

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGWI_nxYBcQ

Ag-Tobig-Nog-Keboklagan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0oi34TMT0Ag>

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