

# THE STORY OF ANCIENT PANAY: ITS SETTLEMENT AND PRE- SPANISH CULTURE

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1.0 *Background.* The whole of Asia was swept by a mighty wave of culture occasioned by the rise of the Shri-Vishayan Empire during the period from 700 to 1000 A.D. This spectacle of the empire's expansion crept northward and engulfed the whole of Malay Peninsula, East, Indies, and the greater portion of the Philippine archipelago. In India, the might of the Shri-Vishayan empire began to be visibly felt in the political and cultural life of the people (6). In the Philippines, the irrepressible force left in its wake a deep and impressive mark on the lifeways of the people. The name Visayas, it is said, was given by the Shri-Vishayan colonizers.

Although little of the Shri-Vishayan influence could be seen in the Philippines today, there are indelible imprints of that influence on our cultural heritage which manifest themselves in the character and mentality of our people.

After the collapse of the Pallava kingdom in Southern India, the Shri-Vishayan Empire meteorically rose in power in Malasia. Its power extended over the Malay Peninsula, stretching as far as central Java, Ceylon, Moluccas, a large portion of Sumatra, part of Siam (Thailand), Borneo, and the Philippines. The record to account for the exact number of tributary states are non-existent today, but the chroniclers of oriental history attest to the fact that there were four major states: Banjarmassin, Sukadana, and later the Southern Sarawak region, and Brunei. The relationship that developed between the Philippines, Banjarmassin, and Brunei, lent a new color to our national scene.

1.1 *Relations with Banjarmassin.* The pearls from the

beds of the Sulu sea attracted the colonizers from Banjarmassin and caught the fancy of the Shri-Vishayan lord. Word about these hidden riches penetrated the hinterlands of the empire, and the Philippine coast of Sulu, like a magnet, drew a never-ending stream of treasure hunters, traders, and adventurers from Brunei and the neighboring states. This event marked the beginning of a keener and spirited competition for the possession of the low lying plains and valleys of the Sulu coastlines. The fabulous riches of the Sulu beds whetted the colonizer appetite for expansion in order to (1) monopolize the fabulous pearl-trade; (2) to expand their commercial interests, and (3) to secure supplies necessary to sustain their increasing population.

The influx of immigrants and traders was not without its repercussions, for hardly had they set foot on the shores of Sulu than their presence was met with veiled hostility — the native Buruanons. A clash of interests ensued between the exploiters and the exploited which gained momentum when the Orang Dampuans appeared in the scene in search of the same treasure. The Buruanons threatened to close all avenues of trade and commerce unless the new wave of settlers left. Something had to be done in order to maintain commercial relations necessary for economic survival. The Banjars and the Dampuans felt insecure. Later the Banjars, who were better strategists of the two, conceived of a plan that would loosen the grip of the Buruanon chieftain on the fabulous treasures hidden in the muddy beds of the Sulu deep and enable them to realize their ambition for territorial expansion. The plan was to offer in marriage to the principal Buruanon chief, a Banjarmassin princess of blinding beauty. The plan worked, for "under the thrall of the princess," wrote Otley Beyer and associates, "the Buruanon chief, signed a marriage contract making Sulu a tributary of Banjarmassin or probably a tributary to the Shri-Visayan Empire through Banjarmassin. Thus the colonists secured, through a state of marriage, a permanent foothold for peaceful trade and expansion of Sulu," (11:5-10).

As trade and commerce resumed its normal pace, fortune hunters and traders from the far reaches of the empire continued to swarm the coastline of Sulu. In consequence, the island became a melting pot of all cultures, and the natives were crowded out of their homes and driven to the hills, leaving the control of the coastal regions to the foreigners.

The Shri-Vishayan Empire, just like other great empires in recorded history, did not last very long, for by the thirteenth century it began to decline to give way to the rising power of the Madjapahit kingdom of Java before whose mighty armies it fell in 1377.

1.2 *The Bornean Datus.* With the Shri-Vishayan Empire prostrate at the feet of the conquering hordes of Madjapahit, came wranglings over the spoils of conquest. Sultan Makatunaw's offensive and tyrannical rule irked the favored members of his royal court they made plans to flee Brunei (Borneo) to seek new lands and greater fortunes beyond the northern seas (1:12). Manifesting their usual subserviency, but seething with anger at the grasping and inhuman policies of the sultan, they sought audience with the chief minister of the sultanate. Datu Puti, the chief minister, lent a patient and sympathetic ear to their complaints. He realized that unless the surging tide of popular discontent was checked, the whole of Borneo would suffer the fate of blood and desolation. It would be unwise to seize upon brutal solutions if a crisis was to be averted. In a situation such as this which involved principles long cherished, a patient and deliberate reappraisal of the solution was needed.

Finding himself in the same predicament as his leaders, Datu Puti realized that like one of them he was under the rule of a despotic ruler before whom all must bow in complacency and subservience. Open revolt against the formidable forces of Sultan Makatunaw would be suicidal, so the only recourse was to leave. Secret preparations with the leaders of the group were made. After the long preparation, a flotilla of fast sailing vessels left under the cover of darkness. Heading the expedition was Datu Puti

himself, accompanied by his wife, Pinangpangan. The other datos were Datu Sumakwel, Datu Dumangsil, Datu Lubay, Datu Balkasusa, Datu Bangkaya, Datu Paiburong, Datu Paduhinog, and Datu Dumalogdog (8:4-8). With them, too, were their wives, most prominent of whom were Pabulawas, wife of Paiburong; Capinangan, wife of Sumakwel; Katurong, wife of Bangkaya; Ribongsapaw, wife of Paduhinog; Kabling, wife of Dumangsil; Ilohay Tanayon and Ilohay Sakangaon, beautiful daughters of Paiburong, and their followers, warriors, slaves and their worldly possessions that could be carried in the barangays (12).

2.0 *Arrival in Panay.* Favored by the tropical winds and guided by the stars, Datu Puti steered the expedition through the unchartered seas, skirted the coast of Parawan (Palawan) until they sighted the island of Aninipay, which was the earliest name of Panay, and Buglas now Negros. Upon reaching the southern tip of the island, they sailed farther north and finally, in 1250 (1:12), entered the Sirawagan River and landed in the bank of Andona Creek, not far from the site of barrio Sinogbohan in San Joaquin, Iloilo, where they saw a negrito fishing in the creek (8:9). It was this man from whom the newcomers came to know about the chief, Marikudo, his kingdom, and his people. With this fisherman as guide, the Borneans gained audience with Marikudo, the Negrito King. His experience with the Moro pirates who came as friends at daytime, but pillaged his village at night, taught him to act with caution and restraint. Datu Puti made known his desire to be friends with the natives, and their intention of settling in the land permanently, possibly on the site of Marikudo's settlement.

The offer struck Marikudo's fancy and he told the newcomers that he would study the offer and consult his men, and send a messenger at the time he would be ready to discuss the terms of the purchase. The Borneans returned to their boats to wait, while Marikudo, as was the custom during those days, prepared a feast and gathered his men to discuss terms of the offer. He ordered his men to hunt for wild game, to catch crabs and fish,

and gather edible shells (8:10), and advised them to be present during the conference with the Borneans with their musical instruments. When everything was ready, a banquet was held at which the two peoples freely drank, danced, and made merry. The Borneans, resplendent in their native costumes, danced their *sinulog* and displayed their *dinapay* dance accompanied by their *lantuy* and *tipano*, made of light three-noded bamboo. They beat their drums, and played with their *mang-mang*, *gurunggurong*, and *subing*. As they played the rhythm of the war dance, they brandished their arms with realism that threw the Negritos into a panic. In return, the Negritos danced their *urokoy*, and their *undok-undok* (8:11).

2.1 *The Barter of Panay.* The feast being over, Marikudo's elders and the ten datu sat down to discuss the terms of the purchase through an interpreter. Datu Puti inquired about the extent of Marikudo's territory and he was answered that "should a man go around the island, he would return just on time for harvest" (8:12). In turn Marikudo asked the Borneans how much they were willing to buy the land and Datu Puti ordered his servant to go back to the boat and get a *saduk* made of gold and one basin also made of gold (10). He handed them to Marikudo and asked him if he was willing to exchange the land with those objects. Marikudo was attracted by the size of the gold and so he placed it on his head and danced. Seeing him with the hat of gold, his wife Maniwantiwan cried and stubbornly insisted that she, too, be given a necklace like the one worn by Pinangpangan as a part of the purchase, otherwise she would not give her consent to the barter agreement. She did not mind giving back the basin in exchange to Maniwantiwan, and Pinangpangan, without any complaint, handed it to her on condition that she give to Pinangpangan, in addition to the land, a basket of crabs, a wild boar with long fangs, and one white cross-eyed deer. Maniwantiwan agreed to the bargain, but asked that she be given time to gather them. Maniwantiwan thereupon wore the necklace and danced in front of her people accompanied by Marikudo.

The high price paid by the Borneans for their land satisfied the Negritos, and even told the Borneans that they would include in the bargain their huts and their farm plants. They packed their belongings and moved to new places. Some repaired to "Dalanas" which was the source of the river and the others settled in Kabadyangan. The Borneans temporarily stayed and waited in Andona until the Negritos completed their evacuation from their Sinugbohan homes. After the Negritos had left, the Borneans burned their huts, cleared the forests and built new and stronger huts for their families.

The new settlers moved there after three days with exception of Datu Paiburong and his wife together with his followers who settled separately in a place called Lanag.

3.0 *Settlement of Panay.* At the threshold of a new era in colonization, wisdom and insight dictated that offerings be made to the natives' chief god, *Bulalakaw*. So, three days after they had moved to Sinogbuan, Datu Puti instructed Bangutbanwa, the chief priest, to ask their god's counsel as to what place was best for them to live. Bangutbanwa followed the order and repaired to the mountain fastnesses of Madya-as, where the supposed god *Bulalakaw* lived and remained there for seven days (7). Upon his return on the seventh day, he informed the group that according to *Bulalakaw*, the northwestern part of the island was the best place for a permanent settlement. Acting upon this information, Datu Puti ordered Datu Sumakwel to conduct a general survey of the place. Upon his return after the lapse of several days, Sumakwel reported that a place called Malandog, "had wide fertile plains and valley with shores teeming with fish" (8:15). Thereupon Sumakwel was instructed not to stay at Sinogbuan any longer, but to move to the new place right away. Before Sumakwel left for Malandog, Datu Puti made known his desire to return to Borneo. He assembled all the other datos and their followers so that he could give his final instructions to all his subjects. He appointed Sumakwel his successor as the head datu, and urged his people to respect and obey him as such.

The following day at nightfall, Datu Puti accompanied by Datu Dumangsil and Datu Balkasusa set sail for Borneo. As they were nearing the island of Mindoro, Dumangsil and Balkasusa refused to proceed to Borneo. Instead they sailed farther northward and founded a settlement in Southern Luzon.

No sooner had Datu Puti left for Borneo than Sumakwel and Bangkaya with their followers effected the transfer to Malandog as they were instructed. Exploration of the surrounding places followed. One day while his companions were resting under a tree near a spring, Sumakwel walked farther away alone to reconnoiter the place. Accidentally he stumbled upon a mound of earth which turned out to be a colony of big ants called Hamtik-Hamtik. Because all around he saw were ants, he decided to call the place Hamtik. The place became the center of the Panay settlement during the pre-Magellanic days.

3.1 *Confederation of Madya-as*. The exigencies of the times demanded the establishment of government for the purpose of protection and... regulation of human conduct. About a year after the transfer to Malandog, the seven datu held a meeting, and agreed, among other things, to name the island "Madya-as" after the name of one of the highest mountain peaks in Panay, where the god Bulalakaw lived. They also agreed to divide the island into three *sakups*, namely: Hamtik (Antique) to be ruled by Datu Sumakwel, Aklan (Capiz) to be ruled by Datu Bangkaya, and Irong-Irong to be ruled by Datu Paiburong. These three *sakups* were then organized into confederation called the "Confederation of Madya-as" especially for protection against enemy attacks. Sumakwel, one of the first and oldest leaders of the groups, was elected the supreme ruler of the confederation.

They agreed to join in a tour of the island. Each datu assigned to head a district would bring his men and seedlings to be planted in his district. No contributions would be paid by the people, but they should give offerings to their god once every seven years.

The day following the historic gathering, all their ves-

sels were readied and stuffed with seeds to be planted in their particular districts. A few were left behind to take care of their farms in Malandog.

Starting from Malandog the vessels sailed northward and stopped at Polondan (Pandan), where a married servant of Sumakwel got off with seedlings of coconut, bamboo and *hidyük* to be planted in that area. From there they proceeded to Aklan, which was the second district assigned to Bangkaya. They spotted the Aklan river which runs through the heart of the province and meanders through its bends. Here Bangkaya, with his wife Katarung, his child Balinganga, and his servants, disembarked. They brought with them seedlings of bamboo, nipa, and coconuts.

Proceeding to the third district of Irong-Irong, their vessels reached a cape or point where they left two families under Datu Paiburong named Kurukuro and Barbutak with large quantities of seedlings of rice, coconut, *huri*, and *burak*.

Finally they reached the mouth of the Halawud river where everybody disembarked to reconnoiter the broad swampland of the banks. They were attracted by the crabs which, so goes the story, were said to be so many that they seemed to be like mats spread out over the fringes of the swamps. The Borneans had a fondness for sea foods, so Alayon, the wife of Sumakwel, insisted that they settle here. Here Datu Paiburong left one of his servants, Sarmen, with his wife, Bukaybukay. They had two unmarried sons who later cultivated a wide tract of land on both sides of the river from where they harvested much rice.

Paiburong and his wife Pabulanan decided to settle in Sitio Kamunsilan where trees called *Kamunsil* abound although without fruit. Here they planted plenty of coconuts, nipa, *tagum* and rice. Paiburong assigned his married servants and Solnap, whom he considered among his best men, to a place called Buyo situated on the Alimodian river which flowed to Salog. Datu Paiburong later moved to Katagman. He had two daughters. One whose name was Ilohay Tanayon was married to Datu Labawdungon. An-



other whose name was Ilohay Sakanga-on became the wife of Datu Paibare. These two datus returned to Borneo where they succeeded in killing Sultan Makatunaw.

With Paiburong and his people in Katagman, Datu Sumakwel left Kamunsilan and returned to Malandug but made stopovers at Katigbawan, Nanga, Bungol, Kalampitak, Banuya, Kirayan, Egpuro, Bankhanan, Manara, Buyanan, and then the Sirwagan river where they first dropped anchor from Borneo. With Datus Lubay, Padohinog, Dumangsil, and Dumalogdog, Sumakwel finally passed a point in southern Antique which is presently called Dao because Sumakwel referred to it as "dao dao dao" while trying to compare it at something he could not pronounce.

Following his last trip around the island of Panay, Datu Sumakwel dedicated his time to the development and growth of the Confederation of Madya-as. Assisting him in this tremendous job were Datu Paduhinog, Datu Dumalogdog, Datu Lobay, and Datu Dumangsil.

At the time the barangays were disorganized, Sumakwel tried to unite them into a *rarawigan* or province under a chieftain, with Padi Bangutbanwa as the high priest. Under him were placed the sitio of Hinar-ogan, Bukao, Bantok, Tarim, stretching from Alibunan to the Putian mountain, the sitios of Malnod, and Daraitan, in Antique. All the sitios along the Suague, Ulian, and Jaluar Rivers were also included in Sumakwel's *rarawigan*. All the above settlements were placed under Datu Labawdungon and Datu Paibare with their respective wives, Ilohay Tanayon, and Ilohay Salanga-on. When these two datus returned to Borneo, warrior Lumakad took charge of all the northern plains and hills along the Jalaur River. On the other hand, all the plains and hills along the Ulian River went to warrior Dumara-ay. Datu Lumakad married Maring-ay by whom he had two sons, Berdin and Lutos (3:68-69). It is said that these two men became famous warriors. Datu Dumara-og's wife named Kadangdang was a dancer of no mean ability. She bore him two daughters Maputing Dalaga and Ampaw.

When the Borneans occupied Simsiman, the Negritos

settled in Sitio *Puro Lambunao*. The story is told that when Goite and his men were in the place, they saw a man fishing. He asked him what the name of the place was and he answered "Naga panglambu sa linao," believing that he was being asked what he was doing. Other sitios developed along the Ulian River and were consolidated into Malonod which became a pueblo sometime in 1743.

Other settlements developed from Simsiman. This was due to the initiative and leadership of the Simsiman patriarchs. The settlement of Passi, Dingle, Calinog, San Enrique, Lambunao, Pototan, and Janiuay flourished sometime in the 14th century and became a center of commerce and trade in central Panay.

4.0 *Culture of the People*. (9:70-71). From the time the Borneans clans beached their barangays at the quiet and tranquil Sirwagan River south of the town of San Joaquin to the arrival of the Spaniards in 1521, the Indo Malayan culture had already flourished for 300 years. Our early forefathers were not only sailors, but farmers. The imperatives of survival in a strange land forced them to buckle down right away to clearing patches of virgin soil under which to bury the seeds of corn and rice in order to bring an abundant harvest.

In Hamtik, the people were not merely farmers engaged in the elemental form of shifting agriculture, but were also skilled hunters, fishermen, and explorers. The long range of picturesque hills and mountains stretching throughout her entire length teemed with wild game, and the rivers and seas were abundant with fishes. The people of Hamtik were the first to raise cotton from which yarn was made. Datu Lubay taught them how to weave, and engage in weaving industry. The women became excellent designers and dyers of sinamay. They were the first to develop pottery, but were behind in the arts particularly in music. They were shy, noble and peace-loving, but intense in war.

In Aklan, the wife of Balinganga, son of Bangkaya, gave birth to twins named "Adlaw and Bulan" (Sun and Moon) because of their charming appearance. In order to honor Bangkaya, the inhabitants of the district proposed

that the district be named Aklan and Kapid. Later the Spaniards substituted the named Kapid to Capiz as many of them could not pronounce the letter "d" at the end of the word (5:78-80).

The settlers of Aklan and Kapid had commercial intercourse with the other island. They were sea-farers by nature, and more adept in piloting big vessels for purposes of trade and fishing. In education and in music they were ahead of the settlers in Irong-Irong and Hamtik. It is said that the first school or *buthoan* was opened in Aklan. Like the settlers in Hamtik, they constructed wooden houses. Aklan abound with swamplands which explain why they were the first to manufacture alcohol. They also manufactured wine from fermented rice (*pangasi*). The people of Aklan lisped and stammered when they spoke. This was attributed to the fact that Balingaga lisped when he talked. It is said that the manufacture of wine helped them to become superior musicians because the festivities in those days called for drinking, singing and dancing.

Upon his assumption as datu of Irong-Irong, Paiburong distributed his men throughout his *rarawigan* while he stayed in the area around the Halawod River with his family and slaves for administrative purposes. In this way, his people could cultivate as extensively as possible wide areas of virgin soil while it was easier for him to go up and down the Halawod River to supervise.

Paiburong knew the value of athletics and training in the art of fighting so he taught his people how to play games and the technique of fighting with bladed weapons which he learned in Borneo. Later he taught his people how to manufacture bladed and other weapons.

The people of Paiburong also engaged in trade and commerce like those in Aklan. Favored by excellent location, business flourished and his people reaped immense profits from their commercial intercourse with the merchants and the people of Luzon, Cebu, and Brunei. They also bought a lot of jewelry from Chinese and Malay traders. The people were arrogant, loyal and sincere. Although they had petty quarrels among themselves, they

were united in time of crises especially during the attacks of the Moro marauders and looters from the mountain.

4.1 *The Code of Kalantiao* (2:15). Another evidence of high cultural standing of the Panay Visayans is found in the Code of Kalantiao which is said to be comparable to the ancient laws then in existence. The Code was written in 1433 by Datu Kalantiao, who was considered the First Filipino Lawgiver and a genuine Aklanon, because he was born in the "Aklan Sakup" which was founded by Datu Bangkaya some three hundred years before the arrival of the Spaniards in 1521.

There have been positive evidences that an ancient civilization must have existed on the site for there were blocks of quarried stones cemented together by a process used during the Pre-Spanish period. There were also archaeological traces which were believed to be the foundations of the ancient capital right on the grounds just recently excavated in the construction of the town wharf along the shore of Batan Bay (4).

There are traces of Kalantiao's early domain in the present day Batan. There is, for example, a Kalantiao street in the municipality. A barrio had also been named "Mabuttia" (now Mabukiao). There is also an old custom still being observed which was practised during the time of Kalantiao, and that is, the gathering of the elders of the "Punoan" in the barrios for the purpose of conducting and promulgating rules and regulations. This was announced by a public crier, for the "sakups" to obey. Furthermore, there is still the practice of arranging the marriage suits by the old folks.

The Code contains eighteen orders. There were times when the people and races in the regions in Europe, Africa, and Asia were organizing themselves into groups and classes or barangays as in our case, to be confederated for self-protection under rules and laws to regulate their conduct.

The orders in this code consist of eight groups, and besides the provisions regarding punishment of crimes, it also includes laws for the protection of life and property, punishment for profanation of religion, the pro-

tection of women, penalty for crimes against truth. order for the establishment of a strong and vigorous government.

4.2 *The Maragtas Code.* The Maragtas Code, which is believed to be the oldest written laws in the Philippines, also considered stealing and laziness to be the greatest crimes. Stealing was punishable by cutting off the hands without mercy. Lazy persons were driven to the mountains where they could not see anybody in town. They were supposed to be ancestors of the *Aetas* (Negritos), who are presently wandering in the towns of Iloilo begging for money. Furthermore, a man was allowed to have two wives provided he could support them. This was permitted so that population might increase. Those who could not afford to support their children were not allowed to have more than two children. If he exceeded that number, the rest were thrown into the river.

The Maragtas and Kalantiao were considered very cruel in comparison with the present Penal Code, but they are said to be no less severe than the laws promulgated by Lycurgus in Sparta, and Draco in Athens. In Egypt, minor offenses as well as major crimes were punishable crimes and were punishable by death in the Codes of Hamurabi and Draco.