

Position Paper of the Téduray, Lambangian and Dulanagan Manobo for the Mindanao Tri-People Peace Summit

Saturday 3 March 2007, by [BANDARA Alim M.](#), [LINAS Epifanio](#), [MINTED Allan](#), [MOSELA Lito](#), [SUENAN Norena](#), [ULAMA Melanio](#) (Date first published: May 2005).

Introduction:

The history of the Teduray and Dulangan Manobo is shared by the Maguindanaon, that until the coming of Islam in Mindanao estimated by many scholars that happened between 1450-1475AD, the Maguindanaon, Teduray and Dulangan Manobo to name a few were one and the same people. These people traced their roots from brothers Mamalu and Tabunaway who practiced one and the same tradition of self-rule, culture and economic activities whose title holders are called Baglalan under a Timuay system of governance.

The term or word Timuay came from the root word TIMU that literally means COLLECT or UNITE/UNION. The Timuay as tribal title is actually a system of tribal based self-rule characterized by a collective form of leadership and free participation of the maginged (citizens) through attendance to assemblies and forums called for by the Baglalan or tribal title holders in the different lines of work in the Timuay system of governance.

The highest level of leadership reached by the Timuay system in its historical development is in the tribal level. This meant that every tribal group who implemented the Timuay system of governance has its own territory, center of governance, laws, defense and programs to follow.

But this development was first interrupted when Sharif Mohammad Kabungsuan came and introduced the Islamic faith and the Sultanate system of governance where the brothers Mamalu and Tabunaway were called for to embrace. Mamalu and Tabunaway at that time were the known tribal chieftains in command of the neighboring villages with center of governance based at Mt. Tawan-tawan now popularly called PC Hill in Cotabato City.

The division came after the historic decision of Tabunaway to embrace Islam and the Sultanate system of governance while Mamalu remained faithful to his traditional way of life and system of self-governance. With this major turn in their lives, the brothers made a pact or treaty.

Contents of the treaty were as follows: recognition and respect of the territory, system of governance and religious beliefs of each group; the continuing and non-limit circulation of the means of livelihood and "sawit" system or gifts among communities; unity against common enemy; and treatment as brothers and sisters. This treaty was publicly sworn to by both parties thru a ritual and mutually agreed that the treaty must be observed by the leaders including the coming generations to come and the brothers went their separate ways with their respective followers. From the elder brother, came the Teduray and Dulangan Manobo and from the younger brother came the Maguindanaon.

But as years passed by, the Sultanate system of governance became superior over the Timuay system because the Muslim controlled the strategic places such as the plains and the coastal villages. They have connections too to the global trade and the expansion of Islamization was done rapidly as ideological basis and means for tactical consolidation among their leaders and followers while the Timuay system is isolated in intact villages to ensure none disturbance in the implementation of their traditions and customary laws.

The solemnized treaty between the two groups was gradually forgotten pushed by dissimilar concept of living. On this point, it emerge that the Sultanate system is superior over the Timuay system. The Sultanate system considered the leaders of the Timuay system as their subjects. They don't mind them as their equal in leadership.

On the other hand, from the north of the archipelago, another form of civilization is spreading southward. This time introduced by the Spanish colonizers and then followed by the Americans. This civilization pushed the emergence of the Philippine Republic as a Nation State.

Under the new Republic, the tribal communities experienced far worst than that of the Sultanate system because of the State's slogan calling for "one nation, one people and one government". This means that there is no other government having the authority to govern over the people of the Philippine Republic except the Philippine government. This finally meant that the Sultanate, the Timuay systems of governance and other forms of tribal based self-rule were not given full authority to govern over their own people.

But surprising however, despite the wave by wave entry of the different forms of civilization, the tribal people stand steadfast in their own mode of community management. A concrete example is the emergence of the Lambangian tribe into being.

Lambangian is a tribe that traced their origin from the historic war between the Teduray and Dulangan Manobo hundreds of years ago in a place called Binusugan near the Tran river now called Barangay Villamonte in Lebak, Sultan Kudarat Province. The tribal war was caused by the kidnapping of a Dulangan Manobo experts in collecting honey bees by the Teduray and sold out to the Maguindanaon to serve as slave in honey collection to be sold to Chinese traders.

The tribal war lasted for ten cropping seasons and is equivalent to ten years of conflict. The Teduray warriors came from as far as Bantek, Senigang and Balalaen while the Dulangan Manobo warriors came from Buyaan, Mrawir and upper Tran. As a result, both party succumbed casualties and this was only neutralized when a long drought called "lenggob" started to inflict damage to the agricultural production of the whole populace both Dulangan Manobo and Teduray. The lenggob brought food and water crisis for almost three years. At that time, the only place without food shortage was in tuduk Mrawir, the place of datu Midtu of the Dulangan Manobo.

Knowing the abundance of food at tuduk Mrawir, one Teduray Chieftain and his family tried to cross the war torn areas in Binusugan going to Mrawir to look for food. With all his wisdom, he succeeded to penetrate tuduk Mrawir without any untoward incidents and the Teduray Chieftain was able to explain to datu Midtu the negative effects of war and the lenggob. The two leaders concluded that God punished them because of the tribal war they engage so they decided to stop the war but datu Midtu ask to marry the daughter of the Teduray Chieftain.

After the drought, the Teduray chief went back to his place bringing with him seeds of rice, corn and other agricultural products. His fellow chieftains were surprised because they taught that he and his family were already executed by their Manobo enemy. Knowing that he's still alive and was able to penetrate the Dulangan Manobo territory, they called him datu Dikalawanan, a tribal title which

means supreme datu. From then on, a formal negotiation took place until such time that the relationship was normalized.

The negotiation took place in the war zone area called Binusugan, in Dulangan Manobo that means former battle field using bow and arrow but the name was corrupted by the present settlers and called it Villamonte, a barangay located east of Lebak.

In the negotiation, both parties agreed to stop the conflict and swear not to do it again and instead maintain a friendly relationship. The agreement was sealed with inter-marriage of four (young men and women) from both the Teduray and Dulangan Manobo as a symbol of unity and oneness of the Teduray and Dulangan Manobo.

This was finally concluded with a ritual and prayer calling the coming off-springs of the newly wed men and women as LAMBANGIAN, a cross breed of the Teduray and Dulangan Manobo and should there any violation thereof, the Lambangian shall be cut into pieces signifying that the agreement is null and void.

Despite all these tribal efforts, we found out that much had been damage in our communities. And we saw little hope when in 1997 the RA 8371 was passed into law. In our minds, the IPRA Law is the savior of the IPs. Sadly however in the ARMM, the IPs became victim of policy conflict between RAs 9050 (Organic Act Creating the ARMM) and RA 8371 or the IPRA Law. In short, we are deprived of our rights and privileges embodied in the IPRA Law because we are in the ARMM.

Now, with this Tri-people Peace Summit, the Teduray, Lambangian and Dulangan Manobo of Cotabato City, Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat Provinces wish to be heard and happy to present their own concept and position on the issues of ancestral domain, resources, territory and governance in relation to the resolution of the Mindanao conflict as follows:

1. CONCEPT

Our concept on ancestral domain, resources, territory and governance is a tribal community governed by rules and regulations born out of the tribe's actual and collective experiences commonly known today as tribal customary laws. This body of laws is founded on the principle of Peaceful Co-existence and Pluralism. Peaceful co-existence and pluralism means recognition and respect to ones existence and way of life in a given territory. This is applicable not only to fellow human beings but including plants and animals.

On this basis, the Teduray, Lambangian and Dulangan Manobo became very accommodative to other groups of people. Sadly however, this principle honestly implemented by the tribal people was taken advantaged and abused by other group of people that resulted to the present conflict in territory, resources and governance between and among the three groups of people in Mindanao.

To solve this conflict, we adhere to and remain steadfast in our principle of PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE and PLURALISM. Our stand therefore on the issues of ancestral domain, resources, territory and governance stated as follows:

2. ON ANCESTRAL DOMAIN

That our Ancestral Domain claim shall be delineated pursuant to the present and future appropriate laws that may be applicable. For the moment, the tribes had laid claim to our ancestral domains covering a land area of 289,268 hectares comprising the municipalities of Upi, South Upi, Ampatuan, Sharif Aguak, Datu Unsay, Datu Saudi, Guindulungan, Talayan and DOS in Maguindanao Province and portions of Esperanza, Lebak, Bagumbayan, Sen. Ninoy Aquino, Kalamansig and Palembang in

Sultan Kudarat Province and the city of Cotabato where the tribes are predominantly situated;

3. ON POLITICAL TERRITORY

Consistent with our position sent to the GRP-MILF Panels, we support a broader territory for the Bangsamoro people as a nation for the sake of genuine and lasting peace and development in Mindanao provided that the Bangsamoro shall recognize the Teduray, Lambangian and Dulangan Manobo territory within the Bangsamoro nation. Furthermore, we reiterate that it is also the desire of the tribes stated above to be at liberty to practice and promote their cultural identity by way of actual implementation of tribal and customary laws through the Timuay Justice and Governance within their identified territory.

4. ON RESOURCES

The rights of the IPs – Teduray, Lambangian and Dulangan Manobo in matters of exploitation and exploration of natural resources that may be found within their ancestral domain areas shall be upheld and respected. The tribe shall have an equitable share in all numeral resources to include strategic minerals and forestry resources;

5. ON GOVERNANCE

As earlier stated, the tribe shall conform to any type or form of governance that maybe agreed upon and mutually adopted, hence it is also the desire of the tribe to have equal opportunities and representation in all levels of governance, side by side with their Muslim brothers. Provided, that in the territory identified to the Teduray, Lambangian and Dulangan Manobo tribes, their right to rule and govern must be pursued, implemented, recognized and respected vis-à-vis their traditional and customary laws in a form of a genuine autonomy within the Bangsamoro nation.

A CONCLUSION

Consistent with our principle on Peaceful Co-existence and Pluralism, we fully recognize and respect the existence of our Maguindanaon brothers and sisters in their own identified territory and those that are lawfully resettled in our own communities. On this basis, we RE-AFFIRM our commitment to the Mamalu-Tabunaway Pact and formulate guidelines on settling modern conflicts between the IPs and our Moro brothers not only in our area cluster but throughout Mindanao.