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Foreign Influences on Muslim Rituals

Ghislaine Loyre



This article is based on the rituals of the Maguindanaons, Muslim inhabitants, of the west side of the eastern part of the island of Mindanao. Their Muslim neighbors, the Maranaos are living in the interior around lake Lanao. The other main Muslim group, the Tausugs live in the Sulu archipelago at the south-west of the island of Mindanao. As a whole the Muslims are thirteen groups but this study is based mainly on the Mindanao groups. The Maguindanaons have established themselves along the valley of the Pulangui river, called Rio Grande by the Spaniards. The power of the leaders upriver diminished in the beginning of the sixteenth century facing the politically astute Qudrat, son of one of them, who was capable of constituting a state recognized as "vast and powerful" (Pastells Collection fol. 278-281b). It was in 1645, that for the first time, he styled himself Sultan. This was a new step in political development. The ruler was no longer just the head of a clan called *timuay*, *datu* or *katchil*, probably borrowed from Ternate to honor the young princes. He placed himself within the genealogical line of sovereigns. He was the descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. The link was made through the first official missionary who came to Mindanao, who was the son of an Arab married to the daughter of the Sultan of Johore. The legitimacy was given to a lineage traced to the Prophet. Islam also brought, or completed, the symbols of power.

Close to the Sultan are his parents who are also titled along with the would-be Sultan, *raja muda*. The next in line *watamama*, the members of the councils, were aristocrats or dignitaries (Forest 1971, 172). Related to power are also the counselors of the prince in religious (*sheik a datu*), or judicial and customary matters (*datu a kali*). The descendants of the leaders of the pre-islamic period who preserve special privileges must also be mentioned.

The Sultan, first in the society, is also the reference for the social stratification, each level having its rights, flags and seals. Mastura underlines the borrowings from Islam: official, genealogies, flags and royal emblems, days, ceremonial swords, rotations of functions and titles of functions. The protocol in the court is certainly strict but does not carry the same refinement as in other Asian states. Women have their role in the system since they inherit, like men, titles passed from one generation to the next. The wife of the Sultan bears only the title of her mother and nothing else. She is not a "sultana." The Sultan's children rank according to the status of their mother as well as rights to succeed their father.

The valley of the Pulangui (Rio Grande) was dominated alternatively by up and down river Sultanates before the creation in the eighteenth century of a third Middle Sultanate in between. As time passed, political institutions were established and rules of succession became more precise as councils and aristocrats helped the Sultan to rule. The description of their operations which researchers had access to through oral tradition goes back most likely to the eighteenth or nineteenth century. Slowly power eroded due to succession wars, and local leaders (*datu*), heads of their kin, until today called themselves Sultans. They progressively took over power of their own territory and community and ruled as sovereigns and not anymore as princes.

The common people have established over centuries their own links to the genealogies of the ruling family and hence established their rank. Only slaves could not place themselves in the hierarchy, for they were outsiders, ignorant of the intricate customs and obligations of the Maguindanaons (Loyre 1991, 63-436). They had been brought from outside islands of the archipelago unlike the neighborhood non-islamized ethnic groups (Subanun, Manobo, Tiruray) who stayed in their own land controlled by the Maguindanaons who collected taxes from them. Maguindanaons were also "buying" from them products gathered from the forests or harvested. Many goods were entering the market for barter with outside buyers which was not exclusively the booty from the expeditions of the "pirates" over the Spanish side of the archipelago.

So the Muslim population escaped, more or less, being conquered by the Spaniards. The fifty years of American colonization had more impact on transforming the Muslim rebels than the centuries of Spanish presence. The Americans established their own administration of the area: first military, then it turned to be civil. The Muslims con-

sidered themselves different enough to demand from the Americans independence from the rest of the islands. The inheritors of two colonial powers which have governed the country were therefore integrated into one nation, with more than 80 percent Christians, with the United States remaining as the model until an autonomous government had been given to them in 1989.

Within this setting, the Malay and a few Arab missionaries were responsible for the conversions. Thus it was a slow and discontinuous process which suffered from its incompleteness in time as well as in space. Time has come now for the Muslims to try to perfect their knowledge of Islam. Nevertheless Islam had penetrated all the traditions at various levels without violence. Arab concepts became perceived through the interpretation of the Malay missionaries who made easier their acceptance for the other Malays of the Southern Philippines. However, this was at the cost of the understanding or real concepts. It was evident that the Islam known in Mindanao was an Islam which went through alterations due to the distance and transformation from its origin.

At the same time, the Muslims have an unconditioned admiration for the Middle-East. Islam arrived in this part of the world as a continuation of a route which passed through, India, the Malaysian Peninsula and what is today Indonesia. This new religion did not arrive alone, but with elements of Arabic civilization, as well as those of the countries it had already gone through. Today, the search for a more orthodox religion is very strong here, as in the rest of the world. Important changes come from outside influences, political or religious, as well as economic or ideologic origins. It is nonetheless important to emphasize that islamization, even if incomplete, is not superficial at all (Infielles de Mindanao).

Main Rituals

The practice of a society over centuries can come from numerous transformations as the centuries pass, due to indirect or direct influences. With the coming of Islam, the Maguindanaons did not only adopt a new religion, but they also received a teaching beyond the spiritual level, and were offered rules of life in all aspects. Today deep changes still result from other outside political or religious influences, but are also economic and ideologic in their origin. They are transforming the identity of the groups at various levels.

This article analyzes the various influences affecting the rituals but concentrates on four of them in order to better analyze the process. Therefore we will analyze two short rituals in which Islam and tradition are closely integrated ("veneration of tombs" and "thanksgiving rite"). The first one is performed with little attendance while the second can either be homelike or gathering a crowd. Next are two long rituals, ("rite against disease" and "marriage") which have an opposite development. One tends to disappear while the other slowly enters more deeply into the system. The first is at the family level while the other can be open to the whole community. Our interest here is to find the various levels of islamization and their degrees of acceptance by today's orthodox Muslim. Two rituals are totally rejected, one ("veneration of tombs") because it violates Islamic precepts in spite of its borrowing from Islam the form of prayers, and the other simply ignores Islam and therefore violates its principles. Two rituals are slowly being integrated ("thanksgiving rite" and "marriage").

Classification of Rites

Public Rites:

Life cycle Rite

E.g. marriage (*kawing*)
rite linked to death (*panunjiung*)

Rites against diseases

E.g. rite against disease (*pag-ipat*)

Economic Rites for prosperity

palay-palayan, salat

Private Rites:

Divination rites, magical rites

pagalamatan, tampak

Thanksgiving rites

kanduli

Panunjiung

The "veneration of tombs" (*panunjiung*) is the giving of simple offerings of rice and eggs near the tomb, Islamic prayers articulated near the tomb by a religious man, and is a rite which hardly extends beyond the kin. This ritual which is not elaborate, is totally spiritual. It probably has some soufist influence though it may very well go back to pre-Islamic time. This rite tends to disappear today. In the Sulu archipelago pilgrimages around the tombs of respected men had some importance when in Mindanao, but those funeral sites are now quite scattered and only attended by more or less immedi-

ate family or community. In 1986 in Mindanao, a member of one titled lineage in the sultanate of the Middle Sultanate decided to revive this practice by organizing one. Some people went, but it did not meet the success expected by the organizer. Moreover it was a challenge to the purists who oppose this ritual as contradictory to Islam.

Though accompanied by Islamic prayers this ritual is considered pagan for it implies the quest of the dead as an intermediary to Allah. The Islamic precepts forbid any intercession between man and God, though it remained common in the whole Islamic world. It is all the more forbidden since it is against the first pillar of Islam proclaiming the unity of Allah. The Maguindanaons, though, used to consider that respected dead men could help them to attain their most cherished desires. Because of their religious past life, wise men were considered to have acquired, sometimes already during their life time, supernatural and sacred powers (*barakat*).

Obviously, Maguindanaons preferred to request from their ancestors rather than pray to Allah directly. Addressing Him was difficult, because of the mental distance and men from the community seemed more accessible than this faraway and so powerful Allah. The *pandita*, the man of tradition knows how to address the dead man who in return will ask God. In this part of the world, people avoid confrontation and go around with the help of a third party or an intermediary. Moreover people recall the past fulfillment of demands at this particular tomb so the possibility of success appears to be greater in the mind of the population. This ceremony is very simple. A small offering is placed near the tomb and prayers are recited. Is that inherited from more elaborate pre-Islamic sacrifices? Was it celebrated at a fixed period? Apparently, it is better to hold it during the second month of the Islamic calendar, the month of *Sapar*.

The aged Magindanaons are offended that this practice is being rejected when, according to them, it precisely rests on the respect for Allah and for dead people. Through their exemplary lives, and the obvious trust they received from Allah during their lifetime, some ancestors are capable of obtaining help for their descendants. The trust of God in them has been proven through the supernatural powers they were endowed with. Some sultans of the Middle sultanate could, for example, defeat their enemies by changing rice husk thrown in the air into bees who would defeat their enemies. This act of Faith is not accepted by the "purists" who only see in it remnants of paganism, while the old men recognize a gift of Allah to

people who deserved it because of their deep religiosity. It was not a miracle but an acknowledgement of religiosity by the Almighty.

Prayer, faith and religiosity are present in the ritual which remains, in spite of its components, completely orthodox local and which moreover is contrary to the fundamental principle of Islam. It is understood that the population cannot understand the violation committed through this ritual to which they have shown respect. It is a question of foreign theology and a local cult perfectly integrated in all spiritual honesty in a spiritual unity which is now being rejected.

Kanduli

"Thanksgiving" (*kanduli*) is a ritual accepted by Islam. It is local in its inspiration and very well known in other parts of the Malay world even though its form might change. For example, *kanduli* takes different shapes and forms in the rest of the Malayo world. In Lanao it is *kanduri*, and in Java, this communal meal is *kenduren* and more often *slametan*. It "symbolizes social and mystic unity of the participant" (Geertz 1960 pp. 11–16). In the fishermen village of Langkawi (Malaysia), Janet Carsten (1987, 163–67) observed the *kenduri*, gathering the whole community and accompanying meetings of all kind, ritual as well as social like the departure of someone for *haji*, a death or the victory of a football team. *Kanduli* is a masterpiece of Maguindanaons' ritual life. It not only goes along with almost all rituals, but is in itself complete. It is not performed during magic and divinatory practices. It has petitioning and thanksgiving function.

It is not performed at a fixed date, but on any important occasion, or at regular intervals. Some families, for example, after the prayer of Friday noon in the mosque invite to their house some religious men (*pandita*) to partake with them in this ritual meal. The religious men are very well more than agents of ritual and their functions in society are not limited to that. These are the elites consulted and respected and their function is much wider. They are seated in the traditional way, sitting on a mat (*ikam*) around some trays (*talam*) covered by a colored circular top to protect from the flies. This used to be the way of eating, but now it is only used on this occasion. Bark of trees, or the peels of good smelling fruits, jackfruit and ramboutan, are burned in order to attract the spirits. The congregation remains standing, more or less attentive. It might be the household or hundreds of guests. An Islamic prayer (*doua*) is

recited and during the rapid invocation to Allah, everyone holds their palms oriented towards the sky. Meanwhile some people continue attending to the service. Then the two hands are passed along the face. This now is a purely Islamic rite.

The offering has two aspects. First is the most visible which is the meal and the other an almsgiving (*sedeka*). During the prayer, the host places some pesos in the pocket or in the hands of the celebrants. It is common that celebrants receive a compensation for their participation. In this particular case, they receive a very small amount, but on other occasions, there is a more substantial gift for their collaboration. Moreover, the objects which have been used during the ritual are given to them. Is it a compensation for their participation, or because these objects or clothes have become somewhat sacred and have to be handed down to the persons in closer contact with spiritual matters?

The extreme form of *kanduli* is a very simple meal of celebration. A student can celebrate his birthday with noodles, pineapple juice and *kanduli*. Prayer is absent and it is its most simple form. *Kanduli* is consequently essential to the community which perceives it as a spiritual moment. We could imagine, that in spite of the progressive disappearance of the old religious men, *pandita*, it will resist the quest of Islamic purity. Nowadays specialists of Islam are themselves called *uztadz*, from the Arabic word for "professor." They despise *pandita* who follow tradition, but some of them perform this ritual to say that a new generation of religious men do not totally reject this ritual meal. It is an example of integration since the Malay and Islamic characters are here side by side. It represents a transition between the rite at tombs which is totally rejected, and the ritual against disease inherited from pre-islamic times.

Pag-ipat

Pag-ipat is a ritual against disease. It is a ritual deprived of Islamic elements. It goes otherwise with *pag-ipat*, a pre-Islamic ritual in which references to Islam are extremely few. Specialists, unlike *pandita*, perform no other ritual. The ceremony takes place inside and only the celebrants move. Some ritual objects are placed outside. *Sabakan* is a light shelf built on sugar cane poles in which are display cakes. *Lalag* is a bamboo planted with its leaves and branches from which are hanging small cakes for the spirits but which children would get during the ritual. *Tinatao ni talabusao* is a human ef-

figy eating a devil whose trunk is made of a banana tree with feathers, intestines and blood of chicken, food of the ancestors (Kamid 1982, 45–48). It seems that the house, plants and water are thus represented. These also are three different places where offerings to the spirit can be placed according to the unseen being to be honored. Satan has various shapes *saitan sa lupa*, or Satan of the earth, for whom offerings are placed on tree stumps (*budtud*), which gives its name to the offering. For *Saitan sa langit*, or Satan of the sky, the offering has the shape of the rainbow and carries the same name (*binudtu*). Offering is the most important part of this ritual. Offerings for the spirit of ancestors and those for Satan are different. They vie in their composition, their color and the shape of the rice. Each has its particular name but no other ceremony would be performed except the simple act of placing it.

This ritual against disease is based on various notions such as: possession, unseen spirits, mythical past and offering-sacrifice. It is called *pag-ipat sa tonong* meaning “take care-give to eat to the spirits.” *Pag-ipat* is the most elaborate of rituals for ancestors and spirits. *Kabpagasal* from the root *asal* means “origin” or the first ancestors of a lineage.

Maguindanaon space is animated by numerous invisible spirits including spirits of the ancestors, who sometimes are borrowed from epics (Loyre 1990). Spirits of the dead (*aruak*), for example, go further and further as time passes. The first years after death, the spirit remains very close to the living persons, but if the rules for funerals are not properly respected it will continue to stay close to earth and disturb those left behind. Ancestors can also take the shape of a crocodile to which respect will be shown through offerings. Some persons are endured with a twin spirit (*laping*), to whom marks of respect must also be shown. In this world of “unseen spirits” are also humans who can transform themselves and attack cadavers or new-born persons. Moreover, spirits borrowed from the Islamic world have been integrated in the local pantheon, namely djinns (*guim*) or Satan. The devil, a borrowed spirit, is the most frightening, for even offerings seldom make it compassionate. It often causes death, when other unseen beings are easier to appease.

Pag-ipat is prophylactic for disease which will enter those who neglect to perform it regularly. Some families celebrate it every four years. In case of disease, it is a necessary treatment. Precise symptoms indicate that it is the adapted therapy for delirium, acute thirst,

sickly shivering and craving for raw eggs (Kamid 1982, 38, 110). Highly irritable persons are the first victims.

Celebrants (*pedtompan*), male or female, are usually two. The summoned spirit will penetrate one of the participants, who will enter into a trance during his communication with the spirit. This person can be someone who had previously been cured and generally belongs to the same lineage as the sick person. He dances for several hours. "Ritual against disease" lasts for seven afternoons of which only the last one is different. The less wealthy celebrate a ritual (*ubad*) which lasts only half a day but the most important moments of *pag-ipat* are preserved. The origin of this ritual can be found in the mythical past. The war dance, *kadsasagayan*, which accompanies it, is extracted from an epic (Loyre n.d.). Bantugen, hero and venerated ancestor, is often taken as an example of the best way to behave. Long ago, it is said that the prosperity of the population led it to neglect the homage due to this hero. As a punishment, he sent a deluge. One of the survivors, an old man, was praying near the river, when an object which appeared on the surface of the water, came closer and fell in his hands. It was a curved sword (*kampilan*). Other survivors interpreted this sign as a good omen and joy was shown in a feast with dancing and music (Kamid 1982, 36). Another story tells how the sick grandson of Adam was cured by a similar party of which music and dance were the most important components. Such a feast enabled the angel Gabriel to distract the attention of Satan while God created Adam. Obviously, "historical" explanations are not missing, even incorporating Islamic elements when the *pag-ipat* belongs to another cultural world. Integration of Islam in the local-stratum is once more clear even if the justification must have appeared later. Until the mid-eighties, Islam and local tradition, side by side, did not create theological doubt in the mind of the population.

Deviations and adaptations to Islam are quite significant in the ambiguity existing between Islamic precepts and customary obligations. It is not surprising that the local pantheon should be respected in this type of ritual. The world of "unseen spirits" can punish a man who neglected his duties as a Muslim. A disease is sent to him. The spirits brought with Islam exert pressure on people so that they behave as good Muslims. Consequently to do away with the punishment, a ritual against disease must be performed even if it is not approved by Islam. This very particular theological reasoning proves the deep integration of Islamic and local values.

The purists logically oppose this ritual. A young man, fighting those "pagan" practices threatened to throw in the river the clothes used during the ritual by his step-mother (Kamid 1982, 26). But meanwhile that woman cured a sick person and the young man refrained from his initial plan. Educated in a Koranic school, he did not believe in the validity of this ritual. Indeed, this ritual is incompatible with Islam and would have undergone changes in order to adapt itself to the principles of Islam. That is to say, to do away with the most striking contradictions the ritual should not take place on a Friday but on Saturday, and children and pork sacrifices must be turned into offerings of food. We do not know if such things have been practiced in Mindanao. But what can be at least seen is that previous sacrifices have turned into food offerings as substitutes. After pag-ipat, a "thanksgiving ritual" is performed which is considered by Kamid as a compensation for a non-Islamic celebration. That compensation does not appear as rendering the whole ritual more Islamic. As a consequence, the future of this ritual is quite uncertain. In 1986, it was a common practice quite appreciated by the people. It was considered as a celebration which guaranteed its success (Kamid 1982, 80-84).

Kawing

Kawing is a marriage ritual which is becoming more Islamic. Practices around marriage meet reactions opposite to those of the ritual against disease. They do not face opposition. The life cycle ritual has a function in the society which cannot be dismissed even though there are interferences of local custom.

We ignore the primitive form of marriage in the Maguindanao area, but among Tiruray, non Muslim neighbors, the symbolism was shown in the two young people combing each other's hair. Among the Manobos, another non-Muslim ethnic group, the couple take a meal together. This is practiced by the Maguindanaons but it is only part of the whole complex series of requirements. Is it a remnant of the pre-islamic wedding?

The preparations for the marriage include first a meeting of the families (*kabpaninilong*) to be sure that the maiden is free from any other engagement. Then the parents of the young man come to see the young woman and observe her activity to be able to predict the future of the couple. Then a representative of the parents of

the girl welcomes the delegation of the family of the man (*kabpanganagadung*). Witnesses are present to hear the commitment of the maiden's parents. The social ranks of the two families must be compatible. During the second meeting (*kabpanalangguni*) the "dowry" is debated as well as the material organization of the wedding. The family of the man provides some refreshments. The girl opens a betel nut box as a sign of acceptance. The day before the wedding, the fiancé, protected from the sun by a ceremonial umbrella, goes in ceremony to the house of his promised bride surrounded by people carrying, on a flat hand at the level of the shoulder, a tray on which are placed the material elements of the "dowry" (*kuyug*). They are wrapped in colorful transparent papers and then disposed so that anyone can admire and count. The camel (*unta*) moved by two people under a bamboo structure covered by cloth moves along the pageant at the same time that a fight is simulated (*kadsasagayan*) by two young boys dressed in yellow and red, and armed with traditional weapon and shield. The gong gives the rhythm. This dance is also performed during the "ritual against disease." The symbolism is not yet obvious. In the olden days, for the rulers' family, it was seven days before the wedding games started. Nowadays, *dayunday* is performed the night before during which a man discusses alternatively, in a flirting mode, with two women. Of recent creation, it meets the enthusiasm of the guests more than the traditional *kulintang* play of eight horizontal gongs.

In the actual marriage ceremony, the celebrant holds under a handkerchief the hand of the man at the same time as the hand of the girl's father or guardian. This tradition can be found elsewhere in the Muslim world. He asks the young man whether he accepts to marry that young lady under the customary rights, with the agreement of the family. The toes of the feet are touching under a cushion. The witnesses light a candle during the acceptance agreeing that there was a previous decision of the two families. Today the girl is usually present on stage and there is an exchange of wedding rings. In the olden days, she would have remained inside hidden by a screen which the bridegroom would go round three times before seeing his wife. Then the newly wed eat from two trays (*dulang*) in a separate room. Three days later, the couple leave the woman's house to go to the bridegroom's family. There they only stay one or two days before going to their home on the girl's or the man's side. Today this is just a short visit with some refreshments.

The steps nowadays for the proposal are much simplified and shortened, for the young people would not like to wait for too long. They choose each other without the previous consent of their parents. Oftentimes they have gone ahead without waiting. Many procedures have been abandoned with the change of value regarding time and money. The celebration around the marriage is reduced to the parade of the previous day (and no longer in town) and the evening advertisement. Races and games have disappeared. What we would call the religious ceremony is also reduced and the endless recital of genealogies, the show of knowledge and language virtuosity, are not practiced anymore. The celebration is becoming more Islamic. The officer, someone learned in Islamic precepts, delivers a short speech. Participants confirm that the maiden is free and the touch of thumbs between the bridegroom and bride's father marks the alliance.

Today occasionally a Koran is offered to the new spouse by her husband. Witnesses validate the marriage and they testify by handling a lit candle. They are two, representing each side, but often there is a dozen of them. Witnesses have also a function of "godfather" for the young couple and it is good if they are numerous. In Islam, marriage is a contract, but not a religious act even though the celebrant must be someone well versed in religion. Before, it was performed by *pandita*, men of knowledge including that of the Islamic faith. The imam of the mosque is chosen among his peer *pandita*. The imam is then only among them and there is no distinction in their kind of knowledge, including Islam and tradition. For example, *pandita* officiates during the ritual of veneration of the dead. He is also called for marriage or funeral.

In fact, marriage is a contract with sociopolitical advantages. It enables two families to gather two lineages who want to increase their influence and consequently their power and wealth. The children of two lineages cumulate the honors of both. It is of importance, for the whole system is based on family and patronage. By an appropriate marriage, the votes of a fraction of the population can be acquired. It is therefore very understandable that marriages are a show-off of wealth, so that the given "dowry" is known publicly to everyone even though sometimes the real patrimony is of a lesser value.

Beside islamization, we can perceive the influence of Christians especially in Cotabato City. A page would carry on a cushion the wedding rings. Bridesmaids are present in colorful dresses as in fashion reviews. The reception takes place in a hotel. In terms of cos-

tume, it ranges from the traditional *malong* for women and *barong tagalog* for the men, or white gown with veil and a Western suit, or again the North African *djellabah*, white or black. The different ways of dressing are just signs of the various influences the Maguindanaons are receiving. Those are the contemporary influences, for we know nothing of the evolution of the rites of marriage during the centuries. Islam brought the legal aspects such as the agreement between the young man and the bride's father. The use of the handkerchief is also practiced in Egypt. There Islamic practices and Arabic ones are sometimes amalgamated.

Precautions must be taken not to attribute to Islam what is not linked to its teaching. Today, the Maguindanaons mention that the remittance of a "dowry" is due by the family of the man to the maiden's family and no marriage could be valid without it. Though it seems that this is practiced in most of Mindanao and by groups who did not convert, and the Tiruray in particular. It is likely that Islam reinforced and gave it more regulations. The Tiruray will give us again an example, for they consider that part of the "dowry" can be given after the consummation of the wedding.

Though Islam considers that a single iron ring would do, the amount given depends on the lineage of the family and its proximity to the "royal" line and therefore to Muhammad, the Prophet. Thus the linkage to Islam is made preeminent. We use the term "dowry" as a whole but there are many components in what must be given to the family of the bride, to the various participants of a negotiation, to the lord of the area and as part of the expenses of the wedding (*kalilang*) and objects for personal usage, such as a bed, and linen, clothes, make-up, etc. Today the amount can raise to an exorbitant amount which implies that some would never be able to marry. Consequently, young Muslim professionals marry Christians to avoid this difficulty.

The Maguindanaons often recall that with the coming of Islam, they learned to avoid incest. Before there was no law, it was chaos. The myth-legend of the coming of the first official missionary tells how he married Putri Tunina and found out she was the sister he was searching for. It is related how she appeared between and found the bamboos. One material detail (a ring or a box accordingly to the versions) enabled them to find out they were brother and sister and then they separated. Two levels of incest are recognized. The first level (*sumbang*), is with blood relatives, *sumbing* is with alliance relatives. Is this an influence of Islam on sexual life?

So marriage is clearly an interaction between Islamic elements and some sprinkling of the habits of the Christian neighbors all the more in a town like Cotabato where the Muslim Maguindanaons are a minority. Maidens go out to school and are not close enough to be seen by a small community. Even if decreasing, a number of marriages are still arranged by the parents without the knowledge of the children, especially the daughters. It is all the more in practice among the Maranaos, but rarely among the Maguindanaons, where the maiden does not appear during the wedding ceremony, but remains hidden until the bridegroom finds her after the ceremony. While the ancestral rites are more and more shortened, the Islamic rites are increasing in importance. In the town, the nuptial ceremony is very briefly followed by a banquet.

Summary of Rituals

In conclusion the two short rituals are essentially constituted of a prayer and an offering. The thanksgiving rite which lasts no more than a few minutes for the prayers is followed by a meal of about half an hour. On the other hand, the ritual against diseases and the ritual of marriage extends to several days. The "ritual against disease" is hardly borrowed from Islam, though it may have adapted a lot. In the absence of written sources, it is extremely difficult to capture the evolution of traditional practices considered as unchangeable. While the exact changes may not be identified and described, it is possible to analyze the influences bearing on these rituals. It is reasonable to think that a massive islamization would have consequences more serious for the local customs. References to Satan are obviously an Islamic influence. This is why it is so fragile and does not resist reislamization. The "ritual of veneration" owes nothing to Islam in terms of concept but it changed its form by using Islamic prayer. The "thanksgiving ritual" is also an interesting combination in which the ritual meal is very Malay while the prayer accompanying is totally Islamic. We can thus notice that a local practice can easily infuse elements coming from Islam, as it appears, and disturbing the function and the order of the rituals. That is how they can easily contravene Islamic precepts and the specialists would not be disturbed by contradictions when they think they are feeling very respectful. Nonetheless "ritual of veneration" as well as "thanksgiving ritual" both violate the first pillar of Islam, meaning that there

is only one God and that no intermediary must be called to reach Him. In the first ritual the intermediaries are the ancestors, when in the second they are those invisible beings belonging to the tradition as well as to Islam.

The "thanksgiving ritual" occupies an average situation since it seems to be relatively accepted by the new generation of religious men which may not last if a Wahabite type of Islam, only rampant in 1994, becomes prevalent. Marriage also is a special stance since it is the only one which has a correspondence in the Islamic world and it has a necessary function within a society. So the passage to a more "Islamic" wedding can easily be done and progressively. Local traditions tend to fade away not because of their indigenous character but because of the changes of values and lifestyle and economic constraints. At least today, the rituals against disease and the ritual of veneration appear to be disappearing. The first is rarely celebrated while the second is no longer openly done.

Islamization

To better understand those phenomena, we must first consider the form of Islam in the Philippines, and recall the course of the Islamization. Myths and history have both their version of the first official missionary in his means of transportation coming from wonder. This means of transportation varies accordingly to the versions: *Burak*, the winged ride of Mahomet or, a *kawa*, a frying-pan. But the process of islamization lasted for several centuries. Repetitious contacts, even if not frequent, with passing Arabs on their way to China, first raised the interest of local leaders until they were converted. Islam was already in Manila when the Spaniards came due to the political influence of the sultanate of Brunei. But Islam also came through the other route via Celebes and Moluccas and the sultanates established there. Ternate was the most powerful since its territory extended to the extreme South East of Mindanao Island. Islam benefited from this existing network and was instrumental in reinforcing it in spite of the disruption due to the colonial powers and the Dutch monopoly. First conversions in the so-called Philippines go back to the fourteenth century. But even if some leaders were converted, it took much time for Islam to spread and reach most of the population. The leaders appreciated the ideology which reinforced their legitimacy and their power, but apparently the inhabitants did

not follow them right away. The teaching was completely irregular and incomplete because of the short number of missionaries and their sometimes short length of stay. So people learned portions of Islam progressively and the shock was not so big. It enabled them to retain more easily their previous practices infusing, as we have already stated, elements of Islam. Thus the retained elements have not been the same all over the area. Consequently Islam was not a factor of uniformity.

The rituals described above reflect this mixture of culture and obvious contradictions coming from the fact that Islam did not erase previous customs. This is not particular to the area nor to Islam. Even Christianity suffered the same problems in spite of more systematic reconstruction in the parishes due to the clergy. With every missionary, Islam was presenting a different look, for there was no possibility for a full teaching, but only aspects which the missionaries would emphasize differently except for the basic requirements. The cult at the mosques would probably have no local equivalent so they could easily remain separate, but as prayers are concerned, they could easily replace local invocations to some elements of nature venerated before by an animism population. But the invisible pantheon obviously remained very vivid with consequent problems for a monotheist religion. Spirits of the tradition could appropriately serve as linkages to Allah. Offering prayers on the tombs is the best example of this drift. This can also be seen through the epics where some modifications had been sprinkled in the text. But those borrowings are clearly small in number and secondary for they have not changed the general plot.

We cannot determine what local rites have been eliminated by Islamic principles. Certain suggestions have been made of how the "ritual against disease" may have been affected by Islam. But it is too risky to state anything precise without knowing the pre-Islamic practices. A deep study of the rituals of the Manobo neighbors, who remained animist, could give only a hint, but no more.

The strongest incompatibilities may have been eradicated, but we would think that accommodation was rather the usual meeting point. It even seems that soulism reinforced magical practices by giving a very solid core. The rites of divination, love and hatred are charms aiming at the death of the hated person. Though today it is common to say that these are forbidden and bad.

Before concluding the discussion of Islamic influence, it is worthwhile to emphasize that politics and law have been much enriched

by Islam and have helped states which were not yet constituted. From Islam, the states borrowed concepts, ideology and ruling organization. As far as law is concerned, the Shari'ah code entered partially and was affected by a drastic simplification, but, as a whole, the general procedures have been totally transformed by it. Concerning succession, only the main lines have been preserved and not always the same one. What also appears is that in practice most of the time it came to a drastic application in which the eldest brother would inherit. The very respect towards the elders was enough to disrupt all the refinements of Islamic rules of succession. Above all, Islam is not dissociated from Arabic customs and there is a total amalgamation of the two, giving them equal importance.

It is important to remember that knowledge was not divided between various specialists of rituals, except for the "ritual against disease." One learned man would be competent in Islam, in tradition, in performing rituals, practicing magic, divination and medicine. So the knowledge was integrated in the persons who did not segregate the various "sciences" but performed them globally as part of the overall culture of the inhabitants of the area. So no conflict nor opposition could arise between two well integrated systems.

Muslims yesterday and today, are claiming their right to be different from the Christian majority of the country. Moreover they remained an independent state for centuries. In spite of the still strong ethnic particularisms of the various Muslim groups, the notion of Bansa Moro, meaning a "Muslim Nation," exists today. Each group remains loyal to its own tradition which distinguishes it from the rest whether Muslim or Christian. The present reislamization which unifies the practices by rooting them into Islam might erase the local tradition in order to reach a more Islamic way of life and bring together the thirteen Muslim ethnic groups. Islam will then be very destructive to the cultural heritage.

The Influence of the West

The direct influence on custom by the Spaniards has been relatively weak for they had limited contacts until the nineteenth century when the Spaniards managed to interfere with the succession of sultans and when later the Jesuits settled in Tamontaka in the delta. The Jesuits started educating the runaway slaves, teaching them how to work. They thus broke the social-political stratification in the

area. The changes brought about are linguistic, for some words have been borrowed by the Maguindanaons. Some fines are evaluated in *cuspidor*, Spanish for spitting-bowl. *Multa* for the fine is less used than the local words such as *kasalan* for a simple fine *orbangun*, compensation in case of bloodshed. *Coruna* is also used for "crown" when such an object has no usage, for the Maguindanaons were using the knotted handkerchief on their head according to their kinship and with their particular design. The Spaniards, like the Dutch nearby, by their trade monopolies, destroyed the traditional economic flow by controlling a portion of the Malay archipelago. They also, disrupted the traditional trade patterns in terms of linkages, routes, items, demands and offers. This definitely had an influence on the customary practices though it is quite uneasy to pinpoint them. In spite of the fact that there was no early direct influence on the area, the changes in economical usages could have remained without consequences, because a society is a complex intertwined of all aspects and all are affected by changes in one of them including ritual practices. Moreover it is likely that the society itself would have taken measures in order to remain in control of the unwelcome changes. One of them could be an attempt to protect its identity by reinforcing the social linkages. Therefore instead of weakening, rituals which have a role in the social cohesion may have been reinforced.

Let us consider the place of the "slaves" in society. They provide abundant free labor or if they are less numerous, they become more valuable, better treated, and their skill might be better taken advantage of, for they represent a value to the society. As an item, they can also be part of the "dowry." They also could be given as a payment of fines. They are also the workers in community affairs like a wedding. Without "slaves" the community ties might be reinforced because people do preparations together including the long cooking when a marriage is big. As rituals are considered, we can intuitively think that the "slaves" were no part of them, except for work, to protect the sacred relations with the spirits. Moreover some "slaves" did for the Maguindanaon all type of artcraft which could have been later missing for respecting the proper steps of rituals. We can add that they are various types of what we call "slaves." The slaves captured in other islands were replaced by those who were taken from the non Islamic neighbor tribes who did not have the same capabilities in term of craft. We can also mention the person deprived of freedom for debt or non-payment of a fine. Those belonged to the

same ethnic group as the temporary master. Their participation in a ritual consequently could only be different. These have disappeared a generation ago. So desperation of service is relatively recent.

Let us consider the simpler example of material change like the introduction of chairs and tables which probably changed the physical setting of participants and celebrants during the "ritual of thanksgiving." So today the religious men sit separately with the only traditional tray left in the house. Consequently, the religious could not remain exactly the same because the material setting did not have the same function and symbolism as when everyone was sharing the ritual. Now people remain standing, praying for a few seconds, unwillingly stopping their conversation with the person next to them.

The administration of the Americans was very vigorous once peace and order had been violently imposed. Justice also depended on American law. The Americans tolerated amicable settlements, but not in case of murder, to prevent violence and retaliation. The objective was to render universal practice, but also to prevent the Muslims from resorting to violence in settling their differences. The local hierarchy could no longer assure order and could no longer stop the retaliation.

The consequences must have been drastic in terms of leadership and social cohesion, but also in material life, warfare matters and ideology. A percentage of Protestants are due to the work of American missionaries who came with the new administration sometimes setting schools. Let us recall that Spanish administration was in remote places executed by missionaries, the only ones to go there. The rulers became puppets for their power remained limited to nonpolitical affairs like settlement of cases excluding death (to prevent violence and retaliation), the counseling of the people, the support in terms of marriage, etc. In other terms they used their influence to keep the cohesion of their kin as would any elder. Thus the aristocrats also lost what was part of their privileges and means of subsistence, like getting fines in kind or in properties, or people bound to work for them for a period of time. Not only local "lords" received part of the paid fines, but moreover the less scrupulous ones seized the whole property of the disagreeing persons. Moreover the Americans offered a totally different institutional and political model as well as moral attitude. This was diffused through the numerous schools they built in the country even in remote barrios. It is well known that rather than sending their children to school, the aristo-

crats sent their "slaves" not knowing they gave them a chance to become professionals and prepared for the modern world. This was not a direct shaking of society but it was very deep for it affected part of one generation of people. The faith system, even if not attacked, was not propagated, when the missionaries tried to settle as much as possible. The old (*guru*) teacher-pupil type of teaching was slowly by-passed which prevented tradition, meaning local and Islamic knowledge, to be transmitted by word of mouth as before. Performing rituals was part of the traditional teaching, though the deeper knowledge was only passed on to the blood or spiritual son. The forbidding of "slaves" by the Americans also reduced the stature of the lower class of society which was never really the lowest because it was always above the "slaves". As we can see, the upper class also lost privileges and power. So the whole stratification moved one step below the Americans occupying the highest position. Justice also depended on American law. The Americans tolerated only amicable settlement, but not in case of murder to prevent violence and retaliation. The objective was to render universal practice, but also to prevent the Muslims from resorting to violence in settling their differences. The local hierarchy could no longer assure order and can no longer stop the retaliation.

In terms of practices and rituals, since the aristocrats lost so much power, privilege and source of income, they could not sustain magnificent rituals, such as life cycle rituals. That continued to destroy their images and their position of superiority. So little by little, rituals must have become simplified and removed of their decorative and show-off functions. Did that affect their validity and the belief of the people? We would think not, because, they might have been performed by the simple people, but on a low scale basis with the expenditure they could afford taken into consideration and the whole kin shouldering such events to make them possible. What may have been lost in the process is what the craftsmanship luxury would induce.

The Republic of the Philippines

The Republic of the Philippines did not have the same means to control their Southern citizens. The Muslims, thinking that the Christian Filipinos would be prejudiced towards them, asked for separate independence. The Christians on their side still saw the Muslims as those raiders who destroyed their home, and took them as slaves,

those "cruel" and "hypocrite" people. Then they started a process which shook the bases of the society. After the second world war, settlers came and progressively occupied all available lands in Mindanao. The Muslims not only lost their political independence but progressively they lost their space. Land was not claimed for there was too much of it, but quite fast the Muslims were surrounded by Christians. The deforestation denuded almost all the mountains. All this is quite well known but our interest here is to underline the changes, brutal sometimes, which these events caused the native population. From masters they became a minority and an underdeveloped one from an educational and an economic point of view. Already politically dismantled, socially destabilized, they were above all despised, not even knowing why.

How can you feel the same when the world shrinks and when you feel you have to sustain rights which were so naturally granted to you until then? Nature would not provide them anymore its wild life and fruits. Everything became counted, cash replaced barter. The self-subsistence became hard to sustain. We can imagine that, consequently, rituals started to shrink, reducing their scope, being limited in their means. Maguindanaons had to turn themselves to farmers challenged by their Christian neighbors who had a better know-how and who already had left everything in their province of origin to start better life in this faraway Mindanao. The Muslims had to keep a cohesion to resist, though a number of them sold land which did not belong to them within the community system.

This time local political practice became involved with the national one. The Muslim areas entered into the national political arena. Marcos had seen how to use the old kinship system to his advantage. He fostered one faction through elections obliging the other one, who did not have the whole government paraphernalia with it all the more in a Martial law setting, to get organized. Within the traditional system, it was easy for both factions to gather kin and clientele. Therefore the two fronts were immediately constituted. The name of Allah has been consequently used against the Manila party. The opposition had only one possible fight. Fighting was not only against the central government but against the Christians who had not decided to give away their new home. This has been called a Christian-Muslim war.

Such a war was the cause for so many tragedies, destructions, displacements that things could never be again as before. Many old people died, many widows remained. Everyone became more hard

up, life turned to be materially more difficult. Agrarian rituals (*palay-palayan*) became more difficult to practice. We can suppose that the cultural losses which resulted from the disruption of peace and order were paving the way for a "new Islam" to come in, because tradition had weakened. This of course, occurred when petro-dollars came bringing financial support, building mosques, Koranic schools, giving scholarship to the Middle-East, sending missionaries to the Philippines and funding the armed rebellion. Some South-East Asian Muslim countries participated in that.

The effect of public schools of the Western type added to that of Koranic teaching, took away the attention of the young toward other values of reference, for some the Western world and modernization and for others the Arabic way of life. It is laicism against religious ways. At any rate, customs and tradition were despised disrupting the order. Old religious men complain that the ways of their forefathers are being questioned. All add up to destroy the ritual life and explain the evolution we have been presenting. So nationalism or ethnicism sided with Islam, for it is a way out of the Christian majority and it has always been the basis of the difference. In the past, the cultural identity was one with the Islamic beliefs but now this dimension is left aside. Java has proved to be more consistent, for Islam is not a minority and the cultural identity is much stronger and ancient. The Muslims have always been proud of their differences and they have fought for it.

We could say that this step is now paving the way for the growing of an orthodox or Wahabit Islam of which a visible sign are the women completely veiled in black only showing their eyes. Today custom is no more a challenge to any new ideas.

Conclusion

All those consideration have favored Islamization of the area which now is destroying the local beliefs and practices precisely because they are not in line with orthodox Islam. Now that so many of the traditional leaders are out of power, that tradition is declining which can be the coherence of the society if Islam is not. There will be another division, for educated Muslims are unlikely to join such a move unless they see there a base for power.

In olden days the role of Islam was considerable and constituted the society even though some principles had been twisted within the

slow process. Today it has a destructive influence on the society. It provokes a confusion of civilization: how to choose between the West and modernism, or Islam and a religious way of life, because the two coexist in the system of education.

As a conclusion, what is the future of all customs of the Maguindanaon within this time of national and international pressure? Some can simply disappear even from memory. Some might get fixed in their actual form, to protect them and at the same time empty them from their substance. Some will be so simplified that only some gestures would remain. Some might get adjusted to the new situation. In this case, values, concepts and aims might be altered or displaced. Our example is the headhunting ritual of the Puyuma (J. Cauquelin) or the Yatmul celebration of the death which is performed accordingly to the tourist customers (B. Coiffier).

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