



BARMM

# Pusaka

Embodying Prestige of the BARMM's Cultural Properties





## About the Cover

The cover of the BARMM PUSAKA Coffee Table Book is a gateway to the rich cultural landscape of the region. "Embodying the Prestige of the BARMM's Cultural Properties," the cover serves as both visual and symbolic introduction and interpretation of the bountiful treasures and essence of the region's cultural heritage.

At the core of this cover are elements representing each province: the Inaul of Maguindanao, the Okir of Lanao del Sur, the Tanyak-Tanyak of Basilan, the Kalis of Sulu, the Tepo Weaving of Tawi-Tawi, and the Golden Mosque of the City of Cotabato.

The color scheme of the cover reflects the vibrancy and diversity of BARMM's cultural heritage. Altogether, it is a work of art and a visual embodiment of the region's pride, showcasing the rich cultural items, traditions, and practices that continue to shape the Bangsamoro identity.

The various colors and geometrical patterns envisaged showcases the Bangsamoro identity mirrored thru the cultural properties to entice the creative thinking and interest of both the children and youth not only in the Bangsamoro region but throughout the country.

# Preface

## **BCPCH Mandate**

The Bangsamoro Commission for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage (BCPCH-BARMM) is duty bound to write the history of the Bangsamoro people and further preserve the history, culture, arts, traditions, and rich cultural heritage including their Sultanates such as those of Sulu, Maguindanao, Kabuntalan, Buayan, the Royal Houses of Ranao, and of the Iranun, and the non-Moro Indigenous Peoples by establishing cultural institutions, programs, and projects in the region.

The Commission shall coordinate and work closely with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), National Museum of the Philippines (NMP), and other concerned cultural agencies for the preservation of cultural heritage.

It shall establish libraries and museums, declare and restore historical shrines, and cultural sites, establishment of museums and similar institutions to preserve the Bangsamoro heritage for posterity.

## **BCPCH Vision**

A primary institution mandated with the preservation of history, identity and cultural heritage of the Bangsamoro people.

## **BCPCH Mission**

An institution that protects, promotes, conserves, and preserves the cultural heritage, identity, and historical rights of the Bangsamoro people through the inclusive formulation, implementation, and mainstreaming of relevant and responsive policies, as well as sustainable programs.

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#### **COURTESY**

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Province of Lanao del Sur	
• Mindanao State University Museum	
• Municipality of Marantao Mayor, Hon. Akhira Adiong	
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• BCPCH Lanao Provincial Staff	

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- Merylyn G. Sanson
- Lamitan City Library and Museum

Province of Sulu

- Indajinis Cultural Association
- Aida's Nito Hats
- National Museum in Sulu
- Sulu Pakukus
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- Narhizra Hashim
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- TPWC Chairwoman and Tawi-Tawi Province First Lady Hja. Jumda Sali
- Tandubas Municipality Mayor, Hon. Al-Shalid A. Salih
- BCPCH Tawi-Tawi Provincial Staff

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## MESSAGE OF THE BCPCH CHAIRPERSON

In our quest to preserve, conserve, and protect the rich cultural heritage of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), the Bangsamoro Commission for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage (BCPCH-BARMM) proudly presents this Coffee Table Book. As mandated by the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), the BCPCH takes primary responsibility for documenting and preserving the history, culture, arts, traditions, and heritage of the Bangsamoro people across the BARMM alongside with the thorough process of chronicling our history from the perspective of the Bangsamoro people.

This book serves as a vibrant showcase of the diverse cultural items and heritage from the provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Basilan. It is designed not only to celebrate and honor our rich cultural heritage but also to educate and inspire the younger generation. By engaging with this collection, children and readers of all ages can deepen their understanding and appreciation of the unique culture that shapes our identity.

We hope this compilation will enrich your knowledge and foster a deeper connection to the cultural treasures of the BARMM. Let this book be evidence to the legacy of the Bangsamoro people and a beacon for future generations to cherish and preserve.

**SALEM Y. LINGASA, PH. D.**  
BCPCH Chairperson



## MESSAGE OF THE COMMISSIONER

The province of Maguindanao is renowned for its exquisite brass metalwork, vibrant woven fabrics, and traditional musical dances and practices that are admired throughout the Bangsamoro region. Embedded within this rich cultural heritage are traditions, authentic cultural artifacts, and master artisans who play a crucial role in preserving province's cultural heritage.

In light of this, the Bangsamoro Commission for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage (BCPCH-BARMM) Maguindanao provincial office warmly invites everyone to explore the province's vibrant cultural heritage through this Coffee Table Book. The book showcases a collection of items from the Maguindanao area, highlighting the history, traditions, and artistic talents that define Maguindanaon communities.

Creating this Coffee Table Book has been a privilege, as it reflects the cultural identity of the Maguindanaons. Our goal is to capture the essence of their rich cultural heritage, providing an engaging overview of traditions with the hope of inspiring and enlightening readers. We offer this collection to foster a deeper connection with the Bangsamoro's rich cultural heritage, while appreciating the diversity and resilience of the Bangsamoro people.

**SALEM Y. LINGASA, PH. D.**  
Commissioner





# *Maguindanao Cultural Items and Heritage*

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## Sipil

The five-section Sipil, made of brass, is used to keep Apug, Namat, and Maman clean and free from contamination. This item holds great cultural importance for the Maguindanaon people as it represents their tradition of chewing betel nut.





## *Gador or Lemba*

Gador, also called Lemba, is a brass container that is traditionally given by the groom's family to the bride's relatives during weddings. It can also be used as a dowry, known as "Mahr." This brass item is made using a refined version of the lost wax method.



# Patakiya

The brass Patakiya often used as a “lemba” or decorative piece, and is prominently displayed during Maguindanaon celebrations, especially weddings. Its design reflects the skilled craftsmanship and rich cultural artistry of the Maguindanaon people.







## Dudan

The Dudan is typically made from 'galang' or brass and plays an important role in the cultural tradition of chewing and dipping tobacco, serving as an essential tool for this practice.







# Langgaman

The Langgaman is a traditional tool made from sharp steel and wood, designed to help harvesters reach deep into thick rice stalks during the harvest. Each time the Langgaman is used, it represents a successful harvest and shows the strong connection to traditional harvesting methods.





# Sayap and Buyang

Sayap is a wide-brimmed hat made from local materials like pandan, buri palms, coconut leaves, water hyacinths, and different palm varieties.

Buyang, known as a handheld fan in the Maguindanaon language, is crafted from palm leaves, mainly from the buri and anahaw palms.

Both Sayap and Buyang reflect the sustainability, practicality, and excellent craftsmanship of the Maguindanaon people.





# Tudong

Tudong is a colorful food cover made from pandan leaves dyed in different colors such as yellow, green, maroon, and violet. It also uses coconut leaves and bamboo strips underneath for extra strength. For the Maguindanaons, the Tudong is essential for special occasions such as weddings, Aqiqah ceremonies, enthronements, and other significant events, as it helps keep the food warm and fresh.







# Binangga

The Binangga is a clay pot that served as a water container in Maguindanaon homes in the past. The porous texture of the clay gave the water a unique taste, showing the resourcefulness and creativity of the Maguindanaon people during that time.

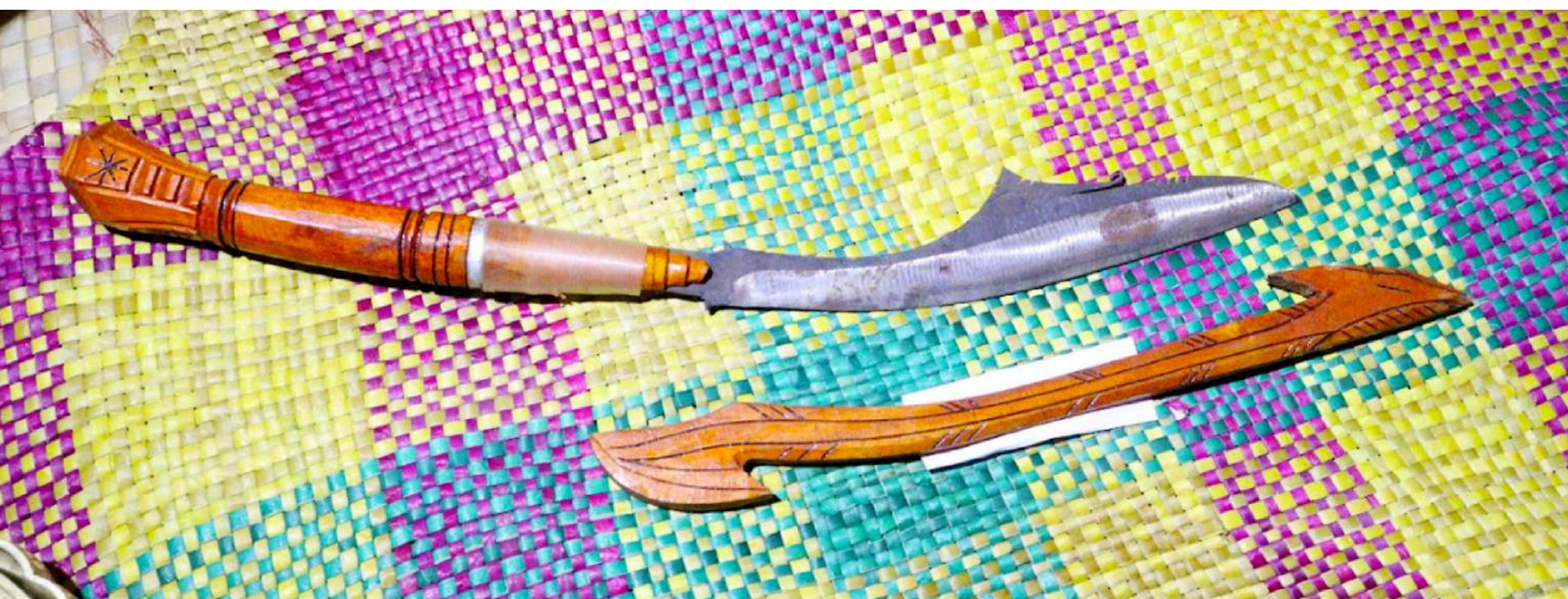




## Sundang or Lanti

Sundang is a traditional weapon used by the Moro people. It features a unique straight (Matidtu) or wavy (Lanti) design that looks like the flames of the Naga (a mythical serpent) and is often carried by the Maguindanaoan warriors.









## *Bolo or Binuwaya*

The Bolo, also known as the Binuwaya blade, is a preferred weapon among Maguindanaon soldiers of the highest ranks. Each of its three parts represents different Maguindanaon communities: Rajah Buwayan (the blade), Datu Maguindanao (the middle section), and Sultan Kabuntalan (the handle). Today, Binuwaya is mostly used in cultural rituals, especially during wedding ceremonies.









## Brassware

Brassware production in Barangay Mother Kalanganan, City of Cotabato, has a long-standing tradition of creating cultural items reflecting the rich heritage of the Maguindanaon people.

Artisans follow a meticulous process, starting with carving designs on wax molds, coating them with clay, and then pouring molten brass into the molds.

Despite the challenges of brassware making, a new generation of artisans in the city continues this ancestral craft. However, with only a few skilled craftsmen left, preserving this tradition requires the collective support of the community.





# Kulintang Ensemble

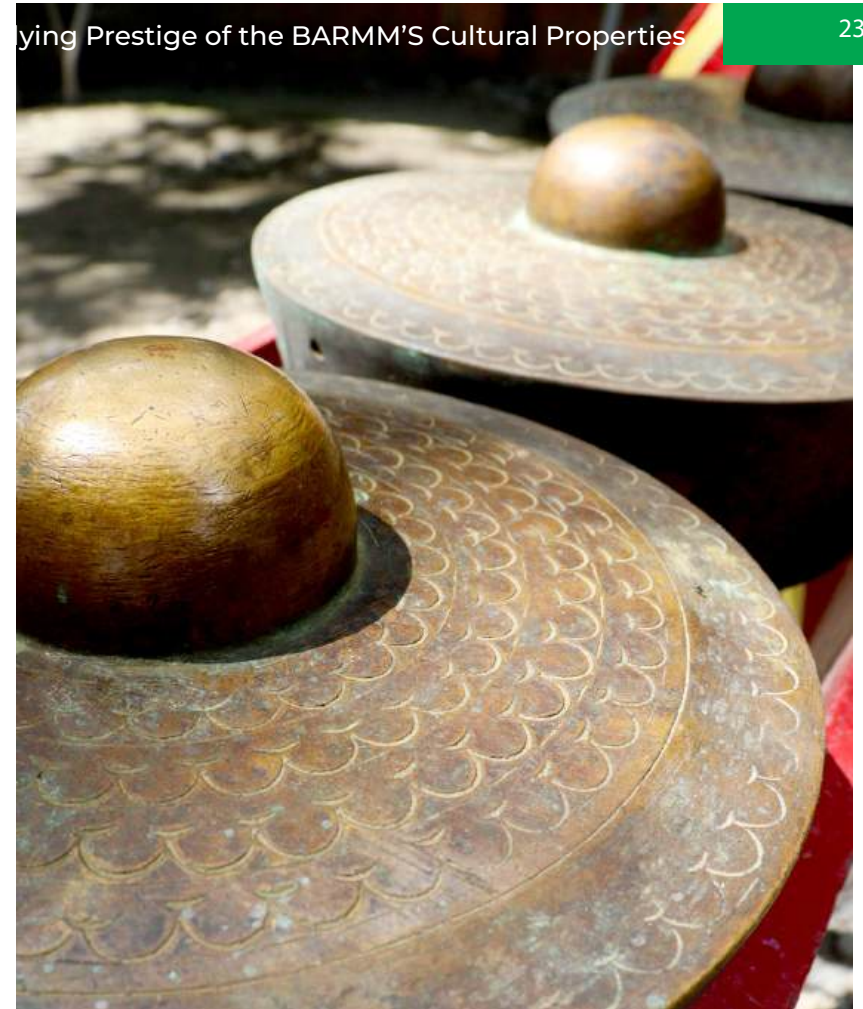
The Maguindanaon Kulintang ensemble is made up of gong-chime instruments, each adding its own sound to the group's rhythm. The Kulintang, along with the Tantangan, is the main instrument, leading the melody with its deep tones.

Other instruments like the Dabakan, Babendil, Gandingan, and Agung bring more layers to the rhythm. This gong-chime group plays an important role in the musical traditions of the Maguindanaon people.

Besides being featured in music competitions, Kulintang music is performed at special events like festivals, marriage proposals, engagement parties (Salangguni), and Aqiqah.











## Dabakan

Dabakan is a drum that looks like a gourd and is usually made from the trunk of a palm tree. Its drumhead is traditionally crafted from monitor lizard and snake skin. Dabakan helps the rhythm much like the Bebendil does.





## Gandingan

Gandingan consists of four large hanging gongs and adds an extra melodic layer to support the main kulintang instrument.





## Babendil

Babendil is the main timekeeping instrument in the kulintang ensemble. It usually measures about one foot in diameter, making it larger than the biggest kulintang gong and similar in size to the agong or gandingan.



# Agong

Agong is made up of large, heavy gongs with wide rims that produce deep bass sounds. It mainly acts as a supporting element in the kulintang ensemble, helping to enrich the melody created by the kulintang through basic patterns and interlocking rhythms. It is also used for ceremonial purposes and societal events.











## Pottery

Pottery-making is a labor-intensive process that requires patience, skill, and a deep appreciation for the artistry involved. It is the art of molding clay into various shapes, which are then solidified by firing at high temperatures to create durable objects. In Barangay Sariff Saidona, Municipality of Datu Piang, Pottery Master Tunina Buka is renowned for her exceptional skill in this craft. From the careful selection of high-quality clay to the meticulous shaping and finishing of each piece, Tunina's commitment to her art is evident at every step.







## Inaul

Inaul means “woven” and is very important in Maguindanao culture. Usually made with cotton or silk threads, Inaul is a physical representation of Maguindanaon heritage, valued as a symbol of “Barabangsa,” which stands for dignity, honor, and cultural significance.





## Obul-Obul

Obul-obul is a part of Maguindanaon wedding decorations and is shown alongside the Pandala, Sambulayang, Bagiyuntay, Pamanay, and Lansay. Its different designs and bright colors reflect the richness of Moro cultures and their historical significance.





## MESSAGE OF THE COMMISSIONER

I am deeply moved by the release of this remarkable coffee table book. It is not just a stunning collection of images and stories; it is a testament to our collective commitment to safeguarding and celebrating the rich cultural heritage of the Meranaws.

This book is more than just a beautiful addition to our coffee tables; it is a vital tool in our noble work of preserving and promoting the diverse traditions, craftsmanship, and history that make Meranaws so unique. Each page serves as a reminder of the importance of our mission, inspiring us to continue our efforts to ensure that our cultural heritage flourishes for generations to come.

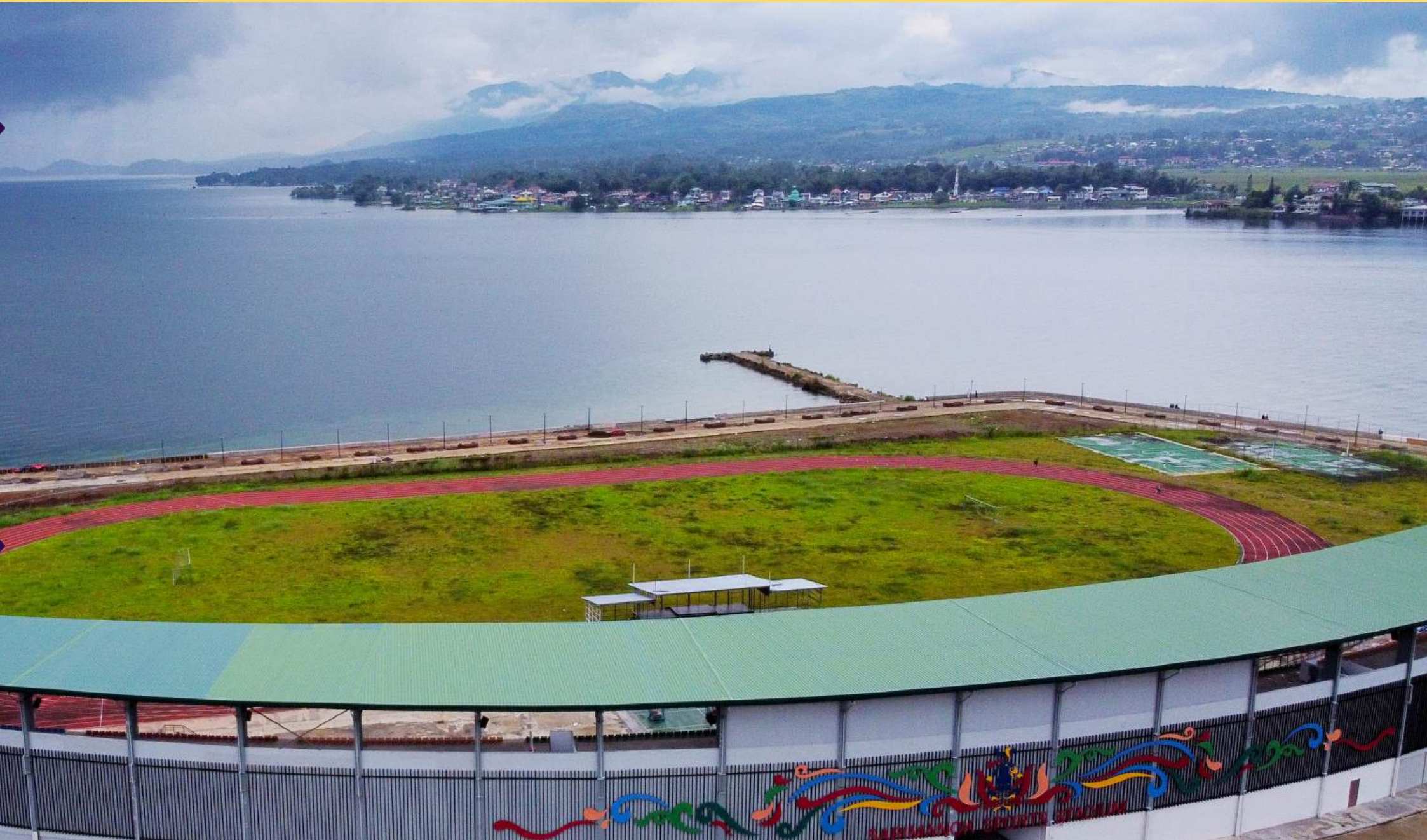
I commend all involved in bringing this invaluable resource to life, and I am confident that it will serve as a catalyst for even greater appreciation and preservation of our cherished heritage.

**ROBERT M. ALONTO**  
BCPCH-Lanao del Sur





# Lanao Del Sur Cultural Items and Heritage







## Torogan

Torogan is a grand symbol of the Meranaw's architectural and cultural heritage, showcasing both artistry and social status in the Meranaw community. Made from strong hardwood and supported by whole tree trunks, its most notable feature is the detailed carvings on the Panolong, the decorative beam-ends featuring Okir designs.

A prime example of a Torogan is located in Marantao, Lanao del Sur. Built two centuries ago, it belongs to Sulutan sa Kawayan Macaantal Montiya. Abdulmalik M. Disoma, a descendant of the Sulutan, believes that the construction of the Torogan was a group effort by the local communities.







## Baor

The Baor is a traditional wooden chest that showcases the remarkable craftsmanship of the Meranaw people. Its elaborate designs, enhanced with Tipay (polished shell cut-outs), and durable construction make it more than just a decorative piece.

Ansary G. Bantayan, a skilled artisan from the Municipality of Tugaya, has been crafting these chests since 1979. He learned the trade from his parents and has passed these woodworking skills on to his family, helping preserve the Meranaw community's traditions.







## Dbakan

The Dbakan is a unique drum shaped like a goblet that is utilized in Kulintang ensembles to enhance the rhythm. It is positioned to the right side of the Kulintang and is traditionally considered a masculine instrument.



## Brass

Brassware craftsmanship is known for its detailed designs, mixing complex geometric patterns, nature-inspired elements, and Islamic art influences. In Barangay Bubong, Municipality of Tugaya, master artisan Nasser M. Salsal has been practicing this craft for 53 years. With a deep understanding of tradition and skill, he has created many brass pieces, each showing his dedication to the craft.







# Gunong

The Gunong is a traditional dagger used for cutting and stabbing, often featuring either a straight or curved blade. While it was once a practical weapon, it is now valued as a symbol of cultural heritage.







## Igaan

The Igaan is a traditional bed that showcases Meranaw culture and craftsmanship. The bed frame is decorated with detailed Okir carvings, while the mattress, pillows, and canopy are embellished with Langkit, featuring complex patterns that add to its decorative appeal.





## Kampilan

Kampilan is a single-edged sword that gradually widens toward its pointed tip. A unique feature is the small spike on the flat side near the tip. The wooden handle, made from local hardwood, showcases exceptional skill in making the sword.



## Kris

The Kris sword of the Meranaws is notable for its durability. Its wavy silver blade is noted for its distinctive appearance, and the carved handle gives a secure grip. The blunt tip provides an additional degree of safety, offering the wielder complete control over the weapon. The scabbard is composed of indigenous wood and strengthened with rattan or metal strips.

Kris sword-making has strong roots in the Municipality of Tugaya, Lanao del Sur. According to craftsmen in Barangay Raya, the process might take from five to twenty days, depending on the size and complexity. Today, the Kris represents respect and honor, and is commonly worn at Sultanate enthronement rites.







## Langkit

Langkit is a colorful fabric strip made using a backstrap loom and featuring Okir designs. It's used to join pieces of fabric or to enhance the look of garments like the malong and Landap, as well as other traditional clothing. Langkit showcases the impressive weaving skills of the Meranaw people.







## Mamaan

The Mamaan, or Betel Nut Box, is a traditional brass container decorated with Okir designs. It has separate sections to store everything needed for betel nut chewing, like betel nuts, slaked lime, and betel leaves.

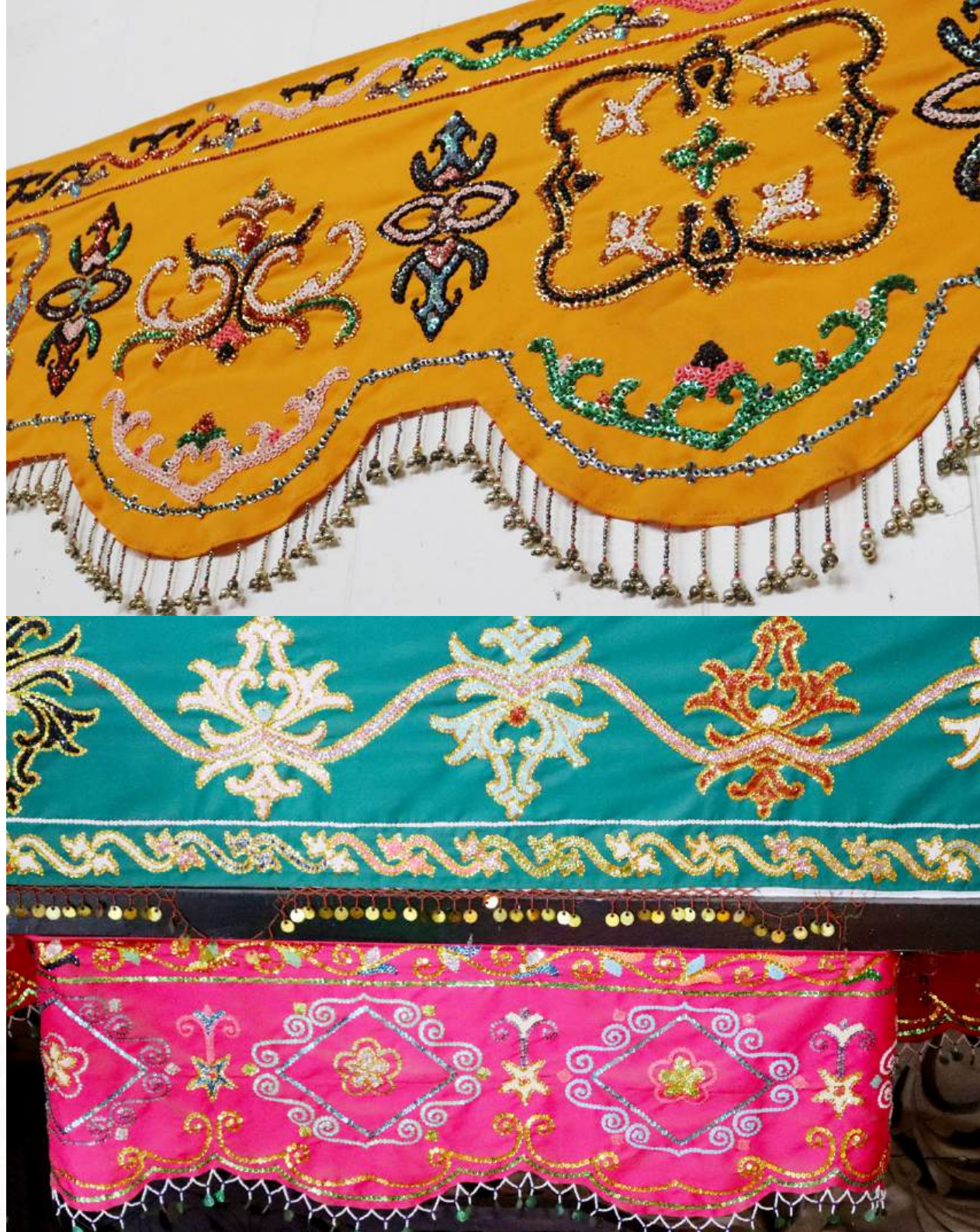






# Mamandiyang

Mamandiyang is a traditional Meranaw decoration known for its vibrant colors and Okir designs. It is frequently used to decorate Meranaw homes and is especially present during special events like weddings and Sultanate enthronement ceremonies.







## Okir

Okir is a special artistic and cultural tradition of the Meranaws, known for its detailed designs that are often carved or shaped from hardwood, brass, and silver. These designs feature geometric and flowing patterns inspired by leaves and vines, making Okir a signature element of Meranaw art and artworks influenced by Muslim culture.





## Panolong

Panolong is a key feature of the Meranaw Torogan, which is a traditional home for a Sultan or Datu. It serves as an extended beam in the royal house.



## Sarimanok

In Lanao del Sur, the Meranaws use a bird-like figure called sarimanok, but it doesn't have any religious significance. Today, many Meranaws associate it with the idea of "royalty," although generally, the sarimanok is used mainly as a decorative element.







Satoran  
M...







## *Kandama (Satora)*

Kanduma or Satora is a distinct style of chess played by the Meranaws, characterized by a particular architectural layout. Sultans, Datus, and other respected members of the Meranaw community often play Satora matches for leisure with their family and friends, typically in the beautiful setting of the Torogan.







## Glat

The glat is a special cutting tool used in the daily lives of the Meranaws. It also shows their skill in craftsmanship and is a symbol of their cultural pride.





## Lake Lanao

Lake Lanao is a natural wonder known for its vast waters and peaceful atmosphere. The Meranaw people share a deep connection to the lake, as their name, “Meranaw,” which translates to “the people of the lake,” reflect their cultural identity. This bond is evident in their daily lives and traditions, with fishing, farming, and artisanal crafts all closely tied to the lake’s resources. The lake serves as a vital source of life, inspiration, and a keeper of their traditions, symbolizing the harmonious relationship between the Meranaw people and their environment.





## MESSAGE OF THE COMMISSIONER

In early 1849, during the Spanish occupation, conquistadors established a colonial base in Zamboanga City and annexed Basilan, significantly expanding the coverage of their government. Known by many names, including Taguime, Puh Gulangan, Tambun, Puh Mahadje, Basih Balan, and Timugen, Basilan is a beautiful province steeped in history and rich in diversity. The Spanish government linked Basilan to Taguime and renamed Pasangen to Isabela in honor of Queen Isabella II of Spain. Now, we invite you to immerse yourself in the vibrant tapestry of Basilan's culture through this coffee table book. Serving as a window into the soul of Basilan, it showcases the province's unique traditions, captivating landscapes, and the enduring spirit of its people. From the echoes of its past to the rhythm of its present, every page is a testament to Basilan's resilience and charm. May your journey through these pages deepen your appreciation for the beauty that is Basilan.

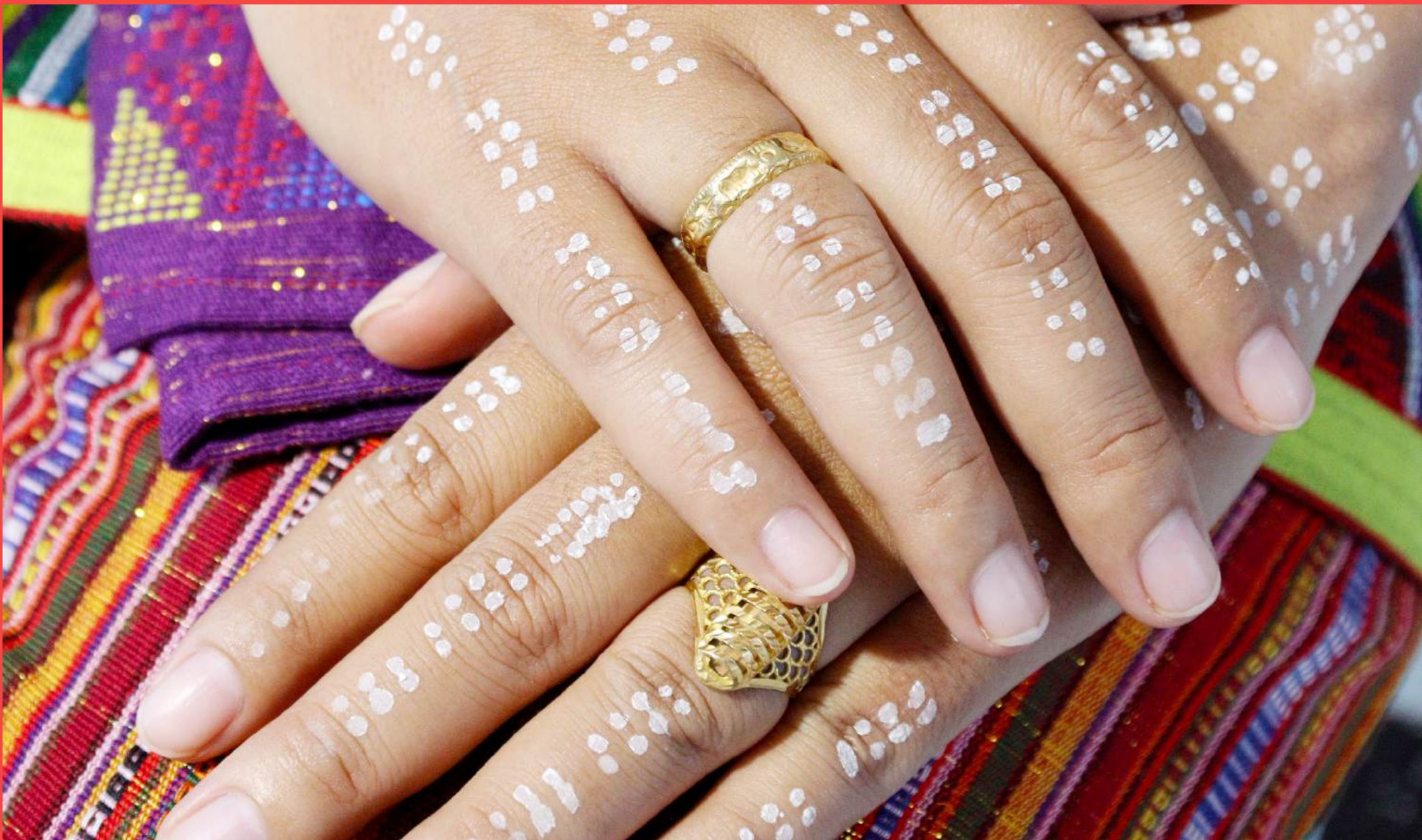
**MERFA A. AMPAO**  
BCPCH-Basilan





# *Basilan Cultural Items and Heritage*

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# Tanyak-Tanyak

Tanyak Tanyak is a type of face painting during Yakan marriage ceremonies. The detailed designs, featuring circles, dots, stars, and other symbols, represent heavenly witnesses to the couple's vows. White markings, made from Borak Sinah (a blend of rice flour and water), are carefully painted on the bride and groom's faces and hands using bamboo tools. Every stroke reflects the rich traditions and heritage of the Yakan people.







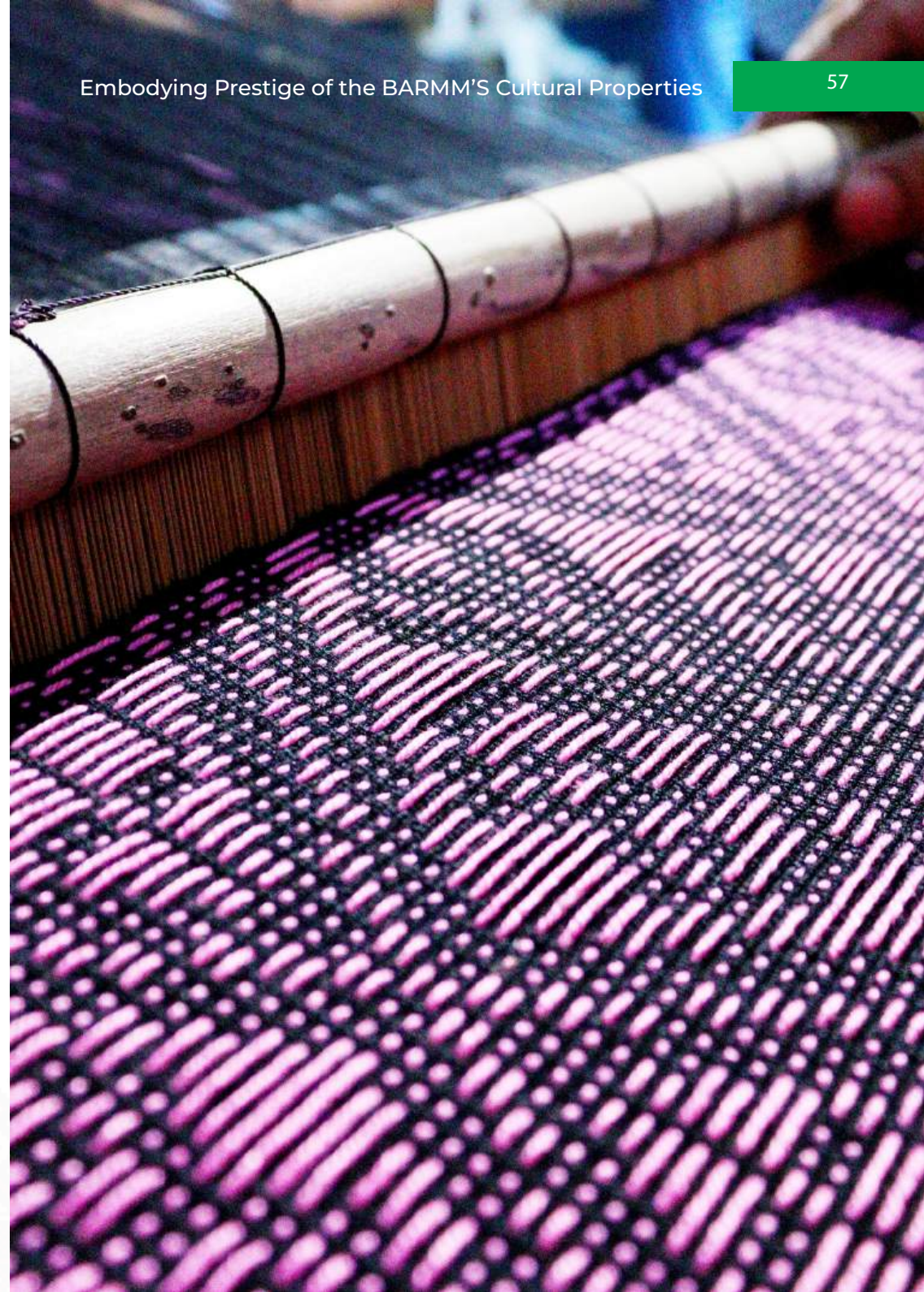






# Tennun

Tennun is a traditional handwoven fabric made by the Yakan people. Weaving Tennun involves a skilled technique using backstrap looms, where weavers carefully mix colorful threads to make a unique fabric that represents Yakan culture. The detailed patterns and designs reflect the rich history of the Yakan community and include motifs like sinaulan, ianalaman, and pinalantupan.









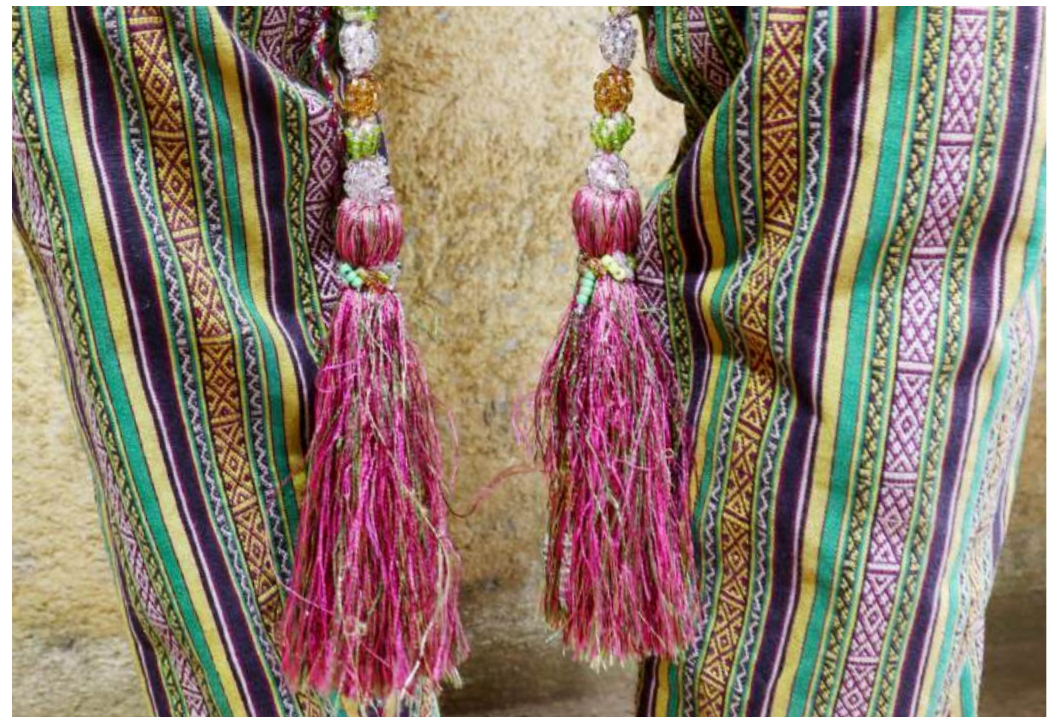


## Pamakey Pangantin

### Yakan Wedding Attire

The Yakans celebrate the union of two people through rich traditional textiles in their clothing. Both the groom and bride wear Tanyak-tanyak designs, which symbolize love and harmony. Pamakey Pangantin represents the couple's sacred bond. The Yakan people recognize that a wedding is not just a personal celebration but also a community event that strengthens the ties among everyone in the community.







# Yakan Traditional Attire

## A. Yakan Male Traditional Attire

- Pilis – head dress
- Kandit is a red fabric that is 10 to 15 meters long, with woven cloth at both ends and long tassels tied into a thick rope. It is wrapped around the waist.
- Sawwal Batun or Peyat is a general term for any type of traditional Yakan trousers.
- Jambu refers to the silk thread leg tassels that complete a sawwal. They symbolize the horse, highlighting the significance of horsemanship in Yakan culture.
- Traditional Yakan Slippers

## B. Yakan Female Traditional Attire

- Saputangan is a headscarf carefully crafted by Yakan women.
- Badju Lapih is a blouse with tight-fitting sleeves that women wear to stay modest.
- Kamisun
- Sawwal Ilaupan is made from black woven fabric and extends just below the knees.
- Jambu

Each piece represents the rich symbolism and strong ancestral ties that shape the Yakan identity.





# Dulang

Dulang is a traditional feast that features various local dishes covered with a Tutup (a cover made from local materials) to keep the food warm and clean.

There are two types of Dulang: one for weddings, where the talam (tray) is covered with banana leaves turned upward to symbolize happiness, and another for Passing, where the talam is covered with banana leaves turned downward to reflect on the fleeting nature of life.

Kalsum Ahamad Isnali is an expert in preparing Dulang, with over 36 years of experience showcasing the traditions of the Yakan people.











## Agung

The Yakan Agung is placed on a wooden tripod stand along with two other agungs. In this arrangement, they face each other, creating a musical conversation with different sounds. Each agung acts as a percussion instrument, often used for community announcements or special occasions. A pair of agungs represents marriage. When three agungs, called Mag Labo-an, are played together, they harmonize with instruments like Kulintangan or Kuwintangan, resulting in a beautiful musical performance.





## Kulaing

The Kulaing is an instrument made from a two-centimeter-wide strip of bamboo. When played, the Kulaing fills the air with music that evokes memories and takes listeners back to a different time.







# Gabbang

The Gabbang consists of a series of trapezoidal bamboo bars of different lengths placed on a resonator. Each bar is carved to produce various sounds when struck with mallets. It is often played to accompany songs and dances. Children play the Gabbang in the fields to scare away animals, birds, and insects that could damage the crops. It is also played during free time, and its lovely melodies reflect the Yakan heritage through the years.





## Suling

Suling is a bamboo mouth flute with a carefully placed holes. Musicians learn both the technical skills required to play it and the cultural significance of each melody.





## Barung

The Yakan Barung features a leaf-shaped blade and comes with a traditional sheath decorated with old coins and embellished with Tipay (shell inlays). The edge and the area near the grip are carved with Ukil designs, and the wooden pommel is covered in silver. The Barung symbolizes cultural identity and is skillfully made to represent the spirit of Yakan bravery and heritage.







## Punyal

The Punyal is a smaller version of the Kris blade used for stabbing, especially in close combat. This small blade is typically kept in a sheath and is often worn below the waist for easy access.





## MESSAGE OF THE COMMISSIONER

Assalamu Alaikum!

The featuring of the Tausug in this book brings to the fore the richness and social relevance of the province's cultural heritage. The Tausug people have left an indelible mark on the tapestry of Sulu's history whose narrative is one of resilience, courage, and determination to face the challenges along the way.

The Tausug's tapestry of heritage & history is a testament to their enduring spirit as they navigate the ebb and tide of life in this vibrant world. Through these features, we will be able to unravel the intricate threads of Tausug identity which reveals a community that cherishes its customs, traditions and values.

With their tale and description, we aim to honor the Tausug people as the vibrant, diverse and multifaceted community by showcasing their traditional attire and intricately beautiful craftsmanship.

Hence, the Tausug people proudly carry their heritage forward to ensure that their customs, traditions and values remain alive and cherished.

Certainly, you will discover that Tausugs of today, as they have always been since time immemorial, still stands as beacon of strength, pride, and unity in the face of adversity.

Let their stories and cultural colors captivate you to a world where authentic cultural properties highlight the Tausug's way of life and traditions.

Let the Tausug people inspire you to embrace diversity, appreciate the richness of our shared humanity, and celebrate the unique contributions that each culture brings to our global tapestry.

Indeed, in diversity we thrive.





# Sulu Cultural Items and Heritage

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## Kalis

The Kalis is a type of sword known for its straight tip and wavy blade. It usually comes with a sheath decorated with Tipay, featuring detailed Ukkil carvings that highlight the “Lam Jalala” design. This design honors Sultan Mohammad Pulalun, also known as Sultan Fadi, who ruled the Sulu Sultanate from 1844 to 1862. The Lam Jalala symbolizes honor and courage.



# Barung

The Barung is a single-edged sword with a wide, leaf-shaped blade. Its handle is often enhanced with a silver cover and polished braided fiber rings, and the decorative hilts are made from ivory or carabao horn. The sheath features Ukkil patterns. While the Barung is effective for close-range fighting, delivering strong chopping blows, it also has ceremonial and symbolic significance.









# Saruk Kambigasan

The Saruk Kambigasan is made from nito vine leaves, pandan, and bamboo strips, forming a net-like design with a thin wooden plate on top. Cultural Master Aida Damlail is leading the effort to revive this traditional craft, dedicating many years to teaching younger generations how to create Kambigasan hats.









## Tutup

The Tausug Tutup is unique among food covers because of its size. Made from colorful buri strips, it features beautiful geometric patterns known as Anjibi Colors. The Tutup has layers of pandan, nipa, and buri to help keep food warm.

Cultural Master Babuh Siling Alig Sabturani from the Municipality of Patikul, Province of Sulu, believes that each Tutup is a work of art that reflects the cultural identity and creativity of the Tausug people.









## Pis Syabit

Pis Syabit is an intricate art form known for its careful choice of materials and precise weaving. Made from cotton or silk, it holds cultural significance and is often used in traditional clothing or as decorative items. Bright colors are typically used to highlight the geometric patterns on the fabric. Tausug men traditionally wear it as a headdress, but they can also drape it over their shoulders or wrap it around a sword's hilt. Pis Syabit is commonly worn during Tausug weddings and other important ceremonies, symbolizing the community's rich cultural heritage.







## Baluy

The baluy, or mat, is crafted from pandan leaves, dyed in bright colors, and woven into geometric patterns. It is often used for meals, social gatherings, prayers, and special occasions like weddings or religious events, providing a shared space for people to come together.

Amil Bangsa Sappayani, a seller at the Jolo Textile Market, has been selling baluy for more than ten years. With each mat he sells, he helps keep this symbol of community and togetherness alive.





## Maligay

A Maligay is a container shaped like a house, used for serving food during weddings and Pagtammam (Qur'an recitation) ceremonies. It's designed to hold and display a variety of delicacies, with some hanging from the container until it's filled.





## Ukkil

Ukkil is a decorative pattern that features graceful curves, combining geometric and flowing designs inspired by Arabesque art. These designs are often influenced by Islamic calligraphy, nature, and traditional themes. Creating Ukkil wood carvings, known as Ukkil Kahuy, involves using various tools such as curved and straight chip carving knives, fish tail tools, skew tools, gouges, chisels, and mallets in different sizes and styles.





# Gabbang

The Gabbang, also called the Bamboo Xylophone, is made up of 17 bamboo bars of varying lengths arranged in order. It creates beautiful melodies that accompany traditional Tausug music and dances.







## Biyula

Biyula is a traditional Tausug string instrument with four strings, each tuned to create distinct sounds. The strings are stretched over a wooden body and played with a bow made from horsehair. The wooden base of the instrument, made from locally sourced wood, enhances its resonance and sound quality.





## Suling

Suling is a bamboo flute with six holes and a blowhole, enabling the player to produce different tones. Its design reflects the deep connection the Tausugs have with nature, as bamboo is seen as a symbol of life.









# Cultural Master Datu Attan Mabbol

Datu Attan Mabbol has kept the tradition of playing the Biyula and Suling alive for many years, sharing heartfelt melodies that reflect and preserve the Tausug culture.







# Kulintang

The Kulintang, also called Kulintangan, is the main melodic instrument in the Tausug Kulintang ensemble. It consists of a series of brass gongs arranged in a specific order and is often played at cultural and social events such as weddings, festivals, and community gatherings.





## « Agung

The Tausug Agung is a pair of large gongs hung vertically, adding depth to the musical Kulintang ensemble. Agung is commonly played at weddings and other social gatherings.

## Gandang »

The Gandang drum is a cylindrical musical instrument with a robust wooden body. Traditionally, its membrane is made from stretched goat skin and secured with rattan. When played, a small hole in the body allows air to escape. The Gandang measures approximately 70 centimeters in length and 25 centimeters in width at both ends. It features a string for easy holding, allowing it to be slung over the shoulder.







## Traditional Attire for Women

The **Batawi** is a traditional garment with Tambuku designs distinguished by its long sleeves. It is often made of lightweight and breathable materials such as silk, cotton, or satin.

**Sawwal** is a loose-fitting lower garment that gracefully wraps around the waist and is secured with a special belt known as the “Sabitan”.

**Pis Syabit** is a versatile headdress made from hand-woven silk or cotton fabric, known for its square shape and geometric designs. It's commonly worn during ceremonies, special events, or as a daily accessory to show ethnic pride and identity.

**Janggay** is a unique accessory for women that looks like metal claws worn on the hands during Tausug dance performances. It highlights the graceful hand movements in the dance.





## Traditional Attire for Men

**Lapuh** is usually made from rich fabrics like velvet or silk and features decorative Tambuku buttons made of gold and copper.

**Birinu** is a buttoned garment for men, featuring a design and fabric that showcase a blend of traditional elements and individual style.

**Kambut** is a rectangular cloth that represents men's sophistication and cultural identity.

**Sabitan** is a handcrafted ornament that measures 3 to 4 inches in width and is used to tighten the waist and provides a unique accent to traditional Tausug dress.





## MESSAGE OF THE COMMISSIONER

Nestled in between the Sulu and the Celebes Sea is a group of islands that holds pride in not just its charm brought about by the diversity of culture and its crystalline seas, pulverulent sands, breathtaking sunsets, and abundant marine resources. Tawi-Tawi's allure could be found in something that is of more depth and something priceless – its inhabitants. The Philippine archipelago's southernmost frontier is known to be the home of industrious and amiable individuals with the warmest hearts, colorful culture, and enticing stories to tell- the Sama people.

Amidst the constantly changing times and circumstances, the Sama people continuously maintains the perfect balance between modernization and tradition, weaving a vibrant and splendid bridge from the past to the present. With a kaleidoscopic wonderland embedded in their stories, songs, culture, and traditions, the Sama people welcomes progress in one arm and perpetually nurtures the roots of their identity in the other.

**ELMASIA LIPAE-MADJILON**  
BCPCH - Tawi - Tawi





# *Tawi-Tawi Cultural Items and Heritage*

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## Bangka-Bangka

**Bangka-bangka** is a boat-shaped container made from pandan leaves, traditionally used to serve delicacies and fruits during important events such as weddings, the completion of religious studies, and the celebration of the Prophet's birth.







## Dulang and Latal

Also known as **Dulang Kamaasan**, the **Dulang and Latal** are a set of trays made from Nito vines, used to present various delicacies and fruits. This traditional tray collection represents cultural identity, generosity, and the valued feasting traditions of the communities in Tawi-Tawi province.





## Gabbang

Gabbang is a traditional xylophone made of bamboo bars set on a frame and played with mallets. In the province of Tawi-Tawi, it is commonly played during traditional dances, celebrations, community gatherings, and musical performances, highlighting the province's rich cultural heritage.











## *Habol Tyahian*

The **Habul Tyahian** for Tausug and **Olos Tinahian** for Sama are beautifully made from cotton or silk, featuring colorful embroidery with French DMC threads in Ukkil or floral designs. These textiles are essential outfits for women at important events and festivals, especially when worn with traditional clothing like the Batawi and Sablay.





## Kabkab

Kabkab is a traditional hand fan made from pandan leaves, expertly made by the women of Sibutu Municipality. Its intricate designs showcase the creativity that celebrates the province's rich cultural heritage.





## Tutup

Tutup is a colorful food cover made from pandan leaves and bamboo strips, featuring geometric patterns. It helps keep local dishes and delicacies fresh by protecting and preserving their flavors.









# Kumpit

**Kumpit** is a remarkable type of boat that reflects the strong spirit of the islanders in Tawi-Tawi. For many years, the local people have depended on Kumpit as their primary means of transportation. It also serves as a houseboat for the Sama-Badjao community.









## Qur'an Lihal

The **Qur'an Lihal** is a folding stand made from high-quality Mahogany wood, featuring intricate carvings. It is used to support the holy Qur'an during important activities like reading and studying. This stand holds significant value for Muslims, as its history is closely tied to the spread of Islam in the Philippines, with Tawi-Tawi recognized as the first place where Islam arrived in the archipelago.





## Sablay and Sawwal

**Sablay** is a long-sleeved outfit that drapes elegantly down to the hips, usually worn by women. It has a front opening that is covered by a “Simpay,” which goes from the front to the back, and is adorned with traditional pins called “Karusang.”

The Sablay is often paired with “Patadjug” or “Sawwal.” It can be complemented with a silk or brocade shawl known as “Kamban,” or a thin scarf called “Papanda,” adding a stylish finishing touch.





## Samba

**Samba** is a short-sleeved outfit that is considered less intricate than the more detailed Batawi and Sablay. Often worn by women for daily activities, it showcases beautiful designs inspired by Siyang Batik.







# Badju' Sama

(Sama-Badjao Attire)

The **Badju' Sama** outfit showcases a mix of green and yellow colors, representing the natural scenery of the Tawi-Tawi archipelago. This color scheme is important to the Sama-Badjao community as it symbolizes their cultural identity and pride.







## Tepo

**Tepo** is a mat handmade from local pandan leaves that grow along the coasts of Tawi-Tawi province. The weavers are involved in every step of the process, from dyeing the leaves to creating intricate geometric designs.

In Badjao Village, master weaver Sabilydah Likawani preserves this traditional craft by teaching the art and techniques of Tepo weaving to younger generations.











# Bud Bongao

Climbing Bud Bongao is not just a hike; it's a spiritual journey with ancient Tampats (shrines) along the way. This trek represents unity, breaking down physical barriers to bring together people of different faiths.

Bud Bongao is also home to unique tree and bird species and serves as a natural habitat for the Philippine long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis philippinensis*), highlighting Bongao's commitment to balancing development with the conservation of its natural environment for both common and rare species.











# Courtesy

## Province of Maguindanao including Cotabato City

- Municipality of Datu Piang Mayor, Hon. Victor Samama
- Cotabato Brassware Association
- Miline M. Dalandas (Datu Piang Tourism Officer II)
- BCPCH Maguindanao Provincial Staff

## Province of Lanao del Sur

- Mindanao State University Museum
- Municipality of Marantao Mayor, Hon. Akhira Adiong
- Municipality of Tugaya Mayor, Hon., Alfattah N. Pacalna
- BCPCH Lanao Provincial Staff

## Province of Basilan

- Nulkaisa E. Alidain – Chief of Administration, Provincial Government of Basilan
- Atakal Family of Barangay Guinanta, Municipality of Albarka
- Asbiyan Abdussalam
- Marina Bonifacio
- Merylyn G. Sanson
- Lamitan City Library and Museum

## Province of Sulu

- Indajinis Cultural Association
- Aida's Nito Hats
- National Museum in Sulu
- Sulu Pakukus
- Maimbung Livelihood Center
- Fhaqyadz Sahidjuan
- Narhizra Hashim
- BCPCH Sulu Provincial Staff

## Province of Tawi-Tawi

- Tawi-Tawi Provincial Governor, Hon. Yshmael I. Sali
- TPWC Chairwoman and Tawi-Tawi Province First Lady Hja. Jumda Sali
- Tandubas Municipality Mayor, Hon. Al-Shalid A. Salih
- BCPCH Tawi-Tawi Provincial Staff



## MESSAGE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem!  
Assalamu Alaykum Wa Rahmahtullahi Wabarakatuh!

Dear readers,

Welcome to a journey through the rich cultural heritage of Bangsamoro. This book has been created to celebrate and preserve the diverse tradition, stories and history of our region. As you turn each page you will discover the vibrant art, music and delicacies that make Bangsamoro unique.

We hope this book inspire you to appreciate and take pride in our shared heritage, and to carry forward the legacy of our ancestors with respect and understanding.

We sincerely thank the BCPCH commissioners and their teams for their invaluable support, as well as the Regional Staff for their hard work in bringing this first ever Coffee Table Book a success.

Happy reading! And thank you.

**AKMAD D. MAMA**  
Executive Director







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## MESSAGE OF THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

It is with profound gratitude and respect to all cultural communities visited by the BCPCH Team in rendering a simplified yet information driven accounts of the tangible cultural properties of the major Moro ethnolinguistic groups in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

While it is imperative to document and conduct rigorous research undertaking into the rich tapestry of cultural heritage the Bangsamoro has to offer, it is high time that in order to better preserve and mainstream these intricate facets of our identity be embedded in the national narrative.

As such, the BCPCH Team, who had painstakingly collected both narratives from the grassroots and authentic photos depicting the way of life of the people in the community, offers its profound gesture of invitation to take keen interest on what the Bangsamoro prides itself upon.

May this be the start of the continuous documentation process of our tangible and intangible cultural heritage carved and ingrained from stories and perspectives of our own people.

**AARON JEFF D. USMAN**  
Editor-In-Chief







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