

PHILIPPINES

CORONEL, Sr. MA. DELIA, compiler. *Darangen: In Original Maranao Verses, with English Translation*, volume 5 (books 9A, 9B, 10). Marawi City, the Philippines: University Research Center, Mindanao State University, 1992. 386 pages. ISBN 971-111-052-0.

The *Darangen* is the folk epic of the Maranao, the Muslim people who live in the Lake Lanao area of central Mindanao. This, the fifth volume in a series, is dedicated to the memory of the late Dr Mamitua Saber, who founded and organized the program under which the series is being published. The present volume contains three episodes: "Kiyatidawa sa Pangensayan a Rogong" [The battle in Pangensayan a Rogong], "Kiyatidawa sa Magoyod a Selegen ago sa Komenkeneg a Ig" [The battle in Magoyod a Selegen and Komenkeneg a Ig], and "Kambagombayan a Lena."

The *Darangen* begins with the foundation of Bembaran, the Maranaos' ideal mythological kingdom, and comes to an end with the episode of Bembaran's fall. This final section describes how Sharief Awlis, a Muslim missionary famous in all of Sulu and Mindanao, visited Bembaran and taught the Islamic faith. The people there refused to accept it, though, so God became angry and destroyed the kingdom with a great fire. A man named Butuanen Karinan, who barely escaped, is thought to be the direct ancestor of the Maranao (URC 1983).

The epic tells us of pre-Islamic Maranao culture and provides information about the earliest contacts with Islamic missionaries. Thus through the *Darangen* story we can gain an understanding, on a folk-tradition level, not only of native Maranao folk ways but also of the type of social conditions that existed when the Maranao contacted and adopted Islam. Because of the shortage of historical materials, such information is of great value to the researcher, and this is why I sincerely hope that this *Darangen* publishing program will continue until its completion.

The episodes in this volume deal mainly with a series of wars between the kingdom of Kadaraan and the kingdoms around it. The forces of Kadaraan are quite powerful, putting its opponents at a disadvantage, but Prince Bantogen of Bembaran (the hero of the epic) provides help for the underdogs.

Though epics may be fictional and lack true historicity, they are not simply fairy tales. At the very least the contents reflect the social circumstances of the period, and may comprise a metaphor of actual events. The *Darangen* provides a number of cases in point; here I shall point out two that I found particularly interesting.

First, maritime activities are mentioned on several occasions—the kingdom of Kadaraan has a strong fleet and attacks other kingdoms from the sea. Sometimes *samar*, sea people, come into contact with the main characters. If you consider the environment of today's Maranao, who inhabit the area around Lake Lanao in inland Mindanao, this bit of information is quite striking. It may be that the world described in the *Darangen* is not only that of ancient Maranao itself, but also that of the surrounding cultures that interacted with Maranao in pre-Islamic times. Historians maintain that sociopolitical ties between the Lake Lanao region and the Sulu and South Mindanao regions were quite advanced in medieval times. It seems that the historians are right, and that lively maritime activities had already developed in those days.

The second interesting point concerns the spiritual cult of the beings known as "Tonong." Throughout the story, Tonongs are actively worshipped in a variety of contexts: sometimes they serve as the guardian spirits of a kingdom, sometimes they are the tutelary beings of individuals. It struck me that this belief in the Tonongs formed something akin to the state religion of the kingdoms in the *Darangen* world.

According to MADALE (1974), the Maranao belief in Tonongs appears to survive in a local ritual named the Kashawing. Other reports suggest that even now the Maranao occasionally make offerings to Tonongs (GOWING 1979, 65). But it seems obvious that Tonong belief has changed in character—the beings seem to have lost their position as guardian spirits of the kingdom and are weaker and more localized. This phenomenon might provide valuable clues as to how a native religion is transformed following the adoption of a world religion like Islam.

Of course, there are many other interesting points that can be found in the *Darangen* epic. There is no doubt that *Darangen* is a vast treasure-hoard of the Maranao's cultural and historical traditions. For this reason, I want to express, again and again if need be, the hope that this series will be brought to a successful completion in the very near future.

REFERENCES CITED

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DEMETRIO, FRANCISCO R., compiler and editor. *Encyclopedia of Philippine Folk Beliefs and Customs*. Volume 1: Actions to Feasts and Celebrations. 11+702 pages, with glossary, appendix, references and index. Volume 2: Folk Medicine to Weaponry. 11+634 pages, with glossary, appendix, references and index. Cagayan de Oro City, R. P.: Xavier University 1991. Hardcover US\$135.00. (Sea mail postage included)

Anybody acquainted with Father Demetrio and his work will agree that for him the study and analysis of Philippine folklore is far more than a simple academic discipline: it is a means of finding the roots of the thought and values of the peoples inhabiting the islands, and of teaching them to the younger generations. The *Encyclopedia* is the fruit of Demetrio's lifelong effort to unravel the "collective unconscious or sub-conscious" and put the "people, especially the young, into the stream of our own mythic traditions" (Introduction). The primary purpose of the *Encyclopedia* is therefore a pedagogic one directed toward the peoples of the Philippines, a fact that has to be kept in mind by other users.

More than twenty years ago Demetrio published the *Dictionary of Philippine Folk Beliefs and Customs* (see *Asian Folklore Studies* 30/2: 144–46). The present work, which follows the same chapter scheme as the *Dictionary*, is meant as a considerably enlarged and improved up-date of the earlier work. Indeed, the eight thousand