

changes in the organisation of pottery manufacture in the area which possibly linked to the specialisation of knowledge in designing the pots, the exclusivity of ideological networks, and factionalism within large settlements.

From start to finish, the ideas are presented in an organised manner. The book begins with basic ideas and concepts about glaze ware technology, its history, classification and dating, and the different theoretical frameworks employed by the different authors. Cordell (Chapter 14) ends the book with a recapitulation of the ideas presented in the book, as well as a noteworthy acknowledgement of the pioneers of glaze ware research in the Southwest, which includes Alfred Vincent Kidder and Anna Shepard. Cordell further points out how the work of the current authors build on these pioneers' work, emphasising the significance of building on past researches rather than criticising them. These researches were, after all, carried out without the benefits of analytic techniques and instrumentations that current researches enjoy.

This book gave me a new perspective on looking at ceramics as a whole. It showed me that just like people, pots can have a social life, which starts from its inception up to its demise. There is always a social, political, religious, and ideological process that will affect its production, use, distribution, consumption as well as its cessation. The book is a reminder that there is more to the typological and stylistics analysis of potteries in terms of inferring and elucidating ancient lifeways and cultures. That is why I highly recommend that people read this book for its fresh approach to studying potteries, especially when applied to Philippine archaeology.

Voices from Sulu: A Collection of Tausug Oral Traditions

Compiled and Edited by Gerard Rixhon

2010. Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press. 436 pp.

Review by Ma. Kathryn Ann B. Manalo

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Sulu is an island archipelago south of the Philippines and a part of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. Its capital, Jolo, is the 15th largest island in the country. Comprising of only 2,135.3 km² in terms of land area, Sulu became one of the major and most powerful Islamic States

in Southeast Asia during the 18-19th centuries. The province stretches from Zamboanga Peninsula to Northern Borneo. Ethnographically, Sulu is the home of the indigenous Tausug, Yakan, JamaMapun, and Badjao. Indeed, the diverse topography of the land and the ethnography of its peoples make Sulu one of the most colourful provinces in the country.

However, how do we reconstruct the past when the sources are oftentimes destroyed by conflict? How do we go about acquiring data when the area is ravaged by war? How do we preserve Sulu's culture amidst all the threats of hostility? It is this very problem that made Gerard Rixhon decided to document his ethnographic recordings and stories collected almost fifty years ago and compile them in his book *Voices from Sulu: a Collection of Tausug Oral Traditions*.

The editor and compiler of Tausug oral histories is no stranger to Mindanao culture and history. Educated at Ateneo de Manila University with a degree of Masters in Anthropology, Rixhon has more than thirty years of experience in research in Mindanao. He is also the founder of the Coordinated Investigation of Sulu Culture at Notre Dame College of Jolo where he started recording the oral histories of the Sama and the Tausug as part of the Sulu Folk Literature Project.

Essentially, the book is a compilation of Tausug oral histories. It is divided into five parts with 23 chapters. Part 1 centres on stories of Mullung, a local and famous storyteller. The stories of Tuwan, another storyteller are found in Part 2. Part 3 is a compilation of Tausug poetry while Part 4, another series of oral stories was collected by H. Arlo Nimmo, another researcher. Part 5 deals with an overview and classification of Tausug literature.

Most of oral histories deal with legends and the Tausug literature has its share of myths. The story *In Kaawn sin Pây* (The Creation of Rice) is a mix of religious tale and the importance of rice in Sulu culture. The story *In Tau Nakauna* (The First People of Sulu) is a tale of the first settlers of the land and how they populated the area, as planned by God. *Katântân Bungang-Kahuy Kakaunun Iban Sin Binatang Halal* (The Origin of Edible Fruits and Animals) tells us about Adam's circumcision, the creation of Eve, and the foods that Tausugs are allowed to eat (*halal*). Although these stories clearly narrate origins, we can likewise see how religion influenced the content of the stories.

The stories of heroes are also represented in the Tausug oral histories. *Hangdangaw*, a hand-span-tall boy was able to go on a journey,

defeat a giant, and marry a princess for saving the town. The tale of *ManikBuwangsi* is a story of love and adventure and like many other epic heroes, he returns home and marry the love of his life.

The state of the society can also be seen in the stories. For example in *Pangkat sin Sultan ha Istanbul iban Di* (The Relation between the Sultan of Istanbul and Our Sultan), Mullung narrates the story of the son of the Sultan of Istanbul, who reached Jolo where he learned about maturity and responsibility. Although a moral tale and not a historical one, we can notice the high regard of the Sulu people for the Ottoman Empire which was once the centre of Islam. The *Parang Sabil of Abdulla and Putli' Isara in Spanish Times* deals with the tragic but heroic story of the lovers Abdulla and Putli' Isara. The story was set during the Spanish occupation of the Philippines and told of abusive lieutenants who raped Putli' Isara. Since Putli was dishonoured, the couple decided to commit a *parangsabil*, a Tausug institution to defend Islam and its followers to death.

Rituals and Ceremonies were also reflected in the stories. The tale of *Munabi* tells us that after death, the Tausug Muslim bathes the departed nine times to clean the nine bodily orifices, after which the body is wrapped in white cloth. Prayers are recited and the body is lowered in a hole that runs north to south so that the body faces Mecca.

Another theme of the Tausug oral histories is religion. In *Sitti Maryam* (Lady Mary), Mullung narrates the life of Mary and the eventual birth of Jesus from an Islamic point of view. The story of *TugbukLawihan* (The Disputed Treasure), tells us to submit to God's will, and a wounded soul can be healed by a medicine man through God's guidance. *Kissa sin Hal Magtiyam* (A Didactic Ballad on Marriage) reminds the Muslim faithful to seek guidance from mosque official before getting married.

There were also stories of peculiar theme. *Lisuan* (Lazybones) is a young man who hates to work and loves to sleep. Although people laugh at him, one of the Sultan's daughters was charmed by his attitude. The Sultan refused the union and exiled the couple to the jungle where through an amazing series of events, Lisuan was able to build a mansion bigger than the Sultan's.

Lastly, riddles, proverbs, and poems were also compiled. These stories have an array of themes from nature, to objects, to family, to love and to life.

Since the stories were told in the local language *Sinûg*, the

translation underwent three levels: literal, grammatical and, with the help of someone knowledgeable in Tausug culture, a contextual one. This ensured that the subtext and other embedded meanings of the stories were not lost in translation.

These stories reflect the complicated history that the Tausug underwent. Their literature obviously reflects a syncretic idea of culture where the indigenous belief is intertwined with new (or foreign) ideas. The book is a testimony to the great colourful culture of the Tausug. Clearly, Gerard Rixhon made the voices from Sulu heard through this compendium.

Phoenix Rising: Narratives in Nyonya Beadwork from the Straits Settlements

Hwei-Fe'n Cheah

2010. Singapore: NUS Press

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The book came in a brown Manila paper cover, occupied ten and one-fourth inches by eight and three-fourths inches of desk space, and weighed all in all about five pounds. Its bulkiness like all other coffee table books, at first, challenged this reviewer's coffee table book-jaded mind. Mercifully, as it emerged from its textured veil, the book design and title removed some of this reviewer's initial doubts. A careful reading of the text results in absolute conversion. Rarely does a coffee table book successfully combine the aesthetics required by the commercial aspects of production with the erudite texts expected of scholarly works. This tome does not disappoint. It invites its reader to travel back through time, and through its visual narrative of a hugely ignored art form (re)creates an important aspect of the art history of Southeast Asia. Through its scholarly and compelling narrative text and images, it embarks in nothing less than a seduction of the mind.

The author, Hwei-Fe'n Cheah, teaches Asian art and textile history at the Australian National University. This current work results from her doctoral dissertation on Nyonya beadwork. *Nyonya* is the term used to refer to women of the *Peranakan* Chinese communities in the straits area of the Malayan Peninsula and Sumatra. *Peranakan* connotes being "locally