

DISCOVERY

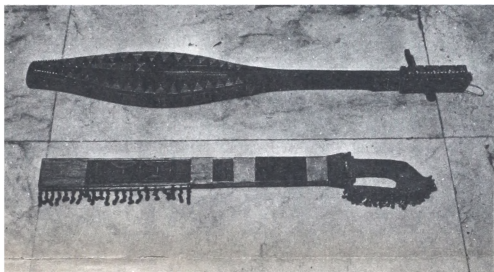
The unique folk art of non-Christian Filipinos

The Philippines has some 60-odd mono-linguistic groups whose cultures ve remained relatively untouched westernization and christianization. The cultural communities of uthern Philippines, for example, ve retained their cultural identities, shown in the folk art exhibit put up the Hilton Art Center. The month-ig exhibit, entitled "Non-Christian lk Art," featured the art of the Ma-ao, Samals, Tausogs, Mangyans, bolis, Bataks and Bagobos. Most of e objects on display belonged to the slim group - Maranaos, Samals, usogs and Darangans. This was man- because the Muslims comprise the ggest minority group. Of the nearly e million Filipinos classified into the

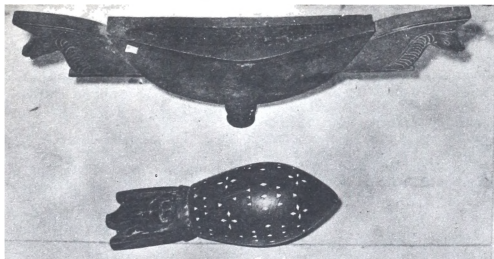
"cultural communities," three million are Muslims.

Art, it has been said, mirrors the society of its origin and this is particularly true of folk art. The Maranao brass bed, the most imposing object in the exhibit, is the stage for the life, love and death rituals of the people of Lake Lanao. According to Mila Enage of the Hilton Art Center, the Maranaos place the brass bed in the center of the house because the bed is where the most important events in a Maranao's life take place. A Maranao child is baptized on the brass bed which, for the occasion, is decorated with silver coins and yellow cloth.

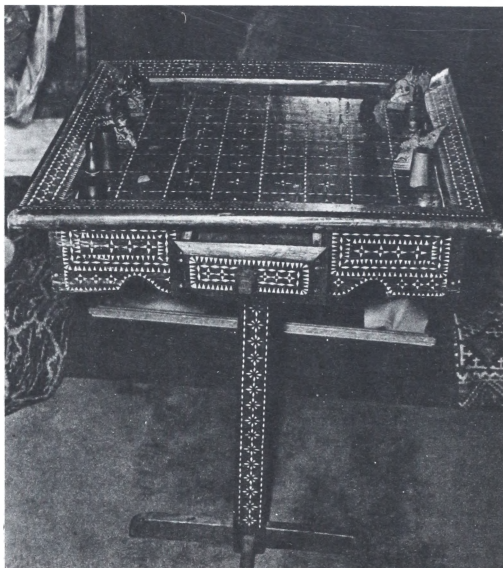
Lucky Christian couples may claim that their marriages were made in



Kobering and T'boli brass bolo



Tobacco container and baking dish



Maranao chess set

heaven, but for the Maranao elite, marriages are made in bed. The bride, the bridegroom, the imam (officiating minister) and the two witnesses all sit on the brass bed during the wedding ceremony. The brass bed is also the scene for signing important documents. Important guests are made to sit on the bed when Maranao royalty entertains. When a Maranao sultan dies, he is bathed and clothed on his bed. This is also where he lies in state until his burial. The brass bed, however, does not accompany the sultan to his grave.

The Muslim okkil design (found in brassware, rooftops and even tombstones) and the geometric designs on Muslim fabrics and mats, developed out of the Islamic taboo against figurial representation. Muslim Filipinos, like Mohammedans everywhere, are forbidden by the Koran to make any

image of Allah and of all living things. The forms of animals, flowers, and plants have to be abstracted if they are to be used by the Muslim craftsman. The open, angular cut at the end of projecting housebeams are said to represent the wide-open jaws of the crocodile. Designs suggesting fern leaf and serpent skin are often found in the malong (Maranao wrap-around and the langkit (cloth belts).

Other objects in the exhibit included a Mangyan blowgun, Batak bracelets, a Tausog hand-painted bamboo screen, a Darangan warrior's outfit, a T'boli bolo, a Yakan hand woven table runner and Bagobo beads. The "Non-Christian Folk Art Exhibit" at the Cafe Coquilla foyer, besides providing a glimpse into the mores of Philippine cultural communities showed the wealth of indigenous art works in the islands.

Cultural calendar

(For the week, Sept. 2-8)

September 2 Final presentation of "Celebration," a song and dance concert, at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, 4:00 p.m.

September 2 Final Presentation of Circus Band Pop Concert at the Phil-Am Life Auditorium

September 4-9 Severino Montano's play, "But Not My Sons Any Longer" at Philippine Normal College

Solo recital of pianist Reynaldo Reyes at the Little Theater of the CCP, 7:00 p.m.

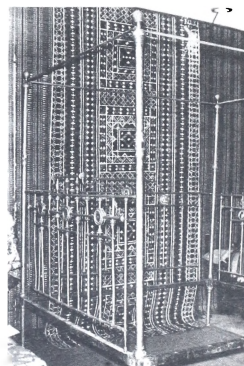
September 6-8 Tanghalang Ateneo's production of Edward Albee's "Zoo Story" at Ateneo, 7:00 p.m.

September 7 Solo concert of Jose Feliciano at the Big Theatre of the CCP, 4:00 p.m.

September 8 "From Fantasy to Reality" at the CCP, 7:30 p.m.



Samal grave markers



Maranao brass bed