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The Chinese at Maguindanao in the Seventeenth Century RUURDJE LAARHOVEN

This article consists of three parts. First it recounts the accidental landing of some Chinese traders from Java at Sarangani Island and what happened to them afterwards. Secondly, it gives an impression of the role played by the Chinese in Maguindanao society during the period of consolidation of the Maguindanao Sultanate. Lastly, in the Appendix four letters are translated which were found by a Dutch interrogation team after they captured a Chinese trading vessel which was on its way from Maguindanao to Java. The research is primarily based on the archival documents of the Dutch United East India Company.¹

LANDING AT SARANGANI

Some time at the end of July or in early August 1687, the mestizo Chinese *nakoda*² Tuwanko left with a Javanese *gonting*³ for Pasir on the southeast coast of Borneo. The *gonting* belonged

This article was a paper read at the First National Philippine Studies Conference on 11-13 February 1985 at the PSSC, Q.C.

1. This is the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie or VOC. All references to the documents have the initials "VOC", followed by the number of the folder, subsection and/or folio. The original materials are located at the *Algemeen Rijksarchief* (ARA) or States General Archives in the Hague, Netherlands. A copy of Philippine-related materials is also available in microfiche and film at the Hamilton Graduate Library of the University of Hawaii, U.S.A.

2. "The *nakoda* is sometimes the owner of the ship and sometimes the representative of the owner who had remained at home. The captain does not receive a salary from the owner, but he has a share in the profits. The details of the relationship between owner and *nakoda*, however, still escape us. There must also have been some sort of contract relationship between the captain and the merchants who made the voyage with him." (M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian Trade and European Influence*, p. 48.)

3. A native cargo vessel, the size of a sloop.

to the Chinese captains Pinko from Japarra and Kohanco from Samarang (See Map). Captain Kohanco had been able to secure a *pascedule*⁴ or pass from the Resident of the Dutch East India Company at Samarang which permitted Tuwanko to make this voyage to Pasir. The crew consisted of eight Chinese, namely, Saowanko, Ompo, Tsjonko, Tjeiwko, Tiepko, Inko, Hayko, and Tsjin, and two Javanese: Aowangsa and Marompang.

Saowanko was the navigator, but apparently he was not very sure in which direction to go. They had strong contrary winds most of the time and landed after a long two and a half months on the shores of Sarangani Island south of Mindanao.⁵ There is no indication that they had stopped anywhere else. Their cargo consisted of a variety of cloth worth from 1500 to 1600 rixdollars.⁶ The nakoda Tuwanko immediately started to trade at Sarangani. He was very interested in the wax and the purpose of his trip probably was to secure this particular product because at Pasir, his intended destination, wax was one of the major export items. Wax was used in the batik industry on Java, for the preservation of food, in candle making, for sealing purposes, etc.

Sarangani Island had until 1625 been subject to the inland kingdom of Boayan, one of the two rival kingdoms in the southern part of Mindanao. The other rival kingdom was coastal Maguindanao under the leadership of Kachil Kudrat.⁷ In 1625/26 the latter attacked Sarangani without warning, burnt its capital, and took many captives while forcing the people who were left to pay tribute to him.⁸ This condition still prevailed when the nakoda Tuwanko arrived, except that control of Sarangani had been

4. From Spanish *pase* and *cedula* (a piece of paper with authorization). It contained information concerning the intended voyage. It also listed the names of the crew, the places to be visited, the content of the cargo, etc. The Dutch East India Company enforced this regulation to keep control of the flow of goods (smuggling) and to strengthen its monopolies.

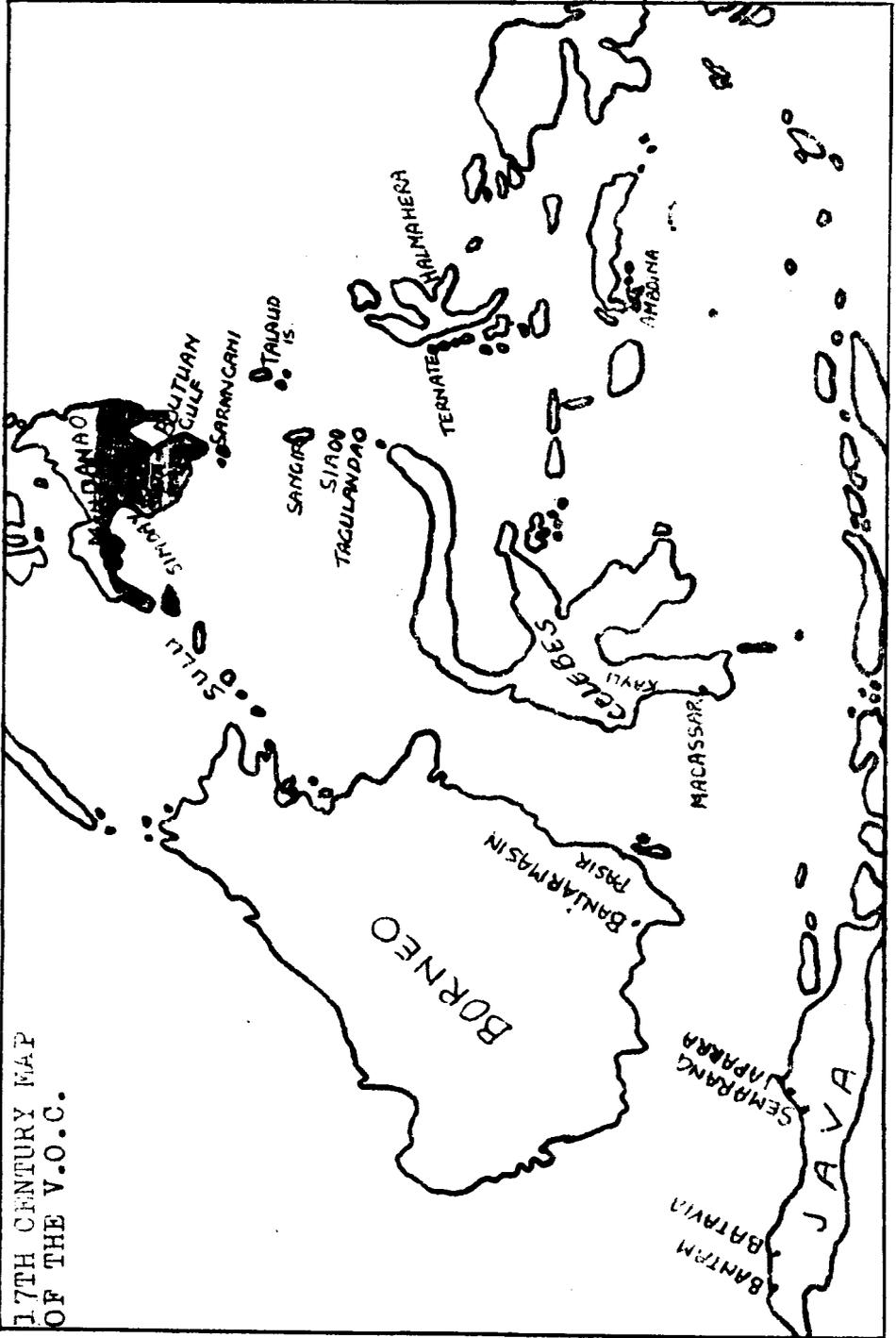
5. VOC 1503, fol. 560v-561, "Notes kept at the meeting of the Council of Justice, Wednesday, October 10, 1691, with the interviewees: the Chinese Tuwanko, the Chinese Iure Mondie Ompo, the Chinese Hieuwko, and the Muslim Sjagassan," fol. 560-567v.

6. VOC 1483, No. M, fol. 37, "Report from Lieutenant Meyndert de Roy to Governor Joan Henric Thim and Council with regards to his mission to Maguindanao from Nov. 12, 1688 to Feb. 11, 1689," 70 fols. The value of one rixdollar was approximately the same as one Spanish real-of-eight during the 17th century.

7. *Kachil* means Prince. Kudrat is also known as Corralat, Gouserat, and Qudarat. Kudrat took the title Sultan after he settled at Simoay in 1645.

8. L.C.D. van Dijk, *Neerland's Vroegste Betrekkingen met Borneo, den Solo-Archipel, Cambodja, Siam en Cochinchina* (Amsterdam, Scheltema, 1862) p. 254.

17TH CENTURY MAP
OF THE V.O.C.



The Maguindanao Sultanate in Paulus De Brieving and Jacob Cloeck: Concise Account of the Current Situation on the Big Island of Mindanao, 15 June 1700 to 14 January 1701. B. Geog. VOC 1/41, f. 1, 76v, 77r.

tightened under Sultan Barahaman (1671-99), the grandson and successor of Sultan Kudrat. Sarangani Island had been made the Sultan's granary and also provided a warehouse to store his trade-goods.

Foreigners were prohibited from trading with the Saranganies, though some of the Chinese traders known to them were allowed to barter up to 500 katties⁹ of beeswax there.¹⁰ However, Tuwanko although he was Chinese was not known there and thus, not allowed to trade. Some Saranganies went to report his arrival and trading activities to Sultan Barahaman who resided at Simoay.¹¹ In the meantime Tuwanko had received more than 100 piculs (approximately 12.5 tons) of wax and three piculs of *tartaruga*¹² for the goods that he set out amongst the Sarangani traders. These lucrative dealings were interrupted when four of Sultan Barahaman's messengers arrived to ask the Chinese for their pascedule. The Sultan had given that order after he heard that the Chinese came from the territory of Java which was under the Dutch. The Sultan was well acquainted with the ins and outs of the Dutch administrative practices, for he frequently traded in Dutch territory himself at places such as Ternate, Macassar, Japarra, Banjarmasin, Amboina, Batavia, Bantam, Malacca, etc. and the Dutch had regularly come to his territory to trade since the early 1650s.

Like the Dutch, the Maguindanao sultanate had exerted a monopoly on wax at Boutuan Bay (the area around present day Davao Gulf) and Sarangani since the 1660s. Hence, the strict regulations on the export of wax were still in effect at this time.¹³

9. One katti (cattie) is equivalent to 1/100 picul. At Ternate one picul was 125 pounds. On Ternate Island in the Moluccas the Dutch East India Company had a trade and governmental center from which they operated their monopoly in spices. The Sultanate at Ternate had in olden times been closely allied with the Maguindanao kingdoms. After 1680 when Sultan Amsterdam of Ternate had attempted to murder the Dutch governor, high officials and all their families, he was forced to sign his domain over to the Dutch and became their vassal.

10. VOC 1637, fol. 91, Letter from the Sultan of Mindanao to the Governor General at Batavia, written at Simoay, Nov. 16, 1699, fol. 87-93.

11. Simoay had been the site of the Sultanate since 1645. The Sultan lived on the left bank of the river of the same name. He moved to Kattituan on the Pulangi River in 1688, but the Maguindanao trade center continued to be at Simoay until after the death of the next Sultan, Sultan Kuday (called Maulano by the Dutch) in 1702.

12. Tortoise shell, also known under the names *karet*, *coret*, and *tartaruve*.

13. *Daghregisters van het Kasteel Batavia* (Daily registers of Batavia Castle), 31 vols., Batavia-The Hague, 1887-1931: Vol. 14, p. 247.

When Tuwanko could not show a pascedule that permitted him to sail to Maguindanao, he was asked if he had letters from Samarang or Japarra to the Sultan. When he could not produce those either, things started to look gloomy for the Chinese. He was warned that the whole crew would be beheaded and their goods confiscated. Trading without the Sultan's permission was punishable by death. How much worse was it to be trading also at a prohibited place! A letter or pascedule would give them protection. It so happened that one of the crew members named Hayko, could write, so together they quickly fabricated a letter on behalf of the ship's owners to the Sultan of Maguindanao. Hayko and another shipmate accompanied the Sultan's messengers when they returned to Simoay. Together with the letter he handed over the remaining cloth worth 727 1/4 rixdollars which had been claimed by the Sultan. The letter was accepted and the safety of the Chinese guaranteed.¹⁴

The Sultan ordered Tuwanko to come to Simoay, but the latter said that he was still busy repairing his ship. We can surmise that he also wanted to finish some trade business. He and the remaining crew arrived at Simoay in their gonting two or three months later. The Sultan was fighting at the time against Sulu and along the Bornean northeast coast, so he could not attend to Tuwanko and his wax.¹⁵ That meant in the Maguindanao bureaucracy of the time that the case of Tuwanko was automatically transferred to the two *shabanda* and secretary of the Sultan,¹⁶ the people all traders passed through after their first or second audience with the Sultan.¹⁷

However, another competing power within the Sultanate was the younger brother of Sultan Barahaman, the then *Kapitan Laut* (Admiral-of-the-fleet) Maulano. He was known to be an astute trader and would be apt to take care of Tuwanko while his brother was preoccupied with the war.¹⁸ Pretending to borrow the newly

14. VOC 1503, Interview Notes, fol. 561v.

15. See the translated letter VOC 1516, fol. 505 that follows in Appendix I.

16. *Shabandar* is a word of Persian origin. At Maguindanao the shabandars were the persons entrusted with the supervision of the Sultan's store and trade business. At the time they were Shabandar Mataram, an older man, and Shabandar Malankay (Manankay). Shabandars were of high rank which allowed them to be present at the Sultan's audience in the hall at Maguindanao. They were usually foreigners (Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian Trade*, p. 7).

17. VOC 1483, No. M., fol. 83, Report of de Roy to Gov. Thim.

18. This *Kapitan* Maulano stands out as an intriguing individual in the Dutch documents. He seems progressive, highly intelligent according to many officials, and acted

acquired wax of Tuwanko, he coerced the Chinese to make a trip to Manila if he wanted to get paid for his wax. The Kapitan Maulano had still some outstanding goods at Manila which Tuwanko could claim for him and use that credit as payment for the "borrowed" wax. At the same time he was required to sell this wax for the Maulano there and exchange it for leather, a little gold, and Spanish reals-of-eight. Tuwanko was given one of Maulano's *korakoras* and a trusted local nakoda to be his companion.¹⁹ Tuwanko took several other resident Chinese who were originally from Samarang with him as well.²⁰

When traders left Maguindanao, proper etiquette required that they inform the sultan and come to say good-bye to him. Tuwanko neglected to do that even though he had received warnings. This induced the Sultan to nullify the earlier acceptance of the letter. Consequently, according to custom, he had the right to confiscate Tuwanko's trade goods. In the eyes of the Sultan and his administrators Tuwanko ceased to be connected with the Dutch East India Company and consequently the letter and pascedule were no longer recognized by the Sultan. The Sultan's act was instigated by Tuwanko's behavior. Of course, the Sultan could in no way personally keep track of every visitor in his domain. His subjects informed him if protocol was not followed. This is clearly shown in the letter of the Sultan that follows in the Appendix.

While Tuwanko was gone Ompo and some of his other shipmates stayed at Simoay to watch the gonting. Apparently five of Ompo's Chinese mates could not resist the Maguindanao beauties. They were "allured by the women (who are very lascivious and bawdy) and who . . . come to marry them."²¹ Tsjonko, Tjeiwko,

on occasions rather independently when his culture would call for conformity. He spoke at least eight different languages, one of which was Chinese. (It is not known which dialect.) He was small of stature, liked to talk, was a music lover and by many writers he was referred to as the most powerful person in the sultanate. Many condescending adjectives with regard to him are dispersed throughout the documents.

19. A *korakora* is a plank-built boat. They were called *korakoras* in Indonesia, but *caracoas* by the Spaniards in the Philippines. For further details, see W.H. Scott. *Cracks in the Parchment Curtain and Other Essays in Philippine History* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1982), p. 64.

20. VOC 1503, III, Interview Notes, fol. 562, 564v, 565, and VOC 1637, Letters from the Sultan to Batavia, 16 Nov. 1699, fol. 90.

21. VOC 1641, "Log-book of De Brieivings and Cloeck about the voyage from Ternate to Mindanao, June 15, 1700 to January 14, 1701," fol. 766.

Tiepko, Inko, and Hayko fell for the beetlenut and tobacco offerings of the *pagally* (younger relative) and married their girlfriends.²² While we may assume that these five married couples took care of population growth, four other mates of the Chinese crew helped decrease the population. Saowanko the navigator, Tsjin, and the two Javanese Aowangsa and Marompang, all died. There is no mention of the cause of death.²³

Tuwanko stayed at Manila only for one month. He later told some Dutch officials who were visiting Maguindanao, that he only saw one Spanish ship in the harbor there and knew of no other that had arrived or left recently. He further informed them that he had met another Chinese, named Quenka, who had carried a Prince and his followers from the island of Siao to the Spanish city, because they intended to invite the Spaniards to their island.²⁴ This was in 1688. Siao had been captured by the Dutch in 1677, so the Siao were considered subjects of the Dutch. That was interesting information for the Dutchmen.

Tuwanko must have settled down permanently at Simoay after his return from Manila. He also married, but did not pay the whole bride-price. In 1699 he was still indebted to the Kapitan Maulano for four *tael*²⁵ of gold and one slave which Maulano had stood guarantee for in the marriage contract.²⁶

Tuwanko also set out to ingratiate himself with the Maguindanaos. He inspired the trust and confidence of the Sultan. Maulano mentioned that the Sultan pardoned him for leaving for Manila without his permission and for disobeying the trade prohibition on wax at Sarangani.²⁷ Tuwanko knew how to play the game. He is known to have said to the Sultan "we have no other faith except in the Sultan, and whatever the Sultan wishes to command we shall obey."²⁸ One can guess he was biding his time until he could see an opportunity for leaving. The details

22. William Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World*, John Masefield, ed., 1906, 2 vol. New York, Vol. 1, p. 335.

23. VOC 1503, III, Interview Notes, fol. 562v, 565.

24. Ibid., fol. 569; VOC 1461, "Report of Albreuw and van Duym about their voyage to Mindanao, June 22 to Aug. 18, 1689," fol. 342.

25. A *tael* is a Chinese weight of changing value. Sometimes it is 1/16th katti. The Dutch East India Company equalled it to 1 1/4 real-of-eight.

26. VOC 1637, The Sultan to Batavia, 16 Nov. 1699, fol. 91.

27. Ibid., fol. 92.

28. VOC 1516, translated letter that follows, fol. 505.

of how that developed will never be known, but in 1691 Tuwanko managed to leave with permission from the Sultan. He had to request many times to be allowed to go, and when finally permission was given he still had to wait three months for the letters.

The only other Chinese of the original crew that had landed at Sarangani with him, who was allowed to go with him, was Ompo. Ompo had escaped being lured into marriage. The other five surviving Chinese were "kept by the Sultan."²⁹ Besides Tuwanko and Ompo there were four more men aboard ship: a Ternatan Chinese, named Hieuwko, his slave, and two Muslims from the Coromandel coast (east India). Hieuwko originally came from Palicatte (half way up the Coromandel coast). He had come to Maguindanao together with this nakoda from Ternate where he had been a resident. This nakoda had gambled away all the trade goods after their sloop had been damaged beyond repair.

The Muslims had come from Madras via Malacca to Maguindanao three years earlier on the English ship *Mindanao Merchant*. At some stage of their stay they had joined their shipmates in a strike against the English because they had not received their wages. They had been supported in their strike by the Sultan and the Kapitan Maulano because they were fellow Muslims. The whole affair had started when one of them, in a state of drunkenness, had spoken about their grudges to an English officer of the ship, who in turn started to beat the Indian Muslim for his rudeness. All this had happened in front of the Kapitan Maulano's house. The Maguindanaos had come to the aid of their fellow Muslim and drawn their kris and the English were forced to retreat. On this occasion the English lost ten of their crew who had stayed behind at Simoay ever since.³⁰ Two still single men of this group of Indian Muslims had approached Tuwanko when they heard that he was sailing for Batavia. This group had come to an agreement with Tuwanko that they could sail with him in exchange for free board and lodging.³¹

29. VOC 1503, III, Interview Notes, fol. 563.

30. VOC 1483, No. M. "Report from First Mate Barend Brouwer to Governor Joan Henric Thim and Council with regards to his mission to Maguindanao from Nov. 12, 1688 to Feb. 11, 1689," fol. 83. Barend Brouwer himself was witness to the incident related above. He describes it in his report under 13 Dec. 1688, fol. 52.

31. VOC 1503, III, Interview Notes, p. 567.

It was the custom at Maguindanao to receive letters that needed to be brought on a trip on the day of departure. The letters Tuwanko brought were dated 10 July 1691, so we can conclude that he left that day. He must have followed a southern course, because at Siao he was held up by a Dutch sergeant. Possibly, Tuwanko was trying to look up an old acquaintance there, the Chinese Captain Quenka, whom he had met in Manila. According to the Muslim Tsjagassan they were in need of a pilot, which was the reason given for stopping at Siao. They hoped to pick up a pilot from there to take them to Batavia.³²

Because Siao is Dutch territory, all non-Siao vessels that were spotted by the Dutch who had a small fort there, were approached and questioned. Tuwanko was in trouble once again. He was taken to Ternate by the dutiful Dutch Sergeant and all of the crew were interrogated by three members of the Council of Justice. At the same time they handed over four letters to the Dutch officials. A translation of these letters is found in the Appendices of this article.

THE CHINESE AT MAGUINDANAO

The letter that Tuwanko carried from Sultan Barahaman to the gonting's owner, Captain Kohanco, shows two peculiar details that contradict other reports. The Sultan mentions a shipwreck and loss of business on Tuwanko's return from Manila. He also puts Tuwanko in an unfavorable light, showing him to be breaking rules and to be stubborn. We know though from a letter that Maulano wrote to the Dutch later, that the Sultan had pardoned Tuwanko.

It seems, therefore, that the Sultan and Tuwanko had come to a certain understanding, probably with regard to some profitable trade deals. Tuwanko in his desire to leave must have made proposals to the Sultan which if successful, would be to their mutual benefit. Part of this set up probably was to make Captain Kohanco believe that most of his investment was lost.

There is no indication anywhere else that Tuwanko was shipwrecked or lost his goods. When he was interviewed by the Dutch at Ternate no losses were mentioned at all. Tuwanko told the

32. *Ibid.*, fol. 567v.

judges of his forced trip to Manila and even showed evidence of that for some of the leather traded there was still with him. However, Captain Kohanco was made to believe that Tuwanko had been very unfortunate.

Is it also possible that the letter should be read metaphorically? In that case the Sultan's expression of punishment for Tuwanko's negligence of protocol was the shipwreck and loss of business. That meant that Tuwanko from that moment on was completely dependent on the Sultan, and therefore, acted now on behalf of the Sultan only. I think that Tuwanko contrived to make the Sultan believe in his dependency in order to find for himself a way to leave again.

The Maguindanao sultanate was consciously making an effort to increase its population. The "pagally" system, mentioned earlier and described by Dampier, was one of their ways of going about it. Practically every Dutchman who wrote a report about his mission to Maguindanao mentioned the policy of attraction. During every mission to the Great River basin some crew members were lured away and became classified as deserters. This was not only a problem for the English and the Dutch, but for other nations, as well. Some quotations from Captain Paulus De Brieving's and Ensign Jacob Cloeck's diary point this out:

There are many escaped slaves here . . . , and many Chinese who have converted to Islam and are given wives by the Sultan, because whoever comes here is welcome.

The Sultan tries to increase the population in his land , . . . appropriates them (those converted to Islam) in this manner. One can protest this, but he will not find willing ears, because he will ultimately reply that they are all free to leave if they can pay their debts. He will then increase that by so much that he will be receiving threefold the amount of the debt.

Every year a few Chinese junks come from China to trade . . . Usually a few Chinese of each junk stay behind, called factors, who are being allured by the women . . . who push them so far that they become Mohammedan and thus come to marry them and are forced to stay in this land forever. That is the reason why there are so many Chinese here. However, many that live amongst them are in bankruptcy from Ternate and Amboina. The Sultan respects the Chinese rather well and speaks the Chinese language, which is also encouraged here.³³

33. VOC 1641, Brieving's and Cloeck, fol. 765v-766.

The fact that Tuwanko left with the Sultan's wholehearted approval, carrying his letters, shows that he was expected to return. However, Tuwanko was married and still owed part of the bride-price, which strengthens the point that he was expected back. All other crew members were unmarried and probably had no debts for those were two preconditions for getting permission to leave.

Tuwanko, however, never came back. We are sure of that because in a letter of 16 November 1699, Sultan Maulano relates to the Dutch Governor le Sage at Ternate an incident of a Maguindanao vessel that was stranded at Kayli through bad weather. From its cargo worth 1500 rixdollars, 1000 rixdollars were kept by a Chinese named Kohanco who claimed that was owed him from the debt incurred by a former nakoda Tuwanko who had lived there before. This tempted Maulano to say to some Dutch visitors: "The Chinese use dirty tricks and are swindlers."³⁴

Also De Roy writes that "many of them (Chinese) complain to us that they were forcefully robbed of their goods, and not just that, but also were coerced into staying."³⁵ The Pagally system was one way of attracting men to stay, but as long as they were not Muslims they were still outsiders, even if they spoke the local language.

We know of one who stayed on and fully adapted himself and became an insider. Inko, one of Tuwanko's original crew who got married, met again in 1695 with the merchant Pieter Alsteyn.³⁶ Alsteyn and Inko had met earlier in 1685, when Alsteyn had defended Inko in a case brought against him by a Ternatan. Inko told Alsteyn that he had not become Muslim yet, but had been faithful to the Sultan and in that way had obtained permission to sail out to the Dutch ship which was anchored away from the shore in front of the Simoay River. The Dutch, as always eager for Chinese informants, welcomed Inko and all that he could tell them. Inko was rewarded probably with a piece of cloth which was the usual form in which appreciation for information was shown.

34. VOC 1637, Letter Maulano to le Sage, fol. 92.

35. VOC 1483, No. M, Report de Roy to Governor Thim, fol. 37.

36. VOC 1554, No. 12, "Log-book of a voyage to Mindanao by sub-merchant Pieter Alsteyn and Ensign David Haak, Oct. 21, 1693 to March 24, 1694," fol. 68, 72.

It was the custom for the Dutch and for the English likewise, to build up a network of informants wherever they traded or visited. The Chinese were always part of this network and some became spies for the Company. Inko thus joined the information network and also talked with subsequent Dutchmen who visited Maguindanao. In 1700 he tells Brieving and Cloeck that he had converted to Islam. He appeared shaven aboard the ship; his queue had been cut off. That was a big decision to take for a Chinese in those days because most of them took great pride in their queues. Even a Jesuit who had returned from his long mission work in China, Father Juan de Lourieta, prided himself on his beard and queue which he wore in Tartary long after his arrival in Manila.³⁷

Inko came together with his friend Enko, who was also shaven. They came as messengers of the Sultan, asking for a piece of Spanish green cloth that the Sultan Maulano requested. It was given to them. Inko seemed to have worked his way up in Maguindanao society, being so close to the Sultan that he was sent on an errand like that. His conversion to Islam probably helped him improve his status.³⁸ We do not know what happened to the other crew members who were married and kept by the Sultan.

Not all Chinese landed accidentally and stayed at Maguindanao. In the Brieving and Cloeck quotations above we read that some had run away from bankruptcy in Ternate and Amboina. In 1688 a wave of Chinese left those areas after rumors were spread of gold to be found at Maguindanao. This could be explained by the profusion of gold displayed by the royal court officials and their wives. In the Sultan's entourage at an audience there always was one man completely harnessed in gold and another in silver. Even their helmets were of this precious metal. All dignitaries were seen with gilded crises and the members of the Royal family wore golden jewelry all over. This was the gold brought by an English pirate Captain Swan, who was forced to pay for everything he needed in gold.³⁹ It is said that after Captain Swan died (actually he was killed) the Kapitan Maulano alone "inherited" five piculs of this gold dust of Swan. The Sultan is said to have had a lesser share.

By the 1690s when a Dutch reformed minister wrote about

37. VOC 1684, *Diary of Carel van der Haagen, 1699-1704*, fol. 1976.

38. VOC 1641, *Brieving and Cloeck*, fol. 753v.

39. VOC 1437, *Capt. Charles Swan to Gov. of Ternate, 16 Feb. 1687*, fol. 199.

Ternate he reported that he knew of only one Chinese, but that many had lived there in earlier years.⁴⁰ If that is so, then it was truly an exodus of the Chinese from Ternate to Maguindanao.

Another flow of Chinese came from China itself. To sail from Sansu (Ch'uan Chou, Hokkien) to Maguindanao took three to four weeks.⁴¹ Three Chinese junks arrived at Maguindanao annually.⁴² They would bring all sorts of goods such as porcelain, big iron pans, brassware, silk cloth, shafts for blades, iron, lead, and a lot of other knick-knacks. They brought back to China, wax at 25 or 26 rixdollars per picul (25 or 26 reals-of-eight per 125 pounds), tortoise shell at 100 rixdollars or more per picul, bird's nests at 120 to 130 rixdollars per picul, dried beetlenuts, non-Muslim slaves, especially negroes from Angola and Mozambique.⁴³ At times it would take the junks from two to four years to get their returns for everything they had delivered to the Sultan. One of Coxinga's Chinese came to Ternate from Maguindanao to bring some rice while they were waiting for their return in wax.⁴⁴

The rice trade between Ternate and Maguindanao was a lucrative business for the Chinese. The Dutch bought the rice wholesale from them and sold it retail to the Ternatans. The Chinese were paid sixty rixdollars per *last* (1 *last* equals 1,976 kg) which was seven rixdollars higher than the market price elsewhere, but the (Dutch wanted to stimulate the import of rice from Maguindanao and build up the Great River basin to make it Ternate's granary, because there was always a great shortage of rice. Records show that in the 1650-70 period hundreds of lasts of rice and paddy were taken from Maguindanao to Ternate yearly. Expectations of the Governor in Ternate were that Maguindanao could supply up to 1,000 lasts annually.⁴⁵ It is no

40. F. Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien*, 2 vols. Amsterdam, Keyzer, ed. 1862, Vol. 1, p. 147.

41. VOC 1641, Brievingen and Cloeck, fol. 694.

42. *Ibid.*, fol. 724.

43. *Ibid.*, fol. 766. The Dutch ms. says "kaffers" which meant non religious negro slaves from Africa who were traded for cloth and brought to the Southeast Asian slave-markets.

44. Coxinga, the dreaded pirate, who sent the Dutch fleeing from Formosa and threatened the Spaniards in Manila with an invasion, also traded with Sultan Kudrat. The Dutch suspected a political relationship between the two as well. In van Dijk, *Betrekkingen*, pp. 269-73.

45. van Dijk, *Betrekkingen*, p. 270. He actually says 1,000 coyangs in contrast to other sources that mention lasts. The actual outcome is almost the same, one coyang being 30 piculs.

surprise that the Chinese community grew at this time in Maguindanao.

The Chinese who had lived at Maguindanao for a long time were capable of judging the Maguindanaos. To Pieter Alsteyn they gave their opinion as follows: "The Maguindanaos are arrogant, lazy, and needy people, whose leaders still know how to get their hands on anything and everything that is kept by their subjects."⁴⁶ Of course that was what the Dutch wanted to hear. However, many observers made similar statements. These writers of course refer to a certain class of Maguindanaos only, the one they were in contact with most frequently. The surplus of rice, wax and tobacco, which were all exported in relatively large quantities for a small coastal harbor principally, could not be produced by lazy and arrogant needy people.⁴⁷ I suspect that the presence of the large number of Chinese is to a certain extent responsible for the surplus and flourishing of Maguindanao trade during the second half of the seventeenth century. In the eyes of the Dutch the Chinese seemed "the industrious" section of society. The Dutch shared the opinion of the Chinese on the Maguindanaos. Of course both the Dutch and the Chinese came from trading traditions and were well matched against each other. Trade amongst the Maguindanao was a monopoly held in the hands of the ruling datu class. Who else could afford to send out vessels?

When the Chinese heard that the Dutch were trying to get permission to build a stronghold at Maguindanao in 1688, they welcomed that and expressed their eagerness in increasing trade and business.⁴⁸ This welcoming attitude of the Chinese towards the Dutch was not mutually shared. Rather representative of the Dutch feelings towards the Chinese at Maguindanao was a statement written by Captain de Roy ten years after his visit. He also had a lot of experience in the Moluccas trade.

The Chinese nation is such that it does not care with whom they trade, as long as there is profit. There is no nation in the Indies more harmful for the Company than the Chinese. That is why the Company must

46. VOC 1554, Report Pieter Alsteyn and Daid Haak, 21 Oct. 1693, fol. 56.

47. I observed recently (April 1985) that the Chinese in Mindanao still penetrate far into the hinterland to collect products in remote areas and bring these to coastal outlets.

48. VOC 1461, Report Albreuw and van Duym, 1689, fol. 346.

always be suspicious when the Chinese request *pascedules* to trade with Maguindanao, Sangir, Talaud, Siao, or the east-side of Halmahera. It can be concluded that even if we think that there is not much to be found in those places, the Chinese will know how to find it. I can say this, because at Maguindanao where there are many Chinese, I saw that the English knew how to make use of these people.⁴⁹

Not only did a Chinese not care with whom he traded; neither did he care how he traded. Illicit trade by the Chinese at Maguindanao was as common as the "fines" paid by Manila drivers to policemen nowadays.⁵⁰

There was a rule at Maguindanao, which was the same at all other sultanates for that matter, that stated that nobody could trade before the Sultan had finished his transaction first. On his signal the subjects were allowed to start trading. Sometimes that signal never came at Maguindanao because of political implications during the negotiations between the foreigners and the Maguindanao Sultans. In that case, the Chinese especially had to resort to illegal trade practices and most of the time the foreigners were cooperative. Practically every Dutch report has an account of some Chinese coming out at odd times of the day and night to secretly trade in tobacco, wax, or cloth. One such occasion may be recounted here as an illustration.

Once, when the Dutch were ashore, a Chinese sold them seven piculs (875 pounds) of wax for 18 rixdollars per picul (2 rixdollars lower than the going market price). The Dutch inspected the ware and the two parties agreed on a time for delivery. When it became dusk, the Chinese came with his cargo to the Dutch ship. On arrival he noticed that there were one or two Maguindanaos aboard. He became rather frightened and requested that the wax be received through the cabin ports; he wanted his cloth the same way.⁵¹ It should be remembered that trade without permission from the Sultan was punishable by death.

49. VOC 1614, Considerations and Reflections on Maguindanao by de Roy, fol. 1096.

50. I am not implying that they learned that from the Chinese.

51. VOC 1554, No. 12, Logbook Alsteyn and Haak, fol. 123.

CONCLUSION

Considering the large numbers of Chinese at Maguindanao, which was frequently mentioned by the Dutch who visited there, we may presume that influences from outside penetrated Maguindanao society not only from their contact with foreign visitors but more so through the daily living and intermarriage with the Chinese. Hayko, for example, came knowing how to write. He might have gone to the Chinese school at Batavia that had been established a few years before he left. He probably taught others to write or made them aware of its convenience in telling his story. The last translated letter in the Appendix indicates that letters from simple people to other places were not uncommon. The presence of a Chinese chronicler should not be excluded as they were known to exist at that time in other trading centers.

A procession described by De la Costa and Schurz of three mandarins from China who came to see Governor General Acuña in Manila is strikingly similar to processions held at the Ternate and Maguindanao Sultanates.⁵² The lacquer boxes and trays that are used for respectively the letters and gifts of the ambassadors, were unmistakably a Chinese influence. Other similarities are the carrying of high dignitaries on bamboo litters, the burning of the incense, the musical accompaniment, the enormous crowds of onlookers, etc. The only difference is that at Maguindanao, it struck the Dutch and other non-European visitors that the men were all so heavily armed.

The Chinese are known to have put on their theatrical plays from time to time, through which aspects of their culture might have found a receptive ear with the Maguindanaos. We can only guess at the cultural borrowings from the Chinese by the Maguindanaos. It would be hard to judge what Maguindanao society would have been like without the Chinese, because they were always there from the earliest records by the Dutch. They formed an integral part of the Great River basin peoples.

52. H. de la Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines, 1581-1768* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 204; William Lytle Schurz, *The Manila Galleon* (New York: Dutton & Co., 1939), p. 85.

Appendices

FOUR LETTERS FROM MAGUINDANAO

Appendix I

Translation of a letter in Malay from the King of Maguindanao to Captain Kohanco, received at Ternate with a vessel from Tagulanda on 22 July 1691.

This letter from His Highness the King of Maguindanao goes to my friend Captain Kohanco, whom God will protect from all illnesses, give long life and much profit, as long as he will live in this world.

The *nakoda* Tuwanko came to trade at Sarangani. That is what the people of Sarangani came to tell me. They wanted to know if they should confiscate *nakoda* Tuwanko's goods, because whoever comes to trade there, risks his trade goods being confiscated and we regard these as our profit. I ordered them not to do that yet, because I first wanted to see myself what kind of Chinese he was.

So two Chinese came from Sarangani and we asked them if they had been sent there? They answered: "We were not sent, but we came on our own. After that we learnt that it was strictly prohibited to trade there." After nine to eleven days I sent people to Sarangani to fetch the *nakoda* Tuwanko, because he was not allowed to trade there. Everyone who comes there to trade, has his goods confiscated. Yes, even my friend the Dutch East India Company does not come to trade at Sarangani because it is strictly prohibited.

The Spaniards experienced that recently too. Before *nakoda* Tuwanko arrived they came again to trade. We taxed them and confiscated goods. The Governor of Manila never mentioned it, because it was the people's own fault. See, Sarangani has our plantations and also is our warehouse.

In the meantime my messengers who would bring back *nakoda* Tuwanko, have returned from Sarangani, but *nakoda* Tuwanko did not want to come with them because he had not finished repairing his vessel. He sold half his goods, but the other half was still outstanding. So I ordered the people of Sarangani to pay him and I let him give the left-over trade goods to my deputies and the *nakoda* Hayko, who brought them to me. They consisted of:

- 30 pieces Guinees *lijwaet*⁵³
- 1 *corge*⁵⁴ *Salemporis*⁵⁵

53. The manuscript says Guinees *lywaet* which is checkered cotton cloth, exported to the Gulf of Guinea therefore, also known as *negroskleeden/negro* cloth.

54. *Corge* is a bundle of 20 pieces woven cloth.

55. *Salempouris*, are multicolored cotton pieces of cloth or blankets. They are named after Salemporis, a place on the Indian Coromandel coast.

- 15 pieces Patholen⁵⁶
- 4 corge small Sarassen⁵⁷
- 3 corge small Quangcarang⁵⁸
- 4 corge Madura Tanabarat⁵⁹
- 4 Balangi Thread
- 4 pound blew and cassoumba⁶⁰ rugs, each of 4 1/2 vadem⁶¹ in length
- 14 pieces small Baftas⁶²
- 18 pieces Chitzen⁶³
- 13 pieces small red Chitzen
- 140 cattie Cassoumba⁶⁴

Nakoda Tuwanko arrived at Maguindanao after two or five months. At that time we were fighting the people of Sulu and Borneo and chased them away. Therefore, we did not pay attention to his wax. I thought that when he comes to leave again I will then see with how much he can sail away, because Tuwanko said: "We have no other faith, except in the Sultan, and whatever the Sultan wishes to command we shall obey."

Her further decided to leave for Manila together with nakoda Mangu, and already had loaded his wax in the *korakora*, when people asked me if nakoda Tuwanko had come to take leave from me. I answered: "I do not know that he wants to leave for Manila." So I reprimanded him about that and warned that if he wanted to continue thus, and use his own free will, I would not recognize him an envoy of my friend [the Company]. But he left in the meantime for Manila and when he returned his vessel was shipwrecked and with this his business came to an end.

Further, I do not know how many debts he still has outstanding on Sarangani ang Maguindanao, because he has never acknowledged me or talked to me about it. It is a custom here that when people take trade goods from

56. *Patholen* are fine pieces of cloth that look silky, but can be cotton based too.

57. *Sarassen* or *Serassen* are multicolored silk pieces of cloth. *Serasse-gobars* were multicolored curtains in use on Java, but *Serassemaleye* were the ones in demand at Ternate and probably also at Maguindanao: they had flowered patterns.

58. *Quangcarang*^{*}

59. *Madura Tanabarat* = *tanabana* from the place Madura, *Tana* = warp; *bana* = woof; Both warp and woof were of the fine silk threads.

60. *Cassoumba* from Malay *Kasumba*: the orange / red flour of the *carthamus tinctorius* used as a dye for cotton and threads.

61. One *vadem* equals 1.69 meters.

62. *Baftas* is from Persian *bâfta* = woven. They were fine cotton pieces of cloth of 6 vadem in length, white or black. The best ones came from Gudjarat. They were in high demand all over Asia.

63. *Chitz* is from Hindi *chint*: A colorful cloth of cotton or silk, usually for head-dress, turban, and belts in use.

64. See footnote 9.

the traders, they have to give a pledge back instead, but the nakoda Tuwanko did not demand a pledge from them.

At the moment my people have a difficult time, because we are moving our place of residence. So the superfluous goods he has given us compensate for this misdemeanor on Sarangani, because he did not behave as an envoy. If we did not know that he was sent by my friend [the Company] we would have confiscated everything.

There is no other gift but two candles of wax and one picul of cinnamon water, which is not to be despised, as it is a sign of mutual friendship now and forever.

Written on Sunday, 10th day of the month Radsiah in the 1101, the year alamat.⁶⁵

Appendix II

Translation of a letter in Malay from the Sultan of Maguindanao to the Captain of the Maleys, received at Ternate with a vessel from Tagulanda on 22 July 1691.

After a series of honorary titles in Arabic characters, the content is as follows:

This letter from your youngest brother the Sultan, is to my eldest brother the Captain Maleys, whom God, the Lord, bless and give life on this earth. Amen.

I have sent to you, my brother the Captain Maleys, the letter with nakoda Tuwanko and I hope you have received it. In that letter I have let you know that I sent some goods with the captain, which consisted of one slave, called Siboluan, 1/2 picul wax, and 15,000 bundles tobacco. I hope that my brother has claimed that from the captain, and given it to nakoda Tuwanko.

If my brother is good-hearted, please, lend the nakoda a helping hand in claiming the goods, for the sake of God and Mohammed.

The goods were taken with the same captain who has been to Maguindanao many years in the past. He was known even during the lifetime of the old king.

I have nothing else to give my brother but my unceasing prayers day and night.⁶⁶

65. VOC 1516, fol. 504-505v.

66. VOC 1516, fol. 505v-506.

Appendix III

Translation of a letter in Malay from a Maguindanao to Captain Piu, received at Ternate with a vessel from Tagulanda on 22 July 1691.

This letter from nakoda—— is to my eldest brother Captain Piu, who may be given a long life and much profit by God.⁶⁷ Amen.

I have received the letter that my brother sent me and understood the contents. My brother's envoys did not come straight to Maguindanao, but first passed by Sarangani and traded there. The King of Maguindanao came to hear about it and had them come to Maguindanao. Therefore, I have not been able to help my brother's envoys. The town of Sarangani is the warehouse of the King of Maguindanao, where nobody, not even the Maguindanaos are allowed to go without the permission of the King.

I also understand from my brother's letter that he wishes day and night to see me. That will be possible in one or two years if I stay alive. In case I come to die, I have a son, named Samsuwan who will then take my place.

I have nothing else to send you except a badju of pisang bast⁶⁸ which is not to be despised because it is as a flower on a stem without fragrance to show my sincere and honest affection.⁶⁹

Appendix IV

Translation of a letter in Malay from a certain Molahan and Gombie at Maguindanao to Tumanay, received at Ternate, 22 July 1691.

This letter is carried by Tuwanko to our father Tumanay, who is blessed by God the Lord on earth, and whom God the Lord will give heaven in the after-life, from Your Honorable Lumen Molahan and Gombie.

If our father is still alive, we ask him to send a letter to us, his sons, so we may know that he is still alive on the eastcoast of Java.

We two brothers live here at Maguindanao under the *Kapitan Laut Maulano*.

We have nothing else to send our father but only our prayers and greetings.⁷⁰

67. The name is missing in the manuscript, but a reference to his son Samsuwan makes this person to be Samsuwan's father, the respectable *shabandar* Mabaram who was one of the two *shabandars* at Maguindanao.

68. *Badju of pisang* – bast is vest or shirt from the fiber of a banana (Abaca) tree.

69. VOC 1516, fol. 506.

70. VOC 1516, fol. 506-506v.