

An Ethnography: Understanding of Tau't Bato's Cultural Heritage

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Abstract – *In the valley at the Singnapan Basin, dwelling in the caves is the tribe known as Tau't Bato. Their existence is not a hoax. Their presence is but a singular event that manifests the richness of the culture of the Philippine archipelago. Located amidst a changing world this tribe of indigenous people clings fast slowly disappearing land. Evolution is inevitable and with the transformations that happen in the modern world, choices to adapt and survive must be made. Choices that sooner or later would bury the wealth of their culture and tradition will be, but memories chronicled through literature and photographs. The study acknowledges the diverse culture and tradition of the Tau't Bato tribe who are considered as national archeological treasures since the early 1900s. Using the available written literatures and photographs captured by Pierre de Vallombreuse, the study focused on the unique practices performed and observed by these people. The status of as well as the conservation and protection of the tribe had also been taken into consideration. Based from the available sources of information, it seemed that the Tau't Bato tribe is losing itself to the modern world and together with them, the culture and the tradition which made their tribe unique.*

Keywords – Tau't Bato Tribe, Palawan Tribe, Unique Practices of Tau't Bato Tribe

INTRODUCTION

In a world governed by technology, where being civilized equates to possessing a multitude of modern devices and equipment capable of harnessing the knowledge of the world in just a click of a button; a world connecting while delineating humankind despite all of the advancements, contemporary people had managed to achieve – it is but comforting to know that there are still nations whose people hold the past in their hands while striving hard to live for the future.

The Philippine archipelago is a home to a diverse group of people, various ethnic groups or tribes, indigenous people who survived the vastly changing world. According to Torres (2016), Indigenous Peoples in the world remains one of the poorest, most excluded and disadvantaged sectors of society. They continuously face different issues including discrimination, poverty and human rights abuse.

The documentation and understanding of indigenous knowledge such as the art and art forms, practices, technologies, early human life

and civilization in the Philippines is one of the key priority areas in research. This theme is under the ATIN Program (Ang Tinig Natin): Inclusive Nation-Building indicated at the Harmonized National Research and Development Agenda (HNRDA) Framework for 2017-2022 prepared by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST, 2016). The initiative of prioritizing this area will promote the conservation and preservation of the country's cultural heritage.

The most unique of all tribes identified by the Philippine government that requires thorough protection from any kind of exploitation is the Tau't Bato tribe. Thus, this qualitative study was conducted to understand the ways of living developed by the Taut Bato Tribe at Singnapan Valley, Southern Palawan.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this ethnographic study was to understand the cultural heritage and shared patterns of behaviors of Tau't Bato Tribe at Singnapan Valley, Southern Palawan. This study aimed to analyze the photographed memorabilia

exhibited in the Senate Hall of the National Museum of the Philippines. Specifically, this study aimed to (1) determine the unique practices of Tau't Bato, (2) assess the current status of the tribe and (3) to recognize the conservation measure in preserving the tribe based on the existing literatures and from the treasured photographic collection of the worlds' renowned photographer, Pierre de Vallombreuse.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This qualitative research utilized the ethnographic research design. This type of research is anchored on the Constructivist Worldview, characterized by understanding multiple participants meaning, social and historical construction and theory generation (Creswell, 2013).

In order to achieve the purpose of this study, the researchers conducted an ocular investigation and documentary analysis of the photographed memorabilia (Figure 1) exhibited in the Senate Hall of the National Museum of the Philippines. It serves as the primary source of data and information to analyze and understand the unique ways of living of the Tau't Bato Tribe.



Figure 1. Photography Exhibit by Pierre de Vallombreuse at the Senate Hall of the National Museum of the Philippines



Figure 2. Sample Exhibited Photographs of "The Valley"

All the pictures exhibited were analyzed and described to gather codes and themes about the Tau't Bato's unique way of living and practices. Some examples of these pictures were shown in Figure 2. To substantiate the discussion and quality of data collected from the photographs observed, various educational sources such as news articles, book excerpts, journals, dissertations, and videos were used as supporting documents to strengthen the claims of the authors. Moreover, it is noteworthy to cite that due to the limited resources and hard copy of written references, majority of information used to accomplish the above-mentioned endeavor came basically from deemed reliable online resources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tau't Bato Tribe

Tau't Bato or Tao't Bato in the Tagalog regions, the name of the tribe literally translates to "people of the rock" or "stone people". It is a small but articulate subgroup of the Palawan tribes (Ethnic Groups of the Philippines, 2011). Figures 3 and 4 shows the Taaw't Bato as a small

population of indigenous people who either lives in their self-made dwellings built on stilts inside caves or in open mountain slopes during dry seasons, or in the crater of an extinct volcano in Palawan during rainy seasons.

“The Valley”, A Photography Exhibit

According to Patrick Deyvant, the Director of Alliance Française de Manille (AFM), it was in March 2016 that the AFM and Pierre de Vallombreuse had made its first collaboration with a small-scale version of *The Valley* exhibition. The AFM Gallery was a compilation of Vallombreuse’s photos taken in the Singnapan Valley, Palawan where the Tau’t Bato reside for a longer period of time.



Figure 3. An abandoned hamlet and a Tau’t Bato house during a misty morning. (This photo was taken in 2015.)



Figure 4. A family prepares to face the monsoon in their cave passed on from generation to generation. (The photo was taken in 1994.)

His artworks showcased the symbolic balance between environment and its inhabitants, the preservation of one’s identity and culture, and the external factors that affect the survival and societal evolution of the group (Vallombreuse, 2017). Last August 31, 2017 up to February 4, 2018, the “The Valley,” a photographic exhibition was open to open for public viewing as a tribute during the 70th Anniversary of the diplomatic relation between France and the Philippines (The Manila Times, 2017). According to Virgilio S. Almario, Chairman of



Figure 5. French photographer Pierre de Vallombreuse during an interview on the opening of his photo exhibit at the National Museum. Source: GMA News TV.

the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), the implementation of this exhibit is a collaborative effort of Alliance Française de Manille, Embassy of France to the Philippines, National Museum of the Philippines and NCCA (Vallombreuse, 2017).

The photos were displayed at the Senate Hall of the National Museum of the Philippines art gallery (Figure 1). It is available for public display in hopes of raising awareness and establish the love for one's tradition and appreciation of other's culture among Filipinos.

Tau't Bato: From Written Literatures and Photographed Artefacts

Through various forms of information gathered from the collective endeavors of scientists, researchers, and expeditioners who braved the rough terrains and the unknowns of the lands, a glimpse of the treasures that lay hidden for some time was slowly uncovered so that others may learn and appreciate the beauty that makes the Filipino a nation laden with values and customs. Reality dictates that this treasury of



culture and inherited tradition be remembered through writings, songs, and dances. More so, it is better still to eternalize other peoples' way of living in photographs which captures the reality that is called life.

The life of the Taaw't Bato tribe was chronicled through still memoirs by the French photographer, Pierre de Vallombreuse (Figure 5), from 1988 to 2017. Though he came from a foreign land, his almost thirty years of social intermingling with the natives had earned him deep insights to be able to appreciate the distinctive qualities of the people which made their rareness the more impressive. Looking through what he saw from his lenses, a glimpse of a world far removed from the ease and comfort of the modern day humanity was shown from the pictured artefacts he had collected and treasured in all of those almost thirty years (de Vallombreuse, 2017).

The exhibited photos shown in figures 6a and 6b have been able to showcase the means at which the natives farm their lands on level areas using the traditional method of utilizing animals like carabaos to till the soil in preparation to planting. In figures 6c and 6d, the photographer had also managed to capture the difficulties and danger that the hunters of the tribe endure almost on a daily basis – leaping, crawling and scaling the jagged cliffs for possible hunts that would bring food to their family's table.

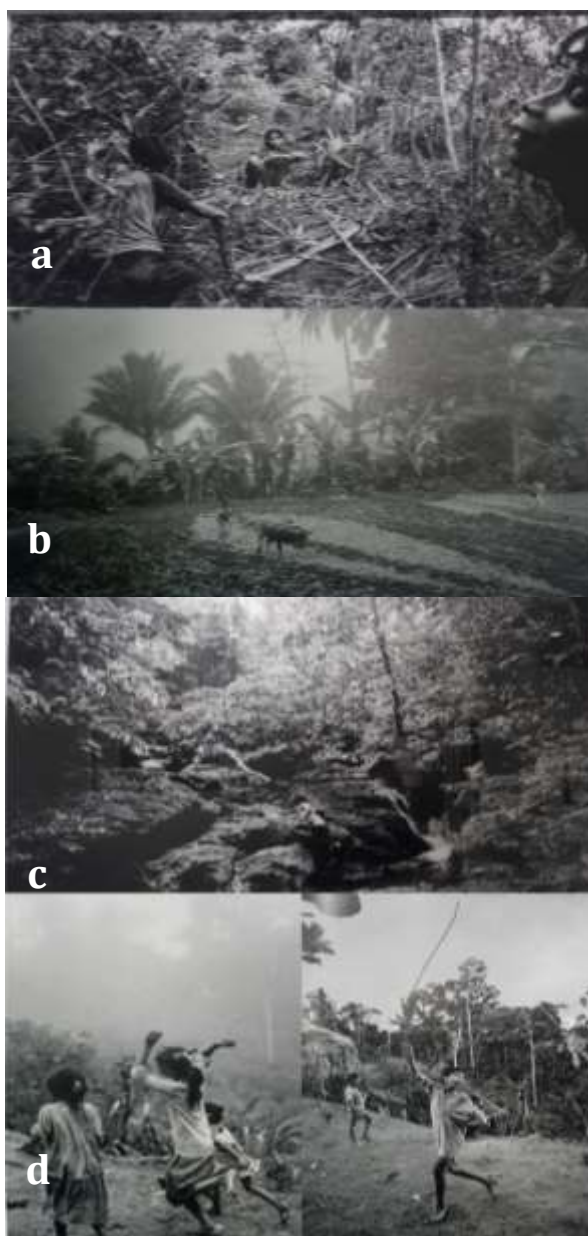




Figure 6 (a) Taking a short break during swiddling of the land; (b) A family farming the swiddled land with the aid of a carabao, 2017; (c) A man climbing a rock wall, 2017; (d) Men climbing the steep rock wall while hunting; (e) Children playing; (f) An old woman caught in heavy rain using a leaf as an umbrella. Source: National Museum.

Singnapan Valley, home to the Tau't Batu, is located along the western slope of Mount Mantalingahan in the southern part of Palawan within the jurisdiction of Barangay Ransang, Municipality of Rizal. In 1978, former President Ferdinand E. Marcos signed Proclamation No. 1743 declaring 14,312 hectares of land covering the Tau't Batu area as a National Museum reservation, and Presidential Decree No. 1492 declaring the petroglyphs in the Tau't Batu caves as cultural treasures. In 1983, the monograph edited by Dr. Jesus T. Peralta entitled "Tau't Batu Studies" was published as the result of the initial research in ethnology, archaeology, botany, zoology, and geology.

Figure 7. Excerpt from one of the exhibited photos of "The Valley". Source: National Museum.

Though only in colors of black and white, the serenity of the isolated condition of the village, its distant joy in simple acts of kindness while the children plays together (Figure 6e), the unity of the family as they prepare to leave their house to tend to their farm, the hardships of being caught in torrential rains with nothing but a large leaf to protect them (figure 6f) – all create lasting images that show the raw beauty of the indigenous family called Taaw't Bato.

During the 1970's, the Taaw't Bato tribe are found to be shy and cautious people. Having lived all their lives in isolated seclusion they could be labelled in a conventional way as reserved (Ethnic Groups of the Philippines, 2011). It takes a long period of time before people of the tribe, most especially the children, to warm up to outsiders or foreigners whom they treat as strangers for a certain period of time but when they do, they unhesitatingly will show kindness (Maentz, 2012). Primarily they live in

contentment, enjoying once in a while the fruits of their labor when trading their resources for other things. In recent years, they are more exposed to the changing world outside of their own, and they have been more aware to the fact that they too are changing though at a slower pace as compared to the other tribes.

According to researched literature and accounts of natives, during the administration of President Ferdinand E. Marcos in 1978, words of a tribe being "rediscovered" living in the caves of the Palawan mountains reached the Malacañan Palace, the then president together with his wife, Imelda Romualdez-Marcos immediately embarked on a helicopter journey to meet the native tribe, bringing along provisions such as food and clothing (Maentz, 2012). In fact it was stated that it was the president himself who gave the tribe its name "Taaw't Bato" based on their make-shift houses that were clustered at different levels on the walls of the crater (Maentz, 2012). They were considered as a great archeological find.

Together with the native people's potteries and the petroglyphs found inside their cave dwellings, which indicate that the natives came from the Neolithic times, as can be seen from the picture below (Figure 7) they were later declared national treasures and are to be protected from being taken advantage of by outsiders (Travel Palawan, 2017).

Though somewhat primitive in their ways, the Taaw't Bato had shown that their way of living is in itself able to sustain their various tradition and culture. Their dwellings may have been molded by nature out of crude rocks and cavernous retreats during the wet season when heavy rains flood the valley but they make the best out of it, being happy and living comfortably based how they manage their lifestyle. Often times to be able to enter the their cave dwelling in such season, the natives construct light but sturdy lattice-like ladder made of tree saplings latched together and fastened to the wall crevices of the cave to provide easy access. This ladder-like structure is brilliantly structured by the native people in that it requires no framework which will hold it against the wall, nor will it collapse once

one of the sapling breaks. In seasons when the land is dry, some of the natives preferred to stay in their self-made houses near their farms where they could have easy access to the trading posts near the foot of the mountains.

It was said that the first time the Taaw't Bato tribe was seen, they are wearing primitive and crude clothing like loincloths made of hammered barks for the males and the females having bare breasts covered only with decorative necklaces which they themselves have made as well as small pieces of cloths as skirts to cover their lower body (Joshua Project, 2018).

Nowadays, though other members of the tribe still use g-strings, majority of the people favor to use the clothes that are mostly associated with the conventional clothing attires of the modern world such as shirts, trousers, shorts, blouses for females as well as skirts and the likes. As photographed in Figure 8, the boys of the tribe though wearing a G-string is already wearing long-sleeved shirts while the female children are oriented to wear tops and skirts.

In rare occasions when researches visit the tribe, they witness how the people make fire by rubbing two stones together. When the natives were offered the use of modern lighters for easier production of fire, the people respectfully decline the offer opting to use their own method of building fires (Maentz, 2012) thus ensuring that they would not be dependent on things that



Figure 8. Children from Taaw't Bato tribe dressed in modern day clothes. Source: National Museum.

sooner or later would be gone, break, or be depleted.

Hunting for the Tau't Bato is not a sport but a means to provide nourishment for their family thus they only hunt what they could eat and nothing in excess. Figures 9a to 9d shows children while they are gathering and, or hunting food to eat. During previous generations, hunting is done by the use of poison-tipped arrows emitted through blowpipes, currently the preferred method of their hunting that goes all year round is preferably managed by using traps therefore limiting the possibility of the toxin being eaten by the tribe. Aside from the wild pigs that they catch during hunting, another source of food for the natives is the cassava which is the staple source of carbohydrates for them (Ethnic Groups of the Philippines, 2011).

In addition to being hunters, the Taaw't Bato tribe are also swidden farmers and the cassavas they eat resulted from the cultivation of their farms. Usually they are described to apply



Figure 9. (a) A boy hunts for birds and bats; (b) A child gathering tubers called bancouka; (c) A girl picking fresh vegetables after raining; and (d) A boy trying to catch fish from the river. Source: National Museum.

multiple cropping systems wherein they plant various types of produce all at the same time then harvest at the same time also or in succession. Other products they plant and harvest are pineapples, sugar cane, garlic, sweet potato and other types of vegetables such as string beans, malunggay, squash and pepper (Joshua Project, 2018).

These products are exchanged with other products in a process they call as “sambi” or barter. This system of bartering their products is transacted only with other people in neighboring areas that are a couple of days walk away from them (Maentz, 2012). On rare occasions, they also practice “sambi” wherein they barter off some of their agricultural produce for some marine fish from the Candawaga people, another tribe found in the plains of Palawan (Joshua Project, 2018). At times, to be able to buy important supplies for the tribe, the natives sell forest products such as forest seeds, rattan, and resin from the almaciga tree (Fabro, 2016). This mode of acquiring money by selling their products is called as “Dagang” (Joshua Project, 2018).

The basic social unit in the Tau’t Bato tribe is what they call as “ka-asawahan” wherein there is just the husband and the wife in the family. In this unit there could be other several couples that would make up the marriage groups. When this happens then a “Bulun-bulun” is created. This is the system practiced when there are several couples who dwells in a single cave. Such occurrence is described with sharing of resources such as food and other equipment (Joshua Project, 2018).

The Taaw’t Bato are a merry group that loves music that they also entertain themselves through playing two of their most famous musical instruments called the “Kubing” and “Kudlong” (Joshua Project, 2018). Through the introduction of modernization these people now also enjoys the use of DVD players and oftentimes entertain themselves by listening from it while doing household chores (Figures 11 and 12). Because they are innately peaceful people, there is no report of any violence ever happening in the tribe. Wrongdoings are simply not done be the

members of the tribe. Harmony and balance between the natives and the nature is what they believe in, thus peace is always maintained. As such is the case, children are free to play without any worries from potential danger coming from the members of the tribe; women without tops carrying babies are also safe to cross rivers and hunt for fishes in the river, or visit other families



Figure 11. An evening of watching a movie from a DVD player, 2017.
Source: National Museum.

in far-off places.



Figure 12. Buying a new DVD movie from a local market near the coast.
Source: National Museum

Tribe Status

Information from articles cites that the Taaw’t Bato is a subgroup of the Palaw’an tribe living in the Southwest of Palawan. They are a small community of natives who dwells in mountain caves and had remained secluded except for the last 10 years when people started visiting their tribe on a regular basis bring with them the products of the modern world such as

clothing, cooking tools, DVD players, radios, and blankets.

To start, the population of the Taaw't Bato are not that much to begin with. During the early to late 1970's the population of the natives runs only a couple hundred to 400 at most (Joshua Project, 2018). This was the time that the said tribe was visited by the late President Marcos with his companions and have been started to be exploited. Since the time they were "rediscovered", countless missionaries, foreigners, and other outsiders had visited them bringing with them each time a taste of the modern "civilization".

New forms of religion had been

Change had been imminent. The tribe started to "evolve". With evolution is the slowly dying culture and tradition of the Taaw't Bato. Nowadays, there is only a reported



Figure 13. A child photograph while attending the first "school" of the tribe. Source: National Museum.

introduced to the natives not to mention things that are previously unknown to them such as the typical medicines bought from the pharmacy, different clothing such as pants, t-shirts, and skirts. A new kind of world had been opened up to them and with it a new kind of living – even the process of a "formal" school learning had been oriented to the young ones (Figure 13).

Years passed and owing to the comforts that had been presented to them, the native slowly began to yearn for more than what they possess in the valley. Their numbers began to dwindle as time goes on due to the migration of families (Figure 14) who preferred to stay near municipalities that provides health care and education for their children.



Figure 14. A family leaves the cave to live down the valley, 1994. Source: National Museum

approximation of 100 members of the tribe left in their original dwelling area in Singnapan Basin, in Mount Matalingahan, Palawan, all other members either moved on to a new area nearer town or have intermarried to other tribes. Unfortunately, with this it is said that the last tribe known to be a national archeological treasure is slowly disappearing in the face of the Philippines (Ruta, 2017).

Conservation Measure to Preserve the Tribe

The Philippines is considered as one of the culturally diverse country due to the existence of approximately 14-17 million Indigenous People (IP) belonging to 110 ethno-linguistic groups coming from the different parts of the Philippines. Their existence plays an important

role in the development of humanity. Their culture, tradition, their role as stewards of our environment, and their cosmological insights are precious treasures that new generations inherit from them. As of today, their lifestyles are influenced by the rapidly changing environment that exists in favor of technology. Along with the progress that the people embrace is a growing threat that will bear them to their extinction. Exploitation encroach their lives for the benefit of the influential people who holds “power” over them.

According to one of the exhibited photographs, in as early as 1978 presidential proclamations as well as decrees were put into place by President Ferdinand Marcos which declares the Taaw’t Bato tribe, their land, as well as petroglyphs as cultural treasures. Furthermore, in Proclamation No. 1743, all of the land where the tribe lives is cited as a National Museum reservation, thus, as long as the rule stands, the domain where the tribe lives should be preserved and protected (refer to Figure 7). Unfortunately, even with the laws established long before, the Taaw’t Bato had been vulnerable to exploitation, marginalization and oppression by nation states or by politically dominant ethnic groups. To prevent these to happen, international conventions such as the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), United Nations Framework-Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and United Nations Convention on to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) on which Philippines is a signatory to the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) had been concluded. In addition, the United Nations has issued a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to guide member-state national policies to collective rights of indigenous people—such as culture, identity, language, and access to employment, health, education, and natural resources.

This initiative is a manifestation that the recognition to protect the welfare and rights, culture, and tradition of the indigenous people are reflected not only in local and national agenda but also it is ever present in the discourse of international considerations most especially

when domains for the provision of preserving and conserving biodiversity is concerned. As cited in the Philippine Indigenous Peoples Protected Areas: Review of Policy and Implementation, Forest Peoples Programme in August 2008:

“The State shall recognize and promote all the rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples (ICCs/IPs) hereunder enumerated within the framework of the Constitution; ... Right to ancestral domains ... Right to self-government and empowerment ... Right to social justice and human rights ...Right to cultural integrity...”

-- Indigenous Peoples Rights Act 1997

In compliance with the 1987 Philippine Constitution’s mandate, the Philippines had enacted Republic Act 8371, also known as the Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act (IPRA) in 1997. It is the embodiment of the government’s formal recognition of the rights of the country’s various IPs and indigenous cultural communities (ICCs), foremost of which is to hold titles to their territories or ancestral domains, or the Certificate of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADT), after proper identification and delineation according to law. The importance of IPRA extends to environmental and natural resource management and protection. The main occupants of protected areas are IPs/ICCs, and many parts of protected areas are also the ancestral domains of IPs/ICCs.

With the provisions of laws made throughout generations of legislators and policy makers the only provision needed is for humanity’s awareness to control the truth in giving the indigenous people the justice to live in their natural environment.

Analysis of Information Gathered

The uniqueness of the culture and tradition of one’s bloodline is in itself a treasure to be passed on from generation to generation. It is an honorable measure to ensure that the succeeding generation will possess the foundation that would guarantee the survival of their people and the future of the nation.

The culture and tradition expressed by the Tau't Bato tribe identifies the people and their unique view of how their world functions. The ways and means that they follow to be able to fulfill and practice their culture may be peculiar to the eyes of an outsider but to those who possess the knowledge of ages, it is their everything. It is them as one people – their identity, their being.

The method of the tribe in expressing their religion during the old days was a sacred means of how these people base their beliefs in inanimate objects and resolve notion about gods that any outsiders will not fully comprehend – strangers could only observe their rituals from afar but never really understand, only appreciated. Visitors could only take on impressions of what is it for the Tau't Bato but never have an inkling that the belief the tribe possess is basically their life. For them, giving sacrifices and adoration to nature whose spirit they believe will give them certain luck and who will fulfill their aspirations is not out of anything extraordinary. For them this belief is the ultimate truth and the means to their salvation. This certain ideology in the perspective of those in the modern world may be very feudal and out of context given the developments in technology which they understand. However, it goes both ways. The ways of the current world in turn is a far-fetched thinking for the indigenous people who still hold superstitious beliefs in things they are not familiar.

From the expert production of photographs taken by de Vallombreuse, the state at which the Taaw't Bato express themselves gives the distinct persona of people with pristine knowledge of how they are supposed to work among themselves and with nature. Violence in their community as stated by written articles is non-existent, their belief in inanimate objects such as trees, rivers, and rock formation, yielding influence over their lives may be too primitive yet their idea of justice is more humane as compared from what the current world practices. Killing of one's own is definitely as far-fetched from their culture and tradition of resolving tribal dispute as

that of the modern world opting to use bullets and guns to pacify the nation.

Furthermore, though they live relatively far from the “civilization” that the people nowadays experiences, they exhibit a better grasp of the idea of communion with others. Sharing to them all they have without nurturing greed and remorse from those who have and possess more is not an argument to inhabit their thoughts. They give and share because that is their innate nature as one people belonging in one tribe practicing one tradition, one culture. The idea of their “ka-asawahān” is anchored in the notion that they are one family and they will remain stronger and wiser if they are together. In the concept of the current world, this idea and concept of reaching out and sharing or giving to those in need is yet again far removed from what is practiced. People today would rather be frugal and save what they have for their future use instead of committing it to others even if those others are their immediate family members or blood relatives. The point of the lesson to be learned from the Tau't Bato must not be lost in translation that one should not contextualized their manner of living and judge them harshly. Due to the fact that this is part of their culture, a tradition that had managed to aid them in times that they need assistance, understanding on another peoples' part is direly called for. Their way of living – this is the best possible solution to the hardships that they may have encountered in the past and which gave them hope for a better existence in the near future.

Their hesitation and direct refusal to be aided in creating fire may be considered defiant by those who do not understand the pride that the tribe have for their culture but to those who appreciates the value of hard work without the assistance of technology which sooner or later would eventually disappear from them is truly quite remarkable. It is not errant in their ways but clinging to tradition that will identify them is a treasure on its own. It may be that strangers would view this as a foolish act to deny themselves of a better and thus, easier means of producing fire, but in itself it is quite practical on the part of the tribe. Why would they want to forget the traditional way of creating fire when

the materials they would need is easily sourced from their surroundings? Why use a lighting device when sooner or later it would die out on its own due to fuel loss? Why opt for something they could not sustain? Why forget the tradition which kept them alive?

Wanting to preserve their identity is a pride that each people should possess. Liberation from things menial and ephemeral may cause conflict if it would dictate the way people should live their lives. With this the Taaw't Bato tribe is blessed in that they can maintain what theirs. Without intervention from the outside world, they have the capability to exist. Sadly though, due to the introduction of modern things that readily gives comfort, the population of the tribe is slowly diminishing. From this, it is indeed unfortunate that with their dwindling number is the corresponding decline of the generation who will inherit the ways of the tribe. The Tau't Bato was distinguished from being a national treasure due to the culture and tradition that the outsiders saw and observed in them, but reality is the same people, the same culture, and the same tradition will soon be forgotten and will just be but a memory of the past. Learned from and appreciated only from literatures, dramatizations (if ever accurately portrayed), or in still photographs.

The tribe status upon assessing the diminishing culture and transition of tradition from generation to generation of people in the tribe is also at a saddening state. With the dwindling number of people comes the decreasing chance of the tribe being acknowledged by the nation. Though laws and regulations that targets to protect and promote them are put into place, the implementations and the actual practice is not ensured to take effect. This actuality as defined from the authentic reality is the more distressing. The government through various provisions had considered the welfare of the indigenous people but seemed to have forgotten that in order to protect them, the laws that they set should be meticulously done and implemented by people who will serve as the guardians for these people who are considered not oriented to the ways of the unprincipled few.

Their cultural identity and traditions must be conserved in order for them to pass these treasures from generation to generation. The laws and provisions provided by the government will serve as their defense to these impending threats of marginalization, extinction and exploitation. Continuous dissemination of information and awareness about this campaign will greatly help the conservation of this unique group of people, the Taaw't Bato.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

From the collected information it is said that the Taaw't Bato is one of the indigenous people whose tribe exemplifies a rich and vast culture. Being one of the archeological treasures of the nation is a blessing most especially when the government implements protective laws to preserve its existence. Unfortunately, it is found that though there are presently prevailing laws ratified both in the national and international setting; actual implementation falls short on being practiced and acted upon. This leaves behind the status of the tribe in an overwhelming state of being endangered or worse becoming extinct in the forthcoming days. Culture and tradition which marks the land unique would soon be lost and forgotten, never to be retrieved again.

With this, the authors recommended that the best way to protect and conserve the existing tribe is to prioritize the implementation of the existing laws, rules, and or regulations which in the first place was set to give the Tau't Bato or any other IPs the benefits that they deserve. More so, the local government and any personnel who are in charge of the safe keeping of the said laws should maintain a pure and unadulterated stance in heavily protecting the tribes. Support by the local and national government must be unconditionally given to the tribe without asking for any favors in return. The Tau't Bato are national treasures, like any other material treasures in museums that serves as pride for the nation, these people deserve to be treated better because culture and traditions are phenomenon

that cannot be replaced. It is what makes us who we are. It is what we are.

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