

Inay Malinandang, Talaandig: Charting a Path Toward Peace Education

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OUR NOTIONS OF PEACE in the world today have become closely associated with conflict settlement, peace negotiation, sexual harassment, violence, ceasefire, and wars. In fact, sexual violence as a military tactic in war zones has mobilized the United Nations' (UN) Security Council to rally for the protection and rehabilitation of women and children (against sexual violence), as provided for in Security Council Resolutions UNSCR 1325, 1820, 1888, and 1889.¹

In the Philippines, concepts in peace education such as human rights, disarmament, conflict resolution, interfaith education, gender-fair education, multicultural and international understanding are global concerns as well. While all of these concepts are based on or address political realities seen and experienced in different sectors of our society, there is a dearth of literature on peace concepts, strategies, and terms from the perspective of numerous women's indigenous groups that have been actively negotiating and settling conflicts as well as sustaining peace in the countryside.

The former Philippine Education Secretary Armin Luistro, FSC, offers a hopeful view of the concept of peace in his message in *Nalandangan* (2014): "Our world must have been different if decisions were made by mothers; women gifted with the charism to reconcile misunderstandings and settle conflicts from their fair and just

¹ UNIFEM, "10th Anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325."

framework of peace. Would there be wars as [there are] today or would peace reign in our lands?"²

Secretary Luistro lauds the work of mothers among many ethnolinguistic groups in the Philippines who struggle to preserve traditional peace processes that are connected to sustainable life forces in the community. Their stories are documented in *The Role of Women in Philippine Peace Efforts* in the Southeast Asian conflict-settling conferences, edited by Madelene Santa Maria, among whom are the Tinguian Mothers of Abra³ and the Sama DiLaut of Iligan.⁴ However, literature on peace efforts of women and communities among indigenous groups is either negligible or seldom published and almost never found in reference materials of peace educators in the country.

My aim, therefore, is to empower the discourse of indigenous peace processes from the ways of women, and the concepts of peace and terminologies they use so that these may find a place in the memories of our youth today and future generations through the production and circulation of written and published media.

For this purpose, the peace efforts of the Talaandig women of Sungko, Lantapan, Bukidnon, are highlighted because of their active peacemaking traditions among the seven ethnolinguistic groups in Bukidnon, namely, the Higaonon, Manobo, Matigsalog, Umayamnon, Tigwahanon, Bukidnon, and Talaandig.⁵

The Talaandig Inay Malinandang

The land of the Talaandig, the original inhabitants of Bukidnon, nestles in a plateau between Mount Dulang-dulang and Mount Kalatungan of the north-central Kitanglad Mountain Range of Mindanao, Philippines.⁶ The *tulugan* or home in Barangay Songco, Lantapan, Bukidnon, is the center of the Talaandig ancestral domain

² Villaluz, *Nalandangan*, iii.

³ Madriaga, "The Role of Tinguian Women," 23–32.

⁴ Nanaman, "The Role of IP Women," 40.

⁵ V. Saway, interview by Geraldine Villaluz, June 2, 2010, Kasapaaan sa Sungko.

⁶ Nguyen-De Mesa-Rola, *Vegetable Agroforestry System*, 6.

and culture. There are more or less three hundred Talaandig families living in the Tulugan of Songco, nurtured by mothers called Inay Malinandang, mothers actively working for peace.⁷ A forty-five-minute jeepney ride from the Malaybalay bus station across a vista of pineapple and sugarcane plantations will bring any peace-searcher to the center of Talaandig culture at the foot of Mount Dulang-dulang and to the welcoming spirits of the Inay Malinandang community of Songco.

Kalinandang, from the root word *landang*, is the Talaandig term for peace in the Binukid language. Mothers who are actively involved in peacemaking efforts, therefore, are traditionally called Inay Malinandang [*inay* is the term for mother in many Philippine languages]. However, the words “peace” and “peacemaking” do not only refer to situations of conflict. For the Talaandig, the concepts and ways to peace embrace broader meanings and responsibilities.

Kalinandang, or peace from a Talaandig mother’s perspective is the maintenance and sustainability of nature, health, home, food culture, and education. Thus, peace work for a Talaandig mother is teaching the Binukid language to children in the School of Living Tradition, or celebrating rituals in the daily rhythm of community life, or raising a youth leader for the community.⁸ From the lived traditions of respected women in the community, there were and are mothers whose lives continue to serve as role models to the young. They are Bai Ginamayung (Bai Gawahanen), Bai Kinulintang (Pilar Linsahay Saway), Bai Kinulintang (Maxima Sinto Saway), Bai Tinangkil (Herminia Signucan Saway), Bai Nanapnay (Liza Llesis Saway), Bai Nangunladay (Lourdes Saway Llesis), Bai Balagnau (Adelfa Saway Kinuyog), and Bai Panlibay (Amalia Garciano), whose labors for peace illustrate both personal and social responsibilities.

A mother conflict-settler shared this reflection on her role and responsibility: “There was *rido* (or clan feud) in the community in 2004. Hate and violence could be felt growing and reaching our own sitio. One day, I heard Datu Vic singing a *sala*, or chanted reflection,

⁷ Villaluz, *Nalandangan*, 16–18.

⁸ Nangunladay, interview by Geraldine Villaluz, September 2009, *Kalinandang Peace Concept*.

of the solidarity between the nipa and the rattan trees that generously give of themselves to provide shelter to us humans. Having heard that I asked myself, “Am I content with my role as mother and woman in our community at this time?”⁹

Another woman respected as a mother of the Talaandig is Bai Ginamayung. According to the *Batbatanen* or Talaandig oral history, a smart Talaandig woman named Bai Ginamayung gathered fruit-bearing seeds and placed them in a *kalatong*, a large conical drum. During one of the big floods in Mindanao, the *kalatong* served as her raft. Throughout the flood, she floated with it until the waters subsided and she realized she had been brought to the top of the mountain. This was where Apo Agbibilin, the father of the Talaandig, met her. The mountain is now popularly called Mount Kalatungan. Today the *ulaging* or epic continues to chant of Bai Ginamayung and Apo Agbibilin as parents of the Manobo, Maranao, Maguindanaoan, and Talaandig. To each Talaandig today, these same seeds planted by Bai Ginamayung serve as life-giving sources where the spirits of water, plants, soil, and air dwell. These seeds planted by Bai Ginamayung on Mount Kitanglad have become the source of healing and spirituality for today’s Talaandig. To some mothers, “Bai Ginamayung is the mother of food security who initiated food sustainability during those times of crisis”¹⁰

Bai Gawahanen, famous in the community for her conflict-settling skills, was instrumental to the peace pact among the warring Maranao, Maguindanaoan, Manobo, and Talaandig in Bukidnon. She was a leader known for her wisdom as a community conflict-settler at a very young age. In the first war between the Maguindanao, Maranaw, Manobo, and Talaandig tribes, peace was achieved because Bai Kamayungan or Bai Gawahanen and the rest of the chosen women agreed to marry the Maranaw sultan, Datu Bangunsalibu, to end the conflict in their

⁹ “*Pagkadungog nako sa sala ni Datu Vic, nakapanghuna-huna ko sa akong papel isip babaye sa komunidad. Kuntento na ba lang ko sa akong pagka-inahan ug pagkababaye karon?*” Garciano, interview by Geraldine Villaluz, September 20, 2009, *Women Peace Efforts*.

¹⁰ “*Si Apo Ginamayung ang unang nagpuyo sa gitawag nato karon ug food security initiative kay nasulbad niya ang krisis sa pagkaon adtung higayuna.*” Kinuyog and Garciano, interview by Geraldine Villaluz, May 2005, *Bai Ginamayung*.

communities. Bai Mayebag agreed to marry Datu Kuyaguwa, sultan of Maguindanaw. These marriages between the warring communities served as the foundation of *walu ha pasagi*, the eight members of the Council of Elders representing the four tribes.¹¹

Marriage, however, is not the only way to achieve peace. Community concepts, tools, and strategies for *kalinandang* surfaced in June 2010, during a painting workshop in which thirty Talaandig mothers participated. Two of those illustrated tools for peace discussed in this chapter are the *tultulanen* or narratives and *timbangan* or weighing scale.

Tultulanen

Tultulanen are stories of an individual's or community's experience, feelings, aspirations, knowledge, or advice shared to communicate information in order to strengthen kinship relations. From *tultulanen* or narrative, *tultul* is the act of narrating.¹² *Tultulanen*, or telling one's story, is a structure within the Talaandig's customary laws that strengthens and binds the spirit of kinship relations. The five customary laws are (1) *Kilalaha ha Batasan*, the customary law on mutual recognition; (2) *Sayuda ha Batasan*, the customary law on mutual sharing of information; (3) *Buliga ha Batasan*, the customary law on cooperation; (4) *Uyaga ha Batasan*, the customary law on mutual protection of life; and (5) *Pabatubatuna ha Batasan*, the customary law on mutual assistance and help.¹³ *Tultulanen* is a lived tradition that strengthens Sayuda ha Batasan, the customary law on mutual sharing of information in community.

A *Tultulanen* on *Kalinandang*

In May and June 2010, a soil painting event was held to gather images of peace from mothers actively working for peace. Talaandig

¹¹ A. Saway, "The First War," 25.

¹² V. Saway, interview by Geraldine Villaluz, October 16, 2011, *Tultulanen*.

¹³ L. Saway, "Customary Laws," 17.

youth artists, sons and daughters of Inay Malinandang, facilitated the workshop. On the third day of the workshop, visual representations of peace were shared in a happy event of community *tultulanen* in which not only members of the Inay Malinandang participated, but also fathers, mothers, grandmothers, and children. Four *tultulanen* and their images are presented here from which a perspective for a way of life could be drawn for peace education.

A community ritualist, Inay Narda (Bai Magagaw Leonarda Saway Colipano), explains: “Respect towards the spirit-keeper of earth draws us to constant relationship through prayer in rituals. It keeps us conscious of the needs of earth and its importance to life. Rituals are our way of relating to the spirit who gives life or Diwa nga Wagas, and to the spirit who destroys life or Diwa nga Busaw. A balanced relationship with both brings peace”¹⁴

For Bai Nanapnay Liza Saway, “Peace is the presence of balance in a community. Balance because it is a community where man and woman, old and young, are recognized and respected. Each one has a role to give to the community.”¹⁵

Datu Victorino Migketay Saway highlights food security as an important component of peace: “Peace is food on the table for our children. Our river used to provide for us abundant fish. We seldom get a good catch these days because we have lost some parts of the river due to the cutting of the *balite* (ficus trees) giving way to plantations. We want to revive the trees and the fishes in this river.”¹⁶

Bai Balagnau (Inay Adelfa Saway Kinuyog) is a storyteller, matweaver, soil painter, and teacher of the Talaandig School of

¹⁴ “*Ang pagritwal maoy among pahinungod kang Apo Talabugta isip pakigrelasyon ug pasalamat sa iyang pagpahulam kanamo sa yuta. Ang ritwal nagpahinungdom kana nga angayan kitang makigrelasyon sa diwa nga Wagas ug sa diwa nga Busaw tungod kay kini maghatag ug kalinandang.*” L. Colipano, interview by Geraldine Villaluz, May 28, 2010, Apo Talabugta.

¹⁵ “*Ang Kalinandang mao ang balance. Balanse, kay diha sa komunidad naa ang babaye, lalaki, naa ang bata ug tigulang. Ang kada usa adunay importanteng papel sa komunidad.*” L. Saway, interview by Geraldine Villaluz, September 15–18, 2008, Kalinandang.

¹⁶ “*Pagkaon sa kabataan ang kalinaw. Dunay daghang isda sa among sapa kaniadto apan gamay na lang sila karon tungod sa paghubas sa ubang parte sa sapa dala sa pagputol sa mga balite kilid sa sapa. Buot namong ibalik ang mga balite ug mga isda dinhi.*” V. Saway, interview by Geraldine Villaluz, June 2, 2010. Ang Kasapaan sa Sungko.

Living Tradition, who defines peace in terms of one's identity: "When the Talaandig tradition of peacekeeping, symbolized by this oil jar in the lady's hand, is kept and lived out in community, there is peace."¹⁷

Images of *Kalinandang*

Among the images represented, four soil paintings depict the *tutulanen* of mothers' peace concepts. Inay Leonarda Colipano Saway, or Bai Magagaw, illustrated the Talaandig's respect for the earth by painting the image of soil and its spirit-keeper; Inay Tessie Garciano painted the abundance of fish in a nearby river as the community's desire for food sustainability; Inay Narita Romero, or Bai Manunulam, illustrated peace through the image of a weighing scale with the spirit-keeper of balance above it, signifying the Talaandig symbol for balance in listening and discernment; and Inay Adelfa Kinuyog Saway illustrated a Talaandig lady holding a *tibud*, an oil jar signifying the tradition of peacekeeping that is the responsibility of every Talaandig.

Timbangan

The second tool is the Talaandig framework of justice and peace as symbolized in three images: (1) the *agpangan*, model; (2) *timbangan*, weighing scale; and (3) the *gantangan*, measuring cup. As narrated in the *tutulanen* of Bai Manunulam (Inay Narita Romero) and Bai Nanapnay (Liza Saway), the *timbangan* symbol stands as a reminder of the equal roles of man and woman in the home and community: "Community is complete when there is balance, which means that the roles of man, woman, the elderly, and the youth are recognized as important."¹⁸ According to a young mother-painter Salima Saway, "Fairness in one's judgment and careful listening is signified by the *timbangan* in our life."¹⁹ Leadership is equal in the community; "man

¹⁷ "Kung ipadayon sa kabataan ang pag-ila ug pagpuyo sa tradisyon sa kalinandang nga gisimbolo aning tibud sa lana, para nako adunay kalinaw." Adelfa K. Saway, Interview by Geraldine Villaluz, June 3, 2010. *Kultura*.

¹⁸ Liza Saway, interview by Geraldine Villaluz, September 9, 2009, *Talaandig Justice Framework*.

¹⁹ S. Agraan, interview by Geraldine Villaluz, October 13, 2011, *Timbangan*.

or woman can be a datu or chief in the community as long as he/she acquires the skill, knowledge, talent, and capacities needed of a Talaandig leader.”²⁰

Governance in the Talaandig community is concretized within a council of elders called *pasagi*. In the olden days, according to Datu Vic Migketay Saway, there were only eight members of the *pasagi*—called *walu ha pasagi*—representing the eight children of Apo Agbibilin and Bai Ginamayung. A Council of Elders made up of four men and four women was a tradition adhered to religiously by datu in the past. However, this practice has developed into a new view of leadership. Datu Victorino Migketay Saway, who sees leadership as a voluntary service to community, believes that anyone who has skills, talent, or knowledge and is willing to serve for the growth of the community can volunteer to be a member of the *pasagi*. Thus, in a presentation of the *pasagi* during the Reaffirmation of Kinship of the Seven Tribes in Mindanao in March 2012, the Talaandig *pasagi* membership consisted of Inay Malinandang, male and female active conflict settlers, Talaandig midwives, youth soil painters, musicians, cultural masters, healers, epic chanters, and the datu.²¹

On the other hand, the *timbangan* as a symbol of the justice framework does not only stand for leadership and governance, but also serves as “a reminder for us to make fair and careful decisions.”²² “The *timbangan* calls for active listening to the events in one’s environment, sensitivity to personal and communal needs, and a call for careful judgment.”²³

Thus, the ways to peace from the Talaandig perspective draw out the following processes close to our experiences as a people:

²⁰ Victorino Saway, interview by Geraldine Villaluz, October 10, 2010, *Leadership in the Talaandig Community*.

²¹ Villaluz, “Membership of Pasagi,” 53.

²² Nanapnay Liza Saway claims that the *timbangan* is “[s]imbolo sa panahon nga kita maghimo ug disisyon nga makaangayon.” Saway, Liza, interview by Geraldine Villaluz, September 9, 2009, *Talaandig Justice Framework*.

²³ “Nagpahinumdong kini siyang timbangan nga sa atong pagdesisyon, gikinahanglan tang maminaw, maghunahuna, kinahanglan careful, dili dalidali haron husto ang atong disisyon.” S. Agraan, Interview by Geraldine Villaluz, October 13, 2011, *Timbangan*.

(1) living out of community values and traditions; (2) prioritizing communication or sharing of information as signified by the *tultulanen*; (3) maintaining a constant relationship with the spirit-keepers of the environment; (4) observing partnership in leadership; and (5) listening and reflecting to make fair judgment.

Framework for Peace Education

The *tultulanen* and images painted by the Inay Malinandang in this study open up contextualized concepts for peace education that can serve as guide towards a discerning way of life. Education for a culture of peace in the home, school, community, and environment calls for a conscious daily process. It is a way of life that asks of us a conscious effort to listen and to weigh things and events because peace work is sought for the well-being of community.

Following is a diagram illustrating the significant concepts drawn from the Inay Malinandang Talaandig peace tradition.



The outermost layer acknowledges the importance of the present literature on peace education, such as gender-fair education, human rights education, conflict resolution, and environmental education. The next layer represents a call to communication that brings together a relationship with self, community, and with environment. It is a process whereby stories are shared and valued—stories that recall the works of model peacekeepers in the family, community, and the nation so that a sense of his/her story finds a place in the

younger generation's memories. The third, fourth, and fifth inner circles are calls for listening, reflection, and prayer. It is in these three inner circles that one exercises the act of discernment. In Cebuano, this is often referred to as *pagtimbang-timbang*, to weigh or evaluate matters and events in order to become highly conscious of the other who is most in need. Part of the process of *pagtimbang-timbang* is listening—*paminaw*, in Cebuano, and *pakikinig*, in Filipino. *Paminaw*, to listen, as one goes through *pagtimbang-timbang*, to weigh or evaluate, does not only mean to listen with one's ears, but also to listen with one's heart and mind. This leads to the innermost circle that is the core of the process, which is prayer, the source of strength and the strongest shield for every Filipino in all moments of crisis. It is in prayer that the dynamism of *pagtimbang-timbang* springs forth into action, because it implies surrender in the Cebuano term *pag-ampo*, and risk in the Tagalog word, *pananampalataya*. To pray, therefore, is to come to the center of one's faith in the spirit of risk and of surrender.

This framework for peace education that is drawn out from the Inay Malinandang of Talaandig's peace processes highlights a way of life that prioritizes four movements very close to the experience of Filipino families: *paminaw*, to listen; *pagtimbang-timbang*, to weigh, observe, reflect, contemplate; *pag-ampo*, to pray; and *pakigsagabay*, to accompany.

Conclusion

Knowledge, according to Michel Foucault, has no power unless it is produced and circulated in a collection of discourses. In a book of interviews, entitled *Power/Knowledge 1972–1977*, Foucault argues: “. . . there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterize, and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated, nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation, and functioning of a discourse.”²⁴

²⁴ Foucault, “Truth and Power,” 132–33.

This study has been inspired by the silent voices of indigenous women's peace concepts and strategies, which do not reach the level of written and published literature for peace education in the country. Popular discourse on indigenous wisdom expressed in the popular terminologies on peace is an endeavor that struggles against dominant concepts in print and published materials. Two significant tools and peace concepts aim to empower the discourse of indigenous women and place them in the forefront of discussion and study. The framework for peace education underlines a process of discernment that is drawn from the words “*tultulanen*” or sharing one's stories and “*timbang*” or weighing scale, processes that involve the act of discernment and prayer. All of these words seem complicated, but when expressed in the language of *paminaw*, to listen; *pagtimbang-timbang*, to discern; *pag-ampo*, to pray; and *pakikisabay*, to accompany, they produce a series of steps for action, such as listen-evaluate-pray-accompany.

To educators of peace education, the framework presented here offers challenging roles, namely, to be educator-researcher-historiographer-writer of local knowledge in one's community in order to contribute to indigenous women's power of discourse and wisdom in peacemaking.

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