

Datu Puti ~ Philippine Legend

I'm sorry I can't remember whom, but someone mentioned in a comment the name Datu Puti from Philippine Legend. The name was new to me, as is Philippine legend and mythology in general, and so I thought I would see what I could unearth. What follows is virtually the sum of my knowledge, and was produced taking information from a number of sources, both historical and of legend. If I have it wrong, then perhaps someone could let me know.

Historians tell us that that 10 Bornean datus headed by Datu Puti, along with their followers, fled Borneo to escape persecution by Datu Makatunaw, the rajah of the House of Sri-Vijaya. They boarded their long ships called barangays in order to seek out new lands.

The other Dutus who accompanied Datu Puti were, Datu Sumakwel, Datu Bangkaya, Datu Paiborong, Datu Paduhinogan, Datu Dumangsol, Datu Libay, Datu Dumangsil, Datu Domalogdog, and Datu Balensuela. Together they were to become the founders of the pre-colonial Philippine civilisation.

They sailed the seas, until they came to two islands, Panay and Sinugbahan, which were at that time under the rule of an Ati King, or Aeta "big-man," named Marikudo. Those Marikudo ruled were pygmy-like bands that practised hunting and gathering as well as slash and burn farming (kaingin), and they were initially in terror of the Borneans. However, Datu Puti, sought a peaceful alliance and was therefore welcomed by the Aetas. Immediately, they forged trade relations with the natives exchanging their combs, hatchets, knives and copper swords (called kris) for the Aetas' deer horns, boar teeth, bamboo baskets, and various maritime products.

To commemorate the new alliance, Marikudo invited his new associates for a feast under the thick, broad branches of his dapdap and the bounteous food was laid on banana leaves. The Borneans came wearing splendid accoutrements. The men wore kerchiefs wound 4 times around their heads,

grandiose jewellery, sleeveless and collarless vests and various shirts. The women wore their hair parted in the middle and knotted in two, like horns of a cow's calf, and perched on each ear. They had long sleeved blouses and they had long, ornately coloured skirts called tapis.

At this feast, the Datus negotiated the purchase of land for one gold sadok and a gold necklace for Marikudo's wife, and since the Aetas thought that the island was too large to farm, they agreed. The Aetas, who preferred the cover of forests and mountains, retreated to such areas (where they can still be found today), while the Datus divided the island into political units called saktop, namely Hantic (Antique), Aklan, and Irong-Irong (Iloilo), and thus founded the various clans of the Philippine culture. Datu Puti, Bangkaya, and Paiburong headed these saktops. The entire island continued to be called Hantic.

After the Datus were settled, Datu Puti proclaimed that he would sail back to Borneo to challenge the tyrant Makatunaw, and as he was the only one powerful enough, the other Datus agreed. Datu Puti, his wife and servants set sail for Borneo and were never heard from again.

Datu Sumakwel was appointed the new leader and under his leadership the culture prospered. He established a permanent settlement in what is now Malandog in the municipality of Hantic. It was named for a species of a large ant called hantic-hantic, which abounds there.

Ref.: http://waylandermyth.multiply.com/journal/item/21/Datu_Puti_Philippine_Legend