

SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES

A Filipino Muslim Royal Wedding in Southern Philippines

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Long before the arrival of the Spaniards, Chinese and other Westerners to the 1,107-island archipelago known as the Philippines, there existed the "Islamic Empire of Sulu" under the rule of the Sultan (and his Royal Family) of the Sultanate of Sulu in what was then called the Sulu Archipelago.

The Islamic Empire of Sulu --- or the "Sulu Empire" for short --- was located in what is now known as the Sulu group of islands in Southern Philippines --- not far from the island of North Borneo --- where for centuries a Filipino Muslim tribe known as the Taosugs fiercely defended their people, religion, culture, tradition and heritage by rejecting any influences from the outside, Western world.

Even the discovery of the Philippine Islands in March 16, 1521 by Spanish explorer Ferdinand Magellan -- - and the influx of foreign influences that followed it --- did not really affect nor influenced the Taosug culture that much.

Today, the Taosug people are proud of their heritage, culture and especially their religious beliefs as Filipino Muslims. In these modern times, many of the tribe's old ways and traditions are still being practiced and strictly observed.

And it makes them even prouder that they were able to preserve much of it despite the brutal wars waged against them in the early days by the Spaniards during the Galleon Trade, the Americans at the turn of the century, the Japanese during World War II --- and now even by their own government in Manila.

But amid all the chaos brought about by three decades of civil unrest in Sulu, the Taosug people of Southern Philippines still live by --- and strictly observe --- the Taosug tribe's centuries old ways, beliefs and traditions.

While Westerners succeeded in wiping out entire nations by killing its people and destroying their culture and substituting it with their own by force---the Taosug tribe in Southern Philippines are proud --- as Filipino Muslims --- that they valiantly protected and defended their culture and history from any outside influences for centuries now.

The **Muamar Salamaddin Tulawie - Nurwiza Indanan Sahidulla** wedding in Jolo last year --- which was done in the same tradition as their forebearers did centuries ago --- is a living testament to the Taosug tribe's rich culture and history.



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The 28-year-old groom **Muamar Salamaddin Tulawie**, and the 23-year-old bride **Nurwiza Indanan Sahidulla**, in a modernized Tausug wedding ensemble. The bride is wearing a 24-karat golden veil.



The bride performs the Pangalay, a traditional Tausug wedding dance.



The groom kisses the hand of his father-in-law during the wedding.



The couple sharing the groom's traditional food of eggs, crabs, fried chicken, Tausug cake and rice given to the bride.



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traditional union: It is one of a celebration of love and life.



Prior to the wedding, the bride performs a traditional Tausug bath.



The bride.