

Langkit: Tobiran and Lakban

MARANAO, LANA O DEL SUR PROVINCE, NORTHWESTERN MINDANAO ISLAND, SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES. *The Maranao of the two provinces of Lanao del Sur and del Norte, together with parts of North Cotabato, wear a traditional tubular lower garment called, malong. There are several types of malong. One of these is the landap, meaning “pure”. This garment is essentially made up of three pieces of plainly woven cloth of solid colors, usually green, magenta or purple and yellow. Sometimes the panels are all green (gadong), or all black (pangelemen) and the most sought after, all yellow (binaning). Narrow strips of tapestry woven cloth join these three pieces of cloth together to form a single and wider piece. The ends of the cloth are then joined together by another tapestry-woven strip to form the tubular garment. These tapestry panels are called langkit.*



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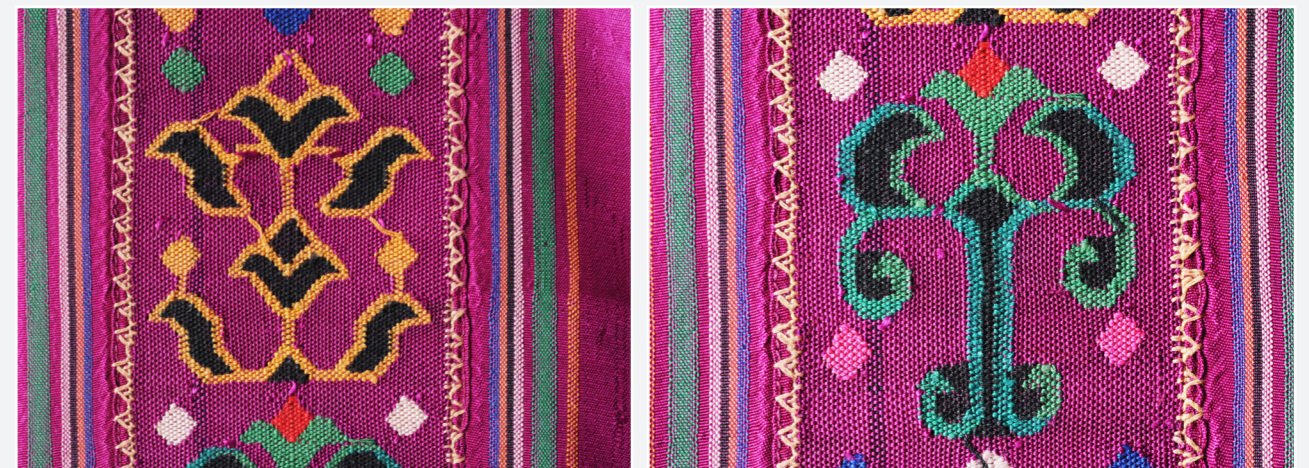
THE LANGKIT is of two kinds: a narrow kind (*tobiran*) and a wider one (*lakban*). The *tobiran* joins the three panels of cloth, while the *lakban* joins the two ends to form the tubular garment. Both are highly ornamental and colorful especially when set off against the solid colors of the plain-woven panels. The intricate designs are in orange, blue, yellow, green, magenta and purple, usually shaped in curvilinear male design and the female geometric configurations of the Maranao *okir*.

A narrow, specialized kind of tapestry loom is used to weave the langkit. Discontinuous weft is used to introduce the colors and design into the cloth. Two general types of design are hooked into the warp. In the first, which is the female *okir* approach, the basic design element is the solidly and variedly colored square with the diamond as a variation. These squares are then arranged into straight lines or diagonals that eventually form motifs like an outline

square, a diamond, zigzags, crosses and other forms. Digressing into the male domain, the squares can also be formed into jagged but curving lines of a circle or a spiral.

The second type is done in the curvilinear style, without the jagged configuration of the first. The lines are smooth and flowing. The designs are distinctly floral in contrast to the more geometric of the former. At times, the larger motifs are outlined in lighter color and then filled in with darker colors. Some motifs are solidly colored. Clearly depicted are the decorative motifs of the Maranao such as *potiok* (bud), *dapal* or *raon* (leaf), *pako* (fern), *pako rabong* (growing fern) and *katorai* (flower). The continuous and repeated chain of a *pako* into a complex motif like the *magayoda*, is sometimes added along the edges of the langkit. The brilliantly colored *langkit* makes the *landap malong* unique among the garments of the peoples of the Philippines.

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(opposite page) The strips of tapestry-woven langkit are essential to the *landap* type of Maranao *malong*.