

In this study, "legend-making" is a dialectic process of construction between a legend and a narrator's perception of reality. The paper will specifically discuss, as the meanings and function of the telling of the legend, on the legend and the migrants' construction of "reality", particularly on their perception and image of the homeland. The data examined in this study shows, on one hand, that the ubiquitous legend of Maria Cacao is given a specific form and expression in the course of migration experiences of the narrators and, on the other hand, it enables the narrators to structure and imagine their reality in a particular way: for instance, the intensification and activation of their image of homeland and identity.

## Maria Cacao and Golden Boat : the Legend and Image of the Homeland among the Visayan Migrants, Philippines

by SEKI Koki

The legend of Maria Cacao is quite popular among the people of contemporary central Visayas, particularly southern Cebu, of the Philippines. It represents the folk notion of the spirits (*engkanto*) or, more broadly speaking, the ambiguous existence of the unknown world (*diti ingon nato*, literally translated as "ones not like us") and the people's relationship to it. The legend also shows that those supernatural beings tend to take the form of a fertility goddess who inhabits mountains, rivers, and caves, and is regarded as a benevolent provider of the people's daily necessities. It further reflects the folk perception of the environment such as the cave, river, and mountain as ambivalent spaces between the mundane world of the mortals and the supernatural, or sacred, world of the spirits and goddesses.

The purpose of this article is to discuss the aspect of legend-making of the Maria Cacao tale in the Visayan context. Particularly, it focuses on one characteristic aspect of this island society, that is the high mobility of the people, specifically, those who utilize and take advantage of the space created by the sea as a way to seek their markets, as a stock of resources, and as migration routes, for their subsistence. Such people are engaged in various activities such as fishing, itinerant trade, and artisan industry. Specifically, this article will focus on the group of fishermen and their families who are originally from some coastal villages of Dalaguete, southern municipality of Cebu. As will be described in the paper, those fisherfolk from Dalaguete have been migrating to different parts of Visayas, Mindanao, and even to Palawan, looking for the niches for their livelihood.