

# Astrology

**B'LAAN, SULTAN KUDARAT PROVINCE, WESTERN MINDANAO ISLAND, SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES.** *The indigenous mythico-religious beliefs of the highland B'laan are centered on particular features of the environment that are given a spiritual essence that has profound effects on their lives. The stars in the night sky, for instance, are intertwined with their cultural life.*



Collection Datu Antonio Kinoc

Archival photograph of B'laans whose lives are intertwined with the stars.

THE THREE STARS on the belt of the constellation Orion, called *B'latic Fali* by the B'laan, determine the cycles for the conduct of specific rituals, ceremonies and the initiation of agricultural phases. When the B'latic rises from the sea in the night sky, this is a sign placed in the heavens by the spirits that all are being called to start clearing the land for new fields to raise annual crop. The position of the B'latic, which is associated with rice or other constellations, is determined by its angle and position in the night to indicate the time for the seasonal cycle for different agricultural and ritual ceremonies. This position indicates not only the time to start the agricultural activity, but also the kind of crop to be planted. Once Orion has passed the zenith, it is no longer used as a reference point.

The B'latic Fali is also used to time various other events depending on its position in the sky. During the month of May, when it is

overhead in the early hours of the morning (*Amla'ago Fali*), it is the time for the planting of corn. When seen in the eastern sky, the position is called *Tranun Fali* right after midnight in early May. When it has passed its zenith in the western sky, they stop planting crops. The B'laan word for corn is *agol*, such that the star cluster associated with the planting of corn is called *Salil Agol*.

The B'laan also recognize ten phases through which the moon passes. The new moon is referred to as *Sot Bulun*. Between this and the half moon called *ladagit*, is *Tokay/Bong Laris*. Between the half moon and the full moon are four phases: *A'al*, *Lalagit Baba*, *Akdawung Fange* and *Tafong Bong*. Full moon is *Adsel*. After this is *Askel*. When there is no moon, this is referred to as *Kijo Liko/Lubu*.

JTP