

Dances of the Bukidnon and Manobo Indigenous Tribes, Northern Mindanao, Philippines

Dr. Lincoln V. Tan and Ms. Ruby TN. Jimeno

Bukidnon State University, College of Education

ABSTRACT

This study documented the different dances of the Bukidnon and Menuvu Indigenous groups in the province of Bukidnon. This study identifies the different dances of the Bukidnon and Menuvu indigenous tribes. Specifically, sought to answer the following questions: 1. What are the identifying characteristics of Bukidnon and Menuvu indigenous tribes in terms of : Costumes, Accessories and designs, Musicality and instrumentations, Props, Steps and figures and Is there a significant difference in the characteristics of Bukidnon and Menuvu indigenous tribes in terms of : Costumes, accessories and designs, Musicality and instruments, Props Steps and figures

This study used the historical method to make a careful investigation of the facts concerning the past Bukidnon and Menuvu indigenous groups. Descriptive method was also used for costumes, props, movements and interpretations of beliefs and traditions from dances. Moreover, the participant-observer technique was employed with immersion activity to identified tribes to familiarize the Bukidnon and Menuvu indigenous groups. This is one way of knowing more the identified tribes' ways of living, practices and use of instruments for a colorful presentation.

Recording of the dance and analysis was done using the interpretation of the persons interviewed to preserve the authenticity of the dance. The researcher being not an expert of the field, identify a person who are well verse of the tribes to help in the interpretation of figure and steps as performed by dancers from the different indigenous groups.

Keywords: Dance, Bukidnon, Menuvu

INTRODUCTION

Dance is an expression of one's emotion. This is the output of how a performer, trainer and director conceptualize the beat and rhythm produce by instruments as background music. It is enhanced by external factor such as social problem and existing fad and fashion of every

generation. Dance in the light of cultural preservation, authenticity plays a vital role in such a way that what had been practiced and performed by the past ancestors should not be modified and changed. For the Bukidnon and Menuvu indigenous tribes, performed dances during activities as invited or as they celebrate their gathering which is the *kaamulan* depict the similarities of their cultural identities like their lifestyles, beliefs, traditions and practices that describe the backgrounds of each of these tribes.

These tribes exist in the different parts of the province and slowly diminishing its culture because of the existence of new concepts and technology. This modernization introduces new knowledge that contribute to some changes and modification on the original practices of the past ancestors of Bukidnon and Menuvu tribes through dances. According to Laipply (2007) because of the intermingling that occurs over various periods of time, the original dance form is often lost. This is due to the nature, ability, efforts and experiences of the dancer and the background and conditions from period to period. Yagi (1984) added that these factors greatly affect the final form of the dance.

After many decades existing as a tribe in the province, only a few from the said place was able to document some dance of the Bukidnon and Menuvu indigenous tribes. Translating all their movements and practices into dance steps and figures and even to put all their actions, movements and performances into exact words, phrases to sentences and paragraph to produces a dance literature. There are existing researches on Bukidnon and Menuvu indigenous tribes but not purely on documenting the steps and figure and come up with dance literature.

This research would help dance directors identify authentic dances of the Talaandig and Menuvu. This can guide instructors in teaching the original meaning of gestures, figures, steps, costuming, colors, designs, props, accessories and the story behind the presentation of culture through dances as written in the dance literature where readers are guided how to execute the figures and steps, proper costuming, use of props and accessories and musicality

In order for this study to be successful, the researcher has to follow the usual procedures in asking permission to pursue the research. Visitations to the sites where we can find these tribes will be done with the permission from the Office of the NCIP and the tribal chieftain through the Municipal mayors. Traditional way of accepting visitors will be respected by doing some rituals and offering of required things asked by the tribe.

METHODOLOGY

This study used the historical method which applies a careful investigation of the facts concerning the original Bukidnon and Menuvu indigenous groups. Descriptive method was used for costumes, props, movements and interpretations of beliefs and traditions from dances. Moreover, the participant-observer technique will be employed and do immersion to

identified tribes to familiarize the Bukidnon and Menuvu indigenous groups. This is one way of knowing more the identified tribes' ways of living, practices and use of instruments for a colorful presentation. Recording of dances and analysis was done using the interpretation of the persons interviewed to preserve the authenticity of the dance. The researcher being not an expert of the field identified a person who is well verse of the tribes to help in the interpretation of figure and steps as performed by dancers from the different indigenous groups.

For Ethical considerations

The researchers had to seek the free prior informed consent (FPIC) undergone the ritual “*pamalás*” as practiced by the indigenous groups and after the ritual, the interview started with identification of the oldest person and the performers of the group. Group discussion with a little enjoyment through wines was done to let the group dance not only talk and tell what their dances all about. The researcher identified somebody from the group-respondents if the terms used need to be interpreted. Recordings, interview, observations, actual participation of dancing to the group were some of the instruments used to gather information and exact figures and steps of the dances included in this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Bukidnon dances differ in what activity or program will the performer do their movements whether to mimic animals and human, rituals or welcoming dance.

“*Tinakembo*” is a dance showing how the Talaandig use a musical instrument “*takembo*”. This is commonly used in the farm which they believe that the sound of the “*takembo*” would help them drive away the pest because the tone irritates the insects. This is similar to “*saluray*” dance which uses a bamboo instrument with two strings beside a hole at the middle portion of the bamboo node but this is truck with a piece of carved stick instead of the finger to produce sounds or music. *Talaandig* usually present this dance with chants to ask, to beg and to heal the farm from pest and drive all pests through calling the spirits that guard the planted vegetables and trees and the spirits in the land.

Another dance is entitled “*Kanimbahi or Tagwahaponan*”. It is a ritual dance for an

Expectant mother, this ritual dance is done to ask for blessings primarily for the child in the womb. It is their belief that if the baby is a boy, it has great chance of becoming the *datu* of the tribe or a warrior. The child will bring good leadership and progress to the group if it passes through the ritual “*tagwahaponan*” The ritual is always done in the afternoon in the belief that the guardian spirit being invoked who resides in the core of the ocean, blesses only in the afternoon.

Andalugong of the bukidnon-higa-onon. Is a dance usually done before or during the delivery of a mother and is done to represent the presence of the *Magbabaya*. Representing him is “*Andalugong*” a pole with a small piece of white cloth at the top. It is planted near the ladder of the house of the expectant mother to drive away bad spirits and to inform people that somebody is on delivery. *Andalugong* is a representation of the God they believe that would blessed the expectant mother and to give what they want to become for the child.

Moreover, another dance performed by the Bukidnon-Higaonnon tribe is entitled

Balighot (meaning knot) a tied bunch of grass is also located further from the pole as a warning that nobody should enter the house during the ritual. The mother should be three months along in her pregnancy or even nearing delivery when his ritual is done. From the time of the ritual, the child is considered a person with the possibility of becoming a leader like a *Datu* if male or a *Bae* if female. For this reason, the mother is given two shares of food. A small table (*bangkaso*), which serves as an altar made of specific kind of wood, is decked with colors, hanging and plants such as *Kilala*, *Manganbangon* or *Dongan*. On it are placed beads known as *Paulang* spread mat, Betel nut quid. Nearby are chicken to be sacrificed, the blood sprinkled on the *Bankaso*. The food is cooked and the portion placed on the altar must be eaten only by the couple concerned and all of it before midnight. Priests officiate and chant during the rites.

Higa-onon performed a dance entitled **tado** . It is a dance showing the use of candle

Made of pure honey comb during the ritual of *kanimbahi*. This unusual touch of candle called *Tado*, is lighted the whole day till the sun sets to the west. The higa-onon believe that the lighted candle would help expectant mother born the baby with safe, away from bad spirits and clear future and become the great leader or a bae of the upcoming generations.

Finally, the Bukidnon-Talaandig performed a **Pamintok** dance which is a classification of “*Dugso*” dance created out of the action “*pintok*”, the snapping of the center finger and the thumb to produce a sound. The sound is intended to call the spirit of the wind and stamping of the feet to call the spirit on the ground, their chants calls the spirits anywhere else to help drive away bad karma, call for guidance and ask for blessings for abundance and success. This dance is usually seen during programs and activities that welcome the visitors and honoured officials of the province may it be local, national or international.

On the other hand, the **Menuvu** perform movements that depict their practices, the same with the Bukidnon this tribe are fond of mimicking animals and insects and even human during harvest or planting and even fishing. One of the dances that the menuvu perform is **Binaylan**, it is a dance with ceremonial connotation performed by the Umajammen Tribe of Salorengan, Cabanglasan. It is a dance depicting a *binaylan* (dance of the priest) either *binaylan hubahi* (priestly dance of a woman) or *binaylan hu maama* (priestly dance of man). It has three parts,

the first part shows how women of Salorengan travel from the sitio to the Cabanglasan proper bringing with them their goods in preparation for a celebration, and the second part is purely *binaylan*. This part shows how the priests in their tribes perform ceremonies like “pasasalamat” (thanks giving,) “pamalas” (to drive away bad entities), pamugaw” (to drive away bad spirits or bad karma), healing, and or asking for guidance and blessings.

The Menuvu- Anggan tribe usually performs “*Laguras or Lagudas*”, it is a ritual dance done by the Angaan tribe, a menuvu indigenous group of Damulog, Bukidnon. It is usually done to ask blessings and forgiveness and to heal sick and evil possessed individual. This is a dance of all ladies forming circles around the sick person and does the different basic steps of *lagudas*. All the tribes of Menuvu tribes usually entertain their visitors by performing the *Manak-anas* is a dance mimicking the mother as she takes care of the baby like looking for food and taking a bath and washes the baby in the river. This dance is usually done by the tribe when they have celebrations and presentations to welcome their visitors and guest.

Moreover, Menuvu-omajammen performs the *Asbong*, it is a basket where they place the head of a pig which is suspended in their sacred altar called “*Sangkao*”. This dance show how the ladies of Salerongan, Cabanglasan carry and brought with them some goods while they travel through the rough trails of the mountains. This is seen during festivals and spiritual related activities. This dance was crafted through observations on the movements of the ladies while they are bringing with them the *asbong*..

Another dance that the menuvu usually performs in gathering is the “*Saluray-kudlong*” is a courtship dance known to all Menuvu tribe particularly the “*Tiguahanon* and *Matigsalug*”. This dance took identity from the instruments being used while performing and these are “*saluray*”- a bamboo section fashioned out as guitar used by the females and “*kudlong*” is a wooden guitar used in accompaniment for dancing. This dance is usually done during festivities, celebrations and to welcome also visitors. The identified indigenous groups made some chants or sing some songs to enhance the presentation. Furthermore, *Kayametan* is a dance of Matigusalug and Tigwahanon on mimicking a Forest bird (*Tungkago*) resembling a hornbill, with the dancer holding her forefingers to the sides of her nose. This dance is usually presented by the group to some activities and festivals or celebration of the tribe.

DISCUSSION

Bukidnon and Menuvu indigenous tribes performed different dance according to what activity these tribes are doing either do have similarities in their characteristics as presented in their dances. This simply implies that Bukidnon regardless of what group a person belongs, he/she knew his identity and that is being a Bukidnon. In terms of dancing, both tribes start at the left foot as they start doing their figures and steps. These indigenous tribes in terms of musical

instruments don't have big difference but only on the beat and rhythm as they play the instrument were they differ. This simply means that all tribes identify *bantula, dabakan or kalatung, kulintangan, gong* and bamboo flutes as their common instruments but they do have their own tribal identity on beats and rhythm as reflected on how they move and work in terms of body movements and personality.

Moreover, Bukidnon and Menuvu indigenous tribes differ in terms of costumes and designs, Bukidnons like the Higa-onon, Talaandig and Bukidnon groups find their dress as ankle long gown and long pants with vertical lines as dominant symbol with triangles and dominant color is red, black and white. While the Menuvu namely, Menuvu, Tigwahanon and Matigsalug wear knee length skirt with butterfly sleeves blouse and men are knee level shorts with a very fit jacket. It is enhanced with diamonds, horizontal lines, triangles colored yellow, and the Umayamnon who appears as different to other menuvu groups because their suit is the same as the Bukidnons but the dominant color is Royal blue because they are very loyal to the Philippine Flag. In terms of body ornaments, these tribes do not have big difference in their accessories and props. Both are using materials made of beads but they differ only in the manner of how it will be use, who will use and as the identity of the group. The Bukidnons do have the "*pinggangahanan*" with a *panika*; dominant color is red, black, white and yellow while the Menuvu uses *sudlay* or a comb with balls of different colors which are made out of yarn thread. For other props, most of it are similar and are common to all indigenous groups. Finally, Bukidnon and Menuvu do not have difference in their figures and steps. They usually do mincing steps, jumping, hopping, wide or long stride of walking steps

CONCLUSION

Based from the findings, indigenous tribes of Bukidnon do not have big difference in the manner how dances are being performed and enhanced with the use of different accessories, props, costumes, designs, figure and steps and the instruments used to produced back ground music. These groups only occur slightly different from each other in terms of color, dress cut, use and placements of accessories and the beats and rhythms for the music. For Bukidnons like the Higa-onon, Talaandig and Bukidnon groups, they find their dress as ankle long gown and long pants with vertical lines as dominant symbol with triangles and dominant color is red, black and white. While the Menuvu namely, Menuvu, Tigwahanon and Matigsalug wear knee length skirt with butterfly sleeves blouse and men are knee level shorts with a very fit jacket. It is enhanced with diamonds, horizontal lines, triangles colored yellow, and the Umayamnon who appears as different to other menuvu groups because their suit is the same as the Bukidnons but the dominant color is Royal blue because they are very loyal to the Philippine Flag.

Moreover, Bukidnon and Menuvu indigenous tribes do not have big difference in their accessories and props. Both are using materials made of beads but they differ only in the manner of how it will be use, who will use and as the identity of the group. The Bukidnons do have the

“*pingganggahanan*” with a *panika*; dominant color is red, black, white and yellow while the Menuvu uses *sudlayor* a comb with balls of different colors which are made out of yarn thread. For other props, most of it are similar and are common to all indigenous groups. Bukidnon and Menuvu do not have difference in their figures and steps. They usually do mincing steps, jumping, hopping, wide or long stride of walking steps.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH/RECOMMENDATIONS

An on-going extension project for this study and to further examine and strengthening the implementation of Free Prior Informed consent which cannot be felt during the Kaamulan where most of these dance are performed by non IPs which it turn out to be an open presentation and carnival and that therefore, there should be strict compliance to the requirements in performing and presentations using the bukidnon culture.

References

Alejandro, Reynaldo G. 1978 Philippine Dance. Mainstream and Cross currents.[n. p.]:Vera-Reyes, Inc.

Aguinaldo, Milagros M. and Delsa F. Usal. (2002) Folkdances of central Luzon, Quezon City:MMA Publications.

Bayanihan Folk Arts Center 1987 Bayanihan. Manila: Bayanihan Folk Arts Center.

Brandeis, Hans (1993) Music and Dance of the Bukidnon of Mindanao.
www.bukidnondance.com

Brandeis, Hans (1981) Zur Musik der Higa-onon am Libang-Fluß, Agusan del Sur, Mindanao, Philippinen. Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin (M. A., Ethnomusicology). Unpublished typescript.

Brandeis, Hans (1989) Competition and Guardian Spirits: Musical Behavior among the Higaunen of Mindanao, Philippines. A paper read during the 30th Conference of the International Council for Traditional Music at Schladming, Austria, July 23-29, 1989. Unpublished typescript.

Brandeis, Hans (1992) “Religiöse Bezüge in der Vokalmusik der Bukidnon auf Mindanao, Philippinen.” In: **Bröcker**, Marianne (ed.): Bericht aus dem ICTM-Nationalkomitee Deutschland [Vol. I] Musik und Religion. Bericht über die Tagung des Nationalkomitees der Bundesrepublik Deutschland im International Council for Traditional Music (UNESCO) am

17. und 18. September 1990 in Bamberg. Edited by Marianne Bröcker. Bamberg: Universitätsbibliothek Bamberg. Pp. 7-24. 3 music examples on tape cassette.

Burton, Linda (2007) www.bukidnoninstruments.com

Cole, Fay-Cooper (1956) *The Bukidnon of Mindanao*. Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History.

Datoc, Salud C. (2001). "enhancing Values Through sayaw Pilipino: A keynote Address." National Folkdance Workshop. Saint Louise University, University of Baguio, Baguio City.

Garvan, John M. (1931) *The Manóbos of Mindanáo*. Washington D. C.: National Academy of Sciences. (Memoirs of the National Academy of Sciences. Vol. 23. First Memoir.)

Goce, Edilberta C., (2007) *The Higaonon Cultural Identity through Dances* unpublished thesis, Cebu Normal University.

Goquingco, Leonor Orosa (1980) *The Dances of the Emerald Isles. A Great Philippine Heritage*. Quezon City: Ben-Lor Publishers.

Graymiller, (2009) <http://dance.lovetoknow.com/history>

Graymiller, (2009) <http://danceevolution.com>

Laipply, Judson, (2008). www.dance.com

Maceda, José Montserrat (1963) *The Music of the Magindanao in the Philippines 2 Volumes*. Los Angeles: University of California (Ph. D., Ethnomusicology); Ann Arbor: University Microfilms.

Maceda, José Montserrat (1963) 1971 "Classification and Distribution of Musical Instruments in the Philippines." In: Maceda, José Montserrat (ed.): *The Music of Asia*. Manila: National Music Council of the Philippines, UNESCO - National Commission of the Philippines. Pp. 24-37.

Marbella, Hermelina Ching (1976) *Some Fundamental Characteristics and Distinctive Features of Selected Central Bukidnon Dances*. Cebu City: Cebu Normal College, Graduate School (M. A., education). Unpublished typescript

Monroe, Remigio, E. Jr., (2001) “ Cordillera Folk Dances Associated to Rituals And ceremonies.” Benguet State University, La Trinidad, Benguet

Obusan, Ramon A. (1988) The Cultural Center of the Philippines Presents the Unpublished Dances Of the Philippines by The Ramon Obusan Folkloric Group. December 29-30, 1988. (Program notes)

Obusan, Ramon A. (1990) Ballet National Folklorique de Philippines. The Mysterious and Unknown Rituals of the Philippines. Europe Tour 1990. (Program notes.)

Opeña, Ludivina Ravidas (1975) “The Bukidnon Folk Literature (Preliminary Study).” In: **Demetrio**, Francisco R. (ed.): Dialogue for Development. Cagayan de Oro City: Xavier University. Pp. 187- 275.

Opeña, Ludivina Ravidas (1979) “Olaging. The Battle of Nalandangan. A Bukidnon Folk-Epic.” In: Kinaadman. Cagayan de Oro City: Xavier University. Vol. 1, pp. 151-227. Polenda (2007) www.bukidnonethnicdances.com

Polenda, Francisco Col-om (1989) A Voice from the Hills. Essays on the Culture and World View of the Western Bukidnon Manobo People. Translated and Edited by Richard E. Elkins. Manila: Linguistic Society of the Philippines. (Special Monograph Issue. No. 29.)

Cynthia, (2004) Philippine Dances. “Sayaw Pilipinas (Filipino Folk Dances. Muslim Dances. Tribal Dances. Rural Folk (saNayon) Spanish Influence. <http://www.likha.org/index.html>. Barangay Dance company, <http://barangaysf.org/pages/670758/index.html>

Unabia, Carmen Ching (1976) An Exploratory Study of the Bukidnon Folk Literature. Cagayan de Oro City: Xavier University (M. A., English). 4 Vols. Unpublished typescript.

Villacruz, Basilio Esteban S. (1989) Sayaw. An Essay on Philippine Dance. Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Discography

Recordings of the 2007 Research at Omayam tribe, Salorengan, Cabanglasan Bukidnon.
Recordings of the 2008 Tagoloanon tribe Kaamulan, May 1, 2009, Tagolaon, /Can-ayan, Malaybalay City
Photographs during the research and performance.