

DYANGGO AND SAMBALI RITUAL DANCES OF CAGAYAN: AN ANALYSIS

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Abstract: *This study documented and analyzed two unpublished ritual Cagayan dances. In pursuance of this task, the Sambali and Dyanggo dances were documented, their characteristics were described in terms of historical background, costumes, props, musical accompaniment, and dance movements. The cultural traits of the Cagayano revealed in these dances were analyzed and the dominant concepts found in the dances were described. The data about the dances were provided using the interview. Documentary and thematic analyses of each ritual dance were made to determine the characteristics of each ethnic group. The study found out that the focus of these dances was all about Cagayano turned Christians, and reflect the way of life of the Cagayano and their values. As revealed in the findings, Cagayan ritual dances portray the Cagayano cultural values like courage, determination, charity and humanitarian attitude or brotherhood and religiosity. However, the Cagayan ritual dances have partially suffered loss of authenticity due to modification of costumes and props. Furthermore, Cagayan's cultural ethnic tribes have cultural traits and practices that are distinct from other ethnic tribes in the Philippines. It is likewise found out that the two dances depict the ritual peoples' reluctance to embrace Christianity but later faithfully accepted it.*

(Keywords: Cagayan ethnic dances, Dyanggo, Sambali)

INTRODUCTION

Folk dances comprise important elements and contribute social benefits to the individual. All folk dances have historic origin and when they are intelligently selected and adopted, they provide wholesome contribution to certain educational activities.

Folk dancing is one of the most fitting recreational activities of the people in the community because according to Aquino (1960), it expresses one's love for one's own culture.

Authentic dances' identity will emerge the moment a group begins to view themselves not through the vantage point of their own experience, needs and perceptions on their ritual worldview and value systems. Otherwise, what is seen is a caricature, a distortion.

Instead of appreciating the cultural heritage, looking at it from the outside will diminish it greatly and alienate us from it. This is what has been happening all throughout Asia, particularly in the Philippines, because of an educational orientation and commercialistic media. But this seem to disregard traditional Asian communal values and spiritual ways.

Therefore, the only way to uncover the genius, fathom the fullest potential and strength of ritual dances, the educational system should develop a way of seeing the people's authentic selves and thereby revel in their inexhaustible power and energy.

should study the culture of people they serve and from there evolve educational policies. This is the cultural approach to education. If the school is to be responsive to the needs of the people it serves, it is imperative to study the culture and develop curricular offerings that are relevant to the local life ways. To be an agent of change, one must be well-versed in the culture of the people he works with. Consistent with these cultural constitutional provisions, Executive Order No. 117, series of 1987, Section 16 on the reorganization of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) mandated the renaming of the Bureau of Sports Development (BSD) to the Bureau of Physical Education and Sports (BPES) with specific functions to discharge, namely:

- a. Develop human resources through mass-based sports education;
- b. Improve general fitness of the citizenry;
- c. Promote socio-cultural integration through the revival of the ritual games and sports; and,
- d. Identify and nurture sports talents, traditional games and physical education activities and perform other functions as may be provided by law.

The Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) Order No. 35, series of 1996 mandated the Bureau of Physical Education School Sports (BPES) Revised Program and Project.

The present emphasis on the preservation and revival of their culture makes it imperative for the study of folk heritage. The collection and preservation thereof, will pave the way to the study, appreciation and absorption of the Filipino tradition.

Folk dances tell much about a country and its people. They portray the customs, traditions, ideas, superstitious beliefs and events of daily living.

As a people, Filipinos love singing, dancing, and feasting. For centuries, these have been prominent aspects in their way of life. Almost every occasion is celebrated with dancing and feasting. There are dances and songs for occasions like birth, courtship, marriages, war, planting, and harvesting.

Dances are handed down from generation to generation. The authentic dances are very localized and confined to a peculiar area. Others are regional and national in scope.

The Philippines is composed of many islands and because of the scattered positions of these islands, a great variety of dances are found. The customs and traditions vary in the manner of dances, dance steps and arm movements. The Filipino tradition of grace, rhythm, and songs started from pre-Magellan days (Pavelo and Beran, 1972).

Considering that the cultural heritage shown in dances is vital for transmission to the youth, the school has to enhance the preservation of this unique culture. The school administrator has the the responsibility to ensure that the cultural heritage has to be integrated to appropriate subject area. One area is PEHM in high school and Fold Dances in the Physical Education Program in college.

In Social Sciences, these dances could be used as enrichment activities. Thus, the task of documenting the original dances in Cagayan is deemed necessary.

Statement of the Problem

The main purpose of the study was to document and analyze the Dyanggo and Sambali Ritual Dances. Specifically, the following questions had to be answered:

1. What are the characteristics of Dyanggo and Sambali ritual dances in terms of:
 - a. Historical background
 - b. Costume
 - c. Props
 - d. Musical instrument
 - e. Dance movements
2. What cultural traits of the Cagayanos are revealed in these dances?
3. What dominant concepts are found in Cagayan ritual dances

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The qualitative research design was used by the researcher in gathering data for the study. The researcher made an in-depth observation and key information interview about the unpublished ritual dances found in Cagayan. Photographs of the different movements, costumes and props were also captured.

Locale of the Study

This study was conducted in the province of Cagayan. It was limited to two municipalities namely, Piat and Gattaran. Piat is a small town some 40 kilometers northwest of the capital of Cagayan, Tuguegarao City. Gattaran is the third biggest town in the province with a total land area of 70.75 hectares.

Respondents and Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was used in this study. The respondents involved in this study were the key informants of the Cagayan ritual dances. These respondents do not only have the background knowledge on the dances but are also dancers themselves who perform during fiestas and special gatherings. The respondents are born and raised in the barangay since birth. Their age ranges from 37 to 91 years old.

Research Instrument

An interview guide was prepared by the researcher to enable her to gather the necessary information. The interview guide focused on the following details: the historical background, costume, music, props and characteristics of the dance movements. This guide was used to annotate the unpublished Cagayan ritual dances.

Data Gathering Procedure

The interview was used as a means of gathering data directly from the key informants of the place through personal and verbal questions. This was made to get the information about the existing ritual dances found in Cagayan. This was conducted using the guide described earlier. Documentary analysis was also done to get the specific meaning of each dance.

In the course of documenting the dance, a recorder was used to record the vocal or instrumental music, rhythm accompanying the dances. The key informants were requested to hum the melody or music which was translated into musical notation, and was transformed into a piano score.

The costume while worn by the dancers and some outstanding features of the dances were photographed. A video camera was also used to capture the different movements portrayed by the dancers.

Analysis of Data

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data, noting the trends as regards the story, reason and meaning of the movements of the documented dances. The specific meaning of the steps and descriptions of the respondents.

DISCUSSION

Dyanggo Dance of Nassiping, Gattaran

A. Costume

The costumes used in this particular dance include white gown and wings of angels. It also includes mascara or horned masks made up of clay and paper, dried banana leaves to cover the bodies of the dancers, two regular size papaya and one banana blossom or one big eggplant to serve as the sex organs. The original costume of this ritual dance is made up of thick sack or abaca embroidered with chicken feathers. However, this authentic costume was not usually worn due to the difficulty in making and preparing it.

B. Props

The props used in the dance are swords for angels and “kalatak” or shield, and a rope made up of dried banana stalks for the Dyanggos.

C. Musical Accompaniment

The rhythm of music is unmeasured. It has a slow and a walking space tempo. The melody has a narrow range; an octave. It is divided into two parts: chorus and three verses. Thus A B1 A B2 A B3 A. The music also portrays the manner by which St. Michael drove away the Dyanggos and why he had to drive them away. In other words, this music is a summative story of the ritual itself.

St. Michael Hymn

St. Michael Hymn

(translated by: Mr. Bernardino Cumagun)

Miguel Heneral Valiente

Michael Valiant General

Miguel Heneral Valiente

Michael Valiant General

De, dios, mando Toca, armas toca armas

For God's sake, take arms and march!

Contra luzbel que a mayores

Against Lucifer who is the leader (2X)

Contra luzbel que a mayores

For a revolution is ignited (2X)

Em el cielo se la vanta

Drive them away

Em el cielo se la vanta

Because they are the followers of Lucifer

Em los dar dos de sual haba

Attack them at all sides (3X)

Por que abrasa de luzbel

(rehartado entre susancas) 3X

Make sure that they are totally driven away

Aser to leer, el Corazon

There can be no other than God

Vol cordo suvervia elama

Who can help us to win

Equiem come Dios repito

In a sweet harmonious revolution

Tre cante mora ro garcias

For the victory of Michael

El cielo em dulce harmona

At the court under the King

Por Miguel Victoria sanies

Singing with triumph

El punto bajo empierno

At the altar of Michael (3X)

Cantado ami Miguel Agala 3X

D. Characteristics of the Dance Movements

The heavy-walking steps signify refusal to accept Christianity. The slight bending of knees and trunk also denotes that Ybanags are always ready to defend themselves. The amplified hand position also signifies that Ybanags are very accommodating and always ready to accept changes for the betterment of the community.

E. Dyanggo, the Hidden Ritual

At twelve noon on the 8th day of September, the eve of the feast day of St. Michael, patron saint of Nassiping, Gattaran, Cagayan, church bells toll and the Dyanggos, in full costume-honed mask, blackened bodies and whips in low, come out of their hiding places to frighten and scare away the towns people. This they do until four o'clock in the afternoon while waiting for the procession of St. Michael around the community. The moment they catch a glimpse of their saint, they try to whip and lasso him as though challenging him to duel. But every attempt fails as they weaken and fall, powerless against his might. After the encounter, the image of St. Michael is brought back to church and the weakened and defeated Dyanggos run back to their hiding places.

On the next day at six o'clock in the morning, the feast day, September 29, the image of St. Michael is again brought out for another procession around the town. Once again, the reinvigorated Dyanggos come out but are challenged by eleven (11) angels so that the Dyanggos cannot come near him. They relentlessly pursue him, though, until they reach the church. In a final attempt to prevent the enthronement of the image of St. Michael at the altar, the Dyanggos whip and lasso him so that the angels have to face them and respond to their challenge of a battle of will and might. After a lengthy of conversation, the angels emerge victorious and succeed in driving the Dyanggos away.

After the Dyanggos have all gone, St, Michael is brought inside the church and enthroned. The whole of the community, then joins in singing a song of praise to their patron saint.

F. Dyanggo Ritual Dance (Ybanag/Ibanag)

This ritual dance is being performed during the feast of St. Michael upon entering the vicinity of the Nassiping church. As the bell rings, the Dyanggos perform the ritual dance. Most of the time, the movements are done simultaneously every after figure/step in different feet movement, different arm/head position and measurement. The dance concludes with the Dyanggos falling down. As they fall down, the angels face the statue of St. Michael and kneel, stand and rejoice as the angels emerge victorious and succeed in driving away the Dyanggos.

Sambali Dance of Apayao (Piat)

Oral tradition recounts that the Sambali, a war dance between divided Ytawits, the “Dadayas” and Christian converts was performed until mid-century during the feast day of Piat patron saint St. Dominic on August 8.

A. Costume

The Christian Ytawits wear a camisa de chino-inspired white costume, white being the catechetical color for baptism. This represents godliness. Meanwhile, the Dadayas wear red g-string, a color traditionally associated with insurrection. This color also denotes the dancers’ courage.

B. Props

The props needed in the dance are shield with a cross at the center and the “palatao” or bolo for the Ytawits.

C. Musical Accompaniment

The musical accompaniment of the dance has a fast beat that denotes the aggressiveness of the Ytawits. They use the ‘patanguc’ which is a bamboo striking musical instrument. It has a two-fourth time signature. Its melody has a limited or narrow range, arranged from lowest to highest tone, with an octave musical score. It consists of two parts, A and B or rounded binary, ABAB.

D. Characteristics of the Dance Steps

The Sambali’s dance steps and mechanics depict through its movements, the unbelief and opposition of the Dadayas and the faith, courage and victory of the Christian Ytawits. It also depicts the religious, political and social history of the Ytawits with the Marian faith and its centerpiece.

E. The Sambali Ritual Dance

Prelude: Dramatization

The Pre-Spanish Period. The Ytawes, more commonly referred to as Ytawits, are one of the three major lowland ethnic groups of Cagayan. The Ytawits of Piat is closely identified with the Dadayas (lowland ethnic subtribe of the Kalingas) with whom they live with. They have many things in common.

Each group is governed by a certain chieftain. The Sambaleros project their way of life by hunting and fishing.

Arrival of the Missionaries. They choose Piat as a mission in the Ytawes region comprising the towns of Tabang, Malaweg, Tuao and Piat. The early Spanish settlers in Piat are massacred by the Ytawits and Dadayas. They show aggression for their foreign behavior and for the abuses and intrusions they suffer from them. Conquistadores come in, Sambaleros show aggression.

The Spanish missionary forms another group and goes to Piat. They bring with them a big cross that signifies Christianity. They succeed in their mission to introduce Christianity to the same natives (some Ytawits only). The first mass and baptism are celebrated and the Ytawits are given Christian names.

The conversion of the Ytawits to Christianity went on since then. The Dadayas, refusing to embrace the new faith, came at odds with the Ytawits.

F. Sambali Ritual Dance

Figure I. There are two Ayayas (Aeta women) coming from each feuding group. There is no definite number of dancers but preferably odd numbers, 1 Mengal as Patul (King), and 1 chieftain from the Christian Ytawits.

The dance starts with chants and shouts coming from the “Ayayas”, warning the two feuding teams of an imminent war. The Ayayas will say “uy opun dumatong kaoni! Ta wad ta kontra taku.” The Ytawits will say “kokkofun, angkayu chaw win to angyan yo kontra teran! Makilaban tera (3x). (Comrades, come over now, our foes are coming. Let’s fight!) Upon the order of the village chieftain, the group has to move and get prepared for the battle.

(The dance movements proceed as follows: 16 steps to meet at the center of the battlefield. Left arm in reverse T position holding the shield, Right arm swinging naturally at the sides holding the bolo going to their formation.)

(The warriors are in stance position hands. Booth chieftains will make three walking steps to meet the center. The Ytawit leader will convince the Mengal or Dadaya chieftain to embrace Christianity. The Dadaya leader rejects it and shouts...”Marralaban teran!!! (in a loud voice).

Figure II.

- a.) The dancers make 16 walking steps to look for the enemy. Left arm is in reverse T position holding the shield; right arm swinging naturally at sides holding the bolo.
- b.) Step right foot sideward, cross left foot to right; step right and raise left, arm in reverse T position. Bend trunk slightly forward, knee slightly bended.
- c.) Repeat b to the left starting with left foot.
- d.) With the right foot, make three walking steps with arms raised forward. To meet to the center on count 4. The, clash with the enemy.
- e.) Repeat d, moving backward
- f.) Repeat b to e

Figure IV

- a.) Step right foot sideward, cross left to right, step right and raise left. Arms in reverse T position, bend trunk slightly forward, knee slightly bended.
- b.) Repeat a to the left starting with left foot.
- c.) Starting with right foot, make a three-walking step forward then make a full turn jump to partner's place.
- d.) Repeat a-c.

Figure V

- a.) Repeat Figure II. On the least repetition, the Dadayas will fall to the ground as a sign of defeat.

Finale

- a. Entrance of the Blessed Mother with some Christian Ytawits singing the Mangurug Nac Ta Dios Ama (I Believe In God, the Father)
- b. The Christian warriors will help the fallen and wounded Dadayas to stand and join the procession.

The Ytawits and the Ybanags are self-sacrificing. Both are willing to submit themselves in total self-surrender to their beloved. The Ytawits are very considerate. They live by the virtue of peace and tranquility, cooperation and unity, charity and the humanitarian attitude of brotherhood. This is revealed in the fight between the Dadayas and the Christian Ytawits. The Ytawits help the wounded Dadayas to stand up and support them while walking and joining the procession. This can be further gleaned from the statements of natives through the vernacular, “Naporay kami ngem ammu mi mangimallat kang kassitolay mi” (We are impulsive but we are kind to our fellowmen.) The heavy walking steps of the dance indicate that the Cagayanos tend to be fierce or aggressive especially when their dignity as a person is unduly stepped upon.

“Sikami nga Ybanag ay makasta nga pinaratu, minangnguffun anna ammu mi mammacacua ta kassitolay mi.” (We Ybanags are good people and respectful toward our fellowmen.)

The ritual dances further reveal that Cagayanos have many human frailties, too. They could be kind, subtle, humbe and calm in their relations to others, but they could be enraged or impulsive, repugnant and repulsive in defense of themselves, especially when their honor is at stake.

H. Dominant Concepts In The Dance

Both dances are considered as a religious ritual for they represent a very distinct performance that commemorates the reign of Christianity in Cagayan. Religious rites and rituals have been employed by the Catholic church to Paganism in the Philippines in general Cagayan in particular.

This ritual dance has existed even to date and it is treasured by the residents for it instills the culture of the people and it enlightens the minds of the Cagayanos of the full mystery of their patron, St. Michael and Our Lady of Piat.

Another concept that could be gleaned from the dances is the fact that the pagan Ytawits and Ybanags of Cagayan met with stubborn resistance the religious efforts of the early Christian missionaries to embrace the Christian faith. Historically, this stiff resistance put up the native Ytawits and Ybanags on the propagation of Christianity runs parallel with other cultures and tribes in the Philippines when Christianity is still being introduced in the country.

But like any other human endeavor which calls for change, there are individuals or groups of people who oppose change. Like any pioneering activity, the task of propagating Christianity to the native Ytawits and Ybanags also had its birth pains and is not without strong opposition. This birth pain would include the violent struggle and occasional skirmishes between the pagans and the early missionaries as depicted in the dance. However, as the

early Christians persisted in their missionary work, the natives, realizing the nobility of their Christian work, and sensing the futility of their resistance, finally embraced the Christian faith.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Cagayan ritual dances portray the Cagayan's cultural values like courage, determination, charity and humanitarian or brotherhood and religiosity;
2. Cagayan ritual dances have partially suffered loss of authenticity due to modification on costumes and props;
3. Cagayan's cultural ethnic tribes have cultural traits and practices in the Philippines as shown in their dance movements and dance flames;
4. The two dances depict the ritual people's reluctance to embrace Christianity but eventually faithfully accepted it;
5. The locale where the ritual dances originated has a historic significance in the cultural, social, and political development of the Ybanags and Ytawits as ethnic tribes of Cagayan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher gives the following recommendations:

1. The ritual dances should be taught and performed in authentic manner;
2. Music, arts, and Physical Education (MAPE), Physical Health and Music (PEHM), and Social Science teachers should realize the potentials and values of folk dancing and endeavor to teach, preserve and propagate them to be handed down from generation to generation;
3. Whenever these dances are performed, performers or choreographers should insist on an authentic costuming, music and props;
4. The church, school and the Department of Tourism should hand-in-hand preserve and promote ritual dances as tourist attraction;
5. The literature herein included and other similar literatures should be preserved for use of future researchers;
6. There should be more intensive and extensive researches on folk dances particularly on regional and tribal levels.

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