

FACES OF COLORS....DANCE

INTRODUCTION

The Province of Bukidnon is a fertile and windswept tableland in North-Central Mindanao. Bukidnon is composed of 7 ethnic communities namely: Higaunon, Tala-andig, Pulangihon, Central Bukidnon, Matigsalug, Umayamnon, and Tigwahanon. Of these seven ethnic communities, the Matigsalug, Umayamnon and Tigwahanon are the three Southern Bukidnon Manobo groups. At present, these three groups have an estimated population of 40,000. The term Manobo comes from a binukid term “Mansuba” or “Manuba” meaning people living near the river or along the watershed.

ARTS

Ingrained in the Manobo way of life in the province of Bukidnon is the passion of celebration. The Manobos of Southern Bukidnons are very creative. They always associate themselves with nature as depicted in their arts.

DANCES

Dances take center stage in their life reminding that as a people they are successors to ancient traditions that encourage and nurture virtues of self-reliance, ingenuity and strength of character and preserve the enriching sense of beauty emanating from their arts, music, dances, songs, games and folklore. Ethnic dances are a part of this culture. They show not only the artistic ingenuity of the natives but also their beliefs, traditions and life which are reflected in them. These ethnic dances have for long survived. These dances mimic the movements of animals like birds and frogs. The most famous bird dance is Bobodsil. It is a dance among the southern Manobos of the Matigsalug tribe. It imitates the movements of the buildings. Bobodsil birds are commonly known as Hombill, which is indigenous to their place. Bobodsil depicts the movements of the buildings searching for their mother hen who is away looking for food.

Bobodsil kayumatan, a courtship dance among the Matigsalug of Southern Bukidnon. This dance is depicting the courtship of birds in flight. The female bird will follow the male bird and in return the male bird will respond.

Binaylan Himaklaran, a dance famous among the Southern Manobos of Bukidnon of the Umayamnon tribe, a ritual dance by the baylan during full moon, asking for blessings or appease bad spirits from a sick person.

Binakbak, a very common dance among the three Manobo communities. The performers imitate the movements of the frog to entertain guests during special occasions and festivals.

Bangkakaw, a fertility dance performed mostly by women and few men over a vertically suspended log.

COLORS

Color plays an important role in the Manobo arts. This is visible in their costumes, accessories and handicrafts. The dominant colors found in their costumes are red, yellow, blue or black. Red represents bravery which is a common notion among the communities that when one bleeds he becomes brave and strong. Yellow associates to the color of the sun which is the sources of life and abundance when the field is yellow. Blue or black signifies deepness like a deep river or unreachable like the sky. Other earth colors like gray and brown, were introduced to us by our Southeast Asian neighboring countries. There is a common belief to the non-muslim ethnic communities in the Philippines that green is not considered as a color of them because it is a hue of their natural environment.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Bantula is a drum made from one bamboo internode. It is played with a stick. Tambol is another kind of drum. It is made of a hollow round or cylindrical wood with the hide of the goat, cow or deer stretched upon ring-like frames fitted over its end. This is played with both hands. Kudlong, is a two-stringed wooden guitar played by men while dancing. Saluray is a bamboo guitar with four built-in strings stripped from the bamboo itself. It is played by women while dancing. Pulala is a bamboo flute used in imitating sound of birds. Kubing or Jaw's harp is made of a thinly shaved bamboo with a tongue-like slit at the middle part where the player blows. Agong is a brass or copper made instrument used as gong during gatherings to call the attention of the members. It is hat-shaped and played by beating with a stick. Kulintang is made of brass and composed of 8 gongs arranged horizontally from the biggest to the smallest, which produces ascending sounds.

ACCESSORIES

Accessories are always associated with their costumes. Worn by men are the tangkulo, pugnot, binuklad, bakag and kamuyot. Tangkulo is a beaded head gear with intricate designs and horse hair associated with the rank of social status of Manobo men. Pugnot is a bracelet and anklet made of roots of wild pants growing along the river banks. It is also worn by women. Binuklad is a beaded wristband with intricate designs. Bakag is a convenient rattan basket used as container for their betel nuts and tobacco. It is also worn by women. Kamuyot is a back pack made of abaca fibers. It is a bag commonly worn by men and women.

Worn exclusively by women are saluroy, saray, saliyaw and ginakit. Saluroy is a thread ball hanging on both sides of the head. Saray is threaded beads passing through both earlobes. Saliyaw is a beaded anklet with a small bell. Ginakit is a beaded necklace.

DESIGN / MOTIF AND HANDICRAFT

Zigzag line represents the mountains and the topography of their place. Horizontal line represents the horizon when seen by them as the sky seems to meet the ground. Vertical line means rain as a form of precipitation which is abundant in the place throughout the year. Cross represents the rays of the sun facing east, west, south, and north or the four directions. Circle represents the moon or means that they belong to their territory or within the territory. Inverted “V” represents the river flow which means a good source of life.

HANDICRAFTS

Basket Weaving.

Baskets are made of rattan or “uway” and vine ferns “nito” which thrive abundantly in their environment. Rattan is the main material of the baskets and ferns as is accent. These baskets are used as accessories convenient bags.

Bag making.

Shoulder bags are made of abaca hemp with intricate bead works and accentuated with horse hair. These bags are used as their accessories.

Pugnot/ Tikos are bracelets and anklets made of roots of wild plants. These are used as their accessories and antidote.

CONCLUSION

While the Maranaos are “Royal”, the Tausugs are “Warriors”, the Tasadays are “Gentle”, the Manobos are a noble ethnic community because they are proud of their rich, varied and colorful culture as depicted through their dances.