Philippine Folk Dances

Philippine folk dance mirrors the culture and tradition of the Filipinos. It has also been a source of culture identify of the people. In this diversified country, there are also great diversity of dances in different forms and dynamics that grow out of various times, situation and experiences.

How do Philippine folk dances reflect the culture and tradition of Filipinos?

Well, Philippine folk dances are a tradition dance of the people from one generation to another. They are means of expressing the beliefs, moods and emotions of a people, and have been the mode of communication.

CORDILLERA SUITE

Bindian is an Ibaloy dance. The Ibaloy who inhabit the southernmost mountain regions in Northern Luzon perform victory dances to extol the bravery of the warriors of yesterday. In this version from the barrio of Kabayan, hand movements are downward, suggesting the people's affinity with the earth. The basic step consists of a stamp by the left foot and a light, forward movement by the right. Instrumentalists lead the line, followed by male dancers, while the female dancers bring in the rear.

Ragragsakan Dance

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Ragragsakan dance is an adaptation of a tradition in which Kalinga women gather and prepare for a budong, or peace pact.

The Kalingga borrowed the beautiful word ragragsakan from the Ilocano, which means "merriment." The two biggest occassions for a ragragsakan in a Kalinga village are for the homecoming of successful head takers and the culmination of peace–pact between warring tribes. In this dance, Kalinga maidens balance labba baskets on thier heads, wave colorful tribal blankets, and sing short salidumay songs as they snake through the terrace dikes and skip through breaks in the path.

This dance portrays the walk of the industrious Kalingga women, carrying water pots on their heads and wearing the colorful hand–woven "blankets of life" around their necks. Their walk imitates the climb up the Rice Terraces in the Mountain Provinces of the Philippines.

Ragragsakan was discovered by Ramon Obusan in Lubuagan, Kalinga province among the Kalingga people. Ragragsakan came from the ILOCANO word "ragsak" which means "happy". Ragragsakan thus, means "merrymaking".
**Banga Dance**
CORDILLERA SUITE

*Banga dance* is an Igorot maidens go to the river and prepare for a marriage ceremony. They display not only their grace and agility, but also their stamina and strength as they go about their daily task of fetching water and balancing the bangsa, claypots full of water, on their heads.

**Uyaoy Dance**
CORDILLERA SUITE

*Uyaoy Dance* is an Ifugao wedding festival dance accompanied by gongs and is performed by the affluent to attain the second level of the wealthy class. Wealthy people who have performed this dance are entitled to the use of gongs at their death.

**Idaw Dance**
CORDILLERA SUITE

*Idaw* is one of Cordillere dance. This Bontoc dance depicts a war ceremony performed by warriors of rivaling tribes. Idaw, meaning "bird," is celebrated because it was the omen bearer of war.
MUSLIM SUITE

Singkil dance takes its name from the bells worn on the ankles of the Muslim princess. Perhaps one of the oldest of truly Filipino dances, the Singkil recounts the epic legend of the "Darangan" of the Maranao people of Mindanao. This epic, written sometime in the 14th century, tells the fateful story of Princess Gandingan, who was caught in the middle of a forest during an earthquake caused by the diwatas, or fairies of the forest. The criscrossed bamboo poles represent the trees that were falling, which she gracefully avoids. Her slave loyally accompanies her throughout her ordeal. Finally, she is saved by the prince. Dancers skillfully manipulate apir, or fans which represent the winds that prove to be auspicious. Royal princesses to this day in the Sulu Archipelago are required to learn this most difficult and noble dance.

There are other versions of Singkil. Perhaps the version more widely performed by dance companies is the "Garden Singkil." The story goes that the princess goes into her garden, accompanied by her slave, and plays with the butterflies, which are represented by the fan dancers. The movements of the fans supposedly represent those of the butterflies, as opposed to the diwatas. In another popular version, the prince uses a scarf instead of a sword.

TRIBAL SUITE

Dugso dance is a Bukidnon from northeastern Mindanao perform this dance as an entertainment for the deities, to make them feel more comfortable during the fiesta that has been organized for them and consequently more often to the requests of the celebrants. It was originally thought that this dance was performed only during harvest time or upon the birth of a male heir. Women would wear colorful feathered head dresses, plaid costumes and anklets. They would step rhythmically around a bamboo arch decorated with newly-gathered palay (rice stalks) and corn, and their movements are emphasized by the tinkling sounds from the anklets.
TRIBAL SUITE

Blit B'laan is a courtship dance of the Bilaan of Davao del Sur imitating forest birds during the mating season. Two richly-plumed male birds eye three female birds. The females scurry to safety, burying their heads under their wings (represented by the malong, a tubular cloth), but the aggressive males follow them wherever they go.

MARIA CLARA SUITE

Aray is a dance whose words are sung in "Chabacano-ermitense," a hybrid of Spanish that was only spoken in the Ermita district before the turn of the century and today is extinct. The dance itself is a flirtatious one that involves graceful use of the pañuelo, or shawl, and tambourines. Aray means "ouch" in Tagalog.
Binatbatan Dance

RURAL SUITE

An occupational dance from Paoay, Ilocos Norte, Binatbatan depicts the beating of cotton pods to separate the seeds from the fibers with the use of two sticks called batbat in the Ilocos region. Weavers in Paoay often engage themselves in abel-making contests (abel is a cloth common among the Ilokanos). Dancers maneuver in and out of parallel batbat sticks, each about 18 inches long. The rhythm and speed of the beating of the sticks make for a lively and colorful display.

Pandanggo sa Ilaw Dance

Pandanggo sa Ilaw is a popular dance of grace and balance comes from Lubang Island, Mindoro in the Visayas region. The term pandanggo comes from the Spanish word fandango, which is a dance characterized by lively steps and clapping that varies in rhythm in three-four time. This particular pandanggo involves the presence of three tinggoy, or oil lamps, balanced on the head and the back of each hand.
Lapay Bantigue Dance

Like many small islands, Bantigue in Masbate rely on the sea to supply fish to greater parts of the Bicol Region.

Each dawn, Bantigue village awaits the arrival of boats with their catch. Gathered on the beach with the people are numerous herons called "lapay" flying overhead or moving around waiting for spare fish catch. To while away their time, people turn their attention to the birds, shooing them or imitating their flight, swoops, dives and glides. This playful frolicking started the first steps of a spontaneous dance. Music was brought in later to lend order and form.

Itik-Itik Dance

At one baptismal party in the Surigao del Norte province, a young lady named Kanang (the nickname for Cayetana), considered the best dancer and singer of her time, was asked to dance the Sibay. She became so enthusiastic and spirited during the performance that she began to improvise movements and steps similar to the movements of itik, the duck, as it walks with short, choppy steps and splashes water on its back while calling to its mate. The people liked the dance so much that they all imitated her. There are six separate foot sequences in the series of Itik-Itik steps.
Maglalatik Dance

Maglalatik is a mock-war dance, originating from the Spanish Regime, depicts a fight between the Moros and the Christians over the prized latik, or coconut meat residue. This dance, originally performed in Biñan, Laguna, is also performed as a tribute to the patron saint of farmers, San Isidro de Labrador. Maglalatik is a four-part performance: the palipasan and the baligtaran showing the intense combat, and the paseo and the escaramusa, the reconciliation. The Moros of this dance usually wear red trousers, while the Christians don blue trousers. All of the men use harnesses of coconut shells positioned on their backs, chests, hips, and thighs.

Idudu - Abra, Cordillera A tribal dance. This dance stages a common family life in the Itneg or Tinguian society. It illustrates the family as the main foundation of the tribe’s community. Several traits of an ordinary family are shown. It depicts a father plowing the field while the mother caring for the children. But as soon as the father finishes work, the mother takes over on planting, sowing and all the remaining chores to do in the field. At this time the father is left to take care of the kids. During the dance a Local singer breaks into an Idudu or lullaby to put the baby to sleep. Idudu, a dance taken from Idudu lullaby, obviously portrays the different roles in a Tinguian family.

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