

**The Sociological and Educational Significance  
Of Selected Cuyono Folk Songs**

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Lying southwest of Luzon, like a closed umbrella pointing to Borneo, is Palawan. Its geographical location is such that it has retained its mystic and unique ethnic groups along with their culture in the form of song, music, and dance. Cuyo, the old island capital of Palawan, is rich with its own folksongs. These songs have been handed down vocally from generation to generation. Only lately have efforts been made to record them in more permanent form, with the hope that this most cherished cultural possession of the Cuyono people will not be forgotten. At the same time, some new Cuyonon-composed songs have become popular that they have taken on the status of folk songs. This paper is an attempt at cultural revival, preservation and propagation of the rich musical culture of Cuyo, Palawan.

Folksongs are one of our most cherished cultural possessions; they are expressions of peoples faith, joys, sorrows, hopes, and aspirations. This paper aims to present the folksongs representative of the culture of Cuyono people, categorized as: A) Songs Children Love to Sing; B) Occupational Songs; C) Love Songs; D) Songs for Wakes and Vigils; E) Songs for Fiestas, and F.) Composed Folksongs.

On its broadest level, this study aims at choosing songs for educational use, as instructional material for elementary and high school. It takes cognizance of the educational and sociological implications of the songs, from which children acquire rich ideas and information, as they absorb the most authentic characteristics of the Cuyono people, ground their understanding of their own culture, develop skills in literary appreciation, and awaken the dignity of labor, service to and love of country which are essentials in a democratic society.

In the shortened version of this major study, the authors will present and discuss one song from each of the categories given above and two very popular “composed folksongs.”

## **I. SONGS CHILDREN LOVE TO SING**

Not all songs appeal to everyone. Each song befits and interests a certain level or group. In this particular collection, the following song has been noted to have attracted particular attention of children with ages up to twelve. It is easy to sing and it has a catchy and lively tune.

## TARINGTING

Taringting paglayog don  
Ay ikaw tataeban den,  
Pagsot sa liyang-liyang  
Sa batong malinang-linang.

## TRANSLATION

Taringting fly away now  
For the high tide will soon come,  
Enter the eaves  
Among the smooth stones

### DISCUSSION POINTS:

TARINGTING is a kind of bird that is usually found in the seashore during low tides. Its color is white, with long beaks and long, slender legs. It is a familiar sight in the Cuyo seashore, especially during sunset.

Children, as well as adults love to relax and unwind in the beach after a long, tiring day. It speaks of their love of nature, particularly of the ocean.

## II. OCCUPATIONAL SONGS

Cuyo is a place where people have different occupations. As the song suggests, fishing is a popular work among Cuyo folks.

## LAYANG PASYAK

Ako mi layang pasyak  
panamban-tambam mi pamalanak,  
Porabil ako mapilak kong  
naga solong don ang dagat.

## TRANSLATION

I have a fishnet with shells as the  
weight,  
I use it for catching “tamban” and “  
banak”  
Before I throw the net,  
I wait for the tide to come in.

### DISCUSSION POINTS:

Fishing is one of the main occupations in Cuyo. This song speaks of the fisherman's use of his fishnet in catching “tamban” and “banak”; two popular kinds of fish in Cuyo. The song depicts the traditional practice of using the fishnet to catch fish with shells as the weights around the fishnets.

### III. LOVE SONGS

After harvest time, when village swains come from the mainland of Palawan for a well- earned rest after bringing home cavans of palay, they find no definite task to do. They are sure of their daily rice and go to the sea for their viand.

As a form of entertainment, they meet in the barrio plaza and play ball games like volleyball and sipa; play dama, or simply chat and share adventures among themselves.. On these occasions, they also compose songs and serenade their lady loves.

#### NAPOPONGAO AKO

Napopongao ako sa akeng korsonada  
Pira ren ka bolan ara ko nakikta  
Iwanen ta lamang ang dagat madalem  
Dian den da nga lagi akeng kamatayen

#### TRANSLATION

I am lonely for my loved one,  
I have not seen her for months.  
What can we do, the sea is deep,  
Danger of death is eminent.

#### DISCUSSION POINTS:

The song is a sentimental love song that depicts the longing of a man for his loved one. Because of Cuyo's geographical location, it is difficult to travel frequently out of the island since not many passenger boats ply the route of Cuyo going to the other parts of Palawan, or even to Manila. For a long time, there was only one passenger vessel that went to Cuyo, then to Iloilo and back to Puerto. Otherwise, one has to wait for any fishing boat that may take in passengers when they happen to pass by Cuyo. This is the sentiment of the man who has not seen his lady love for quite a while because of his inability to go to her as often as he wants to. A classic example of man versus nature since man cannot overpower the vastness and danger that lurk in the depths of the ocean separating Cuyo from mainland Palawan.

### IV. SONGS FOR WAKES AND VIGILS

When someone dies in the family, relatives and friends come and keep vigil. After burial, prayers for the soul of the faithful departed are continued for nine consecutive nights. Singing games are played after the prayers to comfort the grieving family.

## **KUERDAS DE LA BORDON**

Kwerdas de la bordon ang singsing papanawen  
Sa raina prinsisa palibot-liboton  
Kwerdas de la bordon ang singsing  
Sa raina prinsisa palibot-liboton.

## **TRANSLATION ( THE BIG CORD )**

The big cord- let the ring go round  
Around the princess, let it go around.  
Big “ bordon” cord, let the ring go  
around  
Around the princess, let it go around.

### **DISCUSSION POINTS:**

This is the native version of “ Dollar-Dollar.’ The ring is transferred around from hand to hand as the song is sung. At the end of the song, the “ IT “ catches the holder of the ring. Punishment is in the form of song, poem or rhyme rendition.

This particular practice shows the typical Filipino spirit of finding something humorous or funny amidst the grieving process; thus, helping to alleviate the pain of losing one’s loved one even momentarily. The game provides a break to the otherwise gloomy or sad atmosphere of the wake or vigil. It symbolizes the happy attitude of Cuyonos and their ability to rise above their grief.

## **V. SONGS FOR THE FIESTA**

Among the first towns to be “ Christianized” in Palawan is Cuyo. Up to the present, the people’s religious fervor is still incomparable. Each barrio has its own patron saint and observes its own fiesta or feast in commemoration of the particular saint’s birthday or death anniversary.

The town itself, embracing all barrios has its own patron saint. Saint Augustine, whose feast day is celebrated every 28<sup>th</sup> of August. This is a time of rejoicing where people of the Catholic religion come to attend mass, join or witness the procession. There “at-ati” or people whose faces are painted black with soot or indigo representing the “ blacks” or colored people with whom St. Augustine worked with and converted to Christianity. These are the leaping “ innocents” and “sinologs’ with sticks, masks of coconut “ sara’ and banana or coconut leaves that serve as decorations around their bodies. They all jump and leap in rhythm to the beating of drums. There is also the “ comedia” or moro in their resplendent costumes of kings, queens and princesses. The dancers and chanters glorify the deeds of Saint Augustine as the foremost church doctor and intercessor.

## **SAN AGUSTIN PALARAN**

## **TRANSLATION**

San Agustin palaran patron sa diang tegbengan  
Basi kita kaloyan, iligtas sa kakurian  
Dayawen tang dayawen ang ateng  
mal nga patron,  
Basipa kita librien sa kakorian bawien

St. Augustine, the fortunate  
Patron Saint of this day's celebration  
May we be blessed kept safe from  
harm  
Let us praise and praise our beloved  
patron saint  
May we be kept safe from all harm.

### **DISCUSSION POINTS:**

As reflected in the song, the traditional Catholic practices are truly evident in the lines and other related activities honoring the patron saint. The interplay of Catholic and even “ medieval” practices are seen and felt.

Cuyo has enjoyed more than 380 years of being a Christian municipality; seeds planted by the Augustinian Recollect brothers almost four centuries ago. The people's religiosity is very much evident in their daily lives.

## **VI. COMPOSED FOLK SONGS.**

Between the folk song and the so called “ art song” stands what is known as the composed folk song. Certain composers are so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of their people and with their creative musical idiom, that their own original creation become so beloved and so generally used among the people, that they achieve the status of a traditional folk song.

The composed folk song crystallizes within the span of a single career and through the medium of a single personality what it might take generation of spontaneous growth to achieve. The composed folk song of a nation are as much a part of its national lore as the pure folk songs in that they are actually used as much by the people.

The two composed folk songs of Mr. Jose and Mrs. Fe Tria- Fernandez have become very popular in Cuyo Island. Their popularity has spread as far down south and north of Palawan. They have become a part of the Music lessons, both in elementary and high schools in the province of Palawan.

### **A. CUYO BALITAW**

### **TRANSLATION**

Sa kapupuroan maambeng  
Kung masanag ngani ang bolan

It's a happy time in the islands  
When the moon is shining bright

Mga bata ig ma nga malam  
Naga parasiar sa pantalan  
Ma nga solteros ig daraga  
Naga gitara magkaranta kadai sara  
Mi sara maambeng andang leba

Pagkasanag ngani dayong parakon  
Sa oma, magkaingin, magsaripsip  
Magpaligid kong mainit,  
Maluto ron ngani ang paray sa bukid  
Dayon sandang parantek  
Maglelebek-lebek,

Amos kamo mga tangay  
Masaraot saot kita nay  
Lipatan tateng kapilay, magpanari anay  
Dading loto roang paray, kita magkalipay  
.Indi tay panombaien, ateng kabedlay.

## **B. MANIG PANGISDA**

Kung nasasalep den adlaw,  
Sa dopit kasasalepan  
naga aramat-amat oroli ang ma nga  
Baroto kasaplan  
Maraye pa sanda nakikita nagalalayag  
Layag den da, ma nga bata ig asawa  
Nagaelat kananda

Matama ngani ang dawli,  
Durong kaambeng nga nagaoli  
Sigurado ren ang panggatang  
Sa sera ara ren y bali  
Basta mi lelegeb-legeben

Young and old alike go strolling to the  
wharf  
Young men and women play the guitar and  
sing.  
Everyone is happy.

When morning comes they go to the fields  
To cut trees, clean the fields and burn them  
When the day is hot  
When the grains ripen on the mountain  
They harvest them and make pinipig.

Come my friend, let's dance awhile  
Let's forget our weariness, let's rest awhile  
Now that the rice is ripe let us rejoice!  
Let us not mind our efforts.

## **THE FISHERMAN**

When the sun is setting in the west  
Slowly one by one the bancas come sailing  
home  
Still faraway they are seen by the sails  
Children and wife all await them.

When there is abundant catch,  
They are happy when they go home  
They are sure of money for rice  
For viand, they do not mind.  
As long as there is something to broil

Asta mi kilaw-kilawen.  
Maambeng ang magbarata  
Magan andang leba

And for “ kilawin’  
The family is happy and light are their  
hearts.

Tuladan lamang sanda,  
Nga mga manig pangisda  
Mapilaypilay nga pangita  
Mainit pa nga ara doa-doa  
Malinaw ig maderes man,  
Ang dagat ay papakunan  
Tenged maman dnedang ing alinan  
Pangabui nga tanan.

It’s just they way they are,  
Though it’s a tiresome job  
And the heat is certain,  
Light the winds or strong they may  
be  
The sea is a sure place to go  
For it is the source of all  
That gives them food and life.

#### **DISCUSSION POINTS:**

It’s a common sight in the Cuyo seashores to see wives and children waiting on the male members of their household to bring home the day’s catch. This song depicts the simplicity of the Cuyono life, the life of the common Cuyono people who are dependent on the bountiful catch from the sea. The simple joys that they show like having enough for their day’s viand is a reflection of their ability to make do with what they have. Even their taste in food is simple; as long as there is vinegar or even table salt to accompany their broiled fish are welcome sight in their table. The family members will relish these with gusto.

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