



Narratives of Folklore in Northern Cebu-Beliefs, Myths, and Customs

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ABSTRACT

The study employs a descriptive phenomenological method, a qualitative approach, to investigate the folk narratives of northern Cebu and gain a deeper understanding and analysis of its rich cultural narratives through a field interview. The key informants of this study are three local residents of Daanbantayan, Cebu. This study utilizes the thematic analysis method of qualitative data analysis which will be used to closely examine recurring themes and patterns of the informants' narratives to draw out meanings and results. The results reveal four main themes: (1) Communal and Individual Mores, encompassing customs and traditions that affect the "regular" experiences of the people including birth and death rituals, marriage superstitions, local feminist traditions, local narrative media, and agrarian customs (2) Denizens of the Otherworld, referring to nonhuman entities that dwell in the gaps and outside the bonds of the human world. (3) Magical Traditions and Customs which include Palliative Magic, Secretive Arts, Rites of Spiritual/Mystical Significance, and lastly (4) Cultural and Sociological Trends, referring to the ongoing effects of the modern world on the rural community, including the Maintenance and Continuity of Belief, The March of Modernity and Breaks in Tradition. Based on the findings, the evolution of cultural practices like sacrifices, offerings, and oral traditions shows how societies balance preserving their heritage with adapting to modern life. The experiences of the interviewees illustrate the importance of these rituals in both spiritual and community life, while also highlighting the financial and practical challenges they bring.

RESUME

O estudo emprega um método fenomenológico descritivo, uma abordagem qualitativa, para investigar as narrativas populares do norte de Cebu e obter uma compreensão e análise mais profundas de suas ricas narrativas culturais por meio de uma entrevista de campo. Os informantes-chave deste estudo são três moradores locais de Daanbantayan, Cebu. Este estudo utiliza o método de análise temática de análise qualitativa de dados que será usado para examinar de perto temas e padrões recorrentes das narrativas dos informantes para extrair significados e resultados. Os resultados revelam quatro temas principais: (1) Costumes Comunitários e Individuais, abrangendo costumes e tradições que afetam as experiências "regulares" das pessoas, incluindo rituais de nascimento e morte, superstições matrimoniais, tradições feministas locais, mídia narrativa local e costumes agrários (2) Habitantes do Outro Mundo, referindo-se a entidades não humanas que habitam as lacunas e fora dos laços do mundo humano. (3) Tradições e Costumes Mágicos, que incluem Magia Paliativa, Artes Secretas, Ritos de Significado Espiritual/Místico e, por fim, (4) Tendências Culturais e Sociológicas, referindo-se aos efeitos contínuos do mundo moderno na comunidade rural, incluindo a Manutenção e Continuidade da Crença, a Marcha da Modernidade e Rupturas na Tradição. Com base nas descobertas, a evolução de práticas culturais como sacrifícios, oferendas e tradições orais demonstra como as sociedades equilibram a preservação de sua herança com a adaptação à vida moderna. As experiências dos entrevistados ilustram a importância desses rituais tanto na vida espiritual quanto na comunitária, ao mesmo tempo em que destacam os desafios financeiros e práticos que eles trazem.

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Introduction

Folklore studies have long been a crucial aspect in the literary world, providing various perspectives of the traditions, beliefs, and practices which contribute to the understanding of the unique cultural diversities and rich heritage of different communities across the world. Historically, folklore has played a significant role preserving an identity and cultural heritage (Eslit, 2023).

Philippine folklore stands as a testament to the rich heritage of folktales and cultural diversity which was passed down from one generation to another. Ocampo (2025) claimed that folklore in the Philippines has its roots in the pre-colonial period, wherein oral traditions served as the primary medium for transmitting stories and beliefs. According to a study by Tadiar and Villanueva (2017), Philippine folklore is an essential component of the nation's cultural legacy, acting as a safeguard for the traditional values, beliefs, and customs of the Filipino people. They highlighted that Filipino folklore can promote a sense of community and serve to bridge the generational divide.

Among the regional folklore, Cebuano folk literature is known for its rich oral traditions reflecting the practices, beliefs, and traditions of its people. With its vibrant culture, Cebuano folklore mirrors the history, shared experiences, and life of the Cebuanos, contributing to the rich tapestry of Philippine folklore and shaping the Cebuano identity.

With its unique linguistic and cultural traits, northern Cebu is home to a wealth of folk literature that has not yet been thoroughly studied. Cebuano folklore is still relatively unexplored in comparison to other regional literatures, despite its cultural significance. There are limited studies that delve into northern Cebuano folklore as Cebuano folklore is frequently generalized in existing research without taking into consideration the nuanced differences across regions. With this, the study seeks to bridge this gap by exploring and analyzing the folk narratives of northern Cebuanos, shedding light on their cultural and literary significance.

This study investigates the folk narratives of the northern Cebuanos. It aims to draw the narratives of how diverse and unique the practices, beliefs, traditions, and culture of the community and its people.

Methodology

Research Design, Environment, and Instrument

The study employs a descriptive phenomenological method, a qualitative approach, to investigate the folk narratives of northern Cebu. By utilizing this method, a deeper understanding and analysis of the rich cultural narratives of the northern Cebu folktales is explored. Through a field interview, the key informants of this study are the local residents of northern Cebu, including Elizabeth Fua Ilustrisimo, a 73-year-old widow who was born in Calape, Daanbantayan, Cebu, Chit Jamac Moralde, a 78-year-old widow who was originally

born in Zamboanga Del Norte but have been residing in Daanbantayan for the past 56 years up to this day. The key informants chosen for the study are native denizens from.

Daanbantayan, a place in northern Cebu which offers diverse and rich cultural heritage. With the aid of an interview questionnaire, the interview was conducted among three participants who are: local people of the area or have longstanding residency in the community to ensure familiarity with local stories, have considerable knowledge of the beliefs, traditions, and culture of the place, typically aged 60 and above, and their ability to engage in conversations.

Data Gathering Procedures and Analysis

In gathering the data, a researcher-made interview questionnaire was evaluated and verified by research experts before it will be used in the study. The entire data gathering procedure was done through field interviews. To ensure ethical issues were considered, the study secured an ethics clearance. To address ethical concerns, the researchers made the participants understand the informed consent form through their emails to establish the privacy and confidentiality, and trustworthiness of the data.

After evaluation of the research instrument, securing the ethics clearance and signing of the informant consent form by the key informants, the schedule of the data gathering was determined. The data gathering procedure through field interviews was done and consequently, the responses were transcribed, verified, and analyzed. The interview for each key informant was at least 1 hour and 30 minutes. The duration of the study was one month.

This study utilizes the thematic analysis method of qualitative data analysis which will be used to closely examine recurring themes and patterns of the key informants' narratives to draw out meanings and results.

Results and Discussion

1. Communal and Individual Mores

These are the customs and traditions that affect the “regular” experiences of the people of Daanbantayan, wheter in daily interactions within the community or personal milestones.

A. Birth and Death

These are perspectives and rites with regards to the birth and death of Daanbantayanons. These traditions and beliefs inaugurate the beginning and the end of life; as such, these bear great cultural importance.

One of the interviewees, A, had mentioned that during childbirth, a midwife would always be present. Although A noted that was in the past since modern regulations no longer allow for it.

Kuan ra man ako pod—kana ra mang mananabang.

Mine was that there was a midwife.

Unya karon, gidili na man na ron. Kuan man g'yod—kanang sentro jud.

But now it's prohibited. You would have to go to the center now.

With regards to death, A said that there were many rites to observe, especially when it was a member of the household's. Many among the practices were prohibitions against the other members of the household, especially during the Forty Days after death:

Kay niadto'g badlongon mi niya atong [bag-o lang namatay akong bana] nga di magsige'g panilhig ba...Nya ingon "Ayaw mo'g kaligo. Adto's laing bay kaligo."

Back [when my husband had just died], they scolded us for sweeping [the house]...they said [also], "Don't take a bath [here]. Go to another house to bathe."

Kanang kuwarenta sad, karon ra man pod ko ani pung kurenta nga—mu'y ingon nga dili muduolduol og patay kon dili pa maabot og kurenta—dili musambat...miyentras di pa mahuman ang kuwarenta.

The Forty Days too, I just learned about it recently, the forty days—that say you shouldn't visit other wakes if it's not the fortieth day yet—don't come uninvited if the fortieth hasn't passed.

Another interviewee, B, believed that the soul watches over its relatives even long after death. She said her *father's* soul was still present, watching her and her family as they went through their lives. Although this belief has caused her some distress, something she often conveys to the spirits of her deceased parents.

Gipili man nako nga dili mutuo aning mga pagtuotuo, maong musulti gyud ko sa akong ginikanan (nga wala na) nga kung mahimo, ako ning putlon ang mga tinuohan.

I chose not to believe in these superstitions. That is why I ask my parents (who have passed) that if possible, can I cut these beliefs off.

The range of norms and traditions associated with birth and death/funerary practices in Daanbantayan serve both practical and symbolic roles. Like in many places, these customs shape individual and group identities and impact how individuals interact within their own communities.

These practices also bridge the gap between generations; by continuing forward with these, Daanbantayanons are expressly signalling to members of the community that they are respecting the community's ideas of birth and death.

B. Maintaining a Good Marriage

These are practices that are supposed to keep a marriage strong and healthy.

Marriage

Where it concerns marriage, according to A, aside from the usual Catholic Christian procedure, the couple-to-be both had to imbibe a drink and had their hair be combed by the officiate of the marriage.

A attributed such rituals to the strength and longevity of her marriage, saying:

Mura'g usa tingali to nakaplig-on, ou. 56 gud ka tuig.

I think it contributed to the strength, yes. It was 56 years.

B also had superstitious beliefs regarding marriage. During the day of the wedding, after the mass at the church, the couple was to rush out of the church, making sure to be the ones to go out first. Upon exit, they would be showered with rice and sugar to actualize their marriage.

Sa dili pami musulod sa balay, atong pagkasal namo, sugaton mi ug bugas ug kamay isip palihi sa amo nga bag-ong kasal

Before we entered the house, when we got married, we were met with rice and sugar to inaugurate us as newly-weds.

B explained that this practice would bring good fortune and prosperity to the marriage.

Marriage rites stress unity, commitment, and social acceptance. These rites of passage detail how traditions effectively stabilize individuals in new roles (Turner, 1969).

While there may be a debate about the true effectiveness of these rituals to strengthening marriages, it cannot be denied that their practice evokes an atmosphere of certainty, if fleeting, that a marriage is off to a great start.

C. Local Feminist Traditions

These are aspects of local feminism put into practice.

The third interviewee, C, said that her identity is deeply rooted in her duties as a matriarch. Her upbringing was shaped by generations of female relatives, instilling in her strong values and traditions.

Kato akong lola, mag-uma man g'yod to siya sa iyang yuta kay kon dili niya tanuman, wa may kabuhian.

My grandmother: she indeed had to farm her land because if she did not cultivate it, there would be no livelihood.

This emphasizes the role of families in passing down the cultural mores of a community. Family stories help individuals understand their origins and how they not only fit into their family but into the wider community structure, which directly affects how they view themselves.

Through the passing down of these stories and adding to them, a core identity and a sense of belonging that touches on both individual and group dynamics is developed, which can serve as a powerful source of empowerment (Coleman, 2017).

D. Local Narrative Media

These are local forms and examples of entertainment.

During B's earlier years in Daanbantayan, plays and other theatrical performances were integral to community events. She noted that storytelling often manifested as live performances, particularly during burials and other significant occasions, reflecting the cultural importance of oral traditions and communal gatherings.

Naa'y namatyan, magbalakbalak sila...mag-istorya sila ug mga sugilanon—naa'y magduwaduwa, naa'y mga babaye ug lalaki—mura'g mangulitawo ba unya naa sa kadaghanan”

When someone died, they'd perform poetry...they'd share stories—there'd be entertainment, there'd be girls and boys—as if they were courting and it would be in front of the crowd.

Communal performances are reflective of a community's social dynamics; often, plays such as the one described by B explore subjects that affect individual members of the community while addressing broader community issues, like courtship, romance and family structures (Axle, 2023).

These local narratives are important in establishing cohesion between community members and preserving communal attitudes towards a large number of perspectives.

E. Agrarian Customs

These are perspectives and traditions held by local farmers with regards to agriculture.

B's family's livelihood is tied to farming. Their everyday necessities are supported by it. It is with this regard that they, too, have varying beliefs when it comes to the way they farm.

Ingon man si papa nako nga muhatag (og halad) kay arun ang atong tanom—pananglitan sinanggi nga mais—madaghan-daghan ba. Dugay mahurot kay gihalad kanila (sa mga diwata).

Dad said that we gave offerings so that our crops—for example, our corn harvest—would be plenty. They would be abundant because offerings were made (to the *diwata*).

The concept of *alay*, which is giving back to the land a portion of its bounty acquired through the harvest season, is practiced by several farmers. According to B, what is offered varies although pigs and chickens are staple offerings. This practice is said to guarantee a good harvest and to ward off misfortune.

Agrarian communities like Daanbantayan rely heavily on the health of the land to

maintain a livelihood; as such, rituals and beliefs about how to tend to the earth and the broader natural world spring up naturally so as to maintain a balance of give-and-take.

While modern progress will often mark these practices as obsolete and/or impractical, there is a growing realization that these practices actually have greater benefits to preserving the land and maintaining a balanced relationship between man and nature.

2. Denizens of the Otherworld

These are the beliefs surrounding supernatural entities and their place in the world.

According to the A, monsters, *ungo*, existed within the bounds of Daanbantayan. This is a story her husband told her about an encounter with a *manananggal*:

Aw, naa'y ungo-ungo. Daghan. Akong bana nag-istorya nga—mura'g 6 na ba to'y edad niya? Nya hapon na. Naa g'yod kuno'y iyang nakita nga kanang...tunga na

ba...nilupad g'yod kuno. Hapon. Kanang kilumkom na ba. Wa ra man [nakit-an siya] kay naa's layo nya ning-agi unya padung...bukid.

Of course, there are monster stories. Plenty. My husband told that—was he six at the time? It was the afternoon. He saw something that was bisected...and it was flying. In the afternoon, when dusk was approaching. [He was not seen] because it was far away and headed to the mountain.

An encounter with *ungo* profoundly impacted the life of C, particularly during her daughter's pregnancy. Because *ungo* are said to be attracted to pregnant women, she advised that wearing black could protect one from these entities.

"Tinuod g'yod na nga naa gyo'y ungo."

It's really true that there are indeed monsters.

Ay'g tuo anang di kuno mangunay'g silingan ang ungo kay kon gutomon, nganong adto man sa layo nga naa ma'y duol?"

Don't believe that monsters don't bother with neighbors because when hungry, why go far when there's something nearby?

A also had this to say about the *ungo*:

...manawag man sila, musangpit man sila...sa amo kaniadto. Diha man to's gawas.

They'd try to summon you, they'd call...back where we lived. That was outside.

B's mother reportedly witnessed supernatural beings firsthand.

Akong mama kakita og agta.

My mother saw an *agta*.

B recalled that behind her mother's house was a buyo, or betel tree, whose leaves locals traditionally used, alongside nuts, for chewing. On this particular tree, B's mother once saw an

agta, a supernatural entity often described as dark-skinned and usually seen smoking a cigarette.

A also mentioned spirits that dwelt in the forest or inside the trees themselves:

Kani kaniadtong kuan...a wa naman sad. Duna'y [kahoy] naputol na—ang lumboy, pero wa mi kahibaw'g ningbalhin ba kaha to...Wa ko kahibaw [ani], pero...taw-an

-ang kahoy] unya putlon...ang nagputol mukuan man sad mupahinumod...Mahadlok man pod [ang mga tawo] muputol...Mananghid...o duna'y kuan didto u, wa na man diha. Giputol naman [ang kahoy] pag-widening sa kuan ba...sa dan.

In the past, but it's not here anymore. There was [a tree] that was cut down—the lumboy but we don't know if it moved to another place...I don't know [this], but if [the tree] is inhabited and cut down, the one who cut it down had to be subservient...[People] were scared to cut it down...they asked permission first...and there was something in the tree, but it's no longer there. The tree was cut down when the road was widened

B further explained that their home seemed to serve as a passageway for supernatural beings. Her niece once claimed to see a child whom no one else could see, always gesturing to something unseen. Their neighbor's window, which was always closed at night, would also be inexplicably found open each morning, with no clear perpetrator.

A also recalled a possession that happened in the local high school:

Mura'g high school tingali. Mura'g duna to'y nakuanan diha's high school. Kay kana ilang building... Wa sad ko kakuan g'yod kaayo ana—basta naa la'y nadunggan nga istorya nilang nakuanan sa daotang espiritu ba—nasudlan. Muna naa sila'y manglimas.

I think in the high school. I think there was someone who was possessed in the high school. Because their building... I don't know much about it—only that I heard there was a story about someone being possessed by an evil spirit. That's why there was someone they had to empty.

The belief in supernatural entities is often said to be a manifestation of a community's fears. Thus, the pervasive qualities found amongst the different kinds of entities imply that there is an underlying negative attitude that Daanbantayanons have with strangers, outside influences and the general sense of the unknown—at least, that may have been the case in the past.

3. *Magical Traditions and Customs*

These are the customs and traditions that have mystical qualities and which a select few Daanbantayanons practice and keep alive. These are primarily rooted in local beliefs of magic and spirituality.

A. *Palliative Magic*

These are practices and rituals that are said to heal ailments and protect from harm.

According to A, there is a robust and widespread tradition of folk healers in the municipality. They are mainly approached when there is suspicion of black magic involved and for chronic or physical illnesses, with different remedies for each:

Labi na kon mahiloan... Hilo ug ang mga piang, ing-ana ba. [Ang mananambal] lang hiloton unya ang painom—usa ka mug kuana’g cafe nya butanga’g usa ka tabon nga Tanduay...Kulafu para—kanang hinawo...Katong akong bata? Maglain ila lawas, a, adto dayon [sa mananambal]. As’a tong anak nakong pulis—[kon] mga anak niyang magluyahuya, a, adto dayon didto.

Especially if there’s black magic involved. Black magic and lameness, those kinds of things. [The folk healer] conducts hilot on you and then makes you drink a mug of coffee that’s been mixed with a cap of Tanduay...Kulafu for hinawo...My child? If they don’t feel well, well, we go [to the folk healer] immediately. Even my child who’s police—if their children feel sick, well, they immediately go there.

Traditional treatments and folk healers were crucial to C’s understanding of health and wellness. Remedies for poison, such as *kinilkig* and *lana*, demonstrate the resourcefulness and knowledge of folk healers.

Kinilkig... lana pod.

Kinilkig... and also coconut oil

According to C, a local folk healer, Meriko, used these remedies to treat poisoning cases. Faith and prayer in healing is particularly important, with C emphasizing the role of spirituality in recovery.

B also had experiences with folk healers—*mananambal* in the local language. She recalled an instance of a *mananambal* successfully determining the cause of her relatives’ sickness through a candle. She explained that the *mananambal* was able to do this because they detected a nonhuman presence through a ritual which involved dropping melted candle wax into a bowl of water.

Niadtong gamasakit ang akong kadugo, dili g’yod siya maayo. Mao tong nabalaka nami sa iya...giadto namo siya sa mananambal ug adto nahibaw-an nga dili-ingon-sa-ato diay ang nagbuhat ato[ng sakit] sa pamaagi sa pagpatulo ug kandila sa tubig...

When a relative contracted a disease that could not be treated. That’s why we were worried...we took them to a faith healer and,

from them, we learned that it was a supernatural entity that caused the disease through letting candle wax drop into water...

Aside from folk healers, A mentioned there was also a very varied and extensive lore for folk medicine:

Kon maghuya mi ang ikuan [sa amkong ginikanan] nga mahuwasan nami sa amoang sakit nga ikaligo—bung-on—dahon sa buungon—ikusokuso mura'g convalescent bath...Unya kana sang sip-onon sad, ubhon, sagolan og [dahon sa] atis.

If we feel lethargic, what our parent would do to relieve us of our illness would be to bathe us—bung-on—with the leaves of the buungon—rub us as if it's a convalescent bath...And with colds, coughs, there'd be a mix of atis leaves.

Kuan sad—kalabo—unsa na'y Iningles ana? Kalabo—naa ma'y daghan. Tanom jud bitaw mi ana, ug kanang serpentina. Maay' kaay' na'ng serpentina kay kanang maglain atong lawas bitaw, bisa'g tulo lang ka dahon, imong ikuan og baso. Epektibo kaay' na...Mao man sad na'y tambal atong naa'y tambalan diri kaniadto taga-Medellin, pero iya nang ibuwad—dahon. Nya mu'y iyang ihatag sa iyang pasiyente—painom.

Also, there's kalabo—what is it in English? Kalabo—there's a lot of it. We do plant them, and also serpentina. Serpentina is really great because if you don't feel well, just three leaves—you put them in a glass. It's very effective...It's also the medicine used by a folk healer from Medellin back then, but what they did is that they would dry the leaves and have the patient drink them.

Kamanghoran kong anak—di na siya mupainom sa iyang mga bata og mga kanang antibiotic—kana rang kamunggay; kuanon niya...nya sagola'g limonsito. Mura'y iya kuan—magkuan lagi oy, magsuka-suka, mubuwa g'yod ang plema sa bata.

My youngest child—they never let their children drink antibiotics—just horseradish; they mix it with calamansi. That's what they do—what happens, the child vomits, the phlegm is finally expelled from the child.

[Akong silingan] diri kung maglaing lawas nila, naa man ko'y herbal dira's kilid o, 24/7, gitawag nila'g Mindanawon—a manguha lang na sila diha, ing' ko panguha lang mo. Muepekto man sad—makuan man ilang lawas.

My neighbors here when they don't feel well—I have herbs here on the side, 24/7, they call it Mindanawon—they just pick out herbs there; I tell them just pick some. It has an effect, their bodies feel better.

Outside of traditional medicine and folk healers, some people of the region, such as the A's late husband, used supposedly magical objects—called *habak*—to heal them of some illnesses:

Akong bana katong pagsakit na niya, nagpakuha og habak...Katong nagdaot na siya kay—four years nga—wa ba

kalakaw. Bedridden ra siya. Unya gitagna man nga—gikuwaan sa kusog ba.

When my husband had an illness, he acquired a habak...When he grew thin due to four years of disability. He was bedridden. And it was divined that his strength was stolen.

A also mentioned another use of *habak* by her grandfather during her youth, which helped him in his profession as a hunter. There was also an inheritance associated with the fetish—which was a gem of some sort—which was ultimately failed and drove the supposed inheritor to some sort of madness.

Ang lolo nuon nako...naa ba'y habak pod. Ou, ba to siya'y diyamanteng gilubong sa iyang paa kay...mangayam to siya sa lasang...di man g'yod to siya unsaon sa...mga hayop nga...wild...naa gani...mga buwayang dagko kaayo nga iyang dad-on...dugay kaayo to siya namatay g'yod kay iya g'yong ipakuha g'yod niya [ang habak] ba...Wa ko kibaw og asa to niya gikan.

My grandfather though...had a *habak*. Yes, he had a gem buried in his thigh because he was a hunter in the wilds...the wild animals never bothered him. He even bought really big crocodiles...He lived so long because he wanted [the *habak*] to be taken out...I don't know where he got it.

Ipakuha g'yod [ang diyamante] sa iyang kanang—usa ka anak. Kamanghoran. Mao to gikuha sa anak, nya pagkamatay niya wa manka tuman sa tahas—naa man diay na'y tahas. Ambot og unsa to—pu'y tahas...Then wala nagfollow—mangayam man sab to, kauban. Mao man to'y iyang silbing right hand ba ngadto's bukid...

He really wanted [the gem] to be taken by one of his children. The youngest. That's why it was taken by his child and, when he died, the task wasn't achieved—apparently, there was a task. I don't know what the task was...but it wasn't followed—the child was also a hunter, a companion. They were his right hand in the mountain...

Wala ko kakuan [sa tahas]...Kay og ipahibaw—mura'g di tingali ma—Ou, wa'y effect. Nya karon...nang wa kakuan sa tahas: mura'g nayabag. Tua ra sa [akong lolo] tingali [ang diyamante].

I don't know what the task was...because if it was known, the gem would lose its effects. And then, because the task wasn't achieved: the child seemed to have gone mad. Perhaps [the gem] is still with [my grandfather].

The folk healing traditions of the Philippines are deeply embedded in its societies (Cerio, 2020), especially in rural areas like Daanbantayan. Its richness is testament to the wide range of knowledge that the peoples of the past had and have preserved throughout the generations.

While debate can be had about its relevance and necessity in the age of modern

medicine, it cannot be denied that such a body of knowledge contains practical wisdom, even if only in kernels.

B. Secretive Arts

These are secretive traditions that invoke malicious powers to harm others.

A explained that there was also a very prominent and resilient tradition of black magic in Daanbantayan, specifically *hilo* which is characterized mostly by its poisonous and discreet applications:

Daghan diri pod anang mga hiloan—Hasta karon, naa...Naa ra ba’y uban paabong lang. Di sad ka kahibaw—munang ayaw lang g’yod mo og pasagad og pangaon diri. Labi na wa mo kaila bitaw...Kanang—ila ra mang tayhopan kuno ba...muepekto nya kay di man ka kahibaw...Naa’y kuan—sumpa kuno, sumpa.

There are plenty of curses here too—even now...There are even some who are charmed. You would not know—that’s why you should never be goaded into eating here, especially if you don’t know the person...It’s that—they simply blow the curse...it goes into effect but you don’t know...There are also spells apparently—spells.

Naa’y kuan—naa’y nag-istorya nga kana bitawng patol. Naa’y musumpa, pero wa ko kahibaw og unsaon.

There are—there are stories about seizures. There’re spells, but I don’t know how.

A had two intimate experiences with black magic, one that involved her son and one that involved her husband:

Ou, kato akong anak. Kato sang naa’y manilhig sa amo diri nga luya na kaayo iyang bata... Ambot og unsa...mura’g...paabong lang kay bata pa man. Duna diay ko’y apo naa sa housing kanang ilang bay diri. Unya duna’y silingan—aw, sa atbang—unya igo lang to nigawas ang bata kuno nya diha nakuan ug nagkaon ba nya pagkakuan, nagluya ang bata...Bisa’g kinsa la’y matungnan tingali nila oy.

Yes, there was my child. When someone used to sweep the house, the child got very fatigued...I don’t know how they did it...probably...through the wind because they were still a child. I had a grandchild in housing whose house was nearby. And there was a neighbor—someone who lived across the street—and the child just went outside and had something to eat and all of a sudden, he grew weak...It’s just anybody that they curse.

Duna to’y istorya [akong bana] nga katong ‘to’s siya’s—nagtrabaho man na siya’s CEBECO...Nagkaon unya mura’g gipaabongan. Natinga na nga luya na kaayo oy. A didto nagpatambal sa may—nay manambal pod ug...sa may dapit simbahan. A nahiloan jud. ‘to iya istorya.

[My husband] had a story when he still worked at CEBECO. He was eating and he was cursed. He was surprised as to why he

grew so lethargic. Then he went to be healed—there was a folk healer near the church. He was really cursed. That’s what he said.

The consequences of being struck with magic, as mentioned by A, don’t only involve sickness but may also lead to death if not treated properly:

Namatay jud...kanang uban nga mukuan lang nga—ingon nga may sakit...pero ang kuan g’yod ato...curse.

They really died. There are those that claim it’s because of illness...but it really was because of...the curse.

B’s youngest brother had a personal and fatal encounter with hilo, which tragically led to his death. One day, he was suddenly rushed to the hospital because of severe abdominal pain and constipation. Earlier that day, he had been drinking heavily with friends, one of whom was said to be a *hiloan*—a practitioner of *hilo*. B suspected that someone cast a curse on her brother.

Among kamanghoran nahiloan man daw to...gidala namo og hospital kay dili lagi siya kalibang ug dili kaihi pero pag-adto hinuon namo sa hospital, nagsige na ‘nuon siya og kalibang... pagbati namo nahiloan man to siya.

Our youngest sibling was apparently cursed by *hilo*...we brought him to the hospital because he couldn’t defecate and urinate, but when we arrived at the hospital, that was when he kept defecating...we believe that he was cursed by *hilo*.

According to A, there are two different types of *hilo*:

[N]aa man kuno’y hilo nga dipalita...Dipalita—kanang dihadiha dayon...Naa sa’y uban nga laygay—ang laygay dugaydugayon pa ka. Dipalita kanang kalit. Laygay kanang kuan—mura’g pila ka adlaw, buwan, ana—uban tuig.

There’s a curse that is called *dipalita*...*Dipalita*—that happens immediately...There’s also another called *laygay*—with *laygay*, it’s effect on you is delayed. *Dipalita* is instantaneous. *Laygay* is how many days, months, sometimes even years.

When asked why there were instances of black magic, A had no definite answer, but supposed that perhaps they were tasked to do so:

Ambot lang. Basi’g naa na’y tahas, wa ta kibaw. Labi na’g...Holy Week. Kana daghan kaayo na [ang hiloan].

I don’t know. Maybe there are tasks? We cannot know, especially during Holy Week. By then, there’d be plenty of [curses].

The role of magic in the Philippines often evoke fear and fascination among its

residents, most especially to those outside of the community. *Hilo* blends magic with poison, reflecting society's particular to imbued and sudden threats. The nature of killing that leaves no traces of evidence underscores the need for people to attribute unexplained illnesses and death to active agents. (Lieban, 1977).

Despite the allure and mystique of black magic, there is the real danger underlying what it is perceived as mystical.

C. Rites of Spiritual/Mystical Significance

These are ceremonies that supposedly imbue magical properties to locations, people or objects or are done to provoke a magical effect.

According to B, there are several rites that the people of Daanbantayan follow. They are known in Bisaya as pangamuyo. These rituals are typically made in order to appease the spirits. She recalled a situation where she had fallen sick due to renovations made on her house without the permission of the local entities. To ask for forgiveness, her grandfather offered a whole pig to the entities. B reported a marked improvement to her health the following day.

Lo, subaya kuno ngano nagkasakit man ko? "Ay, imong balay kay sin na man, [mao] nangayo sila [ang mga dili-ingon-nato] og baboy.

Gramps, tell me again why I was sick? "Oh, you had your house roofed, [so] they [the supernatural entities] asked for a pig."

A mentioned a house-opening ritual that involves a set of items, although the exact purpose was not known since only the carpenters were aware:

[K]atong nagpanday mao ra ma'y kahibaw...kuanan og...kuwarta—Wa ko kahibaw's bugas—sensilyo. [Ibutang] sa haligi.

It was only those carpenters who knew...that money had to be brought—I don't know about the rice—coins. [Place them] on the post.

A ritual for cleansing houses and making them protected against supernatural creatures was also seen performed by A. The rite was a feast for the supernatural entities with food that had not been salted.

[A]kong anak usa, naa sila'y anak—mura'g gikuan sa Di-Ingon-Nato ba—mga katiguwangan...Ila ning gipakuanan [ang haligi] og dugo...sa manok...Gihikayan—silbi ou... Wa sad ko ka kuan—kay ako man nang gipabenditahan's pari. Madre baya ang nagkuan ani oy—blessing. Kato rang kausa tong gihikayan diri.

My one child, they have children—who seemed to have been

visited by the Otherfolk—the Ancestors...They smeared chicken's blood [on the post]...They prepared a feast...I don't know the reasoning—because I had a priest make the benedictions. It was a nun who blessed this, so you know. It was done only once here.
Wa'y asin o kuan—hikay ba. Wala'y asin, dili asinan nila ba...Kuan tingali kontra sa kanang asin...sa mga daotan. Kanang asin...Wa la'y asin, [dugo sa] manok! Kay muingon man na'g ihawi og unsa'y kolor's manok. Ihad ba unya mu to—pila ka buok manok.

No salt or anything else—for the feast. No salt, they don't salt it...probably because evil feared salt. That salt...No salt, just chicken blood! Because you'd be told to slaughter a chicken and asked what color it is. You'd serve it as offering—how many chickens.

When it came magics that guarded against black magic, A said that the most prominent one was a fetish made from a chili pepper:

Mao na ang ilang sulti nga maglakawlakaw ka, da g'yod mo kuno'g sili...nya puston nimo'g plastik, unya isud la'g bolsa. Sili nga kulikot, kanang hang ba...Bisa'g lima lang o pito ba nya isud nimo'g plastic nya bungkig sad, dili pares ba...Tulo, lima."

This is what they say when you're out walking, always bring a chili pepper...put in plastic and just placed inside the pocket. A chili pepper that curls, one that is spicy. Even if there's only five or seven of them—stuffed in plastic and in odd numbers, not in pairs...three, five.

Rituals are observed as protective practices. They are a community's way of securing spiritual protection and harmony. However, these rituals are often conducted under the cover of secrecy (Lieban, 1977). This deliberate obfuscation suggests that the power of rituals lies partly in their being guarded knowledge, passed on to people directly engaged in the spiritual activity.

On a broader note, rituals are evidence of a community's rich and dynamic world-view. The continued practice of these rituals anchors and solidifies a community's unique character.

4. Cultural and Sociological Trends

These are the ongoing effects of the modern world on the rural community of Daanbantayan, mainly how local customs and traditions are being affected.

a. Maintaining Continuity of Belief

These are the practices of the older generation of Daanbantayanons to pass on the local culture alive and keep it alive.

A regarded the passing down of traditions and beliefs as both an active activity done by the parents and as something that happened naturally and gradually by virtue of being within

and engaging with the community:

Ako na'y nagtudlo sa ilaha...Mura'g mapasa's mga anak [ug] apo. Mutuo man pod sila. Unya labi na'g pasidan-an namo nga ayaw mo'g kuankuan diha ha kay basi'g—magpatuya'g kaon naa's gawas—basi'g naa'y muagi unya paabongan mo. Among...

I taught them...I think it will be passed down to the children [and] the grandchildren. They believe it also, especially when we warn them about this and that because—you might eat food outside without thinking—because someone might pass you by and leave a curse. You'll be taken advantage of...

Hibaw na lang sad [ang ubang tawo]...Tanan taw makahibaw na...Aware na sila, maglikay na lang pod [sa ginadili]. Muna nakuan na lang nila sa ilang hunahuna. Magmatngon na lang sad.

[Other people] just learned to know... Everyone knows... They're aware, and they avoid [what is forbidden]. That's why it just stuck to their heads. They just keep aware.

The transfer of traditional knowledge, both through active teaching by parents and passive exposure to community practices, is a hybrid process of explicit instruction and implicit learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

If culture is to be preserved, there must be a concerted effort between members of the community.

b. The March of Modernity

These are the realities of an agrarian society being introduced to modern sensibilities and needs.

It shows the evolving traditions on how the old time traditions still remain relevant, but over time, there are some changes due to contemporary influences that make life flourish among traditional people, while no one likes to forget his or her culture.

Ang trabaho gaan na lang—[gamit lang og] kompyuter, [o mag-]maestro.

The work now is light—[they just use] computers, [while others decide to become] teachers.

Cultural information is frequently lost as a result of change. People have been passing down knowledge and customs for ages. It is essential that these customs be restored. It preserves the richness and diversity of global heritage.

On the one hand, it can undermine customs by encouraging a fast-paced, global way of life. This way of life frequently emphasizes ease above tradition. However, technology can also be an effective instrument. It has the potential to revive and preserve traditions (Mildred, 2024).

c. Breaks in Tradition

These are the negative perspectives that some Daanbantayanons have on the customs and traditions of their local culture.

C's revealed a generational shift in cultural beliefs. Younger generations, influenced by modernity and urbanization, are increasingly skeptical of traditional practices.

Libro na man ilang tuohan.

Books are their faith now.

B, having inherited a wealth of beliefs and traditions from her parents and grandparents, ultimately chose to forgo many of these practices. Raised under a strict parenting style, she consciously adopted a gentler approach when raising her own children and later extended this nurturing method to her grandchildren living with her.

Ako papa niadto, bunalan ka'g pang-ilong sa baka—kanang dagko kaayo na pisi...dili man ko ana kay sakit man na...kung dili gani mo gusto nga ingon-anaon mo, pagbuhat mo'g maayo.

My father back then, he'd hit you with a nose hoop for cows—those really thick ropes...I don't do that because they hurt...if you don't like to be done like that, you have to do well.

Additionally, C sought to chart a new course for herself, deliberately abandoning certain traditions and beliefs. C recognized that some were financially burdensome and, in her view, no longer practical given the rising cost of living and changing societal demands. This shift reflects her pragmatic approach to balancing cultural heritage with contemporary realities.

Ako lang kay gastos.

Because for me, it has costs.

The decline of folk customs and supernatural beliefs is palpable, with many viewing these as mere superstition. However, the narratives of the interviewees preserve their cultural memory, emphasizing the significance of these practices in shaping identity and community.

Their experiences serve as a testament to the enduring power of tradition, even as cultural attitudes evolve. The interplay between tradition and modernity is complex, with each influencing the other in subtle yet profound ways.

Conclusion

Folklore is simply another means of creating human connections. It is one of the ways to express one's beliefs, values, and traditions in life, both as an individual or as a collective. This can clearly be seen by the many colorful experiences and knowledge that the interviewees of this paper have seen fit to share with the researchers.

And through an analysis of the narratives that were recorded, it can be seen how folklore reflects the lived experiences of people, the embedded history of communities and the

dynamic ebb-and-flow between the two entities. This shows how folklore helps preserve cultural identities, even as modern changes challenge traditional ways of life.

As technology and social changes shape the world, these traditions have evolved in response. The shift from traditional practices to modern approaches reflects a cultural transformation, where people try to maintain their cultural identity while also addressing the needs of the present and future. This ongoing balance between tradition and change is key to understanding how communities adapt.

The evolution of cultural practices like sacrifices, offerings, and oral traditions shows how societies balance preserving their heritage with adapting to modern life. The experiences of the interviewees illustrate the importance of these rituals in both spiritual and community life, while also highlighting the financial and practical challenges they bring.

Ultimately, folk literature is a pivotal anchor that ties past, present, and future, continuously evolving with the culture it represents.

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