

THE CEBUANO BALITAO AND HOW IT MIRRORS VISAYAN CULTURE AND FOLKLIFE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"The *balitao* is a love debate in song and dance by a man and a woman."¹ It is more sung than danced. The *balitao* is a truly representative Visayan song as the *kumintang* and the *kundiman* are representatively Tagalog. In it are embodied faith, joy, and all sorts of human activities as well as the varied hopes and odds of Visayan life. The religious beliefs of the early Cebuanos, their social relationship, their loves, friendships and enmities also find expression in the *balitao*.

The *balitao* has no definite authorship. For the most part it has been handed down to us as survivals of the early culture of our forebears. While the *balitao* affords a link between the thoughts and aspirations of our early grandparents and the complexities of thoughts and ideals of the present generation, yet no proper attention has been paid to it. The Cebuano *balitao* largely was extemporaneously sung by old folks gifted with poetic art, but since then it has remained a floating tradition, and none has as yet ever thought of the idea of writing it down for posterity.

The Cebuano has been lost in an age of bewildering foreign influences so that he has completely lost track of that which is really his own and instead has come to love and appreciate those cultures which have been brought by peoples with whom he has had contact. It is a sad fact, but it is true that Filipinos in general, and perhaps Visayans in particular feel a greater inclination towards things and ideals Occidental rather than for their own.

By the establishment of the commonwealth government in the Islands, a feeling of Filipinism was aroused and encouraged among the populace. Things Philippine were stressed. A kind

1) Galang and Osias, *Encyclopedia of the Philippines* (Manila: P. Vera and Sons Company, 1935), I, p. 34.

of renaissance was on in Philippine classic art and letters. There was a deep concern over the collection of folktales, folk songs, epics, verses and even folk dances, but again the project was largely undertaken in Tagalog, it chosen to be the national language of the Islands. So still Visayan literature and culture went begging.

Statement of the problem. Therefore, it is the purpose of this study (1) to describe and analyze the *balitao* as a typically Cebuano folksong, (2) to trace the history and origin of its existence and development, (3) to point out the different phases of Cebuano folk ways as mirrored in the *balitao*, and (4) to appraise its role in contemporary Visayan culture.

Importance of the study. The study of the Cebuano *balitao* would tend to awaken in the Cebuanos that long dormant feeling and love for those traits and customs decidedly our own which were handed down to us from ages long past by our great grandparents. All the while we are conscious that we have such a kind of song as a literary and cultural heritage; that it exists, but which we never appreciate not until somebody has unveiled its beauty and significance before our eyes. Folklorists, ethnologists and sociologists will probably find this work interesting in the sense that old traditions and customs of early Cebuanos are found mirrored in this song. This would lead them to a deeper understanding of the distinguishing characteristics of the Visayan as well as his racial inheritance. The study will benefit students of literature for in the *balitao* is woven exquisite verses replete with beautiful rhymes and cadenced rhythm. The study will present a challenge to music lovers and composers for the *balitao* is sung to a delicate and haunting melody all its own.

Definition of terms used. (1) The *balitao* is an old Visayan folksong and dance in which a man and woman engage in a debate in song, over a subject or on a particular theme, while they dance with each other keeping time with the music until one of the parties is outwitted or if it be a love debate, until the love of the man is accepted. The *balitao* is more sung than danced. In this study, the writer will treat the *balitao* more as a song than as a dance.

(2) *Visayan*, a term which means that which pertains to the Visayas; its people, language, culture, products, etc. The Visayan is a group of islands occupying the central part of the Philippine Archipelago. These islands are: Panay, Samar, Negros, Leyte, Cebu, and Bohol. In this work, however, the writer shall use the term *Visayan* to include only those provinces speaking the Cebuano language which are: Cebu, Bohol, Western Leyte, and Negros Oriental. The term may also be extended to include some sections in Mindanao settled by Cebuano emigrants and where Cebuano is the language.

(3) *Culture*, the complex of distinctive attainments, beliefs, traditions, etc., constituting the background of a racial or religious or social group as with a nation.² *Culture* is a collective name for all behavior patterns socially acquired and socially transmitted by means of symbols; hence a name for all the distinctive achievements of human groups including not only such items as language, tool making, industry, art, science, law, government, morals, and religion but also the material artifacts in which cultural achievements are embodied and by which intellectual and cultural features are given practical effects.³ The term shall be used in this study to include all the distinctive achievements of the Visayan people in general, and the Cebuano group in particular which have been learned through inter-communication; covering not only language, beliefs and traditions but also customs and institutions.

(4) *Folklife*, in this study *folklife* shall be used to mean the composite essence of the mental and cultural interactions and the mode of the Visayan people in their associational interactions among each other and their interactions between their regional physical environment and their cultural development. It shall embrace all that relates to ancient observances and customs, to the notions, beliefs, traditions, superstitions, and prejudices of the folk or the common people.

2) Webster's *New International Dictionary*, Second Ed. (Merriam Company, Springfield, Mass., U. S. A., 1948).

3) H. P. Fairchild, *Dictionary of Sociology* (New York City: Philosophical Library, 1944).

Sources of data and method used. The writer has used the interview method for the major part of the study. She has consulted almost all of the old literati of Cebu on information about the subject although none but Mr. Piux Kabahar has shown the greatest interest in and enthusiasm for the study. In fact the greater portion of the history and analysis of the *balitao* was gained from him. Mr. Piux Kabahar, literary and cultural consultant, of old Cebuano traditions speaks with authority for he has for ready reference not only a complete edition of the Philippine Encyclopedia, which is quite rare now but also has a file of old clippings from newspapers and magazines which were published in Cebu before the war aside from a very old book in Spanish on Philippine literature. The print alone bespeaks of its hoary age. He values the book so much that we are not even allowed to handle it. He tells the story of how he happened to possess such a priceless treasure. The late Don Pedro Rodriguez who was a famed Cebuano poet and man of letters, owned two copies of this book. When he ran for governorship, Mr. Piux Kabahar toured the whole province of Cebu campaigning for him. They won. As a prize Don Pedro Rodriguez handed him a book—an old, old one, leather bound, with the admonition to treasure the book; that is why he treasures the book, he says, “as he values his life.” The other copy was given by Don Pedro Rodriguez to Mr. Eulogio Rodriguez then head of the National Library, and the book was, of course, placed in the National Library, but after that great catastrophe—World War II—like all other priceless possessions of our library, the book is gone. Mr. Kabahar’s copy is oftentimes borrowed by such brilliant Cebuano speakers as Don Manuel Briones and Don Mariano Cuenco but he always follows up for the safe return of his prized possession. From this book the writer got her sample of an old, old *balitao* written in a language which we Cebuanos now no longer speak nor understand.

The writer has also contacted famous *balitao* couples like the famed radio *balitao* couple, Tonyo and Pasing, from whom the writer was able to borrow their complete repertoire of the *balitao* which they sang over station D.Y.R.C. from February of 1948 to June 1950.

The writer also has, after a long search, located and invited the famed king and queen of the *balitao*. She has invited them all the way from Gingoog, Misamis to Cebu to dance for her and to give her the needed information about the *balitao* during

the brilliant years of its development. A tape recording was made by the then Very Reverend Father Rector Albert van Gansewinkel, of the University of San Carlos, Cebu City, of the melody, and photographs were taken of the dance. The writer has also ransacked the Filipiniana Collection of the University of San Carlos Library and the library of the Cebu School of Arts and Trades for materials about the *balitao* in ancient times and during the Spanish occupation of the Islands.

Scope of the study. It is the aim of this study to include those outstanding phases of Cebuano folklife as are found mirrored in these alternative songs. A sample song is quoted and translated which exemplifies a particular phase of folklife. This study shall also attempt to explain the *balitao*—its technique, construction, composition, and diction. The work shall trace the beginnings and development of this song among the Visayans and finally this work shall appraise the importance of the *balitao* in contemporary Cebuano culture.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF
THE BALITAO

The *balitao* had been in the Islands long before the Spaniards came. Most of the old men the writer consulted ascertained that the *balitao* is a truly native art, that before the Spaniards came such a song already existed in the Visayas.¹ This fact is attested to by different historians writing about pre-Spanish Philippine culture. Alip reports that "the ancient Filipinos had no less than twenty kinds of songs, the most important of which are: the *kundiman*, the *kumintang* and the *balitao*."² Zaide writes: "The ancient Filipinos had also picturesque folk dances for every occasion. Two of their love dances were the *balitao* and the *kumintang* which were also songs."³ This chapter shall, as faithfully as possible, attempt to trace the probable origin of this song-dance as well as record its history and development in the Islands in general and in Cebu in particular.

I. Probable Source of Origin of This Song-Dance

When the *balitao* was first introduced and from where it came one can only conjecture for it has long remained unwritten as a floating tradition among the Visayans. The *balitao*, however, very snugly fits into Loeb's definition of a love song in that it is antiphonal in character, part is sung by the man and part

1) Pedro Albaño, 88 years old of Mandawe, Cebu. He claims he is the last old man in Mandawe alive who had served the Spanish government in the Islands. Mariano Bacalso, 60 years old of Pardo, Cebu City.

2) Eufronio Alip, *Political and Cultural History of the Philippines* (Manila: Alip and Brion Publications Incorporated, 1948), p. 38.

3) Gregorio F. Zaide, *The Philippines Since Pre-Spanish Times* (Manila: R. P. Garcia Publishing Company, 1949), p. 84.

by the woman, and that it is in rimed verse. Loeb traces the origin of love songs from the delayed marriage and prolonged courtship inevitably attendant upon payment of a "bride price" required of a man belonging to the cattle culture age. He asserts that singing of antiphonal love songs was common among the cattle raisers of Europe and Africa:

...that cattle raising peoples in many respects may be considered as having a uniform culture irrespective of whether cattle raisers are nomadic or sedentary.⁴

The Swiss scientist Wackernagel in 1936 noted many similarities of customs among cattle raisers of Europe and Asia and believed that the cattle people had at one time a continuous and ancient culture; the remnants may still be observed in Switzerland and among the Ghurka of Nepal. The typical antiphonal love song is so unique and so universal among cattle raisers that diffusion appears highly probable.⁵

In fact Loeb further adds that:

The love song was carried by cattle-raising peoples into the Far East where it underwent secondary developments by becoming attached to agricultural rites. The love song has not a sporadic distribution as might be the case with an independent invention but it is a continuous phenomenon extending from Switzerland to the Batak country of Sumatra.⁶

From these significant facts of Loeb's article the writer dates the origin of love songs of which the *balitao* is a kind and traces the diffusion of such a song from the region of northern India and south China where the pastoral nomads may have probably settled for a while, for according to Loeb, "The rimed love song is ancient enough to permit a wide distribution, for it extends back into the eighth century B.C. in China."⁷ These pastoral nomads must have moved southward and in the course of their wanderings must have come in contact with the Malays of southern Asia, thereby passing on to them whatever cultures they already had at that time. Alternating songs were found

4) E. M. Loeb, "Courtship and the Love Song," *Anthropos* (Fribourg, Switzerland: Imprimerie St. Paul, 1950), Vol. XLV, p. 823.

5) *Loc. cit.*

6) *Ibid.*, p. 350.

7) *Ibid.*, p. 822.

in Annam, Tongkong and Sumatra although in Indonesia "proverbs and riddles extend only as far as cattle. There are no riddles and proverbs in Mentawi in Borneo, nor in Eastern Indonesia, excepting where the Malays have introduced them. Where there are no proverbs, there likewise are no love song."⁸

II. Diffusion into the Philippines

From the foregoing quotation, the writer deduces that the Malays were the sole medium through which these antiphonal love songs were disseminated into wider territories in the Pacific area not, of course, excluding the Philippines.

Beyer believes:

That the early Neolithic culture spread, in an already developed state—into the Philippines and other parts of Malaysian region at a time when these areas were widely populated by the microlith-using people and that these latter folk continued to survive side by side or partly intermixed with the less numerous Early Neolithic immigrants...the microlith culture might have been introduced and spread by the probably mesolithic land-migrating Proto-Malay or semi-pygmy Mongoloid type whose descendants still form an appreciable percentage of the inland or hill population in Luzon, Mindanao and other Malaysian islands—there is as much more evidence for this type than for the Negrito.⁹

The writer believes that alternating songs must have been introduced into the Philippines as early as the first migratory wave of Malays called the Proto-Malays who arrived in the Islands between 12,000 to 8,000 B.C. Proof of this is that alternating songs are widespread among the descendants of this semi-pygmy Mongoloid people as these findings show:

The Lepanto Igorots have *Dain Songs* used in most public and private sacrifice which is a singing contest between boys and girls from the same town or from different towns. The *Dain* is a song

8) E. M. Loeb, "Courtship and the Love Song," *Anthropos* (Fribourg, Switzerland: Imprimerie St. Paul, 1950), Vol. XLV, p. 835.

9) Otley H. Beyer, "Philippine and East Asian Archaeology," *National Research Council of the Philippines* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, Dec. 1948 Bulletin 29), p. 10.

as well as a dance.¹⁰

The Isnegs of Abra during courtship sing love songs which are sung by both sexes.¹¹

"O Aggayam Galayaman" is an Apayao love song in Kabugao dialect, between a young man and his sweetheart, sung alternately.¹²

Just to what definite part of the Philippines these alternating songs first took ground one can only guess, for their chronology is so widespread that studies made by different ethnologists reveal that practically all primitive and pagan mountain tribes have one kind of song or another sung alternately. Among the Christian Filipinos these alternating songs are especially popular in the Visayas, more so in places where the Cebuano language is spoken.

III. The Development of the Balitao in Cebu

From here this study shall then undertake to trace the development of the *balitao* (as these alternating songs are known in the Visayas) in Cebu from its unknown beginnings till the present time.

Pre-Spanish period. The *balitao* can not be accurately dated. Most old men, if asked, respond that it has been here since time immemorial. The *balitao* was not known by such a name then. The ancient Visayan term for it was the *ayayi*. Then at a later date, the dance was called *baya-i*. What these two terms mean, no one can explain for these words are no longer found in the Cebuano vocabulary. Then the *balitao* acquired its present name. Nothing definite can be ascertained as to the etymology of the word although according to Kapili, the Spaniards must have termed such a dance *valse* meaning a waltz, then the natives

10) M. von Vanoverberg, "Songs in Lepanto Igorot As It Is Spoken at Bauko," (Vienna: St. Gabriel's Mission Press, 1954), p. 16.

11) M. von Vanoverberg, *The Isneg* (Washington, D. C.: Publication of Catholic Anthropological Conference, 1932), p. 1954.

12) Laurence L. Wilson, "Some Folktales of Northern Luzon," *Journal of East Asiatic Studies* (Manila: The University of Manila, July and October), Vol. III, No. 4, p. 426.

corrupted the word *valse* into *bal*, there being no "V" in the Visayan alphabet, and joined it to the word *tao* meaning people, thus *balitao* means a dance of the people.¹³

Most of the old people are unanimous in their assertion that the *balitao* was a common form of entertainment during their times as far back as they can remember. Whenever the early folks gather together in communal working or at merrymaking, the *balitao* was ever at hand in the hearts and throats of the men and women. These early people especially the women were very proficient in the art of rhyming and verse making. The *balitao* of the early Cebuanos was sung and danced to the accompaniment of first the *subing*, a kind of bamboo flute, then later on to the accompaniment of a guitar made out of a coconut shell.

The Spanish influences. When the Spaniards came to Cebu, they saw this dance among the natives in the various gatherings and celebrations they made. Ere long Spanish influences worked themselves consciously or unconsciously into the *balitao*.

The harp was introduced into the Islands by the Spaniards, thus superseding the coconut shell guitar and giving the *balitao* a more melodious accompaniment. In fact, now most *balitao* lovers do not consider the *balitao* complete without the harp accompaniment.

Perhaps the greatest Spanish influence as reflected in the *balitao* is the Christianization of whatever crude and pagan elements there were in the *balitao*. The acceptance of the New Faith by the natives polished and enriched the subject matter of the *balitao*. Stories about the Creation; the Deluge; the Lord's life—His Nativity, Passion and Crucifixion—began to permeate the *balitao*.

The strong Catholic influence the friars wielded among the people as well as the strict Spanish upbringing of children was reflected in the moral tendency implicit in the *balitao* during Spanish times.

Even in composition and structure, the *balitao* did not remain immune from Spanish influence for Spanish words and

13) Bernabe Kapili, "The Cebuano Balitao in Philippine Literature," *Sands and Coral* (Dumaguete: Publication of Silliman University, 1952), Vol. 5, p. 44.

phrases here and there grace the lines of the *balitao* as the following stanza shows:

Ayaw pagsulti niana Antonio
Kay aduna na kita karoy diborsyo relativo
Kon ang bana makasala'g adulterio
May gahum ang asawa pagpabalhug sa kalaboso.

Do not say that, Antonio
For we have now relative divorce,
That if the husband commits adultery
The wife has the right to throw him in jail.

As the cities and the *poblaciones* became the centers of Spanish cultural influences, the *balitao* was laid aside in these places for the people turned to everything Western: dresses, thought, arts as well as amusement. However, in the rural sections of the country the *balitao* kept its place in the cultural development of the natives and so it stayed as still the favorite form of entertainment among them.

According to the old folks, during their time a social gathering always opened with a *balitao*. It was a highlight of agricultural festivals. Harvest time was especially *balitao* time. In the evening when the day's work was done, the harvesters would huddle around a clearing in the field, and to the strains of guitar music, a pair danced around and exchanged witty remarks and verses in song while the crowd, tired from the day's work, laughed and yelled in enjoyment. This went on into the night more so if the moon was bright and was broken up only by a brief interval for supper time. This oftentimes took the form of a contest between the sexes. Whoever was outwitted was replaced while the audience took turns booing whoever was replaced or applauding whoever was triumphant, each sex aligning with a particular contestant of his sex.

The American regime. The troublous years of the Revolution and the American Occupation temporarily put a lull in all phases of Filipino life and culture not excluding the *balitao*. During these years the song temporarily left the hearts of men and women and was replaced by fear, anguish and anxiety over what would happen next. Insurgents penetrated into the barrios and oftentimes the women hid while the young men were called

to arms or thrown into prison as rebel suspects.

Then came peace times again under another regime. Since the first concern of America was in the education and civilization of the natives along academic lines, cultural and artistic life of the people was for a time just left to themselves. Naturally the early Cebuanos revived whatever forms of enjoyment they had since Spanish times, and so the *balitao* again was revived. It was not only sung and danced in the rural areas but also in centers more thickly populated. At this junction the *balitao* left the sphere of impromptu singing and dancing by just anyone in the community, and it entered upon a state of specialization wherein a singing couple train themselves for it.

The famous balitao couple. It was at this time about 1910 when the famous couple, Pedro and Colasing, very well-known all around Cebuano-speaking provinces as the *balitao* king and queen, began their successful career. Pedro Alfafara was born in the town of Carcar in 1881 (he can not remember the exact date of his birth). He had an uncle, a *balitao* dancer, who guided him early in his youth to dance the *balitao* although according to him, he really had the poetic gift of easily putting words together in verse and rhyme plus the blessed gift of a full and resonant melodious voice—two very important requisites of this art. He had had several partners, women who had trained themselves in the art but, according to him, none could match Colasing whom he met in 1901. She was very young then, but she had charms and a quick wit so that he was encouraged to train her in the art. Pedro taught her the art and technique of the *balitao* and before long they were at it dancing from place to place.

Colasing is Nicolasa Cañiban in real life, born in San Nicolas, Cebu City, in the year 1900. To know more about her the writer is reprinting an article from the "Ang Freeman," a then popular daily newspaper of Cebu City in the 1920's. The article dated November 19, 1926 is an interview made by Piux Kabahar, the comic king of Cebu, and Colasing the queen of the *balitao*.

Kulokabildo ni Piux, Hari sa Mga Tistis ug ni Colasing Rayna's Balitao—Ang Freeman—Nobiyembre 19, 1926.

Payag nga diutay ang iyang balay, apan mabigot, mahayahay ug makalipay. Atbang sa baybayon ang iyang tamboanam. Silingan sa mga agokoy, linandungang sa mga

dahon sa lubi ug sa mga kahoy. Ang mga balud naglapya sa baybayon.

Nalingaw ako sa taas sa balay. Nakakita ako'g siesta nga nagbitay sa haligi. Baho nga nagtungkawo sa suok. Sa bong-bong nagwakat ang mga hulagway. Sa lamisa tupad sa akong gilingkuran may mga santos nga nanagbarog nga binuhat sa makabebe. May mga istampa usab sa birhen. Altar diay kadto! Sa sulod hisigpitan ko ang usa ka unlan, way sinina, way uban;

Mipahiyum si Colasing dungan ang paglihok sa mga kandis pag alsa sa mga kilay. Maanindot ang pahiyum ni Colasing maorang balitao. Ang iyang katawa maorang palubad sa kitara nga ginuntan sa iyang tingog nga dili kaayo matag-ming daw saxophone. Maanindot tanawon ang iyang baba kon mokatawa. Tulo'y oro sa iyang ngipon. Mabantang, tigson. Husto sa birada ang abaga ug mabigot ang dughan.

"Colasing, sa akong pagkamagsusulat gidamgo ko ang imong mga balitao; gidaman ako sa imong mga garay sa bukid, ug gisalimo-ang ako sa mga matam-is nga saloma sa kasingkasing."

Diay? Salamat bisan dili angay..."

"Tinuod Colasing, alang kanako ikaw maoy usa ka magbabalitao nga magtatandog sa mga kasingkasing patay nga gihaya sa banika sa atong hinalarang yuta. Ang imong mga balitao makusog mogisong sa mga dahong laya sa atong kaagi... kanus-a pa ikaw magsugod paghigugma sa balitao?"

"Gikan sa ba pa ako gimat-an ko'g gikatulgan ang balitao."

"Tigbalitao ba ang imong katigulangan?"

"Oo, nahisandig ako sa kaliwat; apan ang akong balitao may pagkanahasubay sa kabagha-an."

"Ikaw nabantog sa ngalang Colasing apan unsa ang matuod nimong binunyagan?"

"Nicolasa Cañiban kon dunay isugo."

"Tumindog dinhi sa San Nicolas?"

"Oo, kining baryo sa Mambaling mao gayuy akong bala-ngay nga namat-ag mahayag."

"Dalaga?"

"Oo, 23 na karon ako."

"Ang imong mga pagawit sa balitao wala bay kombinasyon sa imong paris?"

"Wala gayud. Ang mga garay i-anak lang sa akong hunahuna ug kutlo-on usab dayon sa akong mga ngabil. Dili

gayud ako maglisud ni abutog kahadlok kon ako aduna nay igaparada sa balitao.”

“Kapila ka na mapildig balitao?”

“Kalooy sa Dios wala gayud intawon. Aduna hino-oy higayon nga makatando ako sa magkinahanglan kanako pinaagi sa balitao apan kargado sa dili ug wala gayud ako mapildig garay.”

“Wala ka pa ba hilubagi sa dunggan ni Cupido?”

“Hayan hilubagan na...”

“Aduna ka na tingali?”

“Pobre pobre sa katungan aduna gihapoy alimango.”

“Sanglit ikaw bantog sa garay, bayoting manultisulti ug kampion sa balitao kalisud kaha nimong dasdason inig amoral na no?”

“Kon dili ko higusto-an, panington gayud ug tagingog bula sa pingpong; apan kon hiuyonan sa kabuhi mahuyang pa ako kay sa kalamantigi.”

“Kon dapiton kamog balitao wa kamoy tema nga pagasabutan sa imong paris?”

“Aduna usahay. Ang malagmit namong tema mao kining mosunod: Kinabuhing Tinago, Dalagang Walay Palad, Malimbongong Saad, Asawang Mainantuson, ug Pagpalabi sa Bahandi Nakapa-alaut Kaniya ug uban pa.”

“Aduna kamoy berso nga inandam niini?”

“Wala, ang tema day pagasabutan ug dihadiha tukuron ang berso inig sugod sa sayaw. Apan kon adunay mokorte anha diha makita ang kalaki kay walay tema nga pagasubayon ug ana-a diha ang akong gusto.”

“Makahatag ka kanakog pila ka garay?”

“Mahimo apan paduyog akog sista. Dili ako makahimo kon dili kantahon. Pangayo-i akog garay bisan unsa basta kantahon ko lang.”

Dalaga Nga Ipananglit Sa Bulak

*Akoy sama sa bulak
Gipanggag maayo
Gibantayang di matagak
Sa iyang pungango.*

*Palubad: Kay kon ako matagak
Ako dili na buwak*

*Kahumot ko mahunlak
Ug si Nanay mohilak.*

Bahin sa Babayeng Minyo

*Akoy babayeng minyo
Ang bana ko si Indong
Tulo ka tuig pagpuyo
Tulo ka tuig pagluko.*

*Palubad: Kinabuhi sa minyo
Maorang upos tabako
Sa sinugdan hanggapon
Sa katapusan ibuno.*

Bahin sa Asawang Abubho-an

*Ang asawang mangabubho
Anga bana dili palakton
Kon magtuman sa gusto
Inigpauli kumoton.*

*Palubad: Kini gong duna nay bana
Maoray mabisyo ang parayeg
Bisan wala na ing kwarta
Matam-is ang ligid-ligid.*

A Translation of the Article

“Repartee between Piux—comic king of Cebu and Colasing the queen of the Balitao”—The Freeman, November 19, 1926.

A description of Colasing's House by Piux:

Her home was a small *nipa* shack but it was cozy, well-ventilated and pleasant in atmosphere. The windows faced the seashore. Neighbor to the fiddler crabs, shaded by the palms and other trees stood her house with the waves dashing against its shoreyard.

I was amused inside the house. I saw a guitar hanging on one of the posts. A big bass skulk at the corner. The walls were littered with a variety of magazine pictures. On the

table nearby where I sat, stood statuettes of saints which were made by Macabebes.¹⁴

A description of Colasing:

Colasing smiled and with it deepened her dimples together with the twitching of her eyebrows. Beautiful was the smile of Colasing like the *balitao*. Her laughter was like the strains of a guitar; accompanied by her voice which was not very shrill, just like a saxophone's.

Her mouth is lovely to look at when smiling. Three gold teeth line her denture. Well-built and robust, she has just the right breadth of shoulders and fullness of breast.

The conversation begins:

"Colasing, because of my being a writer, I dreamed of your *balitao*, daydreamed of your pastoral verses, and soliloquized about your melodious songs of the heart."

"Is that so? Oh! thank you even if I am not worthy...."

"Really, Colasing, for me you are the *balitao* singer who awakens dead hearts that lie about in the farms and fields of our beloved land. Your *balitao* like the wind, strongly shakes the sere leaves of our past. Since when did you begin to like the *balitao*?"

"Since I was a child. I practically woke up and slept on the *balitao*."

"Did your old folks sing and dance the *balitao* too?"

"Yes, in fact, I am a chip of the old block, but the *balitao* I sing follows a little bit the trend of modern times."

"You are known by the name Colasing, but what is your real name?"

"Nicolasa Cañiban, at your service."

"Were you born here in San Nicolas?"

"Yes, this barrio of Mambaling is definitely the place where I first beheld the light."

14) Macabebe—a term given to Tagalog peddlers who sell around clothes, wooden statues of saints and other household articles because most of them come from the town of Macabebe, Pampanga.

"Single?"

"Yes, I am 23 years old now."

"When you sing the *balitao* do you ever make a previous arrangement with your partner?"

"None at all. The verses would just come out of my mind and there and then would be plucked by my lips. I do not feel any difficulty nor encounter any fear when I come face to face with any partner for the *balitao*."

"How many times have you been defeated in a *balitao*?"

"By the Grace of God, I have never been yet. However, there are incidents in which I could give in to those who court me through the *balitao* but in most cases I had never been and will never be outwitted in verse making."

"Has Cupid ever hit you, by the ear perhaps?"

"Oh! I think so, he has already."

"So you have a dear one...already?"

"Though how poor a marsh is, there at least is a crab inhabitant."

"Since you are good at verse making, smart in retorting and a master in *balitao* singing, you must be very difficult to approach in love making?"

"If I do not like the person, he really will sweat it out; but if he suits my taste, I can be as tender as a delicate herb."

"When you are invited to dance the *balitao*, do you not first agree on a theme with your partner?"

"Sometimes we do agree on one. The most common themes are: Secret Life, An Unfortunate Maiden, Deceitful Promise, An Overbearing Wife, Love for Wealth Has Made One Miserable, and many others."

"Do you have ready-made verses for these?"

"None. Only the theme is agreed upon and there and then we build up the verse when we begin the dance, but if somebody taps and cuts in, there is the real test of one's ability for then no theme is to be followed and that is what I especially like."

"Can you sing a few lines for me?"

"Certainly, but I would like you to accompany me on the guitar. I cannot say out my verses. I have to sing them. You may ask from me any verse provided I sing them."

Sample *Balitao* which Colasing Sang to Piux:

A Maiden And A Flower

I am like unto a flower
 Endeared and very well cared for
 Being carefully watched
 Lest from my stem I should fall.

Refrain: For, should I ever fall
 I would no longer be a flower
 My fragrance would disappear
 And would be the cause of Mother's tears.

On A Married Woman

A married woman am I
 Whose husband is Pedro
 Three years have we lived together
 Three years in seclusion and confinement.

Refrain: The life of a married couple
 Is like a roll of smoking tobacco
 In the beginning you inhale the smoke
 But in the end you throw it off.

On A Jealous Wife

A wife who is jealous
 Never lets her husband go out
 But if he insists, on going
 He comes home awaited by wrangling.

Refrain: For one who has already a spouse
 Does nothing but keep to each other
 Even if all their money is gone
 They still lie lazily around.

This dancing couple, Pedro and Colasing, toured the whole province of Cebu dancing the *balitao* in town after town. They also went around towns in Bohol, Leyte, Negros Oriental, and Mindanao. They especially were called to dance during town fiestas, carnival celebrations in cities, Christmas time, on New Year's Eve and other holiday celebrations where a big crowd was expected. Pedro-Colasing have practically become synonymous with *balitao*. Wherever they went, people awaited their

coming just as we await the coming of a celebrity. Oftentimes a band would meet them at their arrival and usher them to the town where they would sing for the night.

According to Pedro Alfafara, the *balitao* reached its zenith of development in the second and third decades of the present century. During these years he and Colasing could hardly fulfill the many engagements and thus some of them had to be cancelled. They dictated their price for indeed these years were the harvest years of the *balitao* for them. Wherever they danced, people flocked in great numbers. Aside from the fixed amount agreed upon by the person or society requesting the dance, the audience in their amusement showered coins upon the dancing pair in the course of the dance.

Pedro Alfafara relates that of his many partners in the *balitao*, Colasing attracted the greatest number of people to the crowd. He explains this with this incident: One day Colasing was eating jackfruit. As she pulled out a segment from among the many in the slice, a seed slipped from her hold. It spun on the floor and then stood on one end on the bamboo floor. Amazed at the sight, Colasing picked it up and examined the seed closely, only to discover that it was not an ordinary jackfruit seed. It was very hard. It was a "gem" of a jackfruit, as Visayans term it, and according to Visayan belief, whoever finds a "gem" in a jackfruit begets the quality of a jackfruit. Just as insects and even human beings are enticed to the very inviting smell of the jackfruit, so did the people flock around her wherever she was. People climbed fences to catch a close view of her or if she was sleeping, people peeped through keyholes or if there was none made some especially if the house was just walled with *nipa* strips. She preserved this "gem" in a bottle of oil which she tied around her waist for luck. When she dressed up for the *balitao*, she first annointed herself with the oil, thereby making herself a prey to people's curiosity and admiration. She kept this secret to herself for years in order to retain the charm. But now when the writer asked her about this "gem", Colasing wistfully smiled and said, "It is gone." How she lost it, she does not even know.

The decline of the balitao. After the 1930's the interest of the Cebuano populace in the *balitao* began to wane. The Cebuano audience turned to the moving picture for entertainment, it being novel and new. The *balitao* couple had to seek for greener

pastures somewhere. They toured the other Visayan islands and Mindanao. For a time Pedro and Colasing entertained the Mindanao audience, but eventually too the audience got tired of the *balitao*. The *balitao* had been outmoded by entertainments and amusements Western in nature. There was no more "going back" for the *balitao* couple. They rolled up their sleeves and settled in the Land of Promise for good. Pedro is now in Gingoog, Misamis Oriental, tilling a little patch of land to keep him and his wife together.

Colasing and her husband are in Digos, Davao, and are bringing up eleven children by selling fish in the market. According to the people in the market, Colasing always sells her fish faster than the others because she sings her *balitao* while selling and so more people are attracted to her stall than to the others.

The *balitao* did not completely leave the Visayas with the famed *balitao* team. It has stayed rooted in the floating traditions of the people. Its strains are a familiar music to hear especially among the urban folks. Its diction and verse though never written down, have come to stay in the hearts of a few men and women. In rural gatherings especially on moonlight nights, one can still hear and see the song and dance of olden days entertaining the simple tastes and interests of the country folks.

CHAPTER III

THE COMPOSITION OF THE BALITAO

The term *balitao* has come to be applied generally to Cebuano folk air which is usually written in 3/4 time. It sings about the people's glorious past, or praises the virtues of the Visayan maiden of old, or idealizes the beautiful country around. This folk air has been divided into two kinds: the original antiphonal *balitao*, which up to now is still unwritten, and the *balitao romansada* which is an outgrowth of it. The second type of *balitao* is written although no attempt has ever been made by anyone to collect it for posterity.

The antiphonal *balitao* has never been written down, neither have its lyrics nor its notation. There has never been any felt need for it since not every one sings this type of folksong now. The *balitao* singer is not only born with the ability to rhyme, but also has a knack for harmoniously setting his verse to music. There is no conscious preparation done before the rendition. The *balitao* couple depend upon the inspiration of the moment and call to play their native skill in weaving witty verses to fit into the general rhythmic pattern as furnished by the accompaniment. This song has been passed down orally from generation to generation of *balitao* singers.

This chapter shall endeavor to describe the musical composition, the versification of the lyrics as well as the development of the accompaniment of both the antiphonal *balitao* and the *balitao romansada*. The writer has sought the technical services of a young and popular Cebuano composer, Mr. Manuel Cabase, to write down the notation and lyrics of the antiphonal *balitao* while an old *balitao* couple, Magdaleno and Cornelia Cabillon, sang the *balitao* alternately for him.

The musical composition of the balitao. Musical compositions of the antiphonal *balitao* in its three stages: the ancient, the later or Spanish era and the modern adaptation of it which is the *tirana*, in both the major and minor keys, are found in

an appendix to this paper. Two very popular *balitao romansada* are copied for comparison and example. An attempt shall be made to scan the lyrics of the *balitao* to determine its meter, rhythm and rhyme scheme. Finally a description of its accompaniment shall also be made.

In the musical composition of the *balitao* the accompaniment plays a major part. In the early days the composers could not follow a particular key in their composition because the accompaniment furnished by a coconut shell guitar did not have a universal pitch. There were no pitch pipes in the Philippines then and the pitch of the guitar varied by its length, size and tautness of strings. When the harp was introduced, it followed the same story. In fact, the coconut-shell guitar and the harp accompanists tuned their instruments to the pitch of the singers. Later on when the five-string guitar was introduced, the pitch could be varied; so the accompanist no longer tuned his guitar to the pitch of the singers, but merely located the chords which harmonized with the singer's pitch.

In composing the *balitao*, the major key is mostly written in the key of C while the minor key comes under the relative minor key of A. The major key is used for the jolly and frolicsome mood while the minor key is used for the sentimental and pathetic mood of the *balitao*.

The *balitao* follows a general and definite pattern as is seen in the illustrations that precede the musical composition of every stage of the *balitao* (please see musical composition in the appendix). However, the composer, at pleasure, may vary the time value of the notes in order to adjust to the wordings of the *balitao*. Cebuano composers call this license of deviating from the general pattern *ad libbing* derived from the musical sign *ad lib*; *ad libitum* meaning at pleasure. An example of this is found in bars 1 and 5 of the later major *balitao* number 4 in the envelope. Slurring may even be employed by the singers for a decorative touch to their line endings. This is especially found in the *tirana* and is still a part of what composers call *ad libbing*. The opposite of slurring is what they call the *senalypha*. Where two-word syllables fall under one note the two sounds have to be run together. Bar No. 2 of the Old Major Balitao illustrates this form of variation. Where ordinarily the words *pa ako* are spoken in three syllables *pa-a-ko*; the second syllable *a* is *senalyphaed* with *pa*, so the three syllables become only two syllables *paa ko*.

As one sings these versions of the *balitao* in different stages, the gradual development of the song is noticeable from the simple unadorned chords of the *balitao* of old to the highly embellished ones of the modern times. This has been due to the fact that singers and accompanists who had inevitably assimilated influences from foreign music perhaps consciously or unconsciously have woven into our own native air such influences. This can be observed in the change of the tempo from the old *balitao* to the modern version, the *tirana*. The later *balitao* shows clearly the influence of the American jazz.

The versification of its lyrics. Analyzing the prosody of the *balitao* lyrics one inevitably takes into consideration that it belongs with Oriental poetry which is a predominantly chanted literature. Many of the verses in early Philippine literature were incantory in nature. The war cries of the ancient Filipinos, the boat songs which accompanied the oars of the island-hopping barangayas were all set to music and it is difficult to imagine them as merely recited literature.

Because of this incantory nature, much of the literature had to depend on rhythm as the main source of its charm. In rhythm and cadence these songs can perhaps be equalled only by the Negro spiritual or the modern mambo. The rhythm of the mambo is swift, active and jerky. The rhythm of many of our Philippine songs is slow, graceful, passive. To this last observation the Visayan *balitao* is no exception.

It is to be admitted, however, that the *balitao* does not owe all its charm to its rhythm. Its beauty lies more in the substance, in the play of fancy, in its irresponsible, often candid, sometimes satiric, subject matter. Its common sense—philosophy is helped along—carried, perhaps would be a more apt phrase—by its slow dragging, sometimes monotonous rhythm, so much so that it is easy to believe that the words and the rhythm seem to belong to each other for a long time. One can almost say the same thing about the form and substance in the *balitao*.

That the rhythm of the *balitao* can be monotonous is inevitable when we realize that it is narrative poetry. The raciness and swift movement of the verse hardly leave any time for variation in stanza form and in length of lines. The *balitao* stanza is a common meter quatrain or a ballad stanza. The melody into which the lyrics are woven is stereotyped and fixed. Within the stanza no particular conventional meter is used for

a line. One verse foot may be iambus, the next a trochee or a third an amphibrach. It follows no regular meter but uses the slurring and the synalypa liberally to catch on with the song rhythm. This is necessary because the flow of thought in the *balitao* is faster than the expression of it. It is also for this reason that the rhyme scheme does not run according to a fixed pattern. Instead of the *a b a b* pattern an *a a b b* or even an *a a a a* one may be used.

A few examples will substantiate the above observations:

1. *Mao kana'y dili gayud matarung*
2. *Nga imo kana, Tonyong buhaton*
3. *Kon imo kana nga himo-on*
4. *Tingali unya ikaw ay iyang imaldicion.*

Notice the use of four meters in the first line. *Mao kana'y* is in iambs. *Dili* is a trochee, *gayud* is iambus and *matarung* is an amphibrach. It is, of course true that certain variations are inevitable in other kinds of verse, except the narrative one.

Nga imo kana Tonyong buhaton.

This line is a real jumble, but in singing it, this jumble is hardly noticeable because the irregularities are slurred. *Nga imo* is an amphibrach; *kana Tonyong* is a pair of iambs; *Tonyong* is a trochee; *nga* is a single syllable and *buhaton* is another amphibrach.

The rhyme scheme in the *balitao* is remarkable for its variation. As with the other variations, the reasons are easily known. The flow of the narrative is faster than the mechanical inventions of rhyme, rhythm or rhyme scheme and the *balitao* singer must fall back on the device that comes nearest to his mind. The *a b a b* pattern seems to be the standard or the norm of the rhyme schemes for the *balitao*, especially the older type. In fact, one criticism that Pedro Alfafara, the most famous *balitao* singer made on the modern *balitao* verse is that it does not follow this pattern which he believes to be the rhyme scheme of the classic *balitao*. This rhyme scheme is very prevalent.

<i>O daw tubig kang matin-aw</i>	a
<i>Nga gibunyag ning kasingkasing</i>	b
<i>Ni-ining dughang mamingaw</i>	a
<i>Nanaha ka ug nanalingsing.</i>	b

Here is the *a a b b* pattern:

<i>Kon buot kang mangasawa</i>	a
<i>Atuay balay namo ayuha</i>	a
<i>Ang atop niya kugon</i>	b
<i>Alisdi sa pako's alimukon.</i>	b

The *a a a a* pattern:

<i>Ayaw Iti ikasakit</i>	a
<i>Kining pamalibad kong hingpit</i>	a
<i>Dili pa kaha buot ang langit</i>	a
<i>Nga kitang duha magkada-it.</i>	a

An *x a y a* pattern also exists:

<i>Ikaw ba mao ang bulak</i>	x
<i>Nga kanako dili mawili</i>	a
<i>Kong dili mo ako hikit-an</i>	y
<i>Mohilak ka mokisikisi.</i>	a

A careful analysis of the Cebuano *balitao* verse reveals that what is commonly called rhyme is not a perfect rhyme in the real sense of the word, but is really an assonance. Assonance is the use of the same vowel sounds at the end of the line. An example is *mawili* rhyming with *mokisikisi*. The correspondence between *li* and *si* is not exact as perfect rhyming would require, but at least they have the same vowel sound ending which is *i*. This is the rule rather than the exception in most verses in Philippine languages.

The *balitao* uses extensively the repetend. Its main purpose, of course, is to delay the flow of thought in order to give the rhymer enough time to think of the next line.

The subject matter of the *balitao* lyrics is as varied as the activities, aspirations and enmities of the people. This will be dealt with in the succeeding chapter.

In most cases the *balitao* verse has no plot. It only has a theme to be argued about or a situation treated in elaborate detail. The movement of the story is slow. Now and then digressions from the theme are made for, like the "stream of consciousness" attitude, the *balitao* singers are sensitive to what is happening around them.

In the *balitao* the moral is explicitly stated. The *balitao* makes many allusions, suggestions, and comparisons before it can say what it wants to say. Figures of speech appealing both to the senses as well as the intellect are abundantly employed. Wit and humor are cunningly woven into the verses. However, here and there some expressions or connotations of lewdness and obscenity may be scattered carelessly.

A description of its accompaniment. In olden times the accompaniment of the *balitao* was much simpler than it is today. The reason for this is simple. The earliest accompaniment to the *balitao* was played on a three-string coconut-shell guitar on which fewer chords could be strung than those which could be produced on a harp. Besides, the early accompanists had not discovered yet such embellishments as are played by modern accompanists.

With the introduction of the harp, the coconut-shell guitar was abandoned in favor of the harp because a greater variety of chords could be played on it, therefore, the accompaniment was more lively and varied.

The advantage the harp has over the guitar is that the right hand plays its own accompaniment while the left makes some progressions of its own in the form of double bass, sometimes by thirds, sometimes by fourths in terms of musical intervals.

The present accompaniment, the five-string guitar—is a Filipino adaptation from the six-string guitar which was introduced by the Spaniards into the Islands. The Visayans found this new instrument so convenient that even if a harp was used, the guitar was always to be had besides it. The guitar has an advantage over the harp in that its accompaniment is complete because later accompanists, profiting from foreign music, have modified and improvised their chords. This is easily made possible because the guitar has its semi-tones called chromatics while the harp is practically diatonic.

To illustrate this point the writer is asking the kind reader to see *Balitao No. 2* in the appendix "Pattern for the Ancient *Balitao*." Attention is especially called to Measures 17, 18 and 19 of said composition. In Measure 17 the chord E b remains Eb in the 18th measure before progressing to Bb in the 19th measure; whereas in the pattern of the latter *balitao* (*Balitao No. 5* in the appendix) Chord Eb on the 17th measure progresses to C 7 of Measure 18 before progressing to Bb 7 of the 19th

measure. Chord C 7 can never be done on the harp because as previously stated, the harp has no semitones.

This is only a slight modification of the chords as compared to the change which modern *balitao* accompanists have made from the *balitao* of the later period to the *tirana*. The *tirana* is the first attempt of the guitar accompanists to deviate from the general pattern of the old *balitao* which had grown quite monotonous by then. This fact can be observed in the chords. (See *Tirana Balitao* No. 8 in the appendix.)

The balitao romansada. The melody of the *tirana* gave rise to the *balitao romansada*. This is a modern improvisation of the *balitao* not only in its musical composition and lyrics, but also in rendition. Before the birth of this new form, all *balitaos* were antiphonal in nature. To vary the monotony of the song, the *balitao* couple ingeniously devised some means to hold the audience. They tried to mirror the life of the time as faithfully as they could. The "love triangle" was a favorite theme so that a third person was added. This third person, however, could not participate in the antiphonal singing of the *balitao* couple, so a situation had to be created in which the third party sung alone; supposedly to himself lamenting his fate or glorying in his luck. Thus the *balitao romansada* justified its existence.

When Don Filemon Sotto, a Cebuano octagenarian and once a popular newspaper publisher, said that as far back as he could remember a new *balitao* always came up every Christmas time, he meant the *balitao romansada*. The authorship was long kept unknown but the song easily found its way into the hearts of the Cebuano music loving populace.¹

The audience responded favorably to the innovation of the *balitao* sung alternately. For a time it seemed that the *balitao romansada* was even supplanting its parent tree, the antiphonal *balitao*, but no! the antiphonal *balitao* had deeply taken root in the Visayan soul; that it was impossible for it to be wiped out entirely.

Several Visayan composers have distinguished themselves along this line. The most popular of them is Rafael Gandionco, popularly known as Ramago among Cebuano music lovers. He

1) As told to the writer during her interview with Don Filemon Sotto on December 3, 1954.

has been called "the father of the Cebuano *balitao*."² He wrote several *balitao* pieces, but the most popular is "*Ang Dalaga Sa Bukid*" (A Country Maiden). This song composed in 1929 is still sung in radio programs and hummed by every Cebuano music lover. Mr. Manuel Velez is another well-known composer whose "*Sa Kabukiran*" (In the Mountains) is sung not only in the Visayas, but also in Luzon for which a Tagalog version was printed. The writer has reprinted Ramago's "*Ang Dalaga Sa Bukid*" as an example of *balitao romansada* in the minor key and Manuel Velez's "*Sa Kabukiran*" as an example in the major key. Both can be found in the appendix with musical compositions at the end of this paper. Several other composers worthy of note are Herminigildo Solon better known among Cebuanos as Amoros, Celestino Rodriguez, Pedro Villafior, Brigido Lakandason, and Manuel Cabase. These composers have left *balitao* pieces both vocal and instrumental which have come down to us as Cebuano classics in the field of music.

While the *balitao*, the most popular of Visayan folksongs may sound boring and monotonous to the modern ear because of its repetitive melody, yet it has preserved that unexplainable phrasing of uniform and long echoes pleasant to the truly Visayan soul because of the wit and wisdom of its lyrics.

2) *Bisaya*, Ramon Roces Publications, Inc. (Manila: August 8, 1948), pp. 14 & 38.

CHAPTER IV

DIFFERENT PHASES OF CEBUANO FOLKLORE AS
MIRRORED IN THE BALITAO

In the *balitao* we find a true reflection of the various aspects of Cebuano life and customs. It also gives us a valuable insight into the manners, ideals, beliefs, and social organization of our forefathers. In the *balitao* we find spontaneous and informal expressions of the Visayans' real nature and spirit. Many of them are inspired by the reaction of the people to their physical environment. Others reveal feelings and emotions aroused by the work and labor of their daily lives. The ordinary sorrows and common joys of life are also fully represented. Relations between the sexes with their many complications, courtship and love making, marriage and misunderstandings, give rise to perhaps the greater bulk of this kind of folksong. In this chapter the reader will be introduced into the different phases of Cebuano folklife as are mirrored in these alternating songs.

I. Visayan Love and Courtship Customs

Courtship is a period preceding marriage during which young people are getting acquainted with each other in an amatory way and during the later part of which they choose specific mates. Among the simple folks of the Visayas, this period is long, lasting sometimes from ten to twenty years due to the fact that the man must first work hard and save enough in order to meet the manifold obligations imposed by the parents of the bride. There is, for example, the dowry locally known as *bugay* which is of two kinds and is always paid by the bridegroom. One kind is the bride price, in the national language *bigay suso*, which consists of an amount of money, a piece of land, or several heads of carabaos or cows, or even in repairing the dilapidated house of the parents of the girl as payment for the milk which the mother has given to the damsel, by which he obtained her

completely. The other kind, termed in the national language as *bigay kaya*, is the real dowry. It is a stipulated sum of money, real estate or property including a house which is supposed to be a gift from the boy's parents and kins to the recently married couple for their support. At times, however, the stipends for the holy masses to be said for the dead relatives of the girl, and the expenses of the wedding are discounted from it; as well as the outlay for the clothes of the bride so that very little or nothing at all is left for the recently married couple.

In order to meet all these obligations, a man usually has to remain single long after his puberty, although this enforced period of celibacy is an active time of courtship. Among the rural populace this courtship often consists of pre-marital intimacy, frequently of an innocent nature, consisting mainly in the man's helping the lady at her daily chores and the singing of antiphonal love songs locally known as the "*balitao sa paghigugma*" or alternative songs of love.

During this period of courtship the man gets better acquainted not only with his bride-to-be, but also with her family and relations; for he has to serve the parents of the bride for some years; to feast them on certain days, to assist in the sowing of the rice or corn and in the harvest, and to carry food for the laborers. All the relatives of the bridegroom have to be obsequious to the bride, to her parents, and to all her relatives so long as those years of service last. During this period the girl's parents observe the suitor closely—his habits, customs and ways, and test his constancy now and then. So if the parents of the girl see some defect inconsistent with their customs and ways, such fact is sufficient ground for breaking the engagement.

This period is termed *pangagad* in the dialect, which means acting to be liked. This differs from the service marriage as described by Sieber and Mueller in *The Social Life of Primitive Man* which is:

The man to all appearances had to work for his wife. Thus we find him taking up his abode in her compound (matrilocal marriage) and only after a year or two or three, whatever the case may be does he take his wife home (patrilocal marriage).

Thus the contact of matrilineal customs with patrilineal peoples gave rise to an almost infinite number of forms of service marriage. . . .

At marriage the man takes up residence in his wife's territory and he remains, as it were a stranger among his wife's kin...¹

In this Visayan custom of *pangagad* the couple are not married yet. In fact the girl is very closely guarded by a sister or a brother, so that no intimacy goes beyond conversing or the singing of the *balitao*. The man also watches his steps carefully else he gets the bolo or the spear of the strict father of the girl on his head. Both act under close surveillance; consequently this period is one more of concealment than of revelation of their true selves.

In the *balitao* of courtship one finds a unique character that is truly native to the Visayan lover. Love to him is a sacred fragile thing which should be handled with care, and even tenderly. The man always starts his song with an address of greeting to everyone for courtesy is an outstanding requisite in a man who wants to find favor with the parents and kinsfolks of the girl.

Balitao Sa Paghangyo Sa Gugma

LALAKE: *Maayong gabi-i mga kahigala-an,
Pamati kay amo nga awiton,
Kay sama sa tingog sa kalanggaman
Nga mabati ninyo sa kabuntagon.*

*Day,² ang pagsubang sa adlaw sa kabuntagon
Ang kangitngit nga tanan mihayag,
Sa imong kaambong
Ang kasingkasing ko nabihag.*

BABAYE: *Dong,³ kining akong kaanyag
Ako ra kining kaugalingon.
Ug pananglit ikaw nabihag,
Unsay labut ko sa imong dangaton.*

1) S. A. Sieber and F. H. Mueller, *The Social Life of Primitive Man* (Illinois: Mission Press, S.V.D. Techny, 1950), pp. 199-202.

2) *Day* is a shortened form of *Inday* which is the Cebuano pet name in addressing a girl or a young woman whose name one does not know.

3) *Dong*, a corruption of *Dodong*, is the equivalent term for a boy or a young man.

- LALAKE: *Day, tinuod wala kay kalabutan,
Tinuod nga wala mo ako sugo-a,
Kay ang kaibog ko kanimo guikan
Kanimo ko gayud usab panilnga.*
- BABAYE: *Dong, ngano nga ako'y imong panilngan,
Unsa may utang ko kanimo?
Ngano nga ako'y imong pasanginlan,
Nga imo ra man kanang gusto?*
- LALAKE: *Day, dili man utang ang gui ingon ko kanimo,
Ug dili sinugo lang ako sa akong kaibug.
Panimpalad lang kini ug kaluy-an mo
Kay usahay dili ako mahikatulog.*
- BABAYE: *Dong, aron mo gayud hisayran
Timan-i aron dili ka malimot,
Bisan unsay imong dangatan
Para kanako wala kay mapa-abut.⁴*

A Balitao of Courtship

MAN : Good evening to you, our friends
Pray hear for we are going to sing
'Tis like the melody of the birds,
That we hear in the morn arising.

When the sun sends forth its rays in the morn,
All darkness around is lit up.
With your womanly beauty and grace,
My heart is completely captivated.

WOMAN: This loveliness in me that you see,
Is personally mine to have and treasure.

4) This is only a fragment of a courtship balitao in order to give a sample; for a man and a woman could argue about this topic for hours and hours, and yet not exhaust the subject—love.

So, granted that you are captivated,
What have I to do with what happens to you in
the future?

MAN : It is true that you have nothing to do with it,
And it is also true that you did not ask me to do it.
But since my love for you is caused by you
Then I shall ask of it from no one but from you.

WOMAN: Why will you collect from me?
What is my debt or obligation to you
Why will you lay the blame on me
When nobody asked you to do so?

MAN : It is not a debt or obligation that I asked from you
But my love has prompted me to say so
For who can tell if in the end you will pity me,
For oftentimes you rob me of my slumber.

WOMAN: Now so that you may well know
Mark this so you will not forget
That happen what may with you
From me you have nothing to expect.

Here is another *balitao* of courtship in which the young woman is greatly offended at the young man's offer of love to her in public. In her anger she calls the young man names and even lambasts the male species wiles and tricks at winning the love of a lady.

Balitao sa Pagpangolitawo

LALAKE: *Maayong gabi-i kaninyong tanan
Nga nia karon ning kalingawan,
Kining akong paghatag ug katahuran
Way guipili bata, tigulang, ug mga kahigala-an.*

*Karon kay tapus na ang akong paghatag ug
katahuran,
Ug nabati na dinhi sa kadaghanan,
Wala'y lain Inday, akong isunod pagsumbong
Kining guibati sa dughan ug dugay na guilu-um.*

- BABAYE: *Dong, pagka wa' nimoy batasan
Ug pagkadaku nimong lampingasan,
Ngano nga anhi ka dinhi sa kadaghanan
Magasumbong sa imong guitago-an?*
- LALAKE: *Day, pagkapait sa imong mga pulong
Nga sama ka sa daob nga dili mapalong,
Apan kon mahurot na ang kahoy nga diin midukot,
Tingali unya'g ikaw kanako magpangab-ot.*
- BABAYE: *Kay nasayud na ako ning mga lalake
Nga maayong mohambog sa mga babaye,
Mo ingon sila nga kanamo mangasawa
Aron lang intawon kami kanila mahigugma.*
- LALAKE: *Dal, ayaw na intawon ako pagpa-antusa
Sa paghalad sa tinuod kong paghigugma.
Kay ikaw ra ang bugtong kong pinili
Nga natingban sa tanan kong pagbati.*
- BABAYE: *Dong, bisan ka pag mag unsa pakilooy,
Kay ako wala gayud kanimo mobati ug kalo-oy,
Pangita na lang, Dong sa laing kabulakan
Aron didto ka mabulahan.*

The Translation—A Balitao of Courtship

- MAN : Good evening to each and everyone
Who is here to witness the fun,
These respects which I am paying everyone,
Discriminates not my friends, the old nor the
young.

Now that I have paid my respects,
Which are heard by the majority around.
The very next thing that I shall relate
Is the feeling within my heart which has long
been drowned.

- WOMAN: Young man, how ill-mannered you are!
And what a vile and despicable cheat!

Why must you, in front of this mass
Unveil what you have long kept?

MAN : Young lady, how bitter are your words,
As if they come from a bonfire forever burning,
But when the fuel that feeds it shall have been
exhausted,
You might, for me be vainly yearning.

WOMAN: Oh! I know the male specie
That they are very good in fooling a lady,
They say to her "I will really marry you."
Just so the lady would also say "I love you."

MAN : Young lady, please make me suffer no more,
In offering you my truest affection.
You are my one and only choice, there's no other
more,
On whom are vested all my feelings and emotions.

WOMAN: Though how much you beg and entreat of me,
But for you I do not even have the least of pity.
So will you kindly seek for love in other maidens,
And with them perhaps be fortune laden.

The Visayans are fond of riddles and love is often expressed through them. This fact very well tallies with Loeb's finding that:

In the Orient along with the love song went proverbs and riddles which are to be found among cattle raisers intimately associated with the love song.⁵

He further asserts that:

Proverbs and riddles in Indonesia extend only as far as cattle. There are no riddles or proverbs in Mentawi in Borneo nor in eastern Indonesia, excepting where the Malays have introduced them. Where there are no proverbs, there likewise are no love song.⁶

5) E. M. Loeb, "Courtship and the Love Song," *Anthropos* (Fribourg, Switzerland: Imprimerie St. Paul, 1950), Vol. XLV, p. 831.

6) *Loc. cit.*

Visayan riddles like the antiphonal love songs are rhymed as these three samples show:

1. *Tigmo, tigmo agokoy*
Ugma ra kita magasoy.—damgo

The riddles made in the night
Will be answered in the morning light.—a dream

2. *Kabayo ni Adan*
Dili moka-on ug dili kabay-an.—kudkuran

The horse of Adam does not eat
Unless someone rides on it.—coconut grater

3. *Baboy sa lasang*
Ang tunok puro lansang.—nangka

A wild pig of the forest
Is covered with thorny pricks—jackfruit

Parrying and answering riddles are a popular pastime among young men and women when they come together on leisure hours or at social gatherings. Sometimes a man may even begin his wooing with them. Love among the Visayans should be surrounded with mysteries and conveyed by appropriate allusions and even far-fetched comparisons that are sometimes unintelligible to the modern reader or hearer as these stanzas show:

LALAKE: *Kining akong paghigugma*
Sa bukug ko Inday mikagit
Kon hinog ka pa lamang nga sab-a
Lamyun ko hangtud ang panit.

BABAYE: *Dili ako Dong motu-o*
Nianang imong mga sulti
Pila na kaha ka babaye
Ang imo nianang guitonto.

LALAKE: *Sa saya mo nga malbarosa*
Nga nalibut sa piligis

*Malooy ka ako pasoksoka
Sa hawak mo pabilikisa.*

BABAYE: *Ayaw Dodong ipadayon
Kanang imong mga pulong
Kay ikaw gamay pang bata
Ana-a pa ang gatas sa imong baba.*

Translation

MAN : My love for you, Young Lady,
Is deeply embedded in my bones;
That if you were only a ripe banana,
I would swallow you skin and all.

WOMAN: I will not believe you, young man,
In what you have just said.
No one knows how many women
You may have fooled that way.

MAN : In your skirt which is like a "malbarosa,"⁷
Which is so full of pleats,
If you pity me, hide me within its folds
And around your waist let me cling.

WOMAN: Please, hold, and do not go on
With your ideas and intentions.
You are very, very young indeed
That milk⁸ is still in your mouth.

The seclusion in which the early Visayan girl was often kept led at times to strange outbursts on her part. Guarded closely by her parents, excluded so often from normal companionship, she found herself buried in vain regrets and anticipations. When

7) A certain plant grown by the early Visayans, valued for its aromatic leaves which young women often wear in their hair for its scent. Its scientific name is *Pelargonium graneolens* and it belongs to the oxalidaceae family. It is said that this plant is of African origin.

8) The expression "milk is still in your month" means youth or young for babies' months are literally, forever wet with mother's milk.

her love had been aroused, the tormenting loneliness of her life warped her nature. As another result of her secluded life the maiden acquired impossible ideas. In courtship for example, she puts all kinds of conditions and obstacles in the path of her lover.

BABAYE: *Kon buot kang mangasawa
Atu-ay lawod pa hunasa
Kon dili ka gani makapahunas
Si Inday dili mo maganas.*

LALAKE: *Buot ka ba gayud motan-aw
Sa akong pagka lalake
Kuyugi ako sa linaw
Kay hunsan ko unyang gabi-i.*

BABAYE: *Kon buot kang mangasawa
Atu-ay lasang daruha
Ang kabato-an ug kabatangan
Imong pagahinluan.*

LALAKE: *Kanang tanan nga guisugo mo
Sa madali akong tumanon
Maoy mahimong daro ang baboy
Ang amo maoy mag kupot sa liboy.*

Translation

WOMAN: If you want to marry me,
First you must dry up that sea.
If you cannot dry up that sea,
You shall not carry me away.

MAN : Would you really like to see,
My being a man and my ability?
Then come with me to the sea
And I will dry it for you tonight quickly.

WOMAN: If you want to marry me
You must plow yon forest for me
Of the rocks and the bushes
It must be rendered free.

MAN : All this that you ask me to do
 I'll do as quickly as possible
 For a plow a pig will do
 And a monkey will hold the handle.

Usually a Visayan girl does not say "yes" or "no" for herself when accepting or rejecting an offer of love. She often refers the man to her parents who have the last say on whom to marry or not to marry.

BABAYE: *Kon ikaw Dong, mangasawa,
 Si Tatay ug si Nanay maoy sultih.*
*Kay kinsa bay mosaka sa kahoy
 Nga sa punuan dili mo agi?*

LALAKE: *Matuod ikaw mao ang bulak
 Sa usa ka maambong nga kahoy
 Dili ko ma agi ang puno-an
 Kon dili hagdanan sa imong kalo-oy.*

Translation

WOMAN: If you want to marry me,
 Then tell my father and mother.
 For who would ever climb a tree
 Without first passing by its trunk?⁹

MAN : It is true that you are the flower
 Of a tall and beautiful tree.
 But the trunk will be impassable for me,
 Unless you will lend me your mercy for a ladder.

9) This is a literal translation of the last two lines of the first stanza and may not sound logical to English readers. The expression in Visayan is proverbial: the girl is compared to a fruit and her parents to the trunk of the tree bearing the fruit. As one cannot get the fruit without passing by the trunk, even so one cannot just ask the girl without first consulting the parents.

II. Marriage

The long time of courtship being over, the pair enters a period of engagement in which the man serves in the house of his bride-to-be. This service usually lasts for a certain period, say two years or more. If the parents of the girl find fault with the groom-to-be because he has failed in some points set forth by them, consequently the marriage is dissolved. A disappointed suitor files a suit with the court seeking to recover the value of services rendered to the family of his intended bride. A penalty is imposed on the party who should withdraw from the agreement. This penalty varies in the different towns and in accordance with the means of the contracting parties. In fact Father Placiencia,¹⁰ a Spanish missionary, tells us that the parents of the suitor or girl who refused to marry after the marriage was arranged, were punished for they were presumed to have induced their child to withdraw from the agreement. However, there are also those meek, and simple-minded suitors who, though they have been disappointed, do not like to go through the ordeal of court trials; so instead of filing their case in court, would merely sigh their troubles off to the moon and learn to forgive and forget. In fact the greater part of the young men in the rural areas belong to this type.

If, on the other hand, the parents of the bride find no inconsistencies in the man, the marriage is arranged. There was only one kind of marriage before;—the religious one. The ceremonies were more or less elaborate according to the rank of the families interested. During the marriage feast they ate, drunk and made merry by dancing and singing—not the *balitao* this time; for the early Visayans had their particular epithalamion and dance called *alap*. In this ceremony the couple just married do not dance themselves but another pair dances and sings for them calling forth the relatives of both the bride and groom to come across with any amount as a contribution or gift, whichever way it is taken, for the newly married couple to begin life with.¹¹

10) Encyclopedia of the Philippines, edited by Galang and Osias (Manila: P. Vera & Sons Co., 1935), Vol. VI, pp. 38-40.

11) This marriage ceremonial will be discussed in detail by Mrs. Lourdes Quisumbing in her thesis "Marriage Customs in Cebu."

The marriage ceremony being over, the couple start life anew, usually in their new house which was constructed before the wedding. So starts the family which is the universal nucleus of human society. Here is a *balitao* sung by a newly-wedded couple.

Balitao sa Bag-ong Minyo

BABAYE: *Unsa man karo'y maayong buhaton
Sa magtiayon nga maingon kanato.
Ug mahitungod sa kaugalingon
Ikaw gayud ang magtudlo.*

LALAKE: *Ako ikaw Day, nga tudloan
Sa usa ka asawa'ng maligdong,
Kinahanglan imong bantayan
Ang mga buhat nga matarung.*

BABAYE: *Mao na ba kining atong kahimtang
Mahunahuna man diay nato ang tanan
Kon magpuyo kita sa kalisdanan
Maihap ta ang bito-on sa kalangitan.*

LALAKE: *Mao na gayud ang magpuyo'g kaugalingon
Ang tanan atong tagamtamon
Labi na ug gukdon kita sa kawad-on
Mahadagan kitang wala'y kuha-on.*

BABAYE: *Kinahanglan atong matngonan
Ang atong kalihukan
Kay kon atong ampingan
Madimdim ta ang katam-isan.*

*Mao may atong guipanguha
Nga madayon ang atong panumpa
Kay matam-is ang kaminyo-on
Kon wala kanatoy magmalu-ibon.*

LALAKE: *Mao kana'y maayo tang himo-on,
Kon magpuyo kitang malipayon,*

*Ang kalinaw maoy patunhayon,
Aron matahum ang panagtipon.*

BABAYE: *Matahum kon imong ampingan
Ug sa mga panumpa magtuman
Apan kon ikaw magpatuyang
Duol ra ang kalbaryo sa kasakitan.*

A Song of A Newly Wedded Couple

WOMAN: Now, what is best for us to do,
Since we are only newlyweds, I do not know
But when it comes to household management
Direction and guidance must come solely from you.

MAN : Yes, my dear, I shall teach you
The duties of an exemplary wife
Bear in mind ever and only to uphold
The good and praiseworthy work.

WOMAN: So this is what it is to be married
Everything is our concern
And if we live in poverty and squalor
The stars in heaven could be counted.

MAN : That is what it is to live independently
We are going to experience everything
Most especially when we are hard up financially,
We do things that we know not what we are doing.

WOMAN: It is necessary that we exercise care
In all our actions and movements
For if we are careful
We can attain a life of bliss.

We have earnestly been striving
For the fulfillment of our promises,
For the marriage is a bliss
If none of the two turns faithless.

MAN : So, it must be our main concern
If we want to live in joy and contentment.

Peace in the home must reign supreme,
If matrimony be made sweet as a dream.

WOMAN: It would be lovely if this state we treasure
And the realization of our promises we make sure,
But if we live in wanton disregard
The Cavalry of suffering could easily be had.

II. Domestic Problems

The early Cebuanos possessed a strong respect for conventions. Certain social forms and practices concerning the relationship of husband and wife were evolved early and strenuously maintained. Failure of the one or the other to keep these conventions, often led to domestic troubles occasioned by such situations as: financial hardships, a breach in family traditions, infidelity, or the interference of the in-laws. It will be noticed, however, that even though how bitter the quarrel might have been between the couple, they in most cases come to a peaceful settlement of their troubles, for the Cebuano couples especially the early ones firmly believe in the Catholic idea of wedlock that "what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

Financial difficulties due to unemployment. The *balitao* as a song of love not only mirrors the pleasant aspects of love, but also portrays the love that remains strong in a turmoil brought about by a clash over circumstances occasioned by financial problems as these stanzas show:

Balitao Sa Kapait Nga Walay Pangita

LALAKE: *Unsa man karon Day, ang imong nagul-an
Mahitungod ni-ining atong kahimtang.
Sultihi intawon ako sa hinungdanan,
Aron ang tanan akong himbaw-an.*

BABAYE: *Kining ato Dong, nga kaminyoon
Maoy mapa-it nga walay sama,
Gisagubang nato ang dakung kawad-on,
Tungod kay wala man kita karo'y kuarta.*

*Apan aron pagsulbad ni-ining tanan
Sa mga kalisud nga atong giatubang,
Kay ingon pa kanatong walay trabaho
Mag palakaw gayud una ug nigosyo.*

LALAKE: *Ayaw taksa Inday ang kalisdanan
Kay bulag naman kita sa guinikanan
Antuson to gayud ang mga kapaitan
Kay ato man kini nga tinuyo-an.*

BABAYE: *Mao ba gayud kini an magminyo
Ang tanang Santos atong masangpit,
Mao ba diay ang magpuyo,
Nga magsagubang sa mga kasakit.*

*Apan wala ako, Dong magmahay
Kay ato man kining duhang gusto,
Asdangon lamang gayud kini kanunay
Ang langit ug ang inferno.*

*The Translation: Balitao of Financial Difficulty
Because of Unemployment*

MAN : What are you worried over, my dear?
Is it over our present set up of things?
Please tell me the cause of the worrying.
So I will have a knowledge of everything.

WOMAN: This matrimonial state that we share,
Is indeed bitter beyond compare.
We are in a great financial crisis,
We do not even have a cent to spend.

But in order to solve all,
These many difficulties we are now confronted,
Since both of us are jobless,
Why don't we engage in a little business?

MAN : Please do not measure the hardships,
Since we are already separated from my parents,
Let us bear patiently all hardships,
Since we entered into this state by mutual consent.

WOMAN: So this is what it is to be married,
All saints do we call for us to intercede.
So this is what it is to live,
Bearing the hardships and burdens of life.

But I have no regrets, young man,
Because these conditions were agreed upon by us
two.

Let's just face the music and dance
Whether to Heaven or to Hell we go.

The following alternating song describes a family crisis over non-employment. While the husband almost despairs of his inability to land himself on a job, the wife consoles him with the idea that behind the cloud there's always a silver lining; that, if their lot be hard now, the morrow might bring them fairer and better luck.

Balitao Sa Kapait Sa Pagpangita Ug Trabaho

BABAYE: *Unsa man Dong, ang hinungdan,
Nga nagmahay man ikaw sa kahimtang.
Kini kay ato nang gisugdan,
Magantus bisan unsay dangatan.*

*Busa inaya-naya lamang ang kaguol
Niining mga adlaw nga tugob sa kasakit
Kay ang mga hunahunang puno sa kahaso!
Ma angkon gayud ang tumang kapait.*

LALAKE: *Bisan gi unsa ko pagpaningkamot,
Gikan sa kabuntagon hangtud sa kagabhi-on,
Sa akong kahago wala gayu'y nakab-ut,
Kay ang buhat mapait kaayong pangita-on.*

*Nagpakilo-oy pa gani ako sa mga kadagku-an
Nga ako sa buhat ilang kahatagan.
Apan ang tanan nakawang lamang
Kay ila man akong gibalibaran.*

BABAYE: *Unsa bay takus nga buhaton,
Nga ikalipay sa atong katigulangan.*

*Mao kini gumonhap nga sulbaron,
Aron ang makalolo-oy ilang lipayon.*

*Apan mahitungod sa atong kahimtang,
Ayaw lamang niana ug kabalaka,
Kay unsa may imong nalisdan,
Nga aduna pa man kitay kahinguha-an.*

LALAKE: *Ang mga gutlo sa kinabuhi tang pini-utan
Mao day mahimo ang panghayhay,
Inagulo sa kapait linagbasan
Sa kawad-on gaantus sa mga pagmahay.*

BABAYE: *Pasagding molunop ang dag-um sa kalangitan,
Pasagding sa luyo nianang naglugitom,
Makita ta ang adlaw sa kahitas-an,
Nga maga banwag sa yutang tabunon.*

*Human sa atong mga pagantus
Ang kalipay ato dang ihibalag,
Kay mao man gayud ang ibalus
Ang adlaw mopakita sa iyang kahayag.*

*The Translation—An Alternative Song Telling
About the Difficulty in Looking for a Job*

WOMAN: Will you tell me the cause
Of your remonstrations against our present state.
Though what is began is began
So we might just as well bear the hardships, what-
ever happens.

Then cheer up and forget your sorrows
On these very days of grief and woe
For a disturbed and troubled conscience
Is likely to suffer and meet with defeat.

MAN : Though how much I have striven to gain success,
From daybreak till day is done.
Yet nothing have I gained from my labor and pains,
For work nowadays is very difficult to find.

I had begged of the "big men"
That they give me a certain employment
But everything was just in vain,
Because they turned me down in disappointment.

WOMAN: What then shall we do
To make our "old folks" happy?
This is a problem to be solved
To make the poor happy.

But with regard to our situation,
Don't you worry about that.
For why should you be greatly troubled,
When we still have another means of livelihood?

MAN : During the moments of this restricted life,
Nothing else could be done but heave a sigh.
Moanings of bitterness pervade the spirit
And poverty is borne with regrets.

WOMAN: Let the clouds cover the heavens entirely,
For behind the thick darkness,
We could see the sun up above,
Shedding its rays over this, our land.

After these sufferings of ours are over,
Happiness will surely cross our path,
For it has always been, that behind
The clouds, the sun is still shining.

Financial difficulties due to gambling. Among the Visayans gambling is a deeply-rooted vice. It had been even probably before the Spaniards came, because all appraisals of Filipino traits, be they made by a Spaniard, an Englishman, a Frenchman, or a Filipino himself, never fail to mention about the Filipino's passion for gambling, in particular for cockfighting.

Father Chirino, a Spanish missionary, says:

...The Indians are passionately fond of cockfighting and spectacles of all sorts.¹²

12) E. H. Blair and J. A. Robertson, *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898* (Cleveland, Ohio: 1903-1909, 55 Vols. Vol. LI), p. 249.

...Often the Indian is seduced into debt contracts by his passion for cockfighting and gambling.¹³

Sir John Bowring, an Englishman governor of Hongkong, who made a visit to the Philippines during which he travelled extensively through the Islands, says:

While the less honorable characteristics of the people are known to be a universal love of gambling which is exhibited among the Indian races by a passion for cockfighting, an amusement made a productive source of revenue to the State. Artists usually introduce a Philippine Indian with a gamecock under his arm to which he seems as much attached as a Bedouin Arab to his horse. It is said that many a time an Indian has allowed his wife and children to perish in the flames when his house has taken fire, but never was known to fail in securing his favorite *gallo* from danger.¹⁴

Mr. John Foreman, an American who resided in the Philippines for a number of years in his book, *The Philippine Islands* writes:

He is fond of gambling. Cases have been known of natives having fled from their burning huts taking care to save their fighting cocks but leaving their wives and children to look after themselves.¹⁵

Dr. Paul de la Gironière, a French surgeon who lived in the Philippines for twenty years, wrote an account of his observations and describes the natives thus:

They are fond of fights between animals especially cock-fights.¹⁶

Statement of Ramon Reyes Lala (*The Philippine Islands*, New York, 1899, pp. 80-87) himself a Filipino:

...fond of dress and show, hunting, riding and other field exercises, but prone to gambling and dissipation.¹⁷

13) *Loc. cit.*, Vol. LII, p. 305.

14) *Census of the Philippine Islands* taken under the direction of the Philippine Commission in the year 1903 (Washington, D.C.: United States Bureau of Census, 1905), Vol. I, p. 497.

15) *Ibid.*

16) *Ibid.*, p. 495.

17) Blair and Robertson, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-105.

This vice was greatly enhanced during the Spanish regime due to example set by the conquerors, to oppression, and to mis-government.

If non-employment causes financial difficulty, it would not be as bad as habitual gambling indulged in by the head of the family in causing such a crisis among the Visayans. What is worst is that oftentimes an unemployed man tries his luck at gambling and may even make it his life occupation. In most instances instead of alleviating their lot, the family sinks deeper into misery and squalor. This passion for gambling may even allure the husband into concluding debt contracts, which is then the beginning of the real financial tragedy of the family. Seldom do peace and tranquility reign in the home of a gambler as this alternating song shows:

Away sa Magtiayon Kay Ang Bana Sugarol

BABAYE: *Pamati kay ako kanimong isulti
Aron imo nga himbaw-an
Nganong gihurot mo ang kuarta'g pildi
Didto, Antonio sa sugalan.*

*Dili ba ikaw akong gimaymayan,
Sa dili pagtambong sa mga sugalan,
Mao unya kini ang sinugdanan,
Sa pagpuyo ta nga wala'y kahusayan.*

LALAKE: *Hinaya lamang ang imong sulti
Tinuod nga ako, Day napildi
Apan kon nakadaug pa kaha ako karon
Anha ko nga ang baba mo motak-um.*

BABAYE: *Bisan ug pila pay madaug nimo
Dili gayud ako niana malipay.
Kay nasayud kana kanako, Antonio
Nga ang pagpanugal ako nga kaaway.*

*Kay sa pagpaninguha mo pa kanako
Ikaw sa akong atubangan nangaliyupo
Ug una ang gugma ko kanimo ipiyal
Nga biya-an mo ang pagpanugal.*

LALAKE: *Wala na lamang kadtoy bali
Ang tanan kong napildi
Ayaw na lang niana pag asercaso
Ganansiya man kadto nako sa Purico.*

BABAYE: *Mao kana'y makaanindot kanimo
Tungod lang kay ganansiya sa Purico
Unsa na man karo'y imong igasto
Wala man gani karon kita'y paniudto.*

*Kon himbaw-an ko pa lang da-an
Nga mao gayu'y imong pagabuhaton
Masbali gibulagan ko ikaw sa dayon
Aron wala unta karon akoy paga antuson.*

A Couple Quarreling Because of Gambling

WOMAN: Now, listen for I will tell you
So that you may very well know
Why you lost all our money
In the gambling den, Antonio.

Did I not advise you before
Never to be around these gambling dens
For this could very well be the beginning
Of a living without peace and blessings.

MAN : Take it easy and please don't shout
It is true that I, in gambling lost.
But had I been lucky in that set
You would shut up your mouth, I bet.

WOMAN: Though how much you may win.
That does not make me a bit happier
For you very well know that since
The beginning, I have always hated gambling.

When you were yet courting me
You, in my very presence, did entreat.
But before my love to you I trusted
That your gambling be forever buried.

MAN : Let us try to forget that which is past
 And all that which I have lost
 Over it pray, do not fuss,
 For as profit from Purico sales, so it goes.

WOMAN: Very well, that is fine of you!
 Just because it was a gain from Purico.
 Now what are we going to spend
 For lunch, there's nothing to be eaten.

Had I known beforehand
 That these things would by you be done
 To have parted with you would have been better,
 So, I would have known no sorrows to suffer.

Securing the husband's permission. It formerly was a tradition which the Filipinos perhaps borrowed from the Chinese and other Oriental neighbors that once a woman was married, her only sphere was the home. She was not supposed to leave the portals of that confinement without first securing the permission of her husband. Failure to do this would surely result in a quarrel between the couple as reflected in this alternating song:

Away Kay Ang Asawa Minlakaw Nga Wala

LALAKE: *Dili na gayud kini kapugngan
 Kining ako kanimong kalagot,
 Ug nganong imo akong guibuhatan
 Maoy naingnan karon ning kaligutgut.*

BABAYE: *Ngano unsay imong hingsigpatan
 Sa akong kina-iya ug pamatasan,
 Sa madali intawon kanako itug-an
 Kon aduna ba ako'y mga kasal-anan.*

LALAKE: *Pamati kay ako kanimong isugid,
 Gusto man kaha nimong himbaw-an,
 Amber nganong wala ka kanako mananghid,
 Sa pag-adto nimo sa baylihanan.*

*Makapila ako kanimo magsulti
Sa imo Inday, nga pagkababaye
Nga una unta ikaw moadto sa bayle,
Kinahanglan gayud ang akong pag-uki.*

BABAYE: *Unsaon man nimo, Dong pag-uki,
Nga wala man kadto ikaw dinhi.
Apan ang tanan lamang hingkalimti
Kay human na man kana mangagi.*

*Dili ka usab takus niini mabalaka
Kay ni Tining man lamang ako gidala
Dili man tuyo ko dido tang pagsayaw,
Sa kalingawan man lang unta ko motan-aw.*

LALAKE: *Ang nakanindot raba, Inday ninyo
Sa pagsulod gayud didto ninyo
Bisan gayud ug hikít-an ako nimo
Gipaduko mo lamang ang imong ulo.*

*Ug dayon sa lingkoranan kaayo ikaw gilabni,
Aron makigsayaw kanimo ang lalake,
Ug ikaw kaayo, Inday nagdiki-diki,
Kay nakakita ka man diay sa dala kong garoti.*

BABAYE: *Wala gayud ako, Dong malisang,
Kay ako man kadtong tinuyo-an.
Mangayo ako kanimo ug pasaylo,
Dinhi karon sa imong atubangan.*

LALAKE: *Mao gayud kamong mga babaye
Kon wala nay mga katarungan,
Paraygan lamang ninyo ang lalake,
Aron malosno ang among balatian.*

BABAYE: *Ato lamang kana nga hingkalimtan,
Kay ako man gayud nga kasal-anan.
Dili ba ikaw kanako makapasaylo,
Nga sala ko man kadtong nahimo?*

LALAKE: *Busa sukad karon gayud matngoni
Ang imo nga pagka babaye.*

*Kon mosulod ka ugaling sa bayle,
Mananghid ka una sa tinyente.*

*The Translation: A Family Quarrel Because
The Wife Went to A Dance Without the
Husband's Permission*

MAN : I can no longer keep and withhold
These ruffled feelings I have for you,
For, why you have done all these things
Is the cause of my present misgivings.

WOMAN: Why, what have you observed lately
About my own habits and ways?
Will you please tell me quickly,
What faults do I have, if any?

MAN : Now, please listen for I am going to tell you,
If you are interested and eager to know.
Now, why did you not secure my permission,
When you went to attend that social function?

How many times have I reminded you,
That since you are a woman,
You must before you go to any dance,
First secure the approval of your husband.

WOMAN: How could you give me your consent,
When you were not at home at that moment?
So please, forget everything,
For what is past is past, there's no need arguing.

Besides, there is no cause for you to worry
I was asked by Tining only to give her company.
In fact it was never my intention to dance
But merely to see the terpsichorean performance.

MAN : And what is nice about you
Is that when you entered the dance saloon,
Though you saw me in person
You bowed your head and pretended non-recog-
nition.

'Then from your seat you were pulled by a young
man,
Who wanted to dance with you at that time,
But then you acted as if you did not like him,
Because you saw my beating stick from behind.

WOMAN: I was not in the least scared, Antonio,
For I did those acts with intention.
But I beg forgiveness of you
Here and now before you in person.

MAN : It is always the case with you, women,
When you already run short of reasons,
You very well know how to touch the sort spot of
men,
So that you can very well conquer their emotions.

WOMAN: Let us try to forget this happening,
I know I am really to blame for everything,
So now will you be kind enough to forgive
The faults that I have committed.

MAN : Therefore, from now on you must be vigilant
Over your honor as a woman.
Should you ever go to a dance
You must secure the permission of your husband.

Jealousy. The early Cebuanos seemed to have ideals of marriage that were essentially monogamous. When the Spaniards came to the Philippines, although polygamy was practiced by some chiefs "the most common and general usage was to marry one woman."¹⁸ Husbands were, and even now in rural areas, are horribly jealous of their wives so much so that she is not supposed to leave the confines of her home nor to adorn herself once she is married. If a married woman dresses up or beautifies herself, she not only becomes the object of her husband's suspicion and jealousy, but also the object of the townfolk's gossips. She in retaliation for this miserable and monotonous life imposed on her by customs and conventions, also lays down strict rules

18) Blair and Robertson, *op. cit.*, pp. 293-296.

of conduct on her husband regarding his attitude towards the fairer sex except her. For a man then, who is already married, to pay special attention to another woman by engaging her in a prolonged conversation, walking her home, or sitting close to her is a breach of the moral law and woe to him if his wife senses the wrong-doing. This often leads to great troubles and may even head the marriage to the rocks.

Balitao Sa Pangabubho

BABAYE: *Pagbantay lang karon, Antonio
Sa daghan mong mga tinunto,
Dili na gayud kini mahimo
Ning hilabihan mong pagka abusado.*

*Ikaw na usab mihadla
Sa laing babaye mingparayeg,
Ako gayud kaninyo nakakita,
Nga kamong duha nanaghagwa.*

LALAKE: *Unsa na usab intawon kini, Sing,
Ningkalit man lamang ikaw ug kabalhin,
Unsa may imo karong mga kamatuoran,
Mahitungod sa imong guikatahapan?*

*Ayaw una, Sing ug padayona,
Kanang imo karong mga pagduda.
Ang kasingkasing mo lamang lukmaya,
Kay wala ka may nakitang pruyba.*

BABAYE: *Hingkit-an ko kamo si Dalmacia,
Nagpahayahay sa daplin sa baybayon,
Nagpinarayganay kamong duroha,
Mao ra ang tukmo ug alimokon.*

*Gisingitan ko ikaw kaganina,
Apan wala mo lamang ako lingi-a,
Gingil-aran ka ba sa akong hitsura,
Nga nakatupad ka na ni Dalmacia?*

LALAKE: *Ayaw intawon, Sing pagdali-dali-a,
Bahin sa katahap mo karon ug duda;*

*Si Dalmacia adunay hinigugma
Anak ra usab ni Manang Barista.*

*Dili ba humana man ako kanimo magsulti,
Nga wala na ako'y amor so ubang babaye;
Kay dili ko na gayud ikaw ibaylo,
Tungod sa ka-anyag ug kabuotan nimo.*

BABAYE: *Ayaw na lang ako'g ulo-ulohi,
Nianang imong mga sulti;
Nganong sa baybayon kamo nagpahayahay,
Kon wala pa kamo magka hinigugma-ay?*

LALAKE: *Gialam-alaman ko lang si Dalmacia,
Kay nag-away man ug ang iyang hinigugma;
Apan wala ko intawon palandongang,
Nga magkahibalag ba kaming duha.*

BABAYE: *Dili gayud ako niana motuo,
Sa mga pulong mo karon, Antonio;
Da-an na akong nasayud kanimo,
Kay bilyako ka ra kaayo.*

*The Translation—Alternative Song
Depicting Jealousy*

WOMAN: You better watch out, Antonio,
For the very many tricks you've played,
This shall no longer continue,
For you have in abusiveness exceeded.

You again entertained another woman,
And with you she also flirted.
With my own eyes, I actually saw,
That the two of you were in a love play engaged.

MAN : For pity's sake, what is this again?
What is the cause of this sudden change?
Now what evidences have you found,
Regarding your unfounded allegation?

Calm down, and please do not give vent,
To your unfounded accusations.
Soothe your heart and pacify your emotions,
For you do not have a strong evidence.

WOMAN: I saw you together with Dalmacia,
Enjoying the freshness of the sea breeze.
You were making love to each other,
Just like two love birds, a dove and a pigeon.

I called aloud for you a while ago,
But you never did pay a heed to it,
Does my face look very ugly to you,
Now that you are at the side of your beautiful
Dalmacia?

MAN : Please, do not draw rush conclusions,
Regarding your doubts and present suspicions,
For Dalmacia has already a sweetheart,
And besides she is also the daughter of Aunt
Barista.

Did I not tell you already,
That I have no more love for other women.
For I will never trade you in with anybody,
Because of your beauty and virtuous mien.

WOMAN: Now you stop flattering me,
With those honeyed words of yours,
Why were you two strolling by the sea,
If you two were not in love with each other?

MAN : I was only trying to alleviate the sufferings of
Dalmacia,
Because she had a break-up with her sweetheart.
But I really never anticipated the idea,
That we two would cross each other's paths.

WOMAN: I will never believe
The words you have just said.
For I already very well know,
That you are a cunning and shrewd Romeo.

Quarrels of couples caused by jealousy are in most cases the bitterest of all. The wife particularly is so embittered towards her husband, who still makes love to other women, that she not only neglects her household chores and refuses to talk to her husband, but may even leave her home and children to return home to her parents. There she enjoys a haven of safety and refuge, for, her husband, fearing his in-laws, can do nothing except to plead for forgiveness and pity to make her return to their home. Sometimes this separation is only temporary, but even then it lasts for as long as five to ten years, the couple only to be miraculously reconciled in old age; if not on their death beds. In some cases they just agree to part from each other and live their lives separately.

Unlike common divorce practices in America in which the wife brings her case to court and sues her husband for an alimony, or a pension for the children if there are any, the Visayan wife, especially in the rural towns, does not make much ado about it, but without even making her plans known to her husband, merely packs her belongings and in the absence of her husband drags along her children and returns home to her people. There she brings up her children, maybe in suffering and poverty, but she finds solace in the thought that it is better to bear the yoke in hard work and dire poverty than to endure the cruel treatment of a husband whose feelings and emotions are estranged by another woman.

The husband on the other hand, after moments of reflection and contemplation, perhaps realizes his fault too late. Since he cannot win her back by force because she is under the protecting folds of her parents, he enters a second stage of courtship to win back the confidence and love of his lost wife. If he succeeds, the family is reunited, but if not, he usually lives a life of dissipation and remorse.

The following alternative song exemplifies such a crisis in a couple's life.

*Balitao Sa Panagbulag Tungod
Sa Pangabubho*

LALAKE: *Dili masukod, Sing and akong pagmahay,
Tungod sa imo kanakong pagbutang-butang;
Dili na usab ako ni-ana malipay,
Gibuhatan mo man ako'g kasal-anan.*

*Tungod lang niadtong hitabo-a,
Maghari gayud ang imong pagduda;
Ug alang sa imong gikatahapan,
Wad-a na lang sa imong dughan.*

BABAYE: *Kutob karon magbulag kita,
Kay nagdala ka lamang sa disgrasya;
Kon magpadayon kanang imong bisyo,
Ako'y paka ulawan nimo sa mga tawo.*

*Wala na gayud kini hinungdan,
Kining ato karon'g panagtipon,
Nahisama lang kini sa usa ka tanaman,
Nga ang mga bulak nahutdan sa alimyon.*

LALAKE: *Ayaw niana, Sing ug komidya,
Kuyawan man lang ang akong dughan;
Pahiyum ug daliti sa imong katawa,
Isalikway kanang mga kagul-anan.*

*Duol ngari kanako O, pinangga,
Kay pahiran ko ang imong mga luha;
Bag-uhon ta ang atong mga panumpa,
Aron walay kasakit kanato'ng mosanta.*

BABAYE: *Ayaw pag hunahuna ug komidya,
Kining akong mga sulti;
Ayaw lamang ako paghanduma,
Ang tanan karon hingkalmi.*

*Adios, na lamang kanimo,
Daghang salamat sa imong kaayo
Wad-a na lang ang tanan,
Kay imo man akong gibudhi-an.*

LALAKE: *Pasing ko—O, Pasing intawon,
Ayaw ako pagtalikding makaliton;
Dili gayud ako niana mo uyon
Sa imo karong buot buhaton.*

*Hunahuna-a lamang pag-ayo,
Ang mga tahum tang damgo,*

*Isugba ba diay ako nimo sa kalayo
Tungod lamang sa pangabubho?*

BABAYE: *Ayaw lang pagdagha'g sulti
Kadaghan na ako nimo niini buhati;
Karon kay dili na ako maka aguanta,
Masbali lamang ako moritira.*

*Daghan na lamang nga salamat,
Sa kadautan sa imong gibuhati;
Hikalimti na lang kining imong asawa,
Ug kamo lay pagtipon si Dalmacia.*

LALAKE: *Unsaon man niini, Sing paghimo
Nga wala pa man itugot ang diborsyo,
Malisud nga atong bugto-on,
Kining ato nga kaminyo-on.*

BABAYE: *Walay malisud sa panagsabut,
Kon uyonan lang natong duha;
Bisan dili ka pa karon mosugot,
Basta bulagon ta gayud ang atong gugma.*

*The Translation—An Alternative Song of Separation
Because of Jealousy*

MAN : My feeling of compunction is immeasurable
Because of your false allegations on me,
Now that is not fair and agreeable,
For you are defaming and reviling me.

Just because of that one incident
Your suspicions are reigning supreme,
With regards to those you are in doubt about
From your heart, please strike them out.

WOMAN: From now on let us part ways
For you are but disgracing me,
If you would go on with your vice,
You put me to shame before people's eyes.

This married state of ours
 Is after all as good as useless;
 Like unto a garden, whose
 Flowers had been deprived of their sweetness

MAN : Please, do not play a joke on me
 I am scared as my heart throb shows
 Please smile and give me the sunshine of your
 laughter
 Dispel the gloom of sadness about us.

Come, O come to me my beloved,
 For I will dry the tears from your eyes;
 Let us renew the promises that we have made
 So that no troubles would bar our ways.

WOMAN: Do not think that I am joking
 In this conversation with you
 Just think of me no more
 And forget everything said today.

So now fare thee well,
 And many thanks for thy care;
 Erase everything from memory,
 For thou have betrayed the trust I gave to thee.

MAN : Pasing, my beloved oh! Pasing dear,
 Please turn not away from me so hastily;
 I will never approve of that
 Which you are planning to do on me.

Just reflect and consider very well,
 Our lovely aspirations and dreams;
 Will you then throw me into the fire,
 Just because of your jealousy?

WOMAN: Pipe down! and enough of those talks,
 For how many times have you done this to me!
 Now that I can no longer bear the troubles you
 give
 It is but logical that I go away.

So many, many thanks to you,
 For the baseness of what you have done;
 Forgive and forget me, your wife,
 And in Dalmacia seek companionship.

MAN : How can this be done, Pasing,
 When divorce is not granted here?
 It would be difficult to sever
 What marriage has joined together.

WOMAN: There is nothing difficult if we talk things over,
 Especially if not one of us would disagree
 But even if you will not accede,
 I am decided to call this love "quits."

Couple quarrels over children. All travelers unite in attributing to the early Filipinos extreme family affection.¹⁹ The husband takes to himself not only the obligation of providing for his wife and children, but also the duty of bringing up his children in the path of righteousness and in the fear of God. The father loves his children so much that even if he now and then wields the rod to punish and correct his children, yet he does it only when necessary so that he is much feared by the children, yet they give him that filiation and respect due only to a patriarch.

On the other hand, the mother whose heart is more tender but whose patience and temper are also as unpredictable often times punishes the children just for a little mischief or misbehavior. Sometimes bored of her daily chores and exhausted from the discharge of her daily routine, she turns a deaf ear to a baby crying and crying his lungs out. When the father comes home from work, he meets with such a troubled atmosphere that this most often leads to petty bickerings, which however, may sometimes become a serious quarrel between the husband and the wife over their children.

19) Blair and Robertson, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-103.

Balitao: Away sa Magtiayon Tungod Sa Ilang Anak

LALAKE: *Ang bana ug mahiabut gikan sa buhat
Gubot kanunay ang iyang hunahuna;
Inig saka niya ang bata durong hilak,
Pangotan-on dayon ang asawa ug unsay sala.*

BABAYE: *Tubagon siya sa iyang asawa
Kastigohon ba ang tawo ug wala pay sala;
Kay ug pasagdan kining bata-a,
Magsalig ang iyang huna-huna.*

LALAKE: *Mao gayud ug wala ako dinhi sa balay,
Masamok ang atong kaugalingon;
Gub-on mo ang hunahuna'ng mahusay
Kay ang mga bata sa diyotay nga sayop kastigohon.*

BABAYE: *Ay pastilan kanimong banaha ka,
Wala lamang ikaw ing kalibutan;
Inig abut mo modayon ka lang ug singka,
Dili ka lang mangotana ug unsay kasalanan.*

LALAKE: *Ngano nga mangutana pa ako
Nga mao naman ang imong batasan
Tambagan ikaw dili kaman patu-o
Puriso mao kana ang atong paga awayan.*

BABAYE: *Ako daku kaayong katarunganon
Kay ako man pirmi ang ania sa puloy-anan
Kay ang panimalay ug dili ko atimanon
Walay makab-ut nga ka-uswagan.*

*The Translation—An Alternative Song
Depicting A Couple's Quarrel Over
Punishing Their Own Child*

MAN : *When the husband arrives home from work,
Tired and perplexed are his thoughts;
When he enters the house a child's cries greet him.
So at once he asks his wife for the cause.*

- WOMAN: The wife then answers her husband
That no one would be whipped for no cause
For if the rod be spared for this child
He becomes overconfident and spoiled.
- MAN : That is always what you do when I am away
No peace and harmony ever reigns in our house
You destroy whatever peaceful atmosphere there
be
Because the children are whipped for a flimsy
cause.
- WOMAN: Ay! my husband, you just presume that to be
But what do you know of the true state of things
here
When you arrive, you immediately scold and
censure
Without even finding out who is the sinner.
- MAN : Why should I bother to ask,
When I know that that has become your habit?
If I give counsel they are unheeded,
That again would just start another trouble.
- WOMAN: I have every reason to act that way
For I am the queen of this household
If I ever neglect my duties as a wife
No prosperity could we reap from our endeavors.

Interference of in-laws. Among the Cebuanos the relation between parents and children is strong and close. In the early days before any Occidental influence infiltrated the country, parental authority was so ample with respect to the person and property of the son that the latter, even after reaching the legal age, did nothing without the consent of his parents. Love and respect to his parents made him leave to his father the election of his wife, and the father in turn, took care of his son after marriage as if his child continued being a member of his household even as a branch still clings to the tree from which it has grown. His wife, too, belongs to the family, but oftentimes, much to her earnest endeavor to adjust to her husband's family, the

in-law trouble still sets in. Parents intervene in the affairs of their children especially in their quarrels. At present in spite of the fact that married couples are living their own lives in their own houses, parental intervention is still felt, though no longer as strong as it was in the olden days when the couple lived with their parents' family. Nowadays in most instances during a family crisis, the wife returns home to her parents to report about the happening. Either her parents accompany her back to her husband, but extract from him a promise that he will be good from now on and not abandon or beat his wife or else they, the parents would get their daughter back; or the daughter stays at her parents' home and the parents wait for the husband to come and get his wife. Again, the parents before yielding their daughter to her husband make him pledge better treatment and relationship between him and his wife.

The following are two alternating songs depicting parental intervention in the quarrels of their children. In the first one the parents are quite hard with the husband to the extent that they not only threaten him with the infliction of physical punishment but also with the getting back of their daughter. The second one, however, depicts parents cooling off the two from the heat of their argument by admonishing and advising them about the ups and downs of married life.

*Balitao Sa Paglaban Sa Ginikanan Sa
Ilang Anak nga Minyo*

AMAHAN: *Unsay gitugon ko kanimo, Antonio,
Nga dili mo pasipad-an ang anak ko;
Kay kon wala kana kaniya'y gusto,
Ayaw kahadlok sa pag-uli sa mga kamot ko.*

*Angay nimo kining himbaw-an
Wala ako makasamad sa iyang balatian,
Kay kon imo gani si Pasing nga pasipad-an,
Tadtaron ko ikaw sa akong sundang.*

INAHAN : *Isulti ko usab kini kanimo
Ayaw kanamo pagtinunto,
Kon dili ka gani patu-o,
Makatilaw kana gayud ug santako.*

*Human baya ako kanimo magsulti
Sa imo nga pagka lalake,
Kon mao kanunay imong buhaton
Si Pasing ako gayu'ng kuha-on.*

*The Translation—Parents Intervene in
the Quarrels of their Children*

FATHER : Did I not tell you, Antonio
That you should not abandon my daughter
For if you have grown tired of her,
Do not hesitate to return her to my care.

Please be it known to you
That I have never hurt her feelings,
So, if you would ever neglect my daughter
I will cut you into pieces with this bolo.

MOTHER : I am also telling you this:
Never to commit any foul play with us
But if you will not take heed
Perhaps it is my punch on your nose which
you need.

I have repeatedly reminded you
Of your being a vicious man;
But if you persist in doing what you have often
done,
I will surely get back my daughter from you.

*Balitao Sa Pagtambag Ug Pagmaymay
Sa Magtiayon*

INAHAN : *Unsa man kaninyo ing nahinabo,
Nga ingon man kami ug nahibulong
Nga dugay na man nga kamo nagminyo
Na lain man sa among pagsud-ong?*

BANA : *Ikaw amo man nga ginikanan
Ako kanimo karon ang magsubay*

*Ni Pasing ako gipangabubho-an
Hangtud karon wa ako'y kalipay.*

*Kanang iya kanakong gipasangil,
Wa siya'y mga kamatuoran;
Ug makatupad ako ug babaye,
Iya dayon akong kasab-an.*

AMAHAN: *Dili ba kana tinuod
Nga imo nga nabuhat?
Itug-an ayaw paglimodlimod,
Aron sa dautan dili kamo modangat.*

*Kini kay inyo mang gituyo-an,
Inyo lamang nga antuson,
Mao gayud ang magpuyo sa kalibutan,
Ang kalipay ug kasubo atong pas-anon.*

INAHAN : *Ang maayo karon ninyong buhaton,
Sa ingon kaninyong nanagpuyo;
Ang dautan dili na lang patulinon,
Aron sa kaayohan kamo mosangko.*

*Kon kanunay kini ninyong hisgutan,
Mao kana'y makasamok;
Maayo pang inyong hingkalmotan,
Aron sa dautan kamo malimot.*

AMAHAN: *Biya-i ninyo ang mga dautan,
Hingpita ang duha ninyo ka kinabuhi,
Batoni ang imong gipanumpa
Aron kamo adunay kaputli.*

ASAWA : *Dili gayud mahimo,
Buhaton ko gayud ang dautan;
Kay kining akong sentimiento,
Hangtud sa akong lubnganan.*

*Kining akong mga panumpa,
Wa na ako kaniya'y pagbati;
Magdapat ang langit ug yuta,
Nga dili ako kaniya makig-uli.*

AMAHAN: *Wa ako'y lain nga ikasulti kaninyo
Mahitungod sa inyong kaminyo-on;
Nga inyong biya-an ang panagbingkil
Ug magpuyo kamong malinawon.*

*The Translation—Parents Advising Their
Married Children*

MOTHER : What is wrong between you two?
We are quite astonished and would like to know.
Although you have lived together quite long,
We sense that there must be something wrong.

HUSBAND: Since you are our parents,
I will tell you everything then;
That Pasing has accused me of infidelity,
That is why I am not happy.

What she has accused me of,
She does not have the least proof;
Even if I could only sit beside a girl,
She would at once scold me for it.

FATHER : So it is not true,
That you have done what you are accused of?
Now without faltering tell the truth,
So that nothing disgraceful would befall you.

Since you entered into this state of life,
You have to bear the brunt of it;
For to live in this world of strife,
We must share in the happiness and sorrows of it.

MOTHER : The best thing for you to do,
Who are starting life anew;
Is to give the devil no headway,
So that in virtue and goodness you stay.

If you would oftentimes make mention of your
bickerings,
It would be the very source of trouble;

It would be much better to forget them,
So of unpleasant things you will not be reminded.

FATHER : Leave out the bad things behind,
Hold dear and fast your two lives;
Be faithful and true to your promises,
So that you may live pure and virtuous lives.

WIFE : No! that will never do,
For I will do what is baleful;
For this grief that I bear
Will lead me on to my grave.

This pledge which I have made,
That I have no more love for him;
Heaven and earth may meet,
But never will I reconcile with him.

FATHER : This is my last advice to you,
Regarding your married state of life;
That you bury your dissensions and enmities,
So that you will live in harmony and peace.

IV. Visayan Attitude and Ideals as Reflected in the Balitao

In the *balitao* we find a spontaneous and informal expression of the Visayans' real nature and spirit. In it are embodied the sentiments, attitudes, and ideals of a happy but slightly fatalistic people, especially of those living in primitive abodes where endemic peculiarities have not been rubbed off by civilizing forces. The Visayans' cheerful acceptance of life has always been tinged with a spirit of fatalism handed down to him from his ancestors who were probably descendants of the earliest immigrants from Cambodia, Indo-China, Java and India.²⁰ Born a stoic, he believes in the basic idea that "destiny wills it" which gives not only the Visayans, but the Filipinos in general, the

20) Gregorio Zaide, *The Philippines Since Pre-Spanish Times* (Manila: R. P. Garcia Publishing Co., 1949), pp. 52-56.

ability to accept sorrow and pain, toil and trouble with fortitude. This social outlook on life runs through many instances in the alternating songs that will follow.

The religious beliefs and the social relationships of the early Visayans also find expression in the *balitao*. In fact Blair and Robertson quotes: "All their religion is based on tradition and custom and is handed down in songs."²¹

Towards hardships in marriage. The early Visayans were always conscious of the fact that married life is fraught with difficulties, troubles and sorrows; yet they also upheld that marriage is indissoluble, so the couple must resolve to overcome these obstacles with determination and optimism as the following alternative song shows:

Balitao Sa Kapait Sa Kaminyoon

LALAKE: *Kining ako karong pagtindug,
Wala ko dad-a ang kasina;
Maayong gabi-i mga higala,
Kaninyong tanan nga ania.*

BABAYE: *Dason sa kang Antonio
Maayong gabi-i kaninyo
Ug kami karon magayubit
Sa among mga kasakit.*

LALAKE: *Ug kon dapit man kini ugaling,
Sa kasakit ang atong pinuy-anan;
Tug-anan ta sa mga salingsing,
Aron masayud ang kalibutan.*

*Ayao lang kahadlok sa pagtug-an,
Sa mga kasakit nga atong gibati;
Kay maoy balaod sa kinaiyahan,
Ang paglaban sa atong mga mithi.*

21) Blair and Robertson, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

BABAYE: *Ning mga kaguol dili ako manumbaling,
Ang kalisdanan asdangon sa dakung kasibut;
Kay kon kawad-an sa kaisug ang kasing-kasing
Mapukan sa bung-aw sa mga kadaut.*

*Ang mga mata itutok sa unahan,
Dili palinga nianang mga kalingawan;
Ang palad mopahiyum ug kita dan-agan,
Sa himaya ug kabuhong sa mga kakulian.*

LALAKE: *Pasagdi nga mokatawa ang mga tawo,
Aron lang pagsulay sa atong mga kasakit;
Ang tawo nga kanato nag ga-o ga-o,
Karon nag antus usab sa dakung kangitngit.*

*Ang kalibutan atong pabation,
Sa bulawanong damgo ug mga mithi;
Sa dughan tang subo padila-abon,
Ang kainit sa tinguha nga atong gipili.*

BABAYE: *Ang tawo gibahin sa duha ka pundok,
Maayo ug dautan mao ang mga latid;
Kon sa mga kalisdanan kita dili mahadlok,
Ato ang kadaugan kon makatkat ang bakilid.*

LALAKE: *Duha ka matang ang tawo ning kalibutan,
Bahandianon nga tugob sa kalipayan;
Dunay timawa ug kabus nga dili samahan,
Sa kapalaran sila gigantihan.*

BABAYE: *Mao kana ang balaod sa kinaiyahan,
Kon kita molihok, sa kabuhian hatagan,
Kay kon ma-antus ta ang kasakitan,
Kang Bathala kita pagatabangan.*

*Ingon niini ang kalibutan,
Dili magsalig sa karon nga madawat;
Kon dili ta manlimbasug sa kalisdanan,
Ang kabulahanan dili kanato modangat.*

LALAKE: *Ug kon buot kita magmalampuson,
Sa kaayohan ug tingusbawan;*

*Ang managyangid dili maka bangon,
Ug maulaw magsud-ong sa kalibutan.*

BABAYE: *Ang unahan lamang lantawa,
Ug ang kahimtang ta usab sud-onga;
Human sa atong mga kasakitan,
Maangkon ta usab ang tumang kahimaya-an.*

*The Translation—Visayan Attitude
Towards Hardship in Marriage*

MAN : As I stand here in your presence,
I do not have the least shadow of malice;
Good evening to you all, my friends,
And to every one who is here present.

WOMAN: In compliment to Antonio's
Good evening to all of you;
We will now lay bare before you,
Our many troubles and cares.

MAN : If inevitably, this be a counterpart,
Of the vale of tears where we are living;
Let us share each other's petty cares,
So that the world would come to be aware.

Fear not to reveal everything,
The many vicissitudes we encounter;
For it is but a part of the natural law,
To stand for and safeguard our virtues.

WOMAN: I will not succumb to these afflictions,
I would even meet difficulties with zeal;
For if the heart be drained of courage,
It naturally falls into the pit of evil.

Let us fix our gaze ahead,
Let us not be tempted by worldly pleasures;
Fortune will smile and heap on us,
Joys and contentment by every circumstances.

MAN : Heed not the ridicules of the people,
For they are made to try men's souls;
The men who have mocked and despised us,
Are themselves suffering from want of enlighten-
ment.

Let us make the world feel,
The golden dreams and aspirations;
Let us set our sad hearts ablaze,
With the fervor of our chosen desires.

WOMAN: Mankind is roughly divided into two groups
One group is good and the other evil.
If by trials and hardships we are not afraid,
Victory is ours if the heights are scaled.

MAN : In this world there are two classes of people;
The rich who have all the pleasures they want
And there are those who are poor and unfortunate;
Who are not blessed by Fortune's rich gifts.

WOMAN: Such is the natural law
That if we work, we will surely live;
For if we can all the hardships bear,
God will to us His blessings give.

This is the way of the world,
We should not depend entirely on present earnings;
For if we do not strive to overcome obstacles,
Hardly would Fortune and Luck be nigh.

MAN : If we wish to be successful,
In righteousness and prosperity;
Revilers and slanderers shall not more rise,
But in shame they shall look at the world.

WOMAN: Let us then look forward into the future,
But forget not to keep an eye on our present;
For after the surging tempest of difficulties,
Greatest joys and blessings could be ours.

Towards a virtuous life. The following song gives us an idea of the early Cebuano's attitude towards a hard but virtuous

life in preference to a life of dishonorable ease. The song further embodies the Cebuanos' hatred towards the wealthy and therefore powerful few who try to muffle the rights of the less privileged people. Of course nothing can be done further than imploring the Almighty to awaken in them Christian charity so they could extend social justice to all.

*Balitao Sa Mga Mithi Nga Gimanggad
Sa Mga Sugbuanon*

LALAKE: *Ang pagpuyo ta niining kalibutan,
Ang kaligdong ato gayung pagamatngonan;
Walay sapayan ug magsukarap sa kangitngitan,
Basta bahandianon ang atong kadungganan.*

BABAYE: *Ang kamapaubsanon ug pagka mabination,
Mao kanunay atong pagasapnayon;
Ang panagtinahuray ug ang panag-angay,
Haduol da kanato ang mga kalipay.*

LALAKE: *Ang kalo-oy maoy hiyas nga langitnon,
Ang kalomo maoy labing bililhon;
Kon kining tanan atong maangkon,
Ihatag usab kanato ang grasyang Diyosnon.*

BABAYE: *Maoy matam-is sa kinabuhi,
Kon malinis lang ang kadungganan;
Mao kini ang atong bahandi,
Nga dili gayud paghingkalimtan.*

*Ang tawo hino-ong maantuson,
Malagmit gayud ang kaayohan;
Sa kalipay kanunay'ng hadla-on,
Aron pagdimdim sa katam-isan.*

LALAKE: *Matam-is usab nga tagamtamon,
Kon ang kalinaw maoy paharion;
Bathala sa gugma Niyang langitnon,
Makahupay sa dughan tang masulob-on.*

*Si Bathala mao ang maglilipay,
Siya ang mohatag sa hingpit nga kahusay,*

*Ang kahilayan Iyang pagasilhigan,
Kay siya mao may labing gamhanan.*

*The Translation—Virtues Held
Dear by Cebuanos*

MAN : In this way of life in this world,
Honor must be highly esteemed and safeguarded;
Never mind if we grope our way in the dark,
Provided that we are rich in honor.

WOMAN: To be humble and to be charitable,
Are two virtues worth holding dear,
To respect each other and to get along together,
Keeps happiness always and forever near.

MAN : Charity is a virtue heaven-sent,
Mercy is a quality treasured dear,
If we could on all these lay claim,
God will His abundant graces shower.

WOMAN: The sweetest thing in life,
Is when our honor is pure and untarnished,
For this constitutes a priceless wealth,
Which could never be relinquished.

A man who knows how to bear sufferings,
Is most likely to meet with success;
Happiness constantly tickles him
To make him drink from the cup of sweetness.

MAN : It is also sweet to live,
If peace reigns supreme;
God will with His heavenly love,
Soothe the overburdened heart.

God is our sole Comforter,
The Giver of everlasting peace;
He sweeps the world of evils,
For He is All-knowing and Omnipotent.

Towards the proud and haughty. The Visayan by nature is courteous and respectful especially to his superiors. He is extremely sensible to kind treatment but is also feelingly alive to injustice or contempt. He hates the proud and the haughty, but since he can not do anything about it he only implores Divine Providence to make them conscious that they are but dust and therefore to dust they will return. This attitude is embodied in the song that follows:

*Balitao—Ang Tawong Mapahitas-on
Ug Mapalabilabihon*

LALAKE: *Kon ang tanlag harian sa damgong mahakugon,
Dili mobati ug kalo-oy sa mga mahisukamod;
Ug alang sa mga tawong maghimo sa ingon,
Sa kaparotan usab sila inud-nud.*

BABAYE: *Kawang lamang ang pagpalabilabi,
Ning silong sa langit nga atong gipuy-an;
Kay wala'y mogamot nato ning kalibutan,
Kabus ug adunahan sa yuta pagatabunan.*

*Sa kalibutan walay butang dumalayon,
Ang tanan pauli sa dakung kangitngit;
Ug kon dunay dili mahiagum sa kamatayon,
Mao da ang kahayag nga makita sa langit.*

LALAKE: *Hinaut nga ang mapahitas-on lamdagan,
Nga magma-aghup ang ilang balatian;
Ang pagpanlupig unta hing kalimtan,
Kay ang kinabuhi ta ato man lang inuslan.*

BABAYE: *Bisan unsa usab nato kabahandianon,
Kon anaa kanato ang ka madaug-daugon,
Wala gihapoy bili ug kapuslanan,
Sa kahitas-an usab kita pagasilotan.*

*Pagkanindot unta nga tan-awon,
Kon ang katawhan usab manag-angay;
Wala madaug-daugon ug malupigon,
Kita tugob sa tumang mga kalipay.*

*The Translation—Attitude Towards
The Proud and Haughty*

MAN : If selfish dreams shall overpower conscience,
There will be no more feeling of mercy for the
fallen;
And for those people who would practice such,
In utter misfortune they would be dashed against.

WOMAN: To be proud and haughty is but in vain,
Under these skies in which we live;
For nobody will stay in this world immortal,
Rich and poor alike will return to dust.

In this world nothing stays everlasting,
Everything returns to nothingness;
If ever there's one who knows no death,
'Tis only the light that one beholds in the sky.

MAN : We hope that the proud and haughty will realize,
That they may become more tender in feelings
That they may forget to take advantage of others,
For this life of ours is only borrowed from Him.

WOMAN: Even though how wealthy we may be,
If we are unkind and have no charity;
Everything will just go to naught,
For He up above gives the judgment.

How beautiful it would be to see!
If all the people live in concord and harmony,
There would be no corruption and tyranny,
And happiness would fill the hearts of men.

Towards love of money. The ancient Visayans were not as materialistic as we are today. To them greed and covetousness for gold and riches especially if they are done the illegitimate way are shameful and blameworthy. They believed that love for material wealth should be transient and secondary. We read this attitude in the stanzas of the *balitao* that follows:

Balitao sa Hangol Ug Bulawan

BABAYE: *Kaulit ug kahangol sa bulawan,
Kinalimtan ang dungog nga giampingan,
Bisan mahulog sa bung-aw sa kaulawan,
Dili sapayan basta ang tanan matuman.*

*Apan ang salapi baya ug bulawan,
Sa takulahaw lamang mawagtang,
Sama nga ang kahumot sa bulak mahanaw,
Mangalarag gayud sa kainit sa adlaw.*

LALAKE: *Unsaon man nato ang bulawan,
Kon nagkalapok ang iyang kagikan;
Mao lamang unyay pagahisgutan,
Ang kaagi sa atong kaliwatan.*

*Wala na untay matahum nga handumanan
Dinhi sa ibabaw sa kalibutan
Kon sa kadungganan lamang mag-amping,
Ang maayong buhat magpabilin sa kasing-kasing.*

BABAYE: *Ang tawo pagatahuron diay lamang,
Kon siya usa ka adunahan;
Apan kon usa intawon ka alaut,
Siya mapuno sa panghimaraut.*

LALAKE: *Ang tawo bisan walay kaalam,
Basta siya usa ka adunahan;
Himbaw-an na nimong daan,
Siya inila gayud sa katilingban.*

*Ang makapahimong tawo ning kinabuhi,
Kon kita adunay bahandi;
Apan kon kita walay salapi,
Wala gayud kanatoy molingi.*

BABAYE: *Angay man gani untang tabangan,
Ang manag-antus sa mga kapaitan;
Apan inay malooy ang adunahan,
Ila hinoong inudnud sa kadautan.*

LALAKE: *Mao kana ang matang sa katawhan,
Nga karon atong makita;
Abi anaa man sila sa maayong kahimtang,
Gipakaingon ug sila nalay Bathala.*

BABAYE: *Kay unsaon man nato ang bahandi,
Dayandayan man lan ning kinabuhi;
Kay didto unya sa laing kalibutan,
Ang tanan magsama man ang kahimtang.*

*The Translation—Visayan Attitude
Towards Love of Money*

WOMAN: Greed and selfishness for gold and riches!
Forgetting and casting aside honor which had been
valued!
Though he falls into the pit of shame,
It doesn't matter provided his cravings are fulfilled.

But bear in mind, that money and gold,
By the wink of an eye, maybe lost;
Like unto the fragrance of the flower gone,
Welts and falls because of the heat of the sun.

MAN : Then of what use is gold to us,
If it has been from the mire of dishonor taken?
It would just be a good subject for gossip,
And the infamous history of our lineage.

There is nothing fonder for recollection,
In this beautiful world of ours;
That to value and treasure one's honor,
For only the good deeds remain with the heart
forever.

WOMAN: So a person is respected only,
If he has much property and money;
But if he be a miserable one,
He would just be full of reproof and censure.

MAN : A man though unlettered and uncultured,
 Provided he has wealth to squander;
 (Oh! you know it already.)
 That he is known and popular in society.

So that which makes a man in this life,
 Is wealth in money or property to spare;
 But if we do not have a penny to spend,
 Nobody would ever cast a glance at us.

WOMAN: It would have been more praiseworthy to help,
 Those that are suffering the bitterness of life;
 But instead of extending mercy to the poor,
 The rich usually pin them down to misery, the
 more.

MAN : These are the kinds of people
 That nowadays we find,
 Thinking that they are already on top,
 They presume that they have become our God.

WOMAN: For what is wealth after all,
 But an ornament in this life?
 When in the next world where we all go,
 Everybody is levelled to the same conditions.

The envious neighbor. The Visayan does not like an envious neighbor. To him, he who looks through the green or yellow veil of jealousy, does not have any peace of mind and worst still is that he looks with no merit at the actions of his fellowmen. He condemns such kinds of people in this alternating song that follows:

Balitao—Ang Masinahon Ug Mayubiton

LALAKE: *Ang mga tunob sa mga malampuson,
 Maoy salamin nga ila kanatong gibilin;
 Ayaw panumbalinga'ng buhat mo tamayon,
 Sa mga tawong masinahon ug wa'y kasingsing.*

BABAYE: *Ang mga mayubiton pasaylo-a ug hingkalimti,
Pagkasayop, kinaiya; pagpasaylo maoy kaaghop;
Kay kining mga butanga dili ug dili magbali,
Kaligdong ang molungtad, magdayon ug mosantop.*

LALAKE: *Ang tawo nga magbaton ug kasina,
Walay kahusay ang kaisipan;
Sa dughan mawala ang paghigugma,
Ug sa kasilag gayud pagahulipan.*

*Diha sa kasina anha magasugod,
Ang kahanawan sa panagdait;
Ang tawo mahimong walay puangod,
Kon sa kasilag makiglambigit.*

BABAYE: *Bisan pag maligdong ang mga buhat,
Sa tawo nga buot nila kasilagan;
Kon ang kasina na gani ang moaghat,
Ang katarung lamang hingkalimtan.*

*Kay ang kasina igso-on sa kasilag,
Maoy sakit nga minugna sa kaligutgot;
Sila sa kalinaw maoy magbungkag,
Kon kasinahan sa higalang sandurot.*

*The Translation—Attitude Towards the
Envious and Jealous Neighbor*

MAN : Footprints of great and successful men,
Are examples that they have left for us to follow;
So heed not those who despise your work,
For they are envious and heartless fellows.

WOMAN: Forgive and forget those jealous gossipers
To sin is human; to forgive divine;
This two should never be interchanged,
To make righteousness triumph and prosper in the
end.

MAN : A man who harbors the feeling of envy,
Has no peace of mind, no not any;

From the heart all loving thought would disappear,
And is replaced by hatred and jealous anger.

From out of envy would commence,
The disappearance of peace and understanding,
And man would be no better than a brute,
If with jealousy he aligns himself.

WOMAN: Though the work done by a person,
Whom they have an envious eye for is admirable;
If it is jealousy that forces and compels,
What is rightful and true is just forgotten.

For jealousy is the twin sister of envy,
They are maladies born out of hate;
They break up whatever peace there is,
Especially when a friend is envied even by a close
friend.

On the dignity of labor. The Visayans uphold the nobleness there is in work. To them, work is God-given and therefore should be embraced with the spirit of calm reservation and dignity as the following song portrays:

Balitao—Ang Pagkugi Ug Pagmahal Sa Buhat

LALAKE: *Ang kinabuhi puno gayud sa pagtulon-an
Dili sama sa panganod nga ipadpad;
Kay kon ang tawo magkugi lamang,
Ni Bathala siya pagatabangan.*

*Kita gipakatawo aron mabuhi,
Aron pagsunod sa tanang pagtulon-an,
Kon wala kitay hiyas sa pagbati,
Masagubang ta ang mga kasakitan.*

BABAYE: *Kinahanglan molihok ug manlimbasug
Sa pagbating maligdong magpaabut
Mag-antus, mag-pailub sa kaaghop,
Isalikway ang katalaw ug kataspok.*

*Ang pakigbugno sa kalisdanan sa kinabuhi,
Dili gamiton ang mga paaging tinalaw;
Mobarog aron pagdaug sa mga mithi,
Dili sa usa ka paaging tinaphaw.*

LALAKE: *Ang buhat bisan unsa ka talamayon,
Hinono-a makapahimo natong dungganan,
Labi na ug magbaton sa dakung kaligdong
Mao kanay puhonan sa atong kaugmaon.*

The Translation—Attitude on the Dignity of Labor

- MAN : Life is indeed full of lessons,
Unlike the fleecy clouds that are drifted by;
For if man would only labor industriously,
God would help him in his endeavors.
- We were born in order to live,
To serve God and obey His teachings,
But if we lack the blessed gift of love,
We would likely encounter hardships and troubles.
- WOMAN: It is necessary that we work and strive,
For a love of the true and virtuous we must await;
Be patient in suffering and humble in clemency,
Disregard cowardice and indolent spirit.
- In our daily encounters with the difficulties in
this life,
Let us not use the cowardly way;
Be firm so that the virtues would triumph,
Not in the hypocritical and pretentious way.
- MAN : Work, though how base and lowly it is
Maketh a man respectable and dignified,
Most especially if he maintains his uprightness.
That would be laying for himself treasures for
the coming days.

V. Occupational Activities of the Early Cebuanos
in the Balitao

The *balitao* of the early Cebuanos reflects to an amazing degree the simple activities of their daily lives. Many of these songs are closely linked with the agricultural life of the people. The other occupations of the people also found expression in

the *balitao*. The hardship of labor and the difficulties of their various tasks were often in their minds. Apparently, a certain amount of relief was afforded them by singing of the things that they had to do.

Farming. Many of the songs that a Visayan sings is closely linked with his agricultural life; this being the typical life most Visayan live. The Visayan feels that his life is directly dependent upon the gifts of nature so he sings of his crops and also his joys and pains in this life activity as this song shows:

Balitao sa Mag-ooma

LALAKE: *Kita ang magtiayon nga kabus,
Sa kalisud naga antus,
Gipapasan sa krus,
Ang kinabuhi nagbubaliktos.*

BABAYE: *Mao gayud ang mag-o-oma
Sa baol maglibot-libot,
Matapus na lamang ang semana,
Sa pagbugwal sa mga sagbut.

Apan ayaw baya pagmahay,
Kay sa oma anak ta maka estudyo;
Sa dili karon madugay,
May anak na kitang abogado.*

LALAKE: *Tuod no, nailhan na man,
Kitang tanan dinhi sa Sugbo,
Tungod kay ang atong mga anak,
Nakabaton ug grado sa atong pag-agak.

Busa, maayo diay ang mag-o-oma,
Kay bisan ug magkalisud-lisud,
Apan daghan diay ug kuarta,
Sama sa mosuhot sa bungsod.*

BABAYE: *Nakasabut kana ba, Indong,
Niining atong kahimtang,
Puriso ayaw na pangita ug lain,
Kay ang oma dili ta gayud biyaan.*

An Alternating Song of A Farmer's Life

MAN : We are a poor couple
 Enduring the hardships of life,
 Made to bear our daily crosses
 And grappling with life's forces.

WOMAN: So this is the life of a farmer,
 By and about our field we move;
 Week in and week out we find ourselves,
 Tilling the soil and weeding our field.

But let us not regret our choice,
 For by our field we have educated our children;
 It will not be long from now,
 When we shall have a full-fledged lawyer.

MAN : In fact we have been known,
 By many here in our town;
 Because our children have all been educated,
 Through our painstaking guidance.

Therefore it is blessed to be a farmer,
 For even if he appears hard-up,
 The truth is that he has much cash,
 Coming in like fish into the corral.

WOMAN: Now do you understand, Pedro
 About this blessed state of ours;
 Therefore waste no time seeking another job,
 For we will never abandon this—our farm.

Tuba gathering. Another activity commonly indulged in by a Visayan is *tuba*-gathering. This is typically Visayan as people in Luzon do not practice such an occupation. *Tuba* is a native Visayan drink obtained from the sap of a coconut bud mixed with a certain tan bark. The *tuba* gatherer climbs the coconut tree once in the morning and another time in the afternoon to collect the gathered sap. While he is up in the tree he sings of his work, his joys as well as his troubles as the *balitao* that follows shows:

Balitao Sa Manananggot

LALAKE: *Ako ang manananggot,
Sa lubi kanunay'ng nagsaka;
Giyamiran sa mga babaye,
Kay pulos ako kono mansa.*

*Kubalon ako'g samput,
Adlaw ug gabi-i sa lubi nagsaka,
Apan hinlo nga walay sagbut
Kining ako Inday nga gugma.*

BABAYE: *Walay sagbut nga makita,
Kanang imong gugma,
Tungod sa kamansahon mo'g pangita,
Wala ka gihapo'y asawa.*

*Molikay kami kanimo
Kay mahadlok ug hitakdan
Kay nabulit man sa mansa
Ang imong kalawasan.*

LALAKE: *Ug dili diay ako mobiya
Niining pangitaa,
Bisan tabunan ako sa yuta,
Dili makatilaw ug asawa.*

*Apan lisud tingaling biya-an
Kining pangita naku,
Kay pagbuot man sa kahitas-an,
Nga maoy ilang gitudlo.*

An Alternating Song Of A Tuba-Gatherer's Life

MAN : I am a *tuba* gatherer,
Who climbs the coconut tree everyday;
Snobbed and shunned by the ladies
For I am dirty and full of stain, they say.

The skin around my loins have thickened,
For day and night I climb the coconut tree,

But pure, spotless and without blemish
Is my love for you, young lady.

WOMAN: Yes, no spot or blemish could I see,
In that love you profess for me;
But because of your stainful occupation,
Until now no wife have you for yourself won.

We run away from you
For fear that you would contaminate us;
For you are all smeared with stain,
All around your bodily frame.

MAN : So if I do not change,
This my very occupation;
Though earth shall cover me then,
I can never a wife for me win.

But I think it is hard for me,
To leave this means of livelihood;
For it is to me Heaven sent,
And the very one for me meant.

Fishing. The Visayan Islands are spaciouly separated from each other by shallow shelves of gulfs, bays or seas which abound in fishlife. Naturally fishing is second only to farming as an industry of Visayans. People along the coastal towns depend for their livelihood on this occupation. Here in this song that follows a fisherman lamentably sings of the hard life he leads at sea and yet what he gets for his catch is never enough even for the bare necessities of life:

Balitao Sa Mananagat

LALAKE: *Ako ang mangingisda,
Dagat ang akong pinuy-anan,
Mao ray akong pangita,
Sa adlaw ngatanan.*

*Ang akong makuha
Katambak ug tanguigui
Ug akong ibaligya
Mahalin dayon bisa'g pila'y bili.*

BABAYE: *Mahalin dayon ang imong isda,
Apan igo rang imong gastohon;
Wala kay kuarta'ng makita,
Kay dili man matigum.*

*Kay usikan ka man kaayo
Walay kuarta nga matigum
Kanang pangita nimo
Igo ra sa imong pagkaon.*

LALAKE: *Tinuod bitao, ambut ug hain,
Nga igo ra mang magasto,
Makapangita tingali ako'g lain,
Ug maminyo ako kanimo.*

*Giantus ko kining panagat,
Nga maoy akong pangita;
Kay wala pa may mosugat,
Sa akong makuha nga isda.*

BABAYE: *Kanang imong pangita,
Pangasawa usab ug manginginhas;
Aron wala kaninyo'y bintaha,
Ug ang inyong panghunahuna magkaparihas.*

An Alternating Song of A Fisherman's Life

MAN : I am a fisherman,
The sea is my home,
'Tis my only occupation,
Day in and day out.

What I catch the oftener
Are Spanish mackerels and red snappers²²

22) Visayan term *tanguigue* is Spanish mackerel in English—scientific name *Ranzaina makua*; *katambak* is red snapper in English. *Lutianus sanguineus* is its scientific name. Albert W. Herre and Agustin Umali, *English and Local Common Names of Philippine Fishes*, Circular 14, United States Department of Interior Fish and Wild Life Service, p. 54.

And if I would peddle these
They readily sell irrespective of the price.

WOMAN: Your fish could be sold at once,
But what you get is just enough to spend,
You have no money to save,
For it is difficult to accumulate.

For you are too much a spendthrift
So your money you can't accumulate
Besides your occupation brings in only
Enough money for your daily bread.

MAN : 'Tis true, and I don't know why
The money I earn is just enough to be spent,
I may perhaps land myself in another job.
If your hand you'd give to me in marriage.

I have borne the brunt of fishing,
Being the only occupation I have;
Since nobody is there to meet,
Whatever catch I may be able to have.

WOMAN: In that occupation of yours,
You should also marry a shell gatherer,
So that both of you would stand on the same level
And so would your thoughts also run parallel.

This chapter closes its expose on the different phases of Visayan culture and folklife as are embodied in the *balitao* the most representative of Cebuano folksongs. In it are mirrored not only the activities, the feelings and reactions of the simple folk to their environment, but also their loves, ideals and their naive interpretations of the phenomenon of nature. As a matter of fact it may be said that there was hardly an experience of life or a factor in the environment that did not find expression in this type of song.

CHAPTER V

THE BALITAO IN CONTEMPORARY VISAYAN CULTURE

The *balitao* as an autochthonously Visayan folksong has long been submerged in obscurity due to the impact of Western influences on culture, thought and entertainment. These Occidental influences have not only transformed the native arts, but also affected fundamental ideas, as well as the way of giving expression to the feelings of the Visayan soul. The change had been to such an extent that native songs were put aside and native ways and ideas appeared as mere vague reminiscences of a remote past.

The Japanese occupation. Some years before the Pearl Harbor incident, the spirit of renaissance was just sweeping along the Philippine shores and some enthusiastic scholars were digging up the past to study Philippine culture and art in their pristine forms. The work of these scholars was centered mostly in Luzon for, unluckily enough, war broke out before the work could be carried further to the Visayan Islands. Despite this, the last carnage, World War II, did some service to the native arts and culture in so far as it weaned the Filipinos, especially the Cebuanos (here in Cebu the army carried out its "scorched-earth policy") for almost five years from everything Western that they were used to, such as: foodstuff, clothing, forms of entertainment, and luxury. The population in Cebu retreated to the hills and the remotest barrios in order to escape from Japanese tyranny, but more especially to avoid being marked out by the guerrillas as collaborators of the then puppet government in the Islands. So, rich and poor alike had to experience living the life of the simple country folk, to share in their fun and forms of entertainment, to listen to their songs and folktales, and to observe their superstitious and religious rites of planting and harvesting. During this period the city populace who did not understand and some who even shunned the simple ways and practices of the country folk realized that after all

these simple people were entitled to their naivete and simplicity. Through this long contact with the rural folk, the city people eventually came to understand and even learn the folkways of the mountain people. From this understanding and knowledge developed love and appreciation for the old folk traditions; for after all, are these traditions not also theirs basically?

Though this period was marked by anxiety and fear of the Japanese who might at any unguarded moment come up to the hills to annihilate the guerrillas, still the mixed populace of basically rural folk and the city evacuees found time to come together for fiesta celebrations or harvest gatherings. The *balitao* was often the highlight of the entertainment. A *balitao* couple entertained the gathering with their witty exchange of verses while they danced around to the tune of an old harp and the click of the castanets. The barrio's crude string band entertained the crowd occasionally with its plaintive and pastoral *balitao* airs.

Even then the Cebuanos never forgot their favorite pastime. In some out-of-the-way places the men came together to gamble both time and money away. Cockfighting was enjoyed not only by the male but also by the female species. Even in this infamous assembly, the *balitao* was not a stranger. Usually in one or the other corner a game of betting called *dejado* was going on. The *dejadista* had to sing the *balitao* in order to attract players. She sang while she manipulated her cards and dice. If any man in the crowd knew the *balitao*, he would respond to the *dejadista* and they sang alternately until one of them was exhausted. Usually it was the man who gave up, for the *dejadista* is a veteran in her trade. Sometimes unchallenged, the *dejadista* sang alone addressing the onlookers and inviting them to bet on her art. She sang as she moved about in her game while the players lost their money to her. *Dejado* was a common game wherever a crowd was assembled.

Those war years, indeed, brought the city folk to the rural setting of whatever traditions their forebears had left behind. There was no way out.. The *balitao* had completely won over the esteem and love of the evacuees for the almost lost art of the past.

The American liberation period. Post liberation days swept the Visayan off his feet; for, what they had missed for some years came back with the liberation forces. The American jazz

and boogie were everywhere around and even little children whistled and sang them, so the sad and melancholic *balitao* was relegated to the background once more.

However, after the American soldiers rolled up their last tent to leave the Philippines to the Filipinos, the people woke up from the dream of everything American or Occidental, and began to gather up what little fragments of things native were left in the dust.

The drama-balitao. The *balitao* was picked up again but in a modified form. Instead of just a couple dancing and singing the *balitao* alternately, it graduated into a drama *balitao*, which is, as the name suggests, a combination of a drama and a *balitao*.

Several innovations were introduced by the change. The drama-*balitao* necessitated a stage with properties such as: a backdrop, a drop curtain and room furnishings unlike the plain *balitao* which could be danced anywhere. The cast was increased to more than two although the *balitao* couple were still the chief characters. A story had to be woven around a theme unlike the plain *balitao* in which no story is told but only a theme is argued about. The dramatic parts were acted and the words were spoken while the lyrical parts were sung by the couple.

This new form of the *balitao* recaptured whatever waning interest there was left among the people for the *balitao*. They became interested anew in this aspect of the *balitao* so that it again was a popular form of entertainment during social gatherings. The same *balitao* dancers were the organizers of this drama-*balitao*, and here and there during barrio or town fiestas, they entertained the barrio or town people with their art. They charged from fifty to a hundred pesos for a night's performance depending upon the theme asked for, which also determined the stage properties and number of characters needed. Transportation, board and lodging were taken care of by the committee in charge of social activities for that town or barrio inviting them. The money paid out to the *balitao* troupe was taken from a general contribution of the community for the fiesta expenses, so everybody in the community saw the drama-*balitao* without charge. It must be noted however, that the audience was composed mostly of old people, and children for, as usual, the young men and women preferred the dance to it.

Repeating the story of its predecessor, the drama-*balitao* could not stay to hold the interest of the public. Its music was

monotonous, its themes ran practically along the same vein, the movements of the dancers were stereotyped, and the story had no variations, so that some of those in the audience would even foretell what would happen next as the play moved on. So, naturally the drama-*balitao* was consigned to the background of the moving pictures and other forms of entertainment.

Radio programs sponsoring the balitao. In 1948, the radio picked up the almost abandoned art, and watered the withering interest there was left among the Visayans for the *balitao*. The Philippine Manufacturing Company sponsored a thirty-minute *balitao* program over station D.Y.R.C. in Cebu City every Saturday evening at eight-thirty to nine o'clock. This program which was started in February, 1948, was discontinued in June, 1950.

After a lapse of four years the San Miguel Brewery revived the *balitao* in a program it sponsored called the Mid-Week Jamboree. It was on the air every Wednesday from seven o'clock to seven thirty in the evening. This radio program which started on August 29, 1954, ended August 31, 1955, after a year's existence.

Thus as we have seen, the radio has done its share to keep alive this priceless tradition and folksong of the Visayan people lest it be buried in oblivion because of the many modern influences bewildering the youth today coupled with the lamentable fact that the younger generation considers the *balitao* naive and artless.

Cebuano motion picture and the balitao. The Visayan motion picture industry does its share too in bringing before the Visayan people the beauty of their own traditions which they just take for granted. In its infancy the Visayan motion picture industry quarried much material from Cebuano folklife and Visayan traditions in general.

To show his love and esteem for the *balitao*, Mr. Piux Kabahar immortalized this old Cebuano tradition in his maiden production "*Rosas Pangdan*" which he produced in collaboration with Tor Villarino. *Rosas Pangdan* was a mountain maiden who lived a simple but virtuous life. She was so good at *balitao* singing and dancing that she claimed it to be her chief attribute in life. The name "*Rosas Pangdan*" is very closely associated with *balitao*. The following song is pronounced by many as the oldest *balitao* still extant. This was the theme song of the play.

Rosas Pangdan

Ani-a si Rosas Pangdan
Gikan pa intaon sa kabukiran
Kaninyo makig-uban-uban
Ning gisa-ulog ninyong kalingawan
Balitao day akong puhonan
Maoy kabilin sa akong ginikanaan
Awit nga labing kara-an
Nga garbo sa atong kabungturan.
Dika-deng dika-deng aya'y sa atong balitao
Maanindot pa ug sayaw
Daw yamog nga mabugnaw
Dika-dong dika-dong intawon usab si Dodong
Nagtan-aw kang Inday
Nagtabisay ang laway.

Translation of the Song

Rosas Pangdan is here
 I have just come from my mountain lair
 With you wanting to share
 The pleasures of your merry-making.
 The *balitao* is my only attribute
 Which is a legacy from my ancestors
 It is the most ancient of songs
 Which is the pride of our hills.
 Dika-deng dika-deng ay! for our *balitao*
 The dancing is very graceful
 The music is as soothing as the dew
 Dika-dong dika-dong, pity the young man
 Who's looking at the young lady
 Very tantalizingly but in vain.

The balitao in Cebuano-Visayan Literature. If literature "is the expression of life in words of truth and beauty, the written record of man's spirit, of his thoughts, emotions, aspirations; the history and the only history of the human soul,"¹ then Cebu

1) William Long, *English Literature* (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1919), p. 8.

Visayan literature exists, no doubt about it, but in its unappreciated and therefore neglected state. It is a shameful fact, yet it is true, that a great many of the so-called "educated class" of Visayans do not care for literary works written in the vernacular, while they subscribe to all kinds of English publications and books. In fact, popular vernacular literature which is found in such weeklies as "*The Bisaya*," "*The Alimyon*," "*The Saloma*" and some other booklets of stories or Visayan songs, is seldom found in the library of the cultured Visayan.

Mrs. Catalina Bucad brings out much painful truth when she wrote this paragraph in her thesis:

One thing wrong with the greater bulk of the educated class of Visayans is that they take this native art for granted. They display a condescending attitude toward native literature even to the extent of regarding it as naive or artless for no reason at all except that it is written in his own simple dialect. Many of the supposedly educated mass do not even know how to read the vernacular writings fluently and to write the dialect correctly. The tendency of this class of persons to snob their own literature is a manifestation of their own ignorance about it.²

It is also disheartening to note here that Cebuano-Visayan literature is still in its scattered state; that no effort has ever been exerted to collect and preserve it. Whatever literary works were done by Cebuano writers are either in the possession of the writer himself, if he is still living or in his relations' keeping, or they may just be scattered about in publications to which the author may have submitted them for printing.

The traditional *balitao* which is said to be the height of the creative ingenuity of the Visayans unfortunately finds no outlet in print. The writer has dug into piles of vernacular weeklies only to find no trace of the antiphonal *balitao* ever printed. However, the writer has come across two printed booklets containing alternating *balitao* quatrains. One, "*Matahum Basahon sa Kulilisi³ ug Balitao*" (A Beautiful Book On the *Kulilisi* and

2) Catalina Manlosa-Bucad, "The Elements of Joy and Melancholy in Cebu Visayan Literature," unpublished thesis, University of San Carlos, Cebu City, p. 2.

3) The *kulilisi* is a game played during the nine-day prayer for the repose of the dead. It consists of selecting a judge who presides over the assembly of young men and women who take turns flinging

the *Balitao*) printed by Bacalso Press of Basak, Pardo, Cebu City, unfortunately bears no copyright date. It is a small booklet seven inches long by five inches wide containing thirty pages of *balitao* and *kulilisi* verses. The other booklet is such an old one that it has lost its cover and therefore the writer could not ascertain its name since it could nowhere be found in the contents. It is a booklet of fifty-one pages embodying the works of Fernando Buyser, a noted Visayan poet. The booklet is divided into "Poems of Old," "Songs of the Mountains—the *Balitao*," "Serenades" and "Songs" which he calls "Saloma."

The *balitao romansada*, however, here and there graces the "Poetry or Song" sections of our vernacular magazines. They even find their place in song compilations called "Popular Songs" or "Song Hits."

As has been traced, we see the Cebuano *balitao* silently and imperturbably struggling with foreign influences which are quite strong here especially in this our time, but despite this, plus the younger generation's cold shoulder to it, the *balitao* has securely asserted itself as a living tradition, the Cebuano ought to be proud of. Time can never dislodge it. Though never written down yet, it is not forgotten for it is so deeply ingrained in the Visayan soul that it awaits only the chance to unfold itself anew to charw the people with its wise homespun philosophy and its antiquity.

verses at each other. One party parries a riddle or puzzle and the other sex answers. Whoever is defeated is punished by the judge by making him or her sing or recite verses. Like the *balitao*, the *kulilisi* makes a play or contest of wit, but while the *balitao* verses are sung those of the *kulilisi* are merely recited.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“The *balitao* was a popular dance-song of the Visayans. It had a rhythm of a melodious and spiritual waltz and is like the *jota* of Spain, the *tarentella* of Italy and the *auvergnat* of France.”¹ Thus has Mr. Alip, noted Philippine historian, very aptly described this famous song-dance of the Visayans. The *balitao* is more played than danced. While a man and a woman stand vis-avis they responsively or alternately sing a love ditty. The girl pretends to refuse the pleading of love. Further explanation follows in a poetic dialog as they dance with each other keeping time with the music until the love of the man is accepted. (Pictures found in the Appendix of this work show this position.)

The *balitao* is a truly ancient native art and a complicated art at that. How the *balitao* couple could think out witty, humorous, or even at times satirical ideas and express them in rhymed verse set to music, while they execute bodily dance movements to the rhythm of the accompaniment could only baffle a modern. The *balitao* unquestionably antedated the coming of the Spaniards.

The early *balitao*, called *ayayi*, although in its crude form, embodied the emotions and ideals as well as the daily activities of the simple folks. Then the advent of Spanish domination brought about influences which worked themselves into the *balitao*. The greatest influence was the Christianization of whatever pagan elements the *balitao* had. The naive subject matter of the early *balitao* was polished and enriched and its simple diction was improved by the assimilation of Spanish words and phrases into it. The *balitao* in its impromptu setting reached its highest development during the Spanish times. The *balitao* at

1) E. Alip, *Philippine Civilization (Before Spanish Times)* (U.S.T., Press, Manila, 1936), p. 42.

this stage since it was spontaneously sung was richly and truly reflective of the Visayan people in its representation of their emotion and varied activities in life. Here in these songs Visayan love and jest piped their tune, Visayan anger and enmities drummed their beat and Visayan ideals and morals found their pulpit.

The coming of the more democratic and liberal rule of the Americans found this song-dance gradually leaving the sphere of impromptu folk entertainment and entering upon a field of specialization, in which people gifted with a lot of witty common sense and possessed of the poetic ability train themselves well on it and made it their serious occupation. Every barrio had at least its one or two *balitao* couples, although there were some barrios which were more popular than the others regarding the fame of their *balitao* dancers. The ability of each *balitao* singer was tested and tried, when during fiestas and other merry-making assemblies, one *balitao* singer challenged another of the opposite sex to a debate in song over a theme just decided during their meeting. Whoever was defeated was replaced by another who tapped him on the shoulders to give way to him. The love debate continued until the unvanquished singer became very tired. Along this line Colasing of San Nicolas had very well proved herself to the Visayan *balitao* audience as queen of the *balitao*. Even Pedro Alfara the acknowledged "king of the *balitao*" attested to the fact that Colasing was really difficult to outwit in this art. Loeb in his article "Courtship and Love Songs" made the same findings when he wrote, "The women are said to be especially proficient in this art."²

In some Eastern countries the youth are not only trained to make rimes but they are also encouraged to be proficient at it through contests held between the sexes, as these quotations state:

In Japan from the fifth to the seventh century A.D. the people had a form of *pantum* which they used in courting. These were called *kagai*. They were alternate songs improvised by youths and maidens. . . . Likewise in Tibet men and women stand in alternate lines advancing and retreating and answering each other in verse. This festival is held in the spring.

2) E. M. Loeb, "Courtship and the Love Song," *Anthropos* (Fribourg, Switzerland: St. Paul, 1950), Vol. XLV, p. 831.

In Annam peasant feasts of alternate chanting take place in both the spring and fall although they are much more common in the fall. The songs are composed by boys and girls who answer one another in verse. The contests consist in seeing where the boys or the girls can sing the longer.

In contests near Hai-Phong, a port of Tonkin, special rules are observed. If a boy is defeated in a contest the girl has the right to seize his hat and the boy must tell her his name and age. If, however, it is the girl who is defeated the boy has the right to marry her. In case the girl refuses to marry her conqueror, the notables can exile her from the village; her family considers her an ingrate and often disinherits her.

In Sumatra, among the Toba Batak intercourse between the sexes is especially free and the youths and girls often have a form of competition in which four-line rimed couplets are exchanged. Whoever loses has to pay a forfeit: the boy gives a piece of his clothing, a knife or some other trinket, the girl gives herself.³

In Annam the ability to compose verses is considered so important that it is taught in the schools.

Rimes are considered so important today that they are taught in the schools and much of the success that a man may have in life may depend on his skill as a rimester. It is even said that a bride may bar her husband from her nuptial couch and divorce him as if impotent if he fails properly to respond to her first line on the night of the wedding.⁴

In view of the foregoing facts, the writer wishes to insinuate that if those neighboring countries could give that much importance to antiphonal riming or singing, why can not we here follow such a lead?

The writer closes this work with high hopes that the *balitao* will find its place in every Visayan heart. The prospects are bright for despite our modern youth's passivity toward it, this song-dance of our forefathers is not completely lost. It is still in the air proudly struggling to compete with the onrush of modern foreign airs. The competition is very keen especially that by nature the Filipino is more inclined to appreciate that which is not his own, but in spite of this the *balitao* has assuredly

3) E. M. Loeb, "Courtship and the Love Song," *Anthropos* (Fribourg, Switzerland: Imprimerie St. Paul, 1950), Vol. XLV, pp. 832-835.

4) *Loc. cit.*, p. 833.

asserted itself in Visayan culture and folklife. The Visayan people too despite the strong influence of Occidental culture which is deeply rooted in their ways and customs have to a little extent preserved with endearing loyalty the few remnants of their old truly Oriental culture, so that though they are thrown into a maze of new modalities attractive and enchanting, there still remains in them the ear for truly Philippine music.

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- "Ramago Amahan Sa Balitaong Sugbuanon," *Ang Bisaya*. Manila: Ramon Roces Publications Inc., August 1, 1948, pp. 14 and 38.
This article is about Rafael Gandiongco acclaimed as the father of the Cebuano *balitao romansada*. The *Bisaya* is a semi-news-paper magazine coming out weekly to date.

E. UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL

- Bucad, Catalina M., "The Elements of Joy and Melancholy in Cebu Visayan Literature." Unpublished Master's Thesis. The University of San Carlos, Cebu City.
A part of this thesis treats of the *balitao* as Cebuano poetry and folksong.

Musical compositions

ANTIPHONAL BALITAO -
ANCIENT TUNE IN THE MAJOR KEY

Day, gi-kan pāa-ko sa a-mo — Ka-ron pa ma-hi-an-hi

Wa-la a-ko ma-hi-ta-bo — Ka-ni-mo di-ha mā yong ga-bi-i

Ma-a-yong ga-bi-i —, Sa ga-may pāa-ko

— In-day nga ba-ta — Hang-tud ka-ron nga na-da-ku na Ka —

ron nga na-da-ku na — Kay nag-pa-mi-lit —, Sa a-kong di-la —

— Ang pag-ta-hud — gi-da-la da-la —

— Ki-ning pag-ta-hud — gi-da-la da-la —



PATTERN FOR ANCIENT BALITAO IN THE MAJOR KEY



PATTERN FOR AN ANCIENT BALITAO
IN THE MINOR KEY

TRANSITION BALITAO - LATER SPANISH
 TIME UP TO THE FIRST TWO DECADES
 OF THIS CENTURY - IN THE MAJOR KEY

Day, na-sa-yud ka ning la-pad tang ka-li-bu-tan—
 —, Ang ba-wod-mo-ha-wok sa bay-ba-yon—
 —, Maysi-len-cio-song ba-wod nga hi-nay ug li-nak-tan
 —, Ma-o kad-toy pan-num-pa—, nga i-kaw a-kong pang-ga-on—
 Nga a-kong pang-ga-on—, Sam-tang ang
 di-na-ga-ang Sa ka-i-nit sa ad-law—
 —, May i-go pang-ga-hum nga mo-tun-og sa ka-bun-ta-gon—
 —, Mo-tun-og sa ka-bun-ta-gon—, Sak-si ka-nang bung-tu-
 ra Nga i-mong na-tan-aw—, Nga i-kaw-ray a-kong pa-nga-saw—
 on I-kaw-ray a-ko—, nga pa-nga-saw on—.

PATTERN FOR THE LATER BALITAO -
TRANSITION PERIOD

Moderately Slow



Musical staff 1: Treble clef, C major chord, G7 chord, C major chord, D7 chord.

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, G major chord, G major chord, D7 chord.

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, G major chord, G7 chord, C major chord.

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, G7 chord, G7 chord, C major chord.

TRANSITION BALITAO IN THE MINOR KEY

Cm G7
 Pag-ka-sa-kit sa a kong ba-la-ti-an--; Nga ka-nu-nay lang a--

Cm
 kong gi-da-ug-da-ug-- ,Ma ayo pang ma-ha-naw- sa ka-li-bu-tan--

G7 Cm G7
 Kay sa ka-ma-ta-yon-- a-ko i-tuk-mud-- , A--

Cm B^b7
 ko-- i-tuk-mud-- , Ma- a- yo pang a-ko-- Ma-ma-tay sa da-

E^b C7 Fm
 yon A- ron di-li mag- an-tus ning ka-li-bu-tan-- Mag--

B^b7 E^b G7
 an-tus ning ka-li- bu-tan-- , Ang ka-pa- it A--

Cm 3
 -kong pa-ga- tam-i- son-- ,Ma- na-ug-a- ko sa a-kong lubnga-nan--

G7 Cm
 Sa ma - mi-ngaw kong lub-nga-nan--

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Chords: Cm, G7.

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Chords: Cm, G7, Bb.

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Chords: Bb7, Fm, C7, Bb, Bb7.

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Chords: Cm, G7, Cm.

Musical staff 5: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Chords: G7, Cm.

Musical staff 6: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Chords: G7, Cm.

Slow

PATTERN FOR LATER BALTAO - MINOR KEY

MODERN VERSION OF THE BALITAO - TIRANA

A-kong a-wi ——— tan si Ti-ra-na ——— Ti—
 ra-na bi-taw'ng ——— ma-ka-lo-lo ——— oy ———,
 Sa-ma sa is ——— da nga bal-ye ——— na ———,
 Sa da-gat nga ——— nag-la-ngoy-la ——— ngoy ———
 Sa-ma sa is ——— da nga bal-ye ——— na ——— Sa
 da-gat in-tawon ——— nag-la-ngoy-la ——— ngoy ———
 Kon ma-lo-oy ka ———, a-ko hag ——— ki ———;
 Pa-nga-saw-a ——— a yaw-bi-ya ——— i ———,
 Pang-ga-a-gyud ——— ug a-mo-ma ——— ha ———.
 Pa-ka-taw-a a yaw pa-hi-la ——— ka ———.

DALAGA SA BUKID (A MOUNTAIN MAID)

Balitao Romansada ni Rafael Gandionco

Maestoso

Ma-oy mut-ya sa bu-hat Ang da-la-ga sa bu-kid Sa si-a tempo
 ngot ma-ga pa-hid Sa mga mag-ba-ba-ol Kan-sang
 dag-way la-ra-wan Sa Pi--li-pin-hong mit-hi, Sa-la-min sa ka-ku-
 gi Ma-oy di-wa sa gug-ma Ma-oy Ma kay mang-gi-bu-ha-ton Wa
 lay pag-pa-hu-lay Sa ga-bi-ig sa ad-law Sa
 bu-hat mo-tu-bay Ban-sa-lang ma-lig-on Sa
 pang-u-ga-li-ngon Sa mag-da-ro mo da-sig Sa iy-ang pa-ray
 -ig-ahay Ug sa pa-yag ma-ga a-wit Di-nu-yo-gan sa pa-
 lad Ang ba-bay-ing bi-lil-hon kay man gi-bu-hon
 Ma-noy, pa-u-li na, ma-ma-hu-lay na ki-ta kay ga-bi-i na

SA KABUKIRAN (IN THE MOUNTAINS)

Balitao Romansada by Prof. Manuel Velez

Allegretto

Sa ka-bu-ki — ran La - yo ang ka-sa - kit — Ang ka-lang-ga -
 man ay — na-nag-a — wit sa ka - bu-ki- Ma-oy ga-in-dig —
 nga pag-had-la, — Ma-nga para-yeg — ay! mga hud- ya - ka —
 — Ang hi-no-yo-hoy — na-gla- noy- la-noy — Sa ka da hu na —
 — ug ka-bu-la-kan — Sa-ka-da-hu-nan — ug ka-bu-la-kan — Oh! Ki-na-bu-hi
 — lon-lon ka-li-pay — Ga-was ha-mi-li — way i-kag ma-hay —
 Oh! Ki-na-bu-hi — lon-lon ka - li — pay Sa ka-bu-ki -
 ran — la-yo ang ka-sa-kit — Ang ka-lang-ga-man — ay na-nag-a —
 wit Ah! — ah! — ah! — ah!
 Sa-ka-bu-ki-
 ran—ah! — ay na-na-ga-wit —

TEXT WITH TRANSLATION

I—Antiphonal Balitao—Ancient Tune in the Major Key—

*Day, gikan pa ako sa amo
Karon pa mahi-anhi
Wala ako mahitabo
Kanimong diha maayong gabi-i
Maayong gabi-i*

Trans.: Day, I've just come from home
It's only now that I've come here
Nothing has happened to me
To you there good evening
Good evening

*Sa gamay pa ako
Inday nga bata
Hangtud karon nga nadaku na
Karon nga nadaku na*

When I was still
a small child, Inday
Until now that I'm big
Now that I'm already big.

*Kay nagpamilit
Sa akong dila
Ang pagtahud gidala-dala
Kining pagtahud gidala-dala*

For it sticks
In my tongue
The courtesy that I'm bringing around
This courtesy that I'm bringing around

IV—Transition Balitao

*Day, nasayud ka ning lapad tang kalibutan
 Ang bawod mohawok sa baybayon
 May silenciosong bawod nga hinay ug linaktan
 Mao kadtoy panumpa, nga ikaw akong pangga-on
 Nga akong pangga-on*

Day, you know that in this wide world of ours
 The waves will kiss the strand
 A quiet wave whose pace is slow
 That is what I promise—that I will marry you
 That I'll marry you.

*Samtang ang dinaga-ang
 Sa ka-init sa adlaw
 May ino pang gahum
 Nga motun-og sa kabuntagon
 Motun-og sa kabuntagon*

As long as the warmth
 Of the heat of the sun
 Has still enough power
 To cool the morning
 To cool the morning

*Saksi kanang bungtura
 Nga imong natan-aw
 Nga ikaw ray akong pangasaw-on
 Ikaw ray ako nga pangasaw-on*

Those hills that you see
 Will be witness for me
 That it's you only that I'll marry
 It's you only that I will marry

V—Transition Balitao in the minor key

*Pagkasakit sa akong balatian
 Nga kanunay lang akong gidaug-da-ug*

*Ma-ayo pang mahanaw sa kalibutan
 Kay sa kamatayon ako itukmud
 Ako itukmud*

How painful it is to my feelings
 That I'm always made to suffer
 'Tis better to be gone in this world
 Than to be pushed into death
 Me to be pushed into death

*Maayo pang ako
 Mamatay sa dayon
 Aron dili mag-antus ning kalibutan
 Mag-antus ning kalibutan*

It would be much better for me
 To die quickly and completely
 So that I will not suffer in this world
 Suffer in this world

*Ang kapa-it
 Akong pagatam-ison
 Mana-ug ako sa akong lubnganan
 Sa mamingaw kong lubnganan*

Whatever bitterness there is
 I'll gladly take them as sweet
 I'll go down to my grave
 My lonely grave

VIII—Modern Version—Tirana

*Akong awitan si Tirana
 Tirana bitaw'ng makalolo-oy
 Sama sa isda nga balyena
 Sa dagat nga naglangoy-langoy
 Sama sa isda nga balyena
 Sa dagat intawon naglangoy-langoy*

I'll serenade you Tirana
 Tirana, who's the unfortunate

Just like a certain kind of fish
Swimming around in the sea
Just like a fish called "balyena"
Swimming in the sea (poor fish).

*Kon malo-oy ka ako hagki
Pangasaw-a ayaw biya-i
Pangga-a gyud ug amomaha
Pakataw-a ayaw pahilaka*

If you pity me kiss me
Marry me and don't leave me
Love me truly and take care of me
Make me happy, don't make me cry.

IX—*Dalaga sa Bukid* (A Mountain Maid)

*Ma-oy mutya sa buhat
Ang dalaga sa bukid
Sa singot magapahid
Sa mga magbaba-ol*

She is a pearl when it comes to working
This maiden of the mountain
She wipes the sweat
Off the farmer's brow.

*Kansang dagway larawan
Sa Pilipinhong mithi
Salamin sa kakugi
Ma-oy diwa sa gugma*

On whose face is mirrored
A Filipino virtuous soul
She's an exemplar of industry
She's a goddess of love

*Kay manggibuhaton
Walay pagpahulay
Sa gabi-ig sa adlaw
Sa buhat motubay*

For she's very industrious
 She works without resting
 At night and during the day
 At work you'll find her stay

*Bansalang malig-on
 Sa pangugalingon
 Sa magdadaro modasig
 Sa iyang parayig ahay*

She's a strong foundation
 Of family life
 She inspires the farmer
 With her caresses—ahay

*Ug sa payag maga-awit
 Dinuyogan sa palad
 Ang babaying bililhon
 Manoy, pauli na, mamahulay na kita kay gabi-i na*

And in their hut she sings
 With the tune of her fate
 This maiden who is full of virtues
 Brother, come home, let's rest for 'tis night time
 now!

X—*Sa Kabukiran* (In the Mountains)

*Sa kabukiran
 Layo ang kasakit
 Ang kalanggaman ay nanag-awit* } repeat

In the mountains
 Suffering is unknown
 The birds sing on all day

*Ma-oy ga-indig nga paghadla
 Mga parayeg ay! mga hudyaka
 Ang hinoyohoy naglanoy-lanoy
 Sa kadahunan ug kabulakan
 Sa kadahunan ug kabulakan*

What are competing are joys
 Soft caresses and laughter
 The gentle breeze is afloat
 On the leaves and the flowers
 On the leaves and the flowers

*O Kinabuhi lonlon kalipay
 Gawas hamili way ikag mahay
 O Kinabuhi lonlon kalipay
 Gawas hamili way ikag mahay*

Oh! life is all happiness
 Not only respectable but also none to regret about
 Oh! life is all happiness
 Not only respectable but also none to regret about

*Sa kabukiran layo ang kasakit
 Ang kalanggaman ay nanag-awit
 Ah - ah - ah - - -
 Sa kabukiran ah - ay nanag-awit*

In the mountains suffering is unknown
 The birds sing on all day
 Ah - ah - ah - - -
 In the mountains ah - ay they are singing