

4 ICLEI2016 32 Emma A. Basco

## **Aurorahan Hymn: A Glimpse of the Socio-cultural and Religious Identity and Ethnicity of the Talisayon**

Emma A. Basco  
De La Salle University – Manila  
College of Liberal Arts, Filipino Department  
2401 Taft Avenue, Manila  
emma.basco@dlsu.edu.ph

### **ABSTRACT**

As a research paper in Cultural Anthropology, it is a basic study about the local culture of the *Talisayon* using *Dalit* as the primary source of information and research materials. The researcher applied some critical theories in studying, analyzing and coming out with a deeper understanding of the ethnicity and idiosyncrasy of the local Talisayons from the olden times up to our present day situation. The researcher used participant observation as a means to deepen the study in the absence of substantial documentation and historical records on the matter. This method is aptly used considering that the researcher is a Talisayon, herself. As such, she could very well use her personal knowledge, experience and point of view regarding the influences of Dalit and Aurorahan to the Talisayons. Finally, the study aimed to gather enough materials, facts and data for greater and clearer understanding of the contemporary cultural situation of the Talisayons. This glimpse will give the true picture of a Talisayon's identity in thoughts, in words, in action and deeds as a Filipino.

*Keywords:* Dalit, Aurorahan, Talisay, Camarines Nortel, Talisayon

### **Introduction**

The researcher has used **Dalit** (hymn/s) as the primary source of information and research materials for this study, to come out with a better understanding of the ethnicity and idiosyncrasy of the local Talisayons from the olden to present day situation.

Using some critical theories, these dalits were studied and analyzed by the researcher to identify the socio-cultural values that will lead towards a clearer understanding of their true cultural identities as a Talisayon in particular and a Bicolano in general. This study also aims to determine from the Dalit/s the core values of the Talisayons relative to their present way of living, practices, ideals, belief and psyche.

Also included in the study is the desire to discover how the festival greatly influenced in shaping the socio-cultural, emotional, behavioural awareness of the present day Talisayon.

As a research paper in Cultural Anthropology, the researcher exerted every effort to produce basic study about the local culture of the Talisayon through these dalits. The researcher used Participant observation as a means to deepen the study in the absence of substantial documentation and historical records on the matter. In addition, this method is appropriate considering that the researcher is a Talisayon, herself. As such, she could very well use her personal knowledge, experience and point of view regarding the influences of Dalit and Aurorahan.

The result of the study will contribute to the production of basic information regarding the tradition, religion, practices and cultural belief of the Talisayon, in particular and Bicolano, in general since the advent of the colonizers. The study will also serve as a proper medium in better appreciation and understanding of the Talisayons and Bicolanos.

Finally, the study aspires to gather enough reference materials, historical facts and anthropological data vital in defining, understanding and ferreting the truth about the ethnicity and identity of the past and present-day Talisayons vis-à-vis the myths, social constructs, and humbugs peddled by the Western colonizers.

### **Aurorahan: Pamimintakasi ng mga Talisayon (Religious rites of the Talisayons)**

Camarines Norte is one of the six provinces of the Bicol Region in the Philippines. Farming and agriculture are the main sources of livelihood of its inhabitants, more so in the town of Talisay. It has vast track of arable land suitable for rice production, hence, it has been known as the “**rice granary**” of the province. However, the Talisayons are also engaged in fishing, weaving specially of the world famous pineapple (pinya) fabric and gold mining.

While the province is already highly urbanized, the locals are still deeply-religious in nature. To date, its people are still perpetuating and celebrating their well-loved socio-cultural events passed on by their elders like *Vivahan*, *Pastores*, *Tatlong Harian* (Three Kings), *Flores de Mayo* (May Flower), *Santakrusan*, *Pagpapapako sa Krus*, *Pinetensya*, *Salubong*, *Aurorahan*, *Penafracia sa Salcedo*, *Kapistahan ng Poong Nazareno* (Black Nazarene) *sa Capalonga*, *Pinyasan*, *Pabirik* (gold panning) Festival and many more festivities.

Coming from an agricultural community, the people of Camarines Norte are truly religious in nature. Their livelihood is dependent on the mercy and kindness of nature making them prayerful for the grace, blessings, and intercession of God Almighty. Each town has different way of invoking the aid of the deities in pursuit of their livelihood. In the capital town of Daet, the Pinyasan Festival is being celebrated every month of June in honor of its patron, St. John the Baptist and a thanksgiving for their annual bountiful harvest of the world famous sweetness and crispness of Queen Formosa pineapples. Its leaves are also woven into the now world renowned pinya cloth and fiber.

In the coastal town of Mercedes, the *Kadagatan* (Ocean) Festival is being held in the name of their patron for their plentiful marine harvest. Mercedes is also known for its delectable *tinapa* (smoked round scud fish) products.

The gold mining municipalities of Paracale and Jose Panganiban simultaneously hold the *Pabirik Festival* (gold panning) yearly in the name of their respective patrons. Even the old Hispanic *conquistadores* were aware of the enormous gold deposits in these localities.

During the merry-month of May, the feast of the Black Nazarene is being commemorated in Capalonga as a tribute to their great protector from sea tragedy. Legend has it that the Black Nazarene came from the remains of the charred image of the eminent Nazarene which was miraculously found and saved by the townfolks from the ravages of legendary Chinese pirate, *Limahong*. Annually, devotees comprising mostly of local and Chinese merchants flock to Capalonga to pay homage to the Black Nazarene.

Uniquely, it is only in Talisay that the *Aurorahan* is being observed and celebrated in August in honour of its patron saint, *San Isidro de Labrador*. It is called *Aurorahan* because the festival is usually held at dawn, originally. But over time, the practice is now being conducted starting at six o'clock in the evening and culminating towards midnight.

The *Aurorahan* is observed in the whole month of August consisting of three *novenarios* (religious vows) starting with the first nine days of August, then on the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> day, and finally the last vows on the 21<sup>st</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> day of August. After every nightly procession, the respective sponsors offer foods and drinks to the attendees. However, on the last night of the celebration, the *Cabo Mayor* (main sponsor) assumes the preparation, goings on and feast offerings to all participants composed of the *may kabig*, *cantoras*, *parapa'san* and the rest of the visitors.

The carriages bearing the images of saints *San Isidro de Labrador* and *San Roque* are borne on the shoulders of four *parapa'san* per icon and paraded around town to the tune of the *Dalit/s* being sung by the *cantoras* and the devotees alternately. Among the hymns of praises being sung in the procession is the special *dalit* for St. Mary (*Salve* and *Perdon*) to ask for mercy and forgiveness. And lastly, singing *dalit/s* for the protection from pestilence of their crops and safety from accidents, sickness and other calamitous events of their families.

The holding of *Aurorahan* is always successful because yearly the *nanunuga/namamanata* (devotees) joyfully come in droves and faithfully comply with their vows of penance, sacrifice and complete devotion to God Almighty. They are also coming back regularly believing strongly that the Supreme Being through their beloved patrons will answer their prayers for a bountiful harvest, benign climate, and successful ensuing cropping seasons.

### Ugat ng Aurorahan (History)

According to eminent writers and historians, the Bicolanos (people of the Bicol Region) by nature are deeply religious persons and that they inherited their religiosity from their ancestors. They firmly believe that the Supreme Being truly exists. They honor their gods and goddesses as a means of acknowledging their greatness as seen in the relics, artifacts and monuments found in their ancient dwelling places, caves, and personal effects. These erected monuments were mostly tall and mighty signifying their high regard and deep respect to their *anitos* (ancient gods).

Their forebears worshiped *Gugurang*, their Supreme Being and Mightiest God in their *Kamurawayan*. *Gugurang* is their savior and protector from calamities, life challenges, tempest and evil. He is also their defender against the *Aswang* (witches), an evil spirit who dwells in the *gagamban* (scorching hell).

Native Bicolanos subscribed to the idea that they are always protected and guided by the *anitos*. They considered that all of their blessings and good fortunes came from God for which they were truly grateful. They also trusted *Batala*, a lesser god whose mission is to instill peace and order and that all the inhabitants in his reign are living harmoniously and contentedly. They also recognized the other spirits like *Katambay*, the guardian angels; *Okot*, god of the forest and hunters-keeper, such that by merely whistling he guided the hunter to a productive hunt. On the hand, the Bicolanos also trusted *Magindang*, their goddess of the sea which aided the fishermen for an abundant catch through his magical sounds and signals, (Realubit, 1983).

The early Bicolanos have also peculiar rituals for each deity they are worshipping, one of which is called *Atang*, or offering through dancing to *Gugurang*. They are offering their best produce as a thanksgiving token for a bountiful harvest. This rite is also being done to ask God for rains during drought season so they could plant. The ritual is done in their *gulang-gulangan* or thatch hut serving as prayer room. Their best harvest or *himoloan* is being offered on the table they called *salangat*. The ritual is done by means of dancing and singing. *Asog*, the main priest, dances the *taruk*, or quick marching steps to worship *Gugurang*. Sometimes, the *baliana* would do the dancing in honor of their moon-goddess. While singing and dancing, the *baliana* together with the women are singing the *soraque* or chant. The group is roaming around the whole community enticing everybody to participate because *pag-aatang* or *atang* involves the entire village.

The *atang* ritual starts with the pounding of the *gong* or *patong* to invite all the participants and get ready for the ceremony. Then the *baliana* followed by all the tribesmen marches towards the *gulang-gulangan*. Next, the *baliana* and the tribeswomen sing the *soraque*, the chant for *atang* to implore for *Gugurang's* mercy and compassion. This is followed by a sumptuous banquet, and eventually a merry-making of songs and dances ensue.

After the ritual, all the tribesmen and participants become tired and weary as they retreat to the altar and pray (Realubit, 1976).

There are other earlier studies depicting the ancient rites of the early Bicolanos. Just like the *atang* or offering, this ritual is also a plea for protection from harm of the evil spirits. The farmers are also doing the ritual of *pakikimaherak*, to beg for God's mercy and safe-keeping of their farms from pests and diseases. Through their incantations, the natives are also literally begging the pests and other predators to be kind and not to harm their rice fields.

According to Reyes, the Tinagba Festival or Pintakasi in Iriga City (a city in Bicol), originated from *Atang* or thanksgiving to *Gugurang*. It is led by an *effeminate* priest called *Asog* assisted by a *baliana*. The *Atang* ceremony ends with a sumptuous meal, raucous songs and dances, drinking spree and oftentimes in a free-for-all riot.

According to Fr. Jose Castano, the *atang* is similar to the Greek's Bacchanalian ritual in honor of Bacchus, their wine god. Like the early Bicolanos, the ancient Greeks hold the ritual as a way of thanksgiving to Bacchus by indulging themselves in lavish feast, bottomless drinks, boisterous merry-making, wild songs and dances and unrestrained orgies. Despite the supposed joyous occasion, the envious, the aggrieved and the oppressed take this opportunity to kill their enemies and get even with their oppressors with their evil acts effectively concealed and masked by the cacophony of shouts, screams and deafening sounds of gongs and cymbals.

Our brother Muslims have the same ritual which they call *Magtabang* or *d'setatabang*. The Manobo tribe in Mindanao, Philippines call their ritual as *tanggawalawa*, performed by their farmers every corn harvests, wedding ceremonies, and home construction. They are doing this as *pagtinabangan* or fostering cooperation in the whole community, *maayong relasyon* or harmonious relationship, *kaayohan sa tanan* or prosperity for all and *katilingbanong panginahanglan* or responding to the needs of fellow Manobo tribesmen. Added to this ritual is *Kaamulan* or social gathering/meeting practiced by the eight tribes from Bukidnon (Matigsalug, Umayamnon, Ilianon, Pulangihon, Talaandig, Tigwa Manobo, Western Bukidnon Manobo) and the Higaunon in Agusan del Sur, Misamis Oriental and Lanao del Norte. The Manobos also observed the *pangampo* or general worship, *panumanod* or to praise the good spirits and *panlisig* or to drive away the evil spirits.

Interestingly and historically speaking, the native Bicolanos from the northern Philippines and Mindanaons from the southern Philippines observed the same rituals despite geographical distance. According to our history books, our forefathers came from Sumatra inhabited by the Malays of South Asia some 2,000 years before the age of Christianity. From Sumatra, they travelled to Indonesia. Our Malay forebears have traces of Indian influences as shown in their political and social institutions, personal acts and practices, religious beliefs, crafted laws, languages, culture and the arts and manner of writing. Aside from Indian influences, our trade practices, languages and religious practices are also abounding with Chinese and Arabic traditions. During the third wave of Malay migration, Mohammedanism was introduced in southern Philippines spreading widely in the whole of Mindanao and other parts of the country including Manila brought about by the widespread influence of the Sri-Visayan Empire (400 -800 AD) and the Madjapahit Empire (1200 – 1400 AD).

The conquest of the Spaniards greatly helped in forestalling the spread of Islam and Mohammedanism in Visayas and Luzon regions. According to Dr. Antonio de Morga, the tenth Spanish Governor-general in the Philippines (1595-1596), "if their colonization of the Philippines had been delayed, it would have been impossible for them to stop the extensive spread of Islam in the whole archipelago and their friars would be hard-pressed in erasing the endemic culture and religious practices of the natives. And because of Christianity, it had been easy on their part to convert the natives". He may only be partly correct in his

assumptions because to date, Islam remains as the dominant religion of our brother Muslim in Mindanao.

When the Spanish friars came to the Philippines, they have observed that their predecessors were already mingling with the native *balianas* in Bicol, *catalonan* in Tagalog, *managanito* in Pangasinan, and Babaylan in the Visayas. Presumably the *catalonan* went around town every year shouting "turumba" followed by the local folks who were shouting and dancing as well. It is believed that people from Pakil, Laguna evacuated to flee from the onslaught of Islam which already reached Manila even before the arrival of the Spaniards, led by the *babaylans* uprising against Islam. But with the arrival of the Spaniards, the *babaylans* and the natives have nowhere else to go, since the whole Luzon have been already invaded and they have no more strengths left to ward off the invaders and have no other recourse but to embrace Catholicism against their will.

Sadly, the *baliana* and Asog in Bicol had lost their native sway. They were overpowered by the invaders especially the Spanish missionaries. Fearful of the *baliana's* power and influence among the natives, the missionaries destroyed their good image among the inhabitants from being their religious intermediaries to that of being *aswangs* or *bruhas* (witch). They were betrayed by their fellow tribesmen who were indoctrinated by the friars. The missionaries imprisoned the rebels, dismembered them and fed them to the crocodiles. The images of their anitos were also destroyed and burned. But there were *balianas* who became cantoras (chanters) during the conquest. Through prayers, they chanted and relayed the history and life of Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding their slavery, the *balianas* were still able to assert their religious powers.

When the Spaniards came, the Filipinos momentarily set aside their native culture and literature and gradually embraced in their hearts and minds the new set of idealism, culture, and western influence especially Christianity. As a religion, Christianity has a very strong influence towards our own literature. Most of the literary pieces of this era pertained to religion such that we called this period as "religious literature" (Maramba, 2006). In Bicol, the prevailing religious beliefs are categorized according to the liturgical calendar. Every December, the *panhaharong-harong* or *kagharong*, *panuluyan* in Tagalog (house-to-house search literally) the Bicolanos dramatize the search for lodging of St. Joseph and St. Mary (biblical parents of Jesus Christ) through religious incantation and verses of supplication in front of each house until the pair is finally accepted to pass the night.

In May, similar religious rites are enacted in honor of Jesus Christ like *Santo Cristo*, and for the Blessed Virgin Mary like *despuerta*, *aurora* and *flores de mayo*. While the *Santacruzán*, dramatizing the discovery of the Holy Cross by Queen Elena, it is more vividly and colorfully enacted in all the Bicol provinces. The *Santacruzán* is a religious procession of respective queens and consorts depicting famous biblical characters. There is also an abridged version of the *Santacruzán* in Bicol called *panjardin* and *kinorubong*. The Bicolanos also celebrate the *dotoc* and *lagaylay* where the *cantora* sings the Holy Cross novena.

Despite the great number of religious festivities introduced by the Spaniards, the native Bicolanos cannot be suppressed from celebrating their native festivals and rituals. To fully entice the native Bicolanos embrace Christianity, the missionaries translated into Bicol language the ritual of *Siete Palabras*, Seven Last Words, and depicted in Bicol the *Aleluya*, *Osana*, *Pagsabat o Pagtonton (Salubong)*, and the procession in *Semana Santa* or Lenten celebration.

When the natives learned the Spanish language, they became aware of so many things. They started to write stories or anything with regards to religion. Based on religious legends and inherent creativity of the Bicolanos they were able to make new traditions like: *panharong-harong* or *kagharong*, *dotoc*, *tapat*, *lagaylay*, *aurora*, *santakrusan*, *panjardin* or

*kinorubong at soledad o perdon*, (sacrificial procession for mercy). Since these literary were written in the vernacular, these pieces were taken to heart by the natives (Realubit, 1983).

According to Dr. Covar, animism was the origin of Christianity in the Philippines. Native Filipinos worshipped their *anitos*. They believed that their *anitos* are living in their surroundings; they were in the forests, mountains, meadows, valleys, rocks, trees, ocean, sea, rivers even in the boondocks and in their community. They also believed that the *anitos* took care of their environment, tribe and everyday life. And consequently, a British anthropologist stated that despite the fact that the natives have limited familiarity on the matters that surround him, he thought that they still have reasons in having their religion (could either be emotional or mental). Marett threw light on the notion that natives believed on the theory that all things are living. He supposed that natives assumed that there are non-living things and it has a unique and distinctive value and as mystifying as the living. The said anthropologist believed that in spite the fact that natives are not aware that things came to being because of the spirits and they considered non-living as living that has its own emotion, thought and idea, they did not explicate that things come to life because of the spirits. Marett called this belief as animatism or preanimism and he thought that it was the basis of animism. According to him, worshipping the anito, our ancestors or any form of nature in a way, is animism.

According to Dr. Covar the lives of the Filipinos revolve around spirituality and material object that surround them. He said that the material attached to us can be divided into natural and cultural matter. Natural matter is separated into the physical and biological aspects of our environment and cultural aspect is divided into art and social development. He further explained that these material objects greatly influenced the outlook, belief, values and thoughts of every Filipino. The connection between spirituality and attachment to material things characterized the Filipino consciousness. It is greatly manifested in our daily life. And the kind of life that we live is our embodiment of our spirituality (Covar, 1988). And for me this explains the innate religiosity of the Bicolanos. These rituals are part and parcel of the Bicolano life that is why to date these practices are still alive. It will live on in on because each generation is tasked to pass to the next these traditions.

Bicolanos are intensely religious. Their deep religiosity had originated from their forebears that explain the way they expressed their Christian faith though the olden way of venerating god and goddesses. And some of their ancient beliefs gave the impression that is a Christian belief and came from the Spaniards. Religion greatly influenced Bicolano's life. Their religious faith is apparent in their daily lives. It can be observed in their present way of life. Bicolano farmers are still practicing rituals during planting and harvesting seasons such as *tamoy*, *talagbanhi*, and *rogotiva*. We can observe from these rituals the influences of the beliefs from our ancestors and from the Spaniards. And these influences are evident to the contemporary festival of the Bicol Region like the Tinagba Festival and Corpus Christi of Iriga City, Tumatarok Festival and Feast of San Felipe and San Santiago of Minalabac, Camarines Sur and most renowned Feast of Nuestra Senora de Penafrancia, Patron Saint of the Bicol Region. Bicolanos called Her "Ina" (Mother). The Bicolanos all over the world paid homage to "Ina" every third Sunday in the month of September. It is a vivacious celebration for the Bicolanos. It is where we are doing our famous "translacion" (transfer of the replica from the Basilica to the Cathedral) and fluvial parade.

The Philippine literary anthology gave us an idea about the life of early Filipinos. Some of our early literary pieces showed the socio-cultural life of the natives, how they respected our forebears, how they worshiped their *anitos* and the nature through the ancient rituals. They used religious hymn to commune with the Supreme Being. We called this religious hymn as *dalit*. The hymn was being sung by *Asog* (native priest) and expressed through dance by the *baliana* (priestesses) with the loud sound of *agong* and *kumpiyang* (musical instruments). *Dalit* is an early form of poem composed of four lines in every stanza, with

eight syllables per line and has rhyme. This poem is intended to be sung to praise our God and Virgin Mary according to Fr. Chirino and San Agustin.

Though it is hard to prove that the only way to write any literary work then was through verse but we can presume that syllabication was used in writing poetry and in documenting our oral traditions and other form of literature just like the Visayan catechumes of the Jesuits in Ormoc City. Catechumes is a compilation of day-to-day lessons of the natives that should be memorized and to be recited the following day (Lumbera, 1968). This compilation is significant because it explicates the nature of syllabication and it supports the idea that we used this form in documenting our oral literature.

These include our *Panawagang-Panalangin* (Invocation), awiting bayan (folk songs) a poem intended to be sung and written as an expression of our emotions, a narrative of our experiences and description of our tradition, values, practices, and culture. Other forms of folk songs are *oyayi*, *suliranin*, *kumintang*, *diona*, *kundiman*, and *dalit*.

To date, the Bicolanos are still holding their *atang* and celebrating sumptuous feast. They are always grateful to *Kagurangnan* and to all of their patron saints. They thank Him for their abundant harvest of palay, corn, and other agricultural produce. They are also thankful for deliverance from misfortune, disaster, or bad luck. The celebration included praying the novena, singing of the *dalit* and offering of food to the images of their patron saints.

In this particular study, the researcher used hermeneutics in interpreting the gathered data. Hermeneutics is an art of interpreting. Partly, it is also the practice of historical retrieval, the re-construction of the historical context of scientific and literary works. Hermeneutics does not re-construct the past for its own sake; it always seeks to understand the particular way a problem engages the present. A philosophical impulse motivates hermeneutic re-construction, a desire to engage a historically transmitted question as a *genuine* question, worthy of consideration in its own right.

Using the theory of hermeneutics in analyzing the *dalit*, it can be assumed that the Talisayon have strong faith in their patron saints. It is expressed in the verses such as the words - *ampunin*, *kupkop*, *tangkilik*, *di ka nagkai*, *sa 'bang sa iyo'y lumapit*, *Bata't matanda ang may damdam na sakit*. Their complete faith is clearly expressed by the word *ihibik*. In all their trials, illness and misfortunes, they always find solace, strength and deliverance in their patron saints. They feel that their patrons will never turn their backs on them in times of distress and misfortunes. To them, the supreme power of their patrons is enough to conquer any *salot* and *kakilakilabot*. They fully trust in them such that the *kababalaghan* at *himala sa paglipol* sa mga *salot* and *sakit* in their communities will happen to their *pagtuga* o *pamamanata* (complete devotion).

The Bicolanos are extremely grateful. They are lavish in thanking their patrons from the blessings they received as in abundant harvest, good weather and healthy condition this is expressed in the phrases: *ani sa bukid*, *pinakayaman ng langit*. Bicolanos are cognizant of the human frailties and weaknesses against temptation and machination of the evil spirit that's why they are always praying for strength, guidance and protection from *Kagurangnan* so that they can overcome all these trials and temptation. They are also sure that anyone who commit sin will never have peace (*Kamurawayan* or *kaluwalhatian*) ang *sinumang nagkasala*. this is evident in the following lines, chorus and stanza of the *dalit* for San Roque at San Isidro Labrador:

**Dalit kay San Roque**  
**Ampunin mo kami'y kupkop**  
**Roqueng kapalara'y puspos.**

Ang salot sa iyong harap,  
 Napapawing agad-agad  
 Himalang ito'y natatap  
 Sampong bagsik mo pang lahat.

Paglipol doon ng salot  
 Libhang kakilikilabot.

**Dalit kay San Isidro**

Kaya't ang ani mo sa bukid  
 pinakayaman ng Langit.

*Isidro'y iyong ihibik  
 kaming ampon mo't tangkilik*

Magsasakang dukha ka man,  
 tinunton mo'y kabanalan,  
 at hindi mo sininsayan  
 hanggang sa ikaw ay mamatay.

Sapagka't di ka nagkait  
 sa bang sa iyo'y lumapit.

Bata't matanda ang may damdam  
 na sakit , kung nasasakdal  
 sa iyo'y nasusundan  
 ang madlang kababalaghan  
 Hindi mo pinaalis  
 hanggang di maligtas sa sakit.

*Isidro'y iyong ihibik  
 kaming ampon mo't tangkilik*

Bicol is a cultural minority with its own distinct culture, practices, mind set, and experiences that will serve as the identity of the entire community including the Talisayons of the Camarines Norte. The talisayon has the same ethnicity and identity just like his fellow Bicolano. Because of their similarities they share the same sets of ideas and goals. According to the studies conducted by Dr. Rodolfo A. Bulatao, Jaime T. Malangyaon at Fernando Mallari the Bicolanos are: (a) jolly and friendly, (b) cool and smart, (c) humble, (d) intelligent and open to change. From the book BIKOLS of the Philippines of Ma. Lilia Realubit, the Spanish chroniclers Fr. Marcelo de Ribadeneira, Fr. Francisco Collin and Fr. Jose Castaño, observed that the Bicolanos have the following traits: (a) exuding self confidence yet not boastful, (b) obedient but not subservient, (c) humble and yet aggressive and courageous, (d) wise, active and full of life, (e) calm and diplomatic, (f) honest but wants privacy, (g) diligent, (h) cautious and wary, (i) fond of history, (j) hard working, (k) family-oriented

As portrayed by the early Spanish chroniclers and scholars, we have seen that indeed the Bicolanos possess unique traits and characters peculiar to their community. Their distinct characteristics, traits and skills have been developed, strengthened and honed by their daily and constant struggles against the forces of nature: harshness of natural calamities and



volcanic eruptions, extreme poverty and the cruelty of the colonizers. Nonetheless, the Bicolanos remained calm, joyful, hopeful, contented with their lives and trusted in the blessings of nature, and relied in their creativity and flexibility to adapt to any situation.

On account of the numerous scholastic studies, historical and cultural research regarding the Bicolano culture, the present day Bicolanos have been made aware of who they are, who their forebears were, and how great and glorious their past is. Having been made aware of their ethnicity, the Bicolanos begin to appreciate their past, enrich themselves from the experiences and endeavor to perpetuate this rich cultural inheritance for generations to come.

Truly, the Bicolanos have gone a long way in nurturing their own ethnicity and identity based from their distinct culture, customs, traditions, practices and way of life.

### Conclusion

Finally, the study aspires to gather enough reference materials, historical facts and anthropological data vital in defining, understanding and ferreting the truth about the ethnicity and identity of the past and present-day Talisayons vis-à-vis the myths, social constructs, and humbugs peddled by the Western colonizers.

Definitely, the Bicolanos will be happy knowing that they are the heirs and beneficiaries of a glorious past. The Bicolanos of today will beam with so much pride and honor knowing the wealth and opulence of their cultural heritage like the *soraque* and its haunting melody... the *tinagba*, depicting an ancient harvest festival...precious proofs of the richness and greatness of the Bicolanos legacy written long before the dawn of human history (Reyes, 1980).

### References

- Almario, Virgilio S. *Isang Sariling Panahon, A Time of One's Own: Mga Tanaga, Diyona, Dalit, at Tatlong Talingdaw*. National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 2008.
- Covar, Prospero R. *Tatlong Sanaysay, Writings accompanying the exhibition PANSARILING LIKHA (Art in Private Spaces)*, Bulwagang Juan Luna, Contemporary Art Museum of the Philippines, Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1988.
- De Luna, Sammy, et al., "The Pride of Bicol: A Reminiscence", 1991. Gerona, Danilo, *From Epic to History Quoting San Agustin, Gaspar, OSA, "Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas (Mejico 1609)*, p 721
- Lumbera, Bienvenido L. *Tagalog Poetry During the Seventeenth Century*, De La Salle University. Manila, 1968.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Tagalog Poetry 1570-1898: Tradition and Influences in its Development*, ADMU Press: Quezon City. 2<sup>nd</sup> printing 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Philippine Literature: A History & Anthology*. National Bookstore, Inc: Quezon City, 1982
- Mallari, Fernando, *Ibalon under Storm and Siege*, 1991, pp 4, 179, 158, 156
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Oral Histories of Teacher and Residents*", 1991, pp 155, 172 Malanyaon, Jaime T, "Philippines: A History of the Bicol Region", AMS Press Naga City, 1991, pp 124-125; pp 111-113
- Manuel, Arsenio E. *Ang Etnisidad at ang Pagmulat ng Pilipino sa pagkabansa, Ulat ng Ikalawang Pambansang kumperensya sa SIKOLOHIYANG PILIPINO*, Bulwagang Paulino J. Garcia, Pambansang Lupon sa Pagpapaunlad ng Agham, Kalye Pedro Gil, 1976
- O'Brien, James *Sikolohiyang Bicolano*, Ulat ng Ikaanim na Pambansang Kumperensya sa SIKOLOHIYANG PILIPINO Kamalayang Etniko at Pananagutang Pambansa, Unibersidad ng Bicol, Lunsod ng Legazpi, 1980 Realubit, Maria Lilia F., *Bikols of the Philippines, History, Literature and General List of Literary Works*. A.M.S. Press: City of Naga, Philippines. 1983. pp 6.

- \_\_\_\_\_, The Bicol Dramatic Tradition, University of the Philippines: Quezon City, 1976
- \_\_\_\_\_, Bikol Literary History, De La Salle University. Manila, 1999.
- Salazar, Zues A., *Kamalayang Etniko at Kapanagutang Pambansa*, Ulat ng Ikaanim na Pambansang Kumperensya sa SIKOLOHIYANG PILIPINO Kamalayang Etniko at Pananagutang Pambansa, Unibersidad ng Bikol, Lunsod ng Legazpi, 1980
- Zamora, Mario D. and Saint Mary's College of Bayombong. Anthropological Research, Perspectives and Fieldwork. Rex Printing Co., Inc. Quezon City. 1986. Peace Studies Journal, Vol. 4, Issue 3, November 2011 Page 23  
<http://nlpdl.nlp.gov.ph:9000/rpc/cat/finders/CC01/NLP00VM052mcd/v1/v7.df>
- Primitive Culture: Researches Into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom, Volume 1 [\*Primitive Culture: Researches Into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom\*](#), Edward Burnett Tylor Author Edward Burnett Tylor Edition 2 Publisher J. Murray, 1871 Original from the University of Michigan Digitized 30 May 2006
- Ramberg, Bjørn and Gjesdal, Kristin, "Hermeneutics", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2013/entries/hermeneutics>