

FOLK SONG

A folk song is a song that has been handed down orally through generations, usually in a set melody; is extemporaneously composed; and expresses emotions, thoughts, or ideas shared by the community. It is called *awiting bayan* in Tagalog, *ambahan/awit/biyao* in Cebuano, *susunan* in Manobo and Bukidnon or the more melodious *iringay* in Bukidnon, *badio* in Ibaloy, *leleng* in Sama, and *balikata* in Tiruray. The *copla* in Capiznon or Ilongo is the generic term for the light song, such as the lullaby, game song, work song, or nursery song. The Ivatan have the *laji*, which is a lyric folk song.

The folk song's exact origin or authorship is, by and large, lost or forgotten over time, as it goes through the process of oral transmission. While the melody tends to remain constant, the lyrics can vary over the years. Indeed, it has no original text, being freshly created by successive singers as they make their own versions (Wells 1950:5). Folk songs do not always originate from the masses. Many songs that start out as art songs become folk songs, undergoing alterations in lyrics or music by singers who learn and transmit them orally.

Folk songs, which are part of every phase of life of the Filipino, can be classified into the narrative and the non-narrative. Narrative songs, also called ballads, are those which tell a story. Non-narrative songs are more varied, because they pertain to different stages, concerns, and activities in the life of a person or community.

The Narrative

The narrative song or ballad, which tells a story, is usually sung to a repeated melody. It is orally learned from the lips of others or extemporaneously composed. It usually concentrates on a single event or episode and uses a dramatic method of narration, which results in brevity and compression. The narrator generally shows an impersonal attitude. Other conventions of the ballad are the use of refrain, incremental repetition, and stereotyped words and phrases.

The ballad is called *komposo* in Aklanon, Capiznon, Cuyunon, and Ilongo; *ullalim* in Kalinga; *gassumbi* in northern Kalinga; *nahana* in Yakan; *idangdang* in Manobo and Bukidnon; *saliada* in Mansaka; and *tenes-tenes* in Sama. Other types of narrative songs are the Kankanay *day-eng*, which tells a legend or fable; the Ifugao *alim*, which is chanted by the rich during a prestige ritual; the Bontoc *allayo*, which is the history of the sponsoring family in a prestige ritual; the Bilaan *flalok to sawa*, which is the story of people and place-names; the Bilaan *flalok dawada*, which consists of four short legends; the Tausug *liangkit*, which is about love, war, nature, and so on; the Tausug *lelling*, which relates and comments on current events; the Yakan *kata-kata*, which is about people in earlier times; and the Yakan *jamiluddin*, which tells a love story. Narrative songs of adventure are the

Mandaya bayok; the Bilaan *tamfang*, about the war exploits of the war hero named Tamfang; the Manobo bimbiya, about the adventures of a folk hero; the Manobo *kirenteken*, which are historical legends about the Kirenteken Manobo; the Manobo *mandagan*, which are historical tales; the Tiruray binuaya, about great events in the distant past; and the Tausug *parang sabil*, about heroic defenders of the Muslim faith.

Ballads tend to be leisurely in narrative style, detailed, and moralistic in tone. One of the oldest ballads of the Tagalog may well be “Tamuneneng” (Beloved), in which the singer narrates the whereabouts of the woman he loves, and how he longs to see her again. A popular ballad is the Tagalog “Ang Bangkero” and the Pampango “Ing Bangkeru” (The Boatman), a didactic song that narrates how a proud and pedantic college student is humbled by a lowly boatman. It ends with a moral: those who have academic learning should not brag about it, because they may encounter a simple person who is more knowledgeable about the practical things in life. Other Tagalog ballads are religious in character, pointing out the sinfulness of disrespect to parents and to religion, as in the song “Donya Marcela,” and the virtue of charity and almsgiving, as in the song “Tulang Pang-Todos los Santos” (A Poem for All Saints’ Day). A well-known Tagalog song, whose original verses from the Spanish period are lost, is “Doon Po sa Amin” (In Our Town), which tells about a place called San Roque, noted for its four interesting beggars: the blind one sees, the crippled one dances, the deaf listens, and the mute one sings. The Tagalog wedding song “Matrimonyo” (Matrimony) may be a blend of the narrative and non-narrative, because it does not simply tell one story from beginning to end, but also gives religious instruction and advice to the bride and groom.

The komposo in the islands of Panay and Negros Occidental narrate tragic love affairs and domestic tragedies. Many are about historical or sensational events, such as executions, calamities and disasters, and wartime bombings. The violent earthquake of 1948, for instance, is the topic of one Ilongo ballad. “Montor” is about the execution and last words of a man who ransacked a convent and then was captured by the Americans. Two other versions identify Montor either as a Moro or a Captain during the early years of American rule. In both versions he is said to be a notorious bandit. This seems to be an offshoot of the American propaganda during that period that Filipinos who participated in the resistance war against the Americans were *tulisanes* or bandits. A komposo about a witch named Basilio may have some basis in fact because it tells of how he has eaten his infant daughter because of his extreme hunger, and his wife reproaches him by reminding him that they have weathered periods of famine before. The outbreak of the Pacific War occasioned many komposo. These war ballads recount the hardships suffered by the people during the Japanese occupation. The people were dressed in sacks and used leaves as sleeping mats, went one ballad. The heroic exploits of Filipino pilots, as in “Deocampo kag Villamor” (Deocampo and Villamor), and the return of General Douglas MacArthur to the Philippines became the subject of songs.

A peculiar type of ballad has plants and animals as characters mimicking human activities. They hold meetings, elections, and even gambling sessions. In one Tagalog song, “Ang Pulong ng mga Isda” (The Meeting of Fishes), the king turtle presides over a gathering of fishes, where the *kandule* (sea catfish) is a priest, the *lapulapu* (grouper) is archbishop, and the tiny *dilis* (anchovy) is a police officer. The Cebuano ballad, “Hantak sa Kalanggaman” (Gambling Among the Birds), narrates a gambling session among the feathered creatures. Another ballad about a fiesta in Kanlinao tells how a musical band of animals plays their instruments at a dance, with eels playing the clarinets, the turtle the drums, the lizard the saxophone, and so on. In one Tagalog ballad recounting a battle among the vegetables, the cucumber is king, the *malingga or kundol* (wax gourd) is queen, and the *patola* is princess. As the ballad narrates it, the eggplant goes to war against the *patani*, while the *bataw* is busy assembling more soldiers for the fray. One Pangasinan song enumerates various fishes and water-dwelling creatures—i.e., *pantat*, *ayungin*, *alalo*, *siwisiwi*, *buslasi*, *patang*, and *bisukol*—and describes their swimming habits. All these songs about plants and animals are apparently intended for children, because they are both humorous and educational, each song reading like a catalogue of fishes, birds, animals, or vegetables, which facilitate a child’s familiarization with the natural world.

A major Islamized group in Mindanao is the Tausug of the Sulu archipelago who have the *parang sabil*, a collection of narratives celebrating the heroism of the defenders of the Muslim faith. They include Sali Bangsawan, Jekiri, and Panglima Munggon. The songs are usually performed for moral and religious instruction to the accompaniment of the *gabbang* (bamboo xylophone). The *parang sabil* seems to be motivated by the Tausug notions of *maratabat* (personal honor) and *sipug* (shame). This appears to be borne out by the themes of the more popular songs, such as the “*Kissa Parang Sabil of Panglima Hassan*,” which is about a Tausug warrior who dies in the Battle of Bud Bagsak, Sulu, in 1904, while leading Tausug resistance against the American forces, and the “*Parang Sabil of Abdulla and Putli Isara in Spanish Times*,” which revolves around the attempt of the protagonists to avenge the Putli Isara’s honor, besmirched by a Spanish soldier. **The Non-Narrative Song**

This type of folk song may be classified into: life-cycle songs, including those related to infancy, childhood, courtship, wedding, family life, death, and mourning; occupational and activity songs, such as drinking songs, boat or rowing songs, agricultural songs; ritual and religious songs; and miscellaneous songs, such as songs about nature, humorous songs, and the like.

The lullaby is called *oyayi* by the Tagalog, *ili-ili* or *ili* by the people of Panay and Negros, *duayya* by the Ilocano, *wiyawi* or *wig-usi* by the Kalinga, *cansiones para ammakaturug* by the Ibanag, *baliwaway* by the Isinay and Ilongot, *angngiduduc* by the Gaddang, *almalanga* by the Bilaan, *sandaw* by the Cuyunon, *buwa* by the Subanon, *balikata bae* by the Tiruray, *yaya* by the Yakan, *oyog-oyog* by the

Mandaya, and *adang* by the Aeta. It is a song sung to hush babies as they are tenderly rocked to sleep in the mother's or father's arms or in the cradle. As such, they have a soporific tune, sometimes with repetitious text. The lyrics reveal something about the nature of family life and the immediate world about. One sad lullaby found across regions tells of either parent or both parents having to be away to look for food:

Bicol:

*Katurog na, Neneng,
Katurog na, baya,
Dai pa si Tay mo
Naghanap ki sira.
Pagabot nya Neneng,
Humigop ka, Neneng,
Ngani kang tumaba.*

Sleep now, Neneng,
Sleep now please
Your Father is not yet here
He has gone fishing.
When he arrives, Neneng,
Take the soup, Neneng,
To fatten you up.

Gaddang:

*Aru, aru, maturug y adu
Se innang y inam so battung
Innang namanuet si aralu
Ta wara na ilutu.*

Lull, lull, sleep, my boy,
For your mother has gone to the creek,
She went to catch a lot of perch
So there'll be food to cook.

Some lullabies can be complex portraits of life as lived by the common folk. In one Tagalog song, a mother expresses her feelings about their impoverished situation, and admonishes her child to be good:

*Sanggal kong anak, anak na giliw
Matulog ka nang mahimbing
Marami akong gagawin
Huwag mo akong abalihin*

*Iyang duyang hinihigan
Banig mo't lampin ay gutay
Tayo'y mahirap na tunay
Luha at hapis ang yaman*

*Kung lumaki't magkaisip
Ikaw bunso'y magbabait
Mag-aaral na masakit
Ng kabanalang malinis.*

Sleep, my beloved child
Sleep soundly now
I have much work to do
So you mustn't disturb me.

Your cradle, mat, and diaper
Are all in tatters
Because we're so poor
And are rich in grief and tears.

When you grow up and mature
May you stay good, my child
Take pains that you may learn
The ways of holiness.

It is in this tradition that contemporary lullabies, whose authors are identified, seem to have been composed. The tune has become both soporific and melancholy, and the lyrics express two kinds of feelings: sadness over the present state of things and the absence of a parent, but also hope for a better tomorrow. In Jesus Manuel Santiago's "Meme Na, Aking Bunso" (Sleep Now, My Youngest One), probably the best-known Tagalog lullaby in recent years, there is the element of protest against the social conflicts which lead to the separation of loved ones:

*Meme na, aking bunso
Ang tatay mo ay lalayo
Humimlay ka sa kandungan
Ng nanay mong mapagmahal*

*Meme na, bunsong sinta
Kita ay iiwan
Ang tatay mo'y maglalayag
Sa parang at gubat.*

*Tayo ngayo'y dumaranas
Ng sanlaksang hirap
Ngunit hindi magtatagal
Sasagana ang bukas.*

Sleep now, my youngest one
Your father's going away
Rest upon the lap
Of your loving mother

Sleep now, my dear child
For I'm about to leave you
Your father will go sailing

Over fields and forests

We live difficult lives
We live in dangerous times
But it will not be long
Tomorrow shall be bright.

Songs of childhood and growing up take us to the happy and carefree world of the child—a world of fun and games, of jokes and laughter, with much time spent outdoors climbing trees and picking fruits, as in the all-time favorite “Leron-leron Sinta” (Leron-leron Beloved). In this juvenile world, rural poverty is mitigated by another kind of wealth. In the song, “Bahay Kubo ” (Nipa Hut), the child describes not a squalid squatter dwelling but a neat little house of thatch and bamboo set amidst a garden planted to many kinds of nutritious vegetables. The child’s closeness to nature is expressed in songs in which he/she mimics the movements of crabs, as in “Dondonay” or “Pakitong-kitong,” and talks to birds, as in “Taringting,” or to the moon, or to other elements in nature. Many children’s songs are sung to accompany their play activities. Such are their counting songs, as in “Isa, Dalawa, Tatlo” (One, Two, Three); clapping songs; songs enumerating the months of the year, as in “Lubilubi”; and songs sung while the children play hide-and-seek and other games.

Children’s songs are called *cansiones para abbing* by the Ibanag, *ida-ida wata* by the Maranao, and *langan batabata* by the Tausug. During the *chono* ritual, small Bontoc boys sing the *aygaen* and older children sing the *orakyo*, which is about how the sacrificial carabao for the chono ritual is caught and slaughtered. The Bontoc boys sing the *bagbagto* as they engage in a mock battle with stones as weapons. Manobo children have a song, called *bakbak*, which is about the frog; older children sing the *binlay pa biya-aw* for their younger sibling.

Love songs constitute the biggest group of Philippine folk songs. They are called *bayok* by the Mandaya and Maranao, *pinatalatto cu ta futu cao* (“pondering within my heart”) by the Ibanag, *ayegka* by the Bontoc, *mandata* by the Manobo and Bukidnon, *kulilal* for the contemporary form and *lantigi* for the ancient form by the Palawan, *dionli* by the Subanon, and *lendugan* by the Tiruray. The Capiznon, Aklanon, or Ilongo panawagon is a song about unrequited love and more plaintive than another love song, the *balitao*. The serenade is called *harana* by the several ethnic groups and *tapat* by the Ilocano. The *aliri* is an Aeta improvisational courting song. The Yakan’s courting songs are the *kalangan*, *lunsey*, and *lembukayu*. The Tagalog courting song is called the *diona*. Many of these love songs are paeans to the proverbial qualities of the Filipino woman.

There are songs about “Taga-Bicol” (Native of Bicol), “Daragang Taga-Cuyo” (Maiden of Cuyo), “Dalagang Pilipina” (Philippine Maiden), and “Lulay”. Invariably, they describe the qualities of the ideal Filipina. She is “parang tala sa umaga” (beautiful as the morning star), “bulaklak na tanging marilag” (a flower of exceptional beauty), “batis ng ligaya at galak” (a wellspring of joy and happiness),

“ligaya ng buhay” (the delight of life), “ilaw ng tahanan” (the light of the home), “bulaklak ng lahi” (the flower of the race), or “dangal nitong bayan” (the honor of the country). In Pangasinan, she is *malimgas*, which means both “beautiful and pure.” An excerpt from a Cebuano song reveals how the chastity of rural maidens is prized:

Ayayay-ayay, ayayay-ayay
Ang mga pakia-kiay
Ang mga dalaga sa bukid
Putli ug ulay

Ayaw bayag hikapa
Mahilak si Inday
Ug di gayod mohilom
Kung dili pangasaw-on.

Ayayay-ayay, ayayay-ayay,
The flirtatious swaying of hips,
The mountain maidens
Are pure and chaste.

And don't try to touch her,
Or Inday will cry
And will never stop
Until you marry her.

The relations between man and woman are a common theme in songs of love and courtship. There are songs advising young unmarried women to be careful in their dealings with men. Typical is a Tagalog song, “Bubuyog at Bulaklak” (Bees and Flowers), which warns maidens against the deceptions of men, who are compared to bees hungry for a flower’s nectar and who fly away laughing at their victims. Courtship, as portrayed in songs, is an arduous undertaking for a young man mainly because the ideal Filipino maiden is so difficult to woo, win, and wed. Moreover, custom required that the young man seek the permission of the girl’s parents before he started courting the woman. In one song, the woman tells the man to first ask the permission of her parents before he can “pluck” her. Suitors can make the most extravagant promises to their objects of desire; thus, the Pampango lover offers to make the girl happy by stringing stars to make her a necklace, and by cutting the moon in half to make a crown for her head. In the classic tradition of medieval chivalry, a Pangasinan swain offers to cover with a handkerchief the floor his lady love steps on.

During the period of courtship, menfolk resort to serenading the women. Some of the most beautiful love songs, in the form of the *danza* or the *kundiman*, were sung in serenades, which are hardly practiced today. At the height of this courtship custom, hyperbole would be the favorite stylistic device to win the sympathy of the girl, luring her to look out of her window. In one song, the lover claims that in his sleep, he lies down on his mat of flowing tears, and rests his head on a pillow of sadness. In another song, he would swear that he is about to

become a cold corpse, so he begs the beloved to open her window, which portends the bliss of heaven's gate opening. Or the lover would offer to die for the sake of his love, should the woman wish it.

The longest recorded wedding song is the Tagalog "Matrimonyo" (Matrimony), which is from Bulacan. In the song, newlyweds are advised to treasure their marriage and to take as their models the couple San Jose (Saint Joseph) and Birhen Maria (Virgin Mary), as well as the pious Abraham and his wife Sarah. Short wedding songs among the Tagalog and Bicol are sad in tone and give a gloomy picture of married life for the woman. She has to give up all her friends, forsake all her former pleasures, and concentrate on pleasing her husband lest she displease him and get beaten up. It is a gruesome fate forecast for the bride.

Songs dealing with family life express Filipino ideals about the structure of the family, the respective roles of parents and children, and the emotions that bond the family together. Songs of advice are the Isinay *anino* and the Bukidnon *idangdang*. Sung specifically as advice to newlyweds is the Ilocano *dallot* and the Yakan *sa-il*. The Tiruray *meka-meka* is a wife's song of loyalty to her husband.

As expressed in a Bicol song, the ideal family can be likened to a tree. The father is the trunk, the mother is the branch, and the brothers and sisters are the fruit. Mutual love between parents and children are expressed in the song, "Pinalangga Ko" (My Loved One), in which a child sings about basking in the love and care of her parents. In the song "Si Nanay, Si Tatay, Di Co Babayaan" (I Will Never Neglect My Mother, My Father), the child sings of love and gratitude, and vows always to look after the parents. In Pangasinan the bride's parents bid her farewell on the eve of her wedding:

*Di aman tan di inam ya nankawalo ed sika,
Antiktikey lay oras na pan ola-ola dad sika
Nabuas na kabuasan isulong day aras
Adios lad amam, inam ya nankawalo ed sika.*

Your father and your mother who cared for you,
Too short the hours left for them to show you their love,
Tomorrow morning you will get the wedding gold coins,
Farewell to your father and mother who cared for you.

Debates in verse and music, usually pitting men and women against each other, are performed on special occasions, such as courtship, marriage negotiations, weddings, wakes, and sacrificial rituals. Kankanay men and women engage in the *daing* during the performance of a solemn sacrifice, the *dayyakus* during sacrificial rituals performed by the headhunter, and the *ayugga*, which has a quicker tempo. In the Ibanag *kinantaran*, the man takes the name of Pepe and the woman that of Neneng. The *kakanap* is a question-and-answer game song between two Aeta. The Kankanay *daday* occurs between the village women and a female outsider who has come to marry a village member. The Manobo *masulanti* is a sung-

dialogue between a mother, her daughter, and the young men at a wake. The Ilocano *dallot* is a song-and-dance joust as is the Visayan *balitao*. The Tausug have the *sindil*; the Yakan have the *maglebu-lebu seputangan*, which is between a group of men and a group of women.

Songs about death and mourning come at the end of this cycle of songs on life. When a loved one dies, songs may be sung during the wake, either by members of the family or relatives and friends keeping vigil and paying their last respects to the departed. Parlor games are also usual on such occasions. A Tagalog song cautions those playing games during a wake not to make too much noise, and to pray instead for the soul of the dead person. In the Ilocos region and in the Mountain Province, the songs are addressed less to the living than to the dead, and discuss more about family matters left behind. In the West Bontoc “Baya-o” (Brother-in-law), a man sings the song for his brother-in-law as a duty of a member of the family.

Dirges are: the Bontoc *annako* and *pagpaguy*, the Kankanay *soso*, the Kalinga *ibi*, the Ilocano *dung-aw*, the Aeta *ingalu*, the Cebuano *kanogon*, the Manobo and Bukidnon *minudar* and *mauley*, and the Tausug *baat caallaw*. The Subanon have a dirge for their chief, called the *giloy*. The Kankanay sing the *dasay* when someone is dying. The Aeta *talinhagan* expresses the last words and wishes of the dying. Sung eulogies are the southern Kalinga *dandannag*, *Ibaloy dujung*, *Ifugao alim*, Bontoc *achog*, and Manobo *mahudlay* and *ay dingding*.

Work and activity songs present an interesting variety of traditional occupations and activities Filipino folk engage in—farming, sharecropping, barbering, dancing, embroidery, rowing and fishing, hunting, pottery making, salt making, dressmaking, tailoring, stevedoring, *tuba* gathering, woodcutting, and wooden-shoe making. Expectedly, the greatest number of occupational songs are about farming, a fact which reflects the predominantly agricultural economy and life of the country. The most popular of songs related to farming is “Magtanim ay di Biro” (Planting Rice Is Never Fun). Fishers may still sing the rowing songs of their ancestors, later the Tagalog *soliranin* or the *kalusan*, a rowing song still alive among the Ivatan fishers of the stormy Batanes sea. The *kalusan* is also sung by farmers clearing their land. *Ivatan* woodcutters also used to accompany the sawing and hauling of wood with a rhythmic song that, as in rowing, synchronized movement and enlivened the collective spirit.

Working songs are called *hila/hele/holo/hia* in Cebuano, *ayoweng/mangayuweng* in Bontoc, *baat* in Tausug, and *delinday* in Manobo and Bukidnon. The *saloma* is the Cebuano sailor song; the *talindaw* is the Tagalog boat song. Rice-pounding songs are the *mambayu* in Kalinga and *chay-assal/kwella/kudya* in Bontoc. The Manobo bee-hunting song is the *manganinay*, and the pre-hunting songs are the *panlalawag*, *tiwa*, and *udag-udagu*. The Ibanag vendors’ song is the *cansion para allaku*. The Aeta fishing song is the *magwitwit*; their hunting song is the *aget*. One Cebuano working song is also a love song:

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

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

I am a tuba gatherer
Who climbs coconut trees everyday.
Women frown upon me
Because I am full of stains, they say.

The skin around my loins has thickened,
For day and night I climb coconut trees;
But pure and spotless
Is my love for you, Inday.

Work and activity songs express the feelings, longings, and outlook on life of the Filipino worker. In general, workers in these islands stoically bear the hardships and burdens of work, and in so doing find fulfillment despite material want in their lives. Besides, not all activities are directly related to production, and some songs are joyful celebrations of short happy breaks from toil. Such is the case with drinking songs, sung in times of merrymaking. These are a special type of social song, and seem to come mostly from the Bicol region, where they are called *tigsik*, and the Visayan islands, where they are called *dayhuan*. Most of them are short songs, sung with gay abandon and the spirit of camaraderie. In the southern Tagalog region, the women and men take part in these happy occasions as they drink their native wine. Typical and popular in the Visayas is the song, "Dandansoy," which is about the drinking of sweet, inebriating tuba, fermented coconut toddy. This has different versions in Cebu, Bohol, and Leyte. Humorous are the songs that describe drunkards, such as the Bicol song that depicts them as drinking until they collapse on the bench as they gulp their tenth glass. In a Waray song, a man drinks glass after glass and finds himself sprawled on the street the following morning. In olden times, drinking feasts celebrated individual, family, or community milestones: exploits in war, successful harvests or hunts, new clearings, or weddings. The practice is not likely to fade away, as long as there is something to celebrate or be happy about.

Religious festival songs commemorate various feasts that are observed by the people throughout the annual cycle or to mark various stages of the life cycle. The Cebuano *harito* is a prayer for blessings, an excerpt of which is:

*Kining among mga lanhan
Inyo untang panalanginan
Aron sa kaayuhan*

Sa akong mga ginsakpan.

These our oil pots
May you bless
For the good
Of my members.

The babaylan of Panay have various types of chanting prayers: the *amba-amba* is a thanksgiving prayer for blessings received; the *pahagbay* is a ritual offering to Andungon, god of infants; the *batakdungan* is a prayer that a newborn be granted intelligence and a sense of respect for its elders; the *unong* is an entreaty to an offended nature spirit to restore the health of the offender, who is being punished with an illness; the *bugyaw* is an exorcism chant; the *tara* is a pre-house-building prayer chant; the *riring* is a harvest prayer; the *dag-unan* is an annual ritual invoking a good planting and harvest season. Among the Kalinga, the *tubag* is a prayer to tribal spirits to grant a child prosperity and protection from disease. Bontoc old men sing the *ayyeng* during a cañao to pray to Lumawig for strength. The Bukidnon sing the *kaligaon* during religious ceremonies. The Bagobo *gindaya* is a hymn in praise of competition during the *gin-em* festival. The Aeta sing the *magablon* to call upon the spirit Limatakdig to cure the sick. Another Aeta ritual song for the sick is the *kagun*. The Tiruray *siasid* is a prayer to god Lagey Lengkuwas and the nature spirits.

Christmas songs are the Isinay *kantan si dubiral*, Ilongo *daygon*, Cebuano *dayegon*, Ibanag *aguinaldo*, and the Pangasinan *aligando* (the longest carol in the Philippines) and its shorter version, the *galikin*. Among the best-known carols in the lowlands is “Ang Pasko ay Sumapit” (Christmas Is Here), whose melody originally came from a Cebuano song entitled “Ka Sadya Ning Taknang” (What a Happy Occasion). Other songs are usually sung in May—the month of flowers and of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In Batangas, rituals of floral offerings to Mary are held in little bamboo chapels during this month, accompanied by the singing of “Pag-aalay Kay Maria” (Offering to Mary). On the night of All Saints’ Day, “souls” go from house to house asking for alms from the living, requesting them to please hurry because the gates of heaven might be closed shut before they make it back there. The carolers sing “Kaluluwa Kaming Tambing” (We Are Ghosts) as they go along, and it used to be that niggardly people, having refused to give alms, would sometimes discover the loss of their fowl kept under the house. Songs are also sung during the feast days of patron saints, such as San Jose on May 1 and San Isidro on May 15.

Miscellaneous songs cover a wide range of themes: friendship, welcome, farewell, humor, nature, and others. Chants for special occasions are called *dawot* by the Mandaya, *oggayam* by the Isneg, *dayomti* by the Ikalahan, and *salidummay* by the Bontoc. The Kalinga *ading*, *dango*, and *oggayam* are songs for expressing feelings related to the occasion, such as peace-pact celebrations and weddings. The Ifugao wedding song is the *chua-ay*. The Ikalahan *ba-liw* is an

extemporaneous chant for funerals or weddings. The Bontoc *fallukay* is a boastful song for headhunting victory celebrations. The *kumintang* is the Tagalog war or battle song, while the *sambotani* is the victory song.

Songs about friendship and conviviality are sung during social visits. Thus, most of these are songs of welcome and farewell. In Marinduque, visitors are welcomed in a ritual called *putungan* (crowning), in which they are crowned with a wreath of flowers, and songs in praise of their coming are sung. The Western Bontoc song “Salidummay,” which greets visitors, can also be a farewell song, sung by the men to the young women as they bid goodbye to one another after a wedding or some other festive occasion. The Ilocano have a special song for a birthday celebrant, which they sing while crowning the celebrant with flowers. The birthday song may well be the universal social song in the Philippines, except that the version most commonly used is American, i.e., “Happy Birthday,” with the Tagalog adaptation, “Maligayang Bati.”

Humorous songs express a rather childlike sense of wonderment and joy at strange things and happenings. Some songs sound like typical tall tales. A flea yields nine jars of lard. A woman cooks fire in a paper pot, using water as fuel. A song tells of a crab so big it takes seven people to lift just its claw; another wants us to believe that there is a yam bigger than the Rizal monument. The subtle humor is found in songs satirizing human frailties and foibles. A man says that he will settle for a dark-skinned girl because she is not choosy about food. In another song, a man is rejected by a beautiful girl because he is cross-eyed, and so he vows to look for a spinster, who would be willing to overlook his physical impairment. Nonsensical songs can be whimsical, funny, or absurd. An old Tagalog favorite is “Lalaking Matapang” (Brave Man):

Akoy ibigin mo
Lalaking matapang
Ang sundang ko’y pito
Ang baril ko’y siyam

Ang lalakbayin ko
Parti ng dinulang
Isang pinggang pansit
Ang aking kalaban.

Love me
I’m a brave man
Seven daggers have I
I also have nine guns

I’m taking a journey
On part of a low table
A plate of Chinese noodles
Is the enemy I’ll be fighting.

• D. Eugenio

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