



MENUVU DANCES OF MINDANAO ISLAND: ITS COMMUNITY CULTURAL VALUE

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ABSTRACT – Dances in the Philippines are varied because of the distinct geographic characteristics of the country. Aside from its geography, our country is a venue to multi-ethnographic groups. All ethnic minority groups have their own enchanting dances which are very different from the ‘Christianized’ groups. The Menuvus of North Cotabato have for ages been practicing *Penudtul* and other dances for their weekly worship. Documenting and understanding the real meanings of these dances can lead to the preservation of the practice. Dance notations may also serve as the jumping-off point from which community identity can be understood by the younger generation. Some challenges in the lives of the indigenous people of Bentangan may be clearly shown through their dance movements. *Penudtul* and some of the dances of the Menuvu tribe, performed as part of its worship rites and on other occasions, are the main focus of the study. Actual performances have been documented through photos and videos to augment the oral description of the dances. Key informant interviews with adult members of the community have been conducted to determine the meanings of the dances to them and the role of dances in the community. To most of them, the dances remain as their way to appeal to the Almighty God. Old folks always wish that their dances be continuously performed by the young and old and its significance never forgotten. The villagers strongly believe that the emotional impact of dance stays on after each performances and benefits the people.

Keywords: ceremonial dance, heritage, indigenous people, Menuvu, ritual dance, worship dance



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