



## 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*

### INTRODUCTION

The indigenous people, specifically the people living in the sacred mountain of Mt. Kituvud, have strongly advocated respect of the environment since the beginning. Problems in the community were solved with their own negotiation and wisdom. But somehow their way of life became an issue when outsiders of the community came to change the patterns not only that of the Menuvu but also those of the other indigenous people living near the slopes of the mountain (Cairns, 1997). This group of people was forced to retreat further up the mountain slopes becoming marginalized unfortunately, and primarily, of the rich biodiversity of their habitat (Cairns, 1997). More often than not the richness of the environment becomes a weapon against the local people when those in power cannot do anything to stop the greed of interlopers.

IPS (2014) illustrated that the culture and tradition of the *Erumanen ne Menuvu* is different in so many ways. The local people do not have written laws to settle issues but local leaders come together to discuss and reach mutual agreement in order to harmoniously patch up misunderstandings. Morris (2009)

stated that culture as a way of life makes a difference, both as physical act and as symbol. Not only during period of trouble would people come to an agreement but also during times of celebration. Ceremonial dances become another symbol of *Erumanen ne Menuvu*. A dance has its own value and stands as a guide for the Menuvus in charting their own future. In addition, Fernandez (2018) wrote that the worth of a local practice can be shown in the manner one talks about; it may be their dance or their music during community gatherings. Learning to position oneself is necessary to appreciate and understand the dignity of the practice and becomes a way to convey its value to the next generation. He further stressed that practices in a community are nurtured through the years as people learn to survive and give emphasis on the true value of the things they do.

While retreating to the high slopes of the mountain, this ethnic tribe brought with them their own dances. Dance being an intangible heritage which has been passed on has served many purposes for the people and the community. Based on the shared ideas, dance can be a mode of communication of the innate emotions of the people. Most of our ethno-linguistic groups have used dance as an expression for worship, creativity, and preservation of rituals (Buot, 2012; Buot and Rebancos, 2005; Fraleigh, 2004). It is a powerful tool to convey messages which cannot be done in words. Filipino national artist for dance, Aquino, said that we have dances and songs for all occasions may it be celebrations of triumph or of death (Gocuingco, 1980). All over the country, we would find dances that reflect the culture of each locality where it is performed. Through dance, one can easily presume some visible characteristics of the people which can be seen more in the context of its ceremonial dances.

Ceremonial dances can either fade away or flourish depending on the real importance a community has placed on it. If these are learned through continuous practice, community members can feel its value and the dances can be sustained for future generation. At present, technology has helped in the popularization of some of the ceremonial dances not only from Bentangan, Carmen, North Cotabato but also from the rest of the country. Social media brought awareness of the existence of dances but sometimes creativity of the dancers cannot be controlled through this medium. This creativity sometimes called improvisation can be offensive to the owner of the ceremonial dances because it may lessen the sacredness of the dance. There is also a possibility of confusion of meanings to the younger people seeing it. In this context, the current study documented three dances performed during the community gathering in Bentangan, Carmen, North Cotabato. In addition, the story of the dances and its meanings were gathered from the people in the community. Protecting our dance tradition by continuing its practice and realizing its true meaning can be beneficial to the people themselves (Margate, 2015).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study followed a qualitative design. One of the authors, being from the locale herself, made use of participant observation to illustrate how the dances were performed. A description of each dance was made aided by the video and photo documentation taken during the actual performances after securing the approval of the community leaders. Several interviews were conducted with members of the community (Table 1). Informed consent was received and forms were duly signed. The dances included in the analysis were performed during the community events and were documented through video and photographs. These three dances were participated in by the people from the locality (Table 2).

### ***Locale of the study***

The study focused on the dances of the Erumanen ne Menuvu from the *Kirinteken* who live at the outskirts of the sacred mountain of Kituvud in Bentangan, Carmen, Cotabato (Fig. 1). The total

population of barangay Bentangan was 4,054 (PSA, 2019). Age group of 5-9 had the highest population of 559 individuals while 80 years old and above with 13 individuals belonged to the lowest group of population (<https://www.philatlas.com/mindanao/r12/cotabato/carmen/bentangan.html>). Kirinteken has their traditional language, belief, and governance. The main source of income is farming.

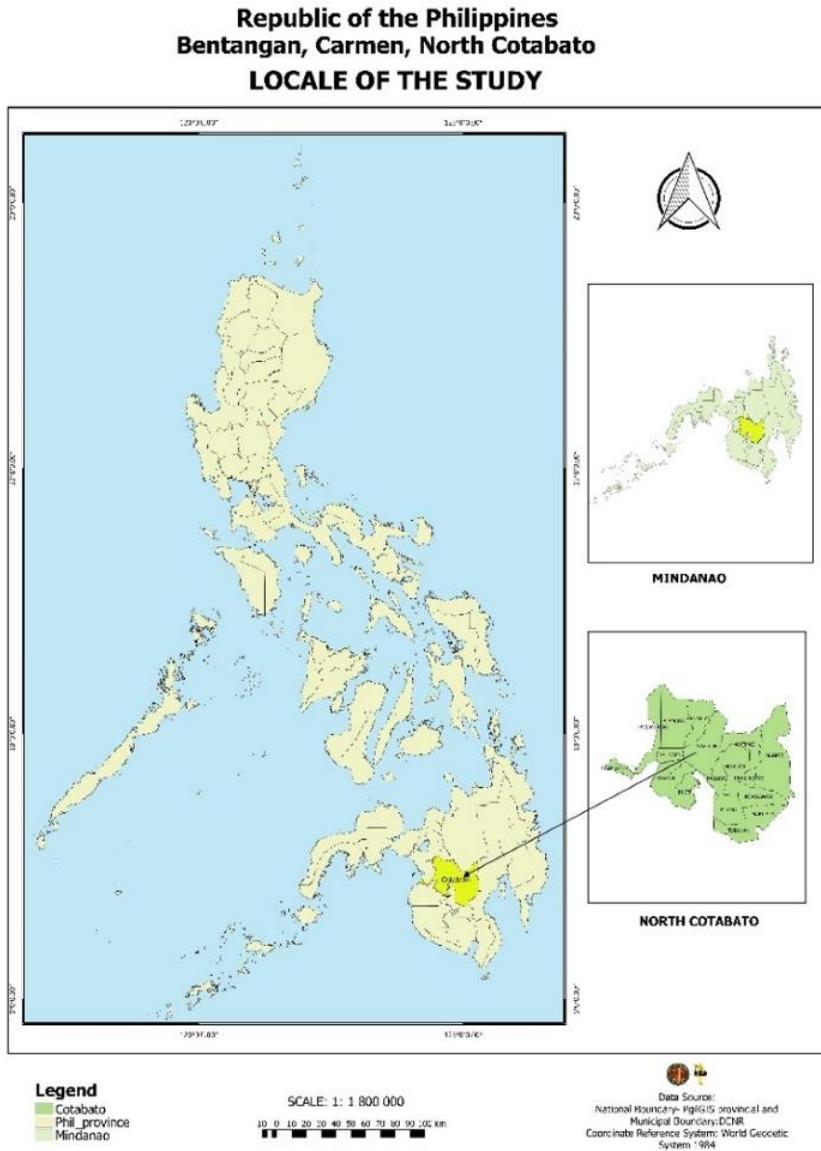


Figure 1. Bentangan, Carmen, Cotabato, the area of the study.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of the research informants of the study.

Factor	Male		Female		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
<b>a) Gender</b>	4	29	10	71	14	100
<b>b) Age</b>						
20-35	2	29	5	71	7	100
36-50			4	100	4	100
51-65	2	67	1	33	3	100
<b>c) Marital Status</b>						
Single	1	33	2	67	3	100
Married	3	27	8	73	11	100
<b>d) Role in the Dance</b>						
Musician	1	100			1	100
Musician and dance teacher			1	100	1	100
Dancer	3	25	9	75	12	100

**Table 2.** Three ceremonial dances of the Erumanen ne Menuvu included in the study.

Name of Dances	When performed
<i>Penudtul</i>	Fridays and Sundays During yearly celebrations of harvest, tilling, blessings of farming equipment, etc.
<i>Duruyana</i>	Fridays and Sundays During yearly celebrations of harvest, tilling, blessings of farming equipment, etc.
<i>Dalan Te Uripen</i>	Fridays and Sundays During yearly celebrations of harvest, tilling, blessings of farming equipment, etc.

### Data Analysis

Guided by the research questions, the account from the research informants were recorded and coded. Content analysis was done to decipher the emerging themes (Mayring, 2000; Braun and Clarke, 2006; White and Marsh, 2006). Coding the data using either terms derived from the narratives or the literature was strictly followed. The recurring codes which appear to be unique or idiosyncratic (Ridulme and Garcia, 2017) were highlighted for additional discussion with the research informants.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Ceremonial Dances: *Penudtul*, *Duruyana* and *Dalan Te Uripen*

These ceremonial dances depict the activities and life of the *Kirinteken* ethnic sub-group. These are performed every Fridays and Sundays of the week as a form of worship (Table 2). Community dancing has become a regular practice of the people as it is the venue of the older generation to teach the young people of the tribal dances (Fig. 2). Young and old members of the community gather in one place and perform the ritual of dancing to appease or make petition to the Supreme Being, whom they call *Holy Megbevaya*. Everybody strongly believes that through their dances, the creator will heal their illnesses, forgive their shortcomings, guide them in their daily activities, and protect them from harm. The *Erumanen*

*ne Menuvu* upholds that as humans, they are guided by the spirits from the heavens, who is the *Uhis ne Meminteran*, associated with the Elemental Being in the world (IPS, 2014). To them, the Being has a supreme role over them which includes protecting them on earth.

The dance ritual was performed on a specified day and time. One can watch it every Friday and Sunday from 8:00 to 11:00 in the morning. The Friday ritual was sacred to the tribe thus remained undocumented. On the other hand, the Sunday ritual was accessible to anybody as long as the elders gave consent. Each particular kind of dance was performed one at a time in full circle by the whole community to the rhythm of the musical instruments. It can easily be observed that the males performing the dance were less aggressive compared to their female counterparts.



**Figure 2.** Menuvu women teaching and training the children of the dances (Photo by J.Pobre).

Over the years as the tribe increased in numbers, various problems, conflict, and worries have cropped up. In order to appease the spirits, they convened and performed a ritual to seek help from *Megvebaya* the Supreme Being to draw or design a way to obtain social order and manage their existence. The dance ritual is performed at two different locations: *Behun Baley*, which means new house and *Dekelan Baley*, which means a big house. On Fridays, the ritual is done at *Behun Baley* in an open but smaller space and Sundays, at *Dekelan Baley* where there is a bigger space. At *Behun Baley*, documentation is prohibited not only because the area is smaller, but it is also where the *babaylan* and the unmarried women reside. Whenever the ritual is at the *Dekelan Baley*, several members may join and fortunately documentation of their performances in the area is allowed once consent from the elders had been sought properly.

In ancient times, dance ritual would be done the entire day. However, as time presses everyone with other jobs, roles to perform, commitments to be done, dance ritual is performed in shorter hours to accommodate other priorities in this lifetime.

### *Community gathering for the ritual and its performance*

Male and female dancers follow a circular formation (Fig. 3). Adult women at the outer circle and men in the inner circle, but if children join, they will be in the inner most circle (Fig. 2). However, if there are few attendees, the performers trooped in one circle only. After each particular dance have been performed in full circle, performers shout, “*Nekeumakey en,*” (We have arrived).



**Figure 3.** The circular formation during the dance (photo by J.Pobre).

The circular figure plays an important role in the ritual dances of the tribe which has been followed ever since although current members of the tribe cannot explain why they do the kind of formation. Worship dances usually use the round formation to unite and bring members closer together. There is a prevalent belief that within the circle, the spirit is present (McNamara, 1999). This can be seen in Mountain Provinces dances and other highland tribal dances where circular formations abound (Buot and Rebancos, 2005). In the case of the Menuvu, the inner and the outer circle shows that members of the tribe follow a certain decorum and observe gender sensitivity. If participants are few the men may join in the circle with the women but when the crowd increases in number, the male participants form another circle.

Apo Apir, the elderly woman who plays the musical instruments and teaches the movements of the dances to the present generation shared an ancient story to us about their *babaylan*. According to the story, the *babaylan* dreamt about the spirit who taught her all kinds of dances. Eventually, she passed all her knowledge about these dances to the members of the tribe.

### *Penudtul*

The *Penudtul*, means to request. This is a supplication to *Kerenan* or *Megbevaya*, the Supreme Being. Members of the tribe use the dance as medium to petition for protection, guidance, and healing from all sickness from the *Kerenan*. The hand gestures characterized by the turning in and out of the hands is an expression to welcome good spirits and at the same time ward off bad spirits. Elbows are bent throughout the whole duration of the performance (Fig. 4. a, b). Three dance terms describe the dance movements:

*Sikal*, *Pënginapëy*, and *Banlëy*. All these are simultaneously done to create a one whole dance pattern and repeatedly executed while dancers move into a circular formation.

*Sikal*

With a slightly bent knee, take 4 light steps starting with the R foot moving forward (R-L-R-close L)(counts 1-4). Knees are positioned close to each other with the soles of the feet flat on the ground while slowly moving forward towards the circular formation.

*Pënginapëy*

Begin with hands in 1<sup>st</sup> position, changing the wrist position of the palm, inward (counts 1, 2) and outward (counts 3, 4). Fingers are relaxed. Repeat wrist movements while moving forward.

*Banlëy*

The head and the trunk slightly lean to R and L direction alternately (counts 1, 2, 3, 4).



(a)



(b)

**Figure 4.** The hand placement while doing the dance (Photos by Pobre).

*Duruyana*

*Duruyana* refers to the swinging movements or *duyan* in Tagalog and Bisaya language. To the tribe, it refers to the weaved hammock used as sleeping cot of infants. It is also used by other communities in the rural areas. According to Apo Apir, the dance mimics the movement and direction of the swing when a child is put to sleep or made to calm down. She added that it expresses the daily lives and activities of the community. It pictures the parents praying for guidance and protection for their children.

The hand movement is identical to *penudtul*. The hands have the same symbolism in welcoming the good spirit and pushing away the bad ones. There is an additional set of counting and a slight variation in the direction. The movement of the dancers clearly signifies the beautiful rhythmic pattern of the ‘duyan’ while trying to pacify the child.

- (A) Take six (6) *Sikal* steps moving forward (counts 1-6).
- (B) For the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> set, the angle of the body faces R and L shoulder respectively while moving forward to reach the final formation of one big circle.

*Pënginapëy* and *Banlëy* are done continuously.

### ***Dalan Te Uripen***

*Dalan te Uripen* interprets the story of a maiden who committed a violation in the community by disobeying a tradition. When a woman refuses to marry the man arranged for her in marriage it is considered a violation of the agreement. Payment through money or property by the family of the woman to the bereaved party would compensate for the violation. In the case of incapacity of the family to pay, usually the Datu would pay in her behalf in exchange for the woman’s servitude in his homestead. This dance also portrays the present day situation of some members who are working as house helpers and some who have preferred working in foreign lands.

The hand movement is similar to *Penudtul* and *Duruyana*, which express invitation of good spirit when wrists are turned in and shoving away the evil ones when it turned out. In addition, the arms are both swung up and down in front of the body a little to the right and left side alternately. The accented close step is used in moving forward with the right foot leading. The dance movements have the same terms as the *Penudtul* and *Duruyana* which are performed altogether simultaneously. Dancers all face in one direction as they perform and execute the steps going clockwise and in a circular manner. *Sikal*, *Pënginapëy*, and *Banlëy* are still prevalent in the dance. The only difference is the added strength in footsteps and the two-count pause at the end of every set.

- (A) Accented *Sikal* step forward with R foot (count 1), close step with L (count 2). Repeat (counts 3,4). Step R foot in front and pause while bringing both arms upward to chest level (count 5) and then back to waist level (count 6).
- (B) Repeat all A facing outside the circle (counts 1-6).
- (C) Repeat all (3x). Dancers direction change every after six (6) counts facing out and in of the circle, alternately.

### ***The dances and its props***

A non-member of the tribe might ask how *Erumanen ne Menuvu* sustained the practice of dancing. Sano (2020) wrote that “the act of dancing together allows people to learn together, talk together, be inspired by each other, and even explore creative and physical possibilities through dancing.” The men and women of the tribe continue dancing and presumably found happiness and contentment in the practice. Each particular dance tells a story relating to actual practices of the members of the tribe.

Their strong plea to *Megbevaya* for protection and bounty is clearly portrayed in the dance movement. *Penudtul* comprises petitions to for all their concerns especially pertaining to health, protection and guidance. *Duruyana*, portrays the importance of the children in the community and the *duyan* movement portrays how the parents show their love and protection over them. While *Dalan Te Uripem*, symbolizes the concern of the community for those who work as domestic helpers even abroad, and constantly needing guidance and protection.

The countless repetition of the dance movements is a strong indication that the community members believe in perseverance and patience (Buot and Rebancos, 2005). The dances look simple but each kind of dance has its own story reflecting the attitude and tradition of the people in the community. Fraleigh (2004), Frank (2007) and other dance authorities have continuously shown each dance to represent its own identity. Each dance has its own reality it wishes to showcase. It is very evident that these three ceremonial dances have similarities in terms of the hands and arms execution called *pinginapey*. The hand raising which shows the prayer of the people are done continuously. Likewise the torso movements are the same throughout the dances, although *dalan te uripen* has a little variation in some particular sequence. The added accent on the footwork of the three dances displays purposeful intent of their petitions perhaps and shows their dedication to worship.

It is customary among participants to wear appropriate attire to the occasion. However, we saw some members who did not wear the customary attire for some reasons of their own. In joining the dance ritual, men supposedly have to wear *ginegetan* for top and *selual* as pants while the ladies wear *ginegetan* for the blouse and *saya* (skirt). Both can wear a headgear called *tubew* as part of the costume. The *ginegetan* is hand embroidered with designs that shows things from nature like leaves, fish, etc. During the annual celebration of the tribe, women can adorn themselves with *eritis* (earrings), *belieg* (necklace), *belusu* (bracelet). Men have locally-made necklaces too.

In all dances, a musical accompaniment is vital. The community has two ethnic instruments to help sustain the vigor and rhythm of the dance ritual. *Deyurey* is the musical instrument for the ceremonial dances (Fig. 5a). It is made from coconut shells and other products found in the locality. While the *Lebpad* or *gumpasan* (Fig. 5b) is made of big and long hard wood which measures approximately 6 feet in length and 6 inches in width. With the help of two pieces of wooden baton about 8 inches long, both the *deyurey* and *ledpad* produce the music for the dance ritual. This kind of music stimulates all the members of the community to come out and bring their passion to the community ritual.



**Figure 5.** Deyurey & Lebpad are the musical instruments played for the dances (Photo by Pobre).

### ***Community Identity as Symbolized by the Practice***

Three themes came out from the narratives: *Andew te ked pengeningeni* (A day of worship), *Pekeludtuk ne keetawi* (A state of wellbeing), and *Edtenuran ke kelindaan* (Remembering its roots through Tradition.)

#### Thematic Analysis from the Stories of the Research Participants

##### 1. *Andew te ked pengeningeni* (A day of worship)

On Fridays and Sundays, the local people come together to worship. Ganap Maximo used the time to pay respect to the deity, he shared, “*Yan maana rinte kedsayew rey te adad wey dyemaat ne ibpengeningeni rey te meupiya kedllelewa rey way ke ked ubpa ubpa dey.*”

(I dance every Friday and Sunday because I want to pray...)

Lyn Arnibal, a teacher added, “*edsayew a te dyemaat wey adkad su ini ke netail ne kebpengeningen rut sikami ne kena egkeatau ne ed ulahing.*” (I dance every Friday and Sunday because this is a tradition of worship for the people who do not know how to chant (*ulahing*).) A practice she keeps and continues to do.

Rodelfa Palao and Hilda Alderan both expressed the value of worship, “*eyan ke andew te kebpengeningeni rey kayi te bentangan.*” (Because this is the day when we worship the Bentangan.)

Sumalinang remembered and shared, “*dengan te vata epa ned sayew ed su ini en ma iya rema ke keytew ne ked pengeningeni.*” (When I was still a child, I performed the dances because this is our way of worship.) According, this was the only occasion where they can dedicate time to Megbeveya. Members of the tribe believed that through the ceremonial dances they are able to communicate to their Megbeveya. The dances show how they entreat and offer their time to their own God.

##### 2. *Pekeludtuk ne keetawi* (A state of wellbeing)

“*Mepiya ke ginawa ku embiya ke ed peke sayew a su embiya ke kena a ed peke sayew su ed luvayan a. Sikedi ma iya rema ke mid tahakan kay te ked pendeyurey na ara ve se embiya akad ne ed pengakay a iya te dekelan baley para ed pendeyurey wey ed sayew dema. Embiya wera ed pulungan ku ne ed pendeyurey a su apey ed mepiya ke ginawa ku.*”

(I feel weak when I do not participate and feel good and calm when I dance. The playing of the instrument was passed on to me, and I think of it as my duty to go to Dekelan Baley to play the *deyurey* and dance at the same time. Playing the *deyurey* makes me feel good and have a good state of mind.)

What Mampurok disclosed to us summarizes the emotion of every man and woman who come to the dance. Community members always have believed that being in a prayer mode produces salutary effects on their physical body. Likewise, that the act alone of dancing relaxes them and gives them a feeling of happiness (Anastasi and Newberg, 2008; Buot, 2008; Fraleigh, 2004) and the opportune time to see other members with similar ideas (Sano, 2020).

One of the informants, Lydia Pobre, experienced getting sick when she stopped joining in the dance. It took them a little while to comprehend the total effect of non-participation in the dance ritual. But when her own family came to realization, there was no turning back for her. Pobre finally made a strong promise to continue dancing for her own well-being. Merly Manguason mentioned that, “*Ini ke andew te kebpengeningeni rey. Apey meupiya ke kedlelawa rey wey ked ubpa ubpa dey.*” (I dance because I pray

that we have healthy body and live a good life). The immediate effects to their physical and mental well-being pushed them to continue doing the tradition.

All of the informants shared that a healthy body and a good life were their priority wishes for everyone to attain. Rodelfa Palao also echoed the same sentiments. She added her concern for the farm, “*yan ku ibpengeni ne meupiya ke kedlelewa tew wey kedbevesukan.*” (...what I pray is to have healthy body and continuously have good farming.)

Good health, long life, great produce in the farm and continuous good relationship with the family were the concerns of these people. “*Pegitungan dut sikami ne tele anak wey melayat ne umur wey ebpemekedlimuey ke sikami ne teltelaanak taman dut mge suled ku,* (for my family to keep on loving each other including relatives)” as highlighted by *Lyn Taupan Arnibal*.

Dancing made them feel good and coming to the Friday and Sunday ritual was an assurance for them that their prayers will be granted. As Gina Sumalinang, a mother and a farmer narrated, “*Dengan ma iya ne malu ad eg keewaan te imaman su ini ma iya se ed raha-raha a te taru na mid engked a ted sayew. Guna ve iya su malu en mehuet ne wera epa neulian ne duen lukes ne mid kahi kede te ed lived ted sayew su apey egke ulian a. Na ara ve ke rudsuan te uman diyemaat wey akad ned seyew a lavi en ke wera impurtanti ne egkehevek ku. Mepiya rema ke ked gungunanam ku ke embiya edsayew a. Apey rema id pengeningeni ku ne egke ulian ke minge anak ku ned peked sakit.*” (I nearly died when I was a teenager. I was sick. When I stopped dancing, I noticed I was not getting well. Our elder advised me to dance again so that I would be cured. Since then I would dance every Friday and Sunday. My body feels good when I dance, I also pray for my children to be cured from any illness.)

Dancing makes them well from any illnesses. Dancing gives them the assurance of good harvest, long and good life. Buot (2008), indicated the purpose in coming to a yearly ceremony to fulfill a promise or petition again for the promise to come. The time the people come together as one group to pray can lead to a wellbeing that might not be enhanced without meeting and seeing the reactions, interactions and negotiations of the community (Lee et al., 2016).

### 3. *Edtenuran ke kelindaan* (Remembering its Roots through Tradition)

Coming together with the intent to celebrate the ancient practices of the people is a clear proof that this group of people value their tradition. Lydia Pobre explained that “*Ed sayew a uman diyemaat wey akad su ini ma iya ke tradisyun tew, wey apey egke wera ke meraat ne kedgungunanam ku.*’ (I dance every Friday and Sunday because this is our tradition and by doing it, I feel well. If I do not dance, I do not feel well.)

Tradition was everyone valued so much because it brought the real story about them as Menuvu. This group of people were always proud of their traditions especially the older folks. They wish to preserve the ceremonial dances with the younger generation and were vocal in encouraging the current members to infect the young. Rowell Gayak, a young adult, mentioned that, “*Mepiya imbiya ke ked gungunanam ku ked sayew a wey apey id pekita ku rema key te inged ku ted pekid seveka a kandan su apey kena kud kelipatan ke engkey ke tradisyun wey kultura tew.*” (I want to show to the community that I agree with them, and so that I would not forget our tradition and culture.) For Gayak, doing the community tradition can be equated to remembering local tradition and culture. He therefore encouraged the active participation of the young members.

Joelyn (20 years old), another member of the Pobre household, told us that, “*mepiya ke ginawa ku embiya ked sayew a, wey apey kena ku egkelipatan ke mid puunan ku, wey id pekita ku te sikedi su proud*

*ne Erumanen ne Menuvu.*” (I feel good when I dance. I also dance so that I would not forget where I come from. I want to show that I am a proud member of the *Erumanen ne Menuvu*.) As a young lady, Joelyn, has her own advocacy. She always wants to show to the community and to the world that their tradition is worthwhile and must be saved from extinction.

Sharing a common belief, the *Erumanen Ne Menuvu* tribe, performs ceremonial dances as their way of praising God. The dances are performed as a cleansing process of the soul and to petition for healing for the members of the family and the community. All the informants shared that the practice of the community was coming from personal knowledge and experience. It was part of the oral tradition of the community.

Members of the tribe believe that through dancing, their illnesses will be healed, they will have guidance and protection, and problems will be solved. In addition, good health, good life and good farming will be granted through their faith. Moreover, it was a prevalent thought that through dancing, they gain inner and physical strength and attain a state of wellbeing. Therefore, performing the ceremonial dances give them physical, emotional, and spiritual benefits. The research informants take pride in who they are as a people and they desire to continue the tradition so that they will not forget their practices, thus, their culture intact.

The existence of the Menuvu and its distinct traditions must always be respected and valued. Morris (2009) encouraged to put dance research on our agenda since this could further understand “how social identities are signaled, formed and negotiated through bodily movement.” An understanding of the senses as a cohesive phenomenological complex that engenders an interconnected, bodily-grounded sense of cultural identity must always be taken into account (Potter, 2008).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The *penudtul*, *duruyana*, *dalan te uripen* portray the life and tradition of the people in the community which *Erumanen Ne Menuvu* tribe highly value. All three dances are performed as ceremonial dances on Fridays and Sundays by interested members. These dances are likewise performed during the *Semeyaan* celebration. The dances and their story are based on the tribe’s *Babaylan* dreams many years ago. It was handed down the generations through their oral culture.

Hands and arms movements are similar in the three (3) dances, however the latter has an addition by bringing the wrists higher than the shoulder level and lowering it to waist level. Execution for the trunk and head are similar too. The footwork for the *penudtul* and *duruyana* dances are the same with variations only in the direction as taken by the dancer. *Dalan te uripen*’s footwork execution is different compared to the other two.

The weekly dance ceremony of the *Erumanen Ne Menuvu*, shows their dedication to the Supreme Being whom they believe as their salvation and their protector. Wearing appropriate attire to the occasion also shows that they give importance to the occasion, however, it is noticeable that some of the performers did not wear the traditional costume for reasons of their own. The duration of the performance has changed over time due to the demands of the present time. Community leaders are tolerant to the changes due to the pressing times they are in.

Dancing to them is a tradition they want to keep as a semblance of their own cultural community identity. These people perform the ceremony with a strong conviction that their illnesses are cured,

economic problems solved, and guidance and protection are continuously received. Moreover, the dance helps them attain inner peace, live a good life, and gain strength, thus benefit them spiritually and physically. Members of the tribe take pride and value their identity. These shared beliefs have bound them together, have strengthened their purpose and have helped them exist peacefully amidst difficult situation.

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## STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

The first author initiated the concept and conducted the literature search. The second author gathered the primary and secondary data. The third author developed the research questions and collaborated with the write up. All authors collaborated in data analysis.

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