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The Kagan folktales in Mindanao island of the Philippines

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Abstract

This study investigates Kagan folktales to understand the culture present in oral literature. It utilized a descriptive method and ethnographic process in the study design. The collected folktales mirrored the following components of culture: 1) Social practices, i.e., *Rido* (family rivalries), use of *gong* and *balao* (musical instruments), wedding, use of native baskets, dowry system for courtship, slavery, use of *malong* (indigenous clothing). 2) Economic practices, like farming, fishing, and barter trading. 3) Political practices, including Datu and Sultanate systems. 4) Religious practices. The analysis shows that the folktales reflect the life and works of the Kagan in Pantukan municipality, Davao de Oro, and Lupon municipality, Davao Oriental, of Mindanao Island of the Philippines. The cultural role of folktales is getting diluted in the Philippines. However, this study found that folktales have a serious purpose of preserving, developing, and sustaining indigenous culture for a better future. In conclusion, the Kagan and their folktales reveal the transcendence of folk beliefs, customs, and traditions to benefit their culture in an acculturated society today.

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Folktale is considered an art cultivated in different ages by all nations; it is an outcome of instincts implanted universally in the human mind (Hartland, 1891). Hence, its preservation is a great challenge for every indigenous cultural community because of the effect of acculturation, and the retrieval of oral lore is also a problem due to vast modernization (Yu, 2020). Therefore, the collection, interpretation, and analysis of this oral tradition should be undertaken before it vanishes.

In the Philippines, different indigenous cultural communities have their folktales. For example, the Tinguians have their story about “The Sun and the Moon” (Cole, 1916; Eugenio, 1985), and the Igorots continuously retell their tale about “Tillin, the rice Bird” (Arguilla, 2001; Eugenio, 2007). Christians such as Ilocanos have the famous story about “The Monkey and the Turtle” (Jabl, 1913; Eugenio, 2001). Next are the Tagalogs, who have the popular story about “Juan Tamad” (Manuel, 2001; Eugenio, 2007). Lastly, the Tausugs, who are Muslims, retell an illustrative tale entitled “Tukling” (Tuban, 1977; Eugenio, 2003).

Filipino folklorists are exerting efforts through research to collect, study, and analyze the folk narratives of the indigenous cultural communities in the Philippines. Nevertheless, only a small portion of Mindanao’s folk stories has been collected and analyzed (Tuban, 1977). The importance of this study lies in the fact that the folktales of any nation should be preserved and studied to become the base form of cultural identity. The Davao region was not completely colonized by Spain, America, or Japan; therefore, its indigenous peoples have managed to preserve their unique culture and traditions, including their oral literature (Tiu, 2005). The community elders are passionate enough to still remember their folktales. Today, many of these traditional stories are in danger of being lost as the younger Lumad (one of the Indigenous Peoples in Mindanao) generation succumbs to acculturation.

Kagan is the name ascribed to the people who were converted to Islam in Caraga, Davao Oriental, on Mindanao Island. However, they later settled in different parts of Davao de Oro and Davao del Sur. The name, Kagan, came from the root word “Kaag” in Cebuano (Visayan) dialect, which means babala (warning). In ancient times, a Muslim missionary from Borneo, Malaysia, holding the ‘sarip’ position, came to Santiago, Davao Oriental, to keep on giving warnings to the people that there is God; there is a day of judgment; there is a law of Allah, and there is a paradise and hell, as he worshiped Allah on the colossal black stone. Over the years, the people who believed in the teachings of the ‘sarip’ were called Kagan and were known as devoted followers of Islam in the Davao region (Tiu, 2005).

In the study of Yu (2017), the Kagan named folk epic dawot; they transferred this long narrative poem from generation to generation using the art of chanting or singing. With the absence of a printing press in ancient times, a balyan (priestess) chanter is in-charge of performing the folk epic to the young members of the Kagan community. They tackle various aspects, such as life, love, death, journey, and sacrifice.

This study aims to relate the culture of the Kagan to their ancient folktales. If Kagan folktales are not examined by critics, these communal masterpieces of literature are prone to literary extinction.

Theoretical Framework

This study primarily aims to decipher the cultural content of the Kagan folktales. The community elders transfer folktales to subsequent generations, using oral tradition or prose narration. As society changes over time, the Kagan folktales are taught continuously to preserve, sustain and develop culture. For the Kagan, these folktales are bearers of cultural practices and truthful accounts of the past. The Kagan

widely accept folktales by faith, and can also cite them, as the principal authority to address the lack of knowledge, uncertainty, or disbelief. According to Tuban (1996), folktales are stories of tradition and origin retold by ancient people; they are also a part of the growth and development of a community.

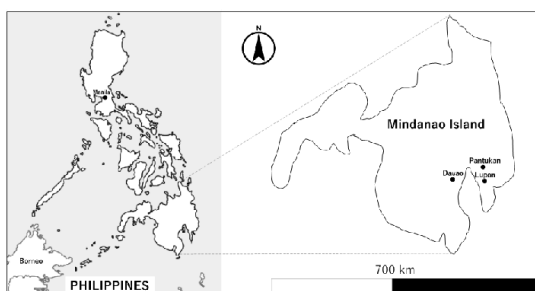
The folktales flourish because of the dynamic interaction of the Kagan in their community; this scenario led them to create an oral tradition that mirrors the past cultures, traditions, customs, religious practices, and beliefs. According to Eugenio (2007), folktales refer to the traditional lore of the “folk,” which can be any group of people bound together by common factors such as language, religion, occupation, manners, customs, observances, and superstitions. The Kagan folktales are traditional knowledge created due to people living through a particular community’s mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual struggles. Every communal interaction participated in by the Kagan manifests their existence. Hence, as long as they indulge in folktales, they will always replicate their life and works. As stated by Carcallas and Sun Jr. (2001), in the past, all literature was in oral form and was subject to change and modification through the advent of time. However, Eugenio (1982) argues that “folklore may appear in print but must not freeze into print.” Hence, through critical evaluation, cultivating the culture present in Kagan folktales is necessary to preserve their culture hereafter.

Materials and Methods

The researchers used the descriptive method and ethnographic process in the study design. This paper focuses on the cultural analysis of the Kagan folktales by reflecting on the different components of culture, such as social, economic, political, and religious practices. With the permission of the Sultan, the fieldwork was conducted in Pantukan, Davao de Oro, and Lupon, Davao Oriental, of Mindanao Island (Figure 1), from January 2 to 9, 2009, May 1 to 7, 2010, and September 10 to 11, 2011. The research methods included Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Key Informant Interview (KII) to record, translate, and analyze the folktales. A total of 15 credible research participants over 50 years of age were invited to share their knowledge of Kagan culture and folktales. The five women participants consisted of three Bai (Princess) and two Balyan (Priestess); 10 male participants included one Sultan (King), three Datu (Chieftain) and one Imam (Priest), and five Elders. To further the discussion with the research participants, the researchers prepared guide questions to let them authenticate the beliefs, customs, and traditions in the oral literature. The utilization of video and tape recorders as anthropological tools was necessary for the transcription of the stories. After gathering primary data, the research key informant helped transcribe the folktales from the Kagan dialect into English.

Figure 1

Map of Research Sites (Created by Takashi Tsuji)



Results and Discussion

The cultural analysis of the Kagan folktales is listed in Table 1. The names of narrators are abbreviated to protect their privacy.

Table 1

The collected Kagan folktales and the classification

No.	The Kagan Folktales	Culture				Similar Folktales
		Social	Economic	Political	Religious	
1	<i>Pilandok</i> and the Giant	<i>Rido</i> (family rivalries) Use of <i>Gong</i> and <i>Balao</i> (musical instruments)		Sultanate system		Carrington (2016); Dimalanta (1986); Esteban et al. (2011)
2	The White Bird and the Turtle		Barter trading			
3	<i>Banog</i> : The Courageous Bird		Farming and Fishing			
4	The Eel	Wedding Use of native baskets		Datu system		
5	The Cow	Dowry system for courtship and wedding Slavery Use of <i>malong</i> (indigenous clothing)		Sultanate system	Animism	
6	<i>Ibid</i>		Dowry system for courtship and wedding			
7	Two Old <i>Kagans</i>		Fishing	Datu system	Animism	

1. *Pilandok* and the Giant (Narrated by RA on January 5, 2009)

The story mirrors different social practices that the Kagan apply in their daily lives from generation to generation. Family rivalry, or the “*rido*” system, is presented in the succeeding narrations as the *pilandok* (mouse deer) and the giant battle against each other. The giant’s grief that aggravates the *pilandok* to think of treacherous actions to overpower the vast and robust opponent gave spice to their rivalry. Any assault is not easily forgiven or forgotten, as those historical records of *juramentado*, *rido*, and *pangayaw* in the history and sociology of the Philippines could testify (Tan, 2009; Torres, 2007; Rodell, 2002; Majul, 1999; Jocano, 1998; Agoncillo, 1990 as cited in Ingilan, 2016).

“Ningawong kamuna muna naga putika, awng yamadaman aw I gutom ng apila na pangayam sang Pilandok, yani na Pilandok na marunong laban, na ningawon permi nan pagka isahan yang apila na sabap sini yag niyat da yang apila ng redo.”

Once upon a time, an angry and hungry Giant is preying on a *Pilandok*, a very clever animal. The giant’s grudge started long ago because *Pilandok* can always outwit him and escape, leaving the giant in utmost rage. Thus, it led the giant to declare *rido*.

The use of musical instruments is also replicated in the story when the pilandok inferred that the beehive is a “gong,” or an instrument made of bronze. The giant also used a tree trunk as a “balao” or a stick to play the gong; he aimed to strike it to create music. Also, “tilam” or a royal mattress of the Sultan, was mentioned. The Gong is a medium for societies and individuals to gather together and reaffirm their shared connection, and through music, sound, and ritual, they approach their deities, demons, and mythologies (Simons, 2009).

“Iputi ng apila yang mabaka ng troso ng kahoy aw hininang nan ng balao na paga badas ng agong. Ibadas yang ng balaw yang huyanan ng oop. Ibadasan nan yang huyanan ng oop kay marim yang apila na maningog ng uni ng bay ng oop. Pagka badas nang balo sang bay ng oop yaalataw aw yakatag maski wain da. Sabap sini, mabaka ng mga oop yang I pahit yan sang parangay, lawas aw masking wain yan kumadto.

Yang Apila na sayo sa yagsugod magpatana sang mayamok na kuwanganan. Wa nan katigami, pag kuwang nan, yaga hinay hinay da yan suyopon ng komonoy. Yama hinay hinay yan suyupon yang kanan badan, sampay nang kamatay yang yaga tagad kanan yang kadugom sang sad ng kumonoy na ilamon yan pasad.”

The story reiterated political practices of which the Kagan are still proud. The appearance of the “Sultan,” as the most powerful individual and the supreme ruler, is present in the story. As they are proud of his supremacy, everyone undoubtedly accepts and follows his orders. In the story, the pilandok used his name to persuade and trick the giant. In addition, folktales about pilandok (mouse deer) often appear in Muslim folktales in Mindanao Island, Indonesia, and Malaysia (Tsuji, 2021, in press). Monkeys in the Philippines’ folklore also play a similar role (Tsuji, 2022).

“Yang Apila yaga tanaw sang yamatog na bila aw lawng nan, “Yani yang pasabot ko na bakos ng sutan? A sogon ko gaw sang hawak ko yani Pilandok?” Yatubag si pilandok: “di pwede, lunoda dako sang lawas, kontra sang katigaman ako ng sutan aw potukan nan ako ng oohh!” Yagadumdum si pilandok sabap ng pagka marama nan ilawng nan: “Sige ikaw da yang yadaog, pero ipasad mo kanak na ahinangon mo yan kong yan da ako sang pinakamawat. Kay basin amakamata yang

The giant excitedly picked a large trunk of a tree that will serve as “balao” or a sort of club used for sounding the “gong,” then with all his might, the giant struck the “gong,” because he eagerly wanted to hear its sound. The “balao” hits the beehive, and the giant smashes it with its guards scattered all over the place. Before the giant comprehended what was going on, many angry bees were swarming around him biting his face and body.

The giant eagerly started to embark himself on the “tilam,” thinking that the softness of the royal mattress was waiting for him. Hence, he jumped right in the center of the quicksand, realizing too late that he was slowly sinking into it; the quicksand swallowed his whole body, sucking it into the darkness underneath where sure death lay, and waited for anything that may come to trod on its treacherous surface.

The giant was taking a discreet glance at the sleeping python and said, “So you mean this is the Sultan’s royal belt? Hey! Pilandok, can I wear those at my waist?” The pilandok replied, “No! You should not do that! I’d rather be drowned in the river than become a headless cadaver if the Sultan finds me out and knows what I did to his royal belt.” Suddenly, the pilandok was thinking so wisely, he said, “All right, you win, but you should promise me that you will do it

Sutan nang pag sog mu sang bakos aw siksaon nan ako sabap ng ipasug tikaw sang bakos ng Sutan."

while I am miles away from you. You might rise and awaken the sultan by wearing the belt, and he will punish me afterward because I let you wear his royal belt.

2. The White Bird and the Turtle (Narrated by VT on January 7, 2009)

The story shows economic practices that the Kagan performed many centuries ago as they struggled for survival. They entered different trades with other countries to gain new knowledge, honor, recognition, and respect for their society. The story has a scenario of barter trade between the Kagan and the Chinese. The turtle is so afraid because he is an in-demand livestock subject for trading. Kagans barter their artifacts with available goods for daily consumption (Yu, 2020).

"Sang ka allow na yang mga kagan yaga pamaligya ng mga bao. Yakipag baylo silan ng mga pakayan sang mga insik. Sabap sini yaga lawong mga insik na marim silan kuman ng karne ng bao. Yang pagkan ng bao na bobong ng madaig na sakit. Yang bao kay yanatigam sang ubos ng yamahitabo sang kanan banwa. Sabap sini, yagatago yan sa mga otaw, yama dodom uman nan na di tan amaka panaw sini na sitwasyon."

One day, the Kagan villagers were engaged in selling turtles; they were bartering them with the Chinese traders for some ornaments; they said that eating the meat of a turtle is good medicine for some incurable diseases. The turtle became aware of the happenings in their barrio and started to hide away from the hands of the villagers, but in his mind, he knew that he could not run away forever.

3. Banog: The Courageous Bird (Narrated by VT on January 7, 2009)

The story presents the economic practices of the Kagan as a means of survival. They mostly choose locations that ensure a decent livelihood. They also make use of every valuable natural resource to live conveniently. The story shows the fishing scenario interrupted by the octopus, resulting in a famine. The narrative also mentions the appearance of a mountain as a good place for farming. Hence, this shows the Kagan having suffered from different struggles regarding their monetary supply due to unexpected tragedies and calamities. Both were ethnolinguistically of equal value and referred to as one group. Kagan clan were involved in agricultural labor while living in coastal areas fishing, and some were laborers in plantations (Sultio & Gomez, 2022).

Sa lupa na yaga huya yang mga Kagan, awng banwa na wa aka pangani. Sa pinaka matas ng bukid adto pagahuya yang matikadong na Kagan na yaga atiman sang langgam na Banog. Yani na ayop kay magpaka lawong, kay maski way inagad ng matikadong na minang awb japon ka ingad nan. Yang banwa na baling katingon, yamatanak gaid yang katingon paglugwa ng dakowa na tabogok, na yamang kawapat yang mga otaw sabap yang kanan kuyamoy na ibadas nang sang mga ka otawan. Sabap sini, ikabusan ng amakaan yang mga ka otawan. Kay waday

In the land where the Kagan resided, there is a mountain that they used for farming, which has never been named; on the peak of that mountain, there lived an old Kagan man who took care of a Banog bird. This animal could speak, so even though the older man did not have a family, he knew he was not alone. The village was very peaceful until such time a giant octopus came into the sea. Every time fishermen sailed into the sea, the giant octopus struck them with its long arms, and some of them were killed. The villagers were now suffering from

isda na amakan sabap sang tabogok. Yang Matikadong ipatigam sang mga guna sa patag, aw yang langgam na banog yamatigam ubos ng yamang kahitabo.

famine because there was not enough food for them. After all, the fishes in the sea are not available for consumption due to the giant octopus. The old man was informed about the chaos in the lowlands, and the Banog bird was also aware of what was happening.

3. The Eel (Narrated by SR on May 2, 2010)

The story reflects different social practices that the Kagan are still practicing nowadays. The Kagans' wedding system, consisting of arranged marriages, is part of the story. When a prince asked for the hand of the princess to be his lawful wife, her father set a difficult task for him as a pre-condition for the marriage. The story also mentions the use of artifacts when the datu prepared a Kagan basket for his challenge against the prince. Kagan community performs ritualistic functions during the wedding ceremony (Buendia, et al. 2006).

“Sa putika na yang basket yamatogom sang tubig, na yamaka lugwa yang mga kasili sang lungag ng basket. Yang gyawsugan aw yang kasili nga yagabaw silan maynono pagkamang ng giginawan ng bia. Sabap sini, yang kandug na kasili kay ay sampung sang mga lungag ng basket. Aw sabap sini yamakasampung sang lungag di dda ama lugwa yang tubig. Yang gyawsugan ya panginsukor sang mga kasili yang datu yaga domdom, nanga yama hininang ng gywasugan inyan na testing kanan. Sabap sini, ihatagan da kanan yang sa nikah sang kanan anak na bubay. Aw sabap uman sini yang kanan mga tipawri na I haram kanilan yang pagkan ng kasili kay dakuwa laban yang tabang sini sang kanilan ka ompowan.”

When he was about to dip the basket into the water, plenty of freshwater eels accidentally made their way inside the basket through the holes. The prince and the eels talked about the test and how to win the princess's heart. So, using the eel's sticky and slippery body, the prince covered the holes. He gathered the exact amount of water to fill the basket with holes. The prince did not fail to thank the eels for their immense help. The datu wondered how the prince was able to do such an impossible test. Then, the datu decided to give his daughter's hand to the brave prince. The prince and princess were wed, and they lived happily ever after. In the end, they made an edict that all of their children and grandchildren were forbidden to eat or kill eels because it had helped their ancestors in the past.

According to Sultio and Gomez (2022), the Kagan community was ruled by a Pyagmatikadung / Datu. The Kagans' political system manifests in the tale. Datu is the most powerful ruler of the community. In the story, the datu is a strict father to a princess whom a loyal prince courted. The datu assigned a seemingly impossible task to test the sincerity of the prince. Kagan community was ruled by a Pyagmatikadung / Datu.

“Sang mawat na banwa ng tribo ng kagan, awong yaga huya na datu aw awng uman anak nan na bubay. Yang yapang nawas kanan na mga giyawsugan na sikon pa sang mangkawaw na banwa. Yang grabe na pag pasaya sang

In a faraway kingdom of the Kagan lived a datu who had a charming daughter. Princes and gentlemen from different places came into the kingdom to ask for the hands of the princess. The datu loves his daughter so much,

*kanan anak na bubay na di yan marim hatag
gaid sang maski sino na usog yang bubay.*

and he cannot just bestow his daughter to anyone.

4. The Cow (Narrated by VT on May 4, 2010)

The story evaluates different social practices in which Kagan still believes. The engagement process was by way of “dowry” when the Allang asked for help from Kabinang to provide wealth for him. In this tradition, the man is obliged to procure wealth given to the woman’s parents; this wealth is for the couple to accumulate and begin a new chapter of their lives. The mode of dressing is replicated in the story when the Allang covered himself with a “malong,” and the Cow named Kabinang spoke before him. In Kagan culture, the wedding can take place anytime when the groom’s family is ready for the dowry, while the dowry is given to the bride’s family on the day of the ceremony (Yu, 2017).

“Yang allang yaga sog ng malong, aw is kabinang yaga baw kanan: “ Kabinang ikaw yan?” lawng nang Allang; itubag yan aw pag lawong, “Od ako kaw ikaw, aw ikaw kay ako, ako yang kammo anino.” Yang Allang na di amaka pangintoo sang kanan ikatigaman. “Maynono mu akatabangan sang kanak problema?” Yaga lawong si Kabinang, “Pasodan yang kammo kamot sa sod nang kanank bobot anatka mo makamang yang perlas, diamante aw buwawan para sang dowry mo.”Aw sinyan na putika ilasak ng Allang sabap idto yang indo kanan, aw di yan maka panginto sang kanan yamakamang sang lawas ni Kabinang. Allang Said: “Adun, pwede dako ako amaka bana ng madajaw na paras na bubay”. Aw sinyan, ida nan ubos para sang dowry aw di amaka panginto yang sutan sang yamada ng Allang. Pero yang sutan di nan apakawain kay dapat yang allng magada ng kaduwa pa sang ida nan na dowry.”

The Allang enclosed himself with a *malong*, because Kabinang spoke upon him. “Kabinang is that you?” said the Allang. “Yes, I am you, and you are me because I am your shadow.” The Allang was shocked knowing about that secret, but he did not mind it anymore, asking, “How can you help me with my problem?” Kabinang replied, “Push your hands inside my anus and get all the pearls, diamonds, and golds that you need for the dowry.” Hence, the Allang immediately did as directed by Kabinang; he was shocked to indeed find the said treasures inside the body of Kabinang. The Allang said, “Now, I can be the husband of the beautiful Princess.” The Allang immediately went to the house of the Sultan, carrying the treasures for the dowry, and the Sultan was surprised by this scenario but accepted the treasures. However, he still did not allow the Allang to marry the princess because, according to him, the Allang must carry twice as much treasure as he had brought.

The story replicates the religious practices of the Kagan when they were animistic. They believed in the presence of gods who had dominion over living and non-living things. The gods can intervene with humans to teach them lessons to use in their lives. The appearance of the Cow named Kabinang, a god, emphasizes that the Kagan are aware that the intervention of gods and goddesses may happen in their lives. Kagans value the conduct of rituals for their divinities (Sultio & Gomez, 2022).

“Kabinang na baka kay isa sang mga tuhan, I hinang nan si Allang, na magakallini sang anak ng sutan. I testingan gaid yan antak nan katigaman yang kabunna nang ka otawan aw yang prinsesa gaid yagapakita kanan ng

The cow named Kabinang is a deity, he created the Allang, who will someday fall in love with the daughter of the Sultan just to test the truthfulness of all humankind, but only the princess shows her kind heart. The

kadjawan. Yang Allang yamatanak aw Buyamarik da si Kabinang sa pangakatan ng langit aw I ridzkiyan nan yang prinsesa.” Allang disappeared, and Kabinang went back to heaven and blessed the princess.

The story also shows the political practices that the Kagan still follow these days. The Sultan's supremacy in the story manifests when he commands his servants to abduct the Cow. It indicates his power as the supreme ruler of the Kagan. The presence of the Allang, or slave, in the story, signifies the existence of slavery centuries ago. Thus, Kagan had already been practicing the system of social stratification that determines the class of a particular individual. The Sultan, as the most powerful being in the community, is respected by everyone (Yu, 2020).

“Yang sutan na kay marim makigbaw sa mag baw nab aka, aw inyan uman yagahatag ng mga kadjawan sang Allang. Sabap sinyan na akamangon nan ang baka ni Allang, aw a ilisan nan nag pareha da na para ng baka. Pagakabos makamag ng sutan yang baka, ilasak nan kamot nan sang bobot ng baka aw yang yamakamang gaid nan kay yang ripa ng baka. Yamawoy yang prinsesa sang ama nan sabap ng grabe na pagkaripa ng kamot ng ama nan.”

The Sultan became very envious, and he wanted to have the talking cow who gave treasures to the Allang, so he planned the abduction of the cow by tricking the Allang into changing it with another cow of similar color. The Sultan pursued the abduction, and he succeeded, but when he penetrated the anus of the cow, all he got was dirt. The princess pitied the Allang, suffering at the hands of her father.

5. *Ibid* (Narrated by SR on May 2, 2010)

The story shows the social practices of the Kagan that are replicated in their lives as time passes. For example, in the Kagan courtship, the man should bravely face the woman's parents. He needs to prove his sincerity by giving “dowry” or wealth to his prospective wife's family to start a new life together. Dowry is a wealth given to the bride's family on the wedding day (Yu, 2017).

“Yang sutan yaga pangusip sa pito nan ka anak na bubay: “Sino kaw?” yang sapiyan aw madjaw na paras ng otaw yatubag: “Ako si Ibid aw marim ako mapakawin sang mga anak mo.” Yatubag yang sutan: “Uno yang kagaga mo?” Yatubag yang sapiyan na otaw: “Ihatag ko kammo ubos ng kagaga ko para sang mga anak mo.” Ihatag nanubos ng kagaga nan, Buwawan, silver, perlas, silk na tela aw agong na ihininang sikon sang bronse. Aw sabap sinyan ipakawin nan yang mga anak nan.”

The Sultan, together with his seven daughters, asked, “Who are you?” The handsome and rich man answered, “I am the Ibid, and I want to marry all your daughters.” The Sultan replied, “Do you have wealth that will accumulate the dowry of my daughters?” The handsome and rich man answered, “I will give you wealth for all your daughters.” He gave gold, silver, pearls, silks, clothes, and a gong made of pure bronze. The Sultan gave his blessing to the handsome and rich man to marry all of his daughters.

The story presents political practices that Kagan still personifies nowadays. The appearance of the “Sultan” as the supreme Muslim ruler of the Kagan is present in the story. The words that he utters become the law of his area. No one within his dominion can match up to his power. The Sultan is honored and respected by the people who live within his territory (Yu, 2020).

“Yakawon yang sutan aw yapangusip kanilan: “nanga na baling kasamok mayo.” Aw yatubag silan ubos, “Sabap kang Ibid na yaga kombitay sang kisami ta.” Pagka kisom, yang sutan yagkipah baw kang Ibid, “Uno yang kammo niyyat nang piga samok mo yag bay name?” Marim ako pakawinan yang kammo ika piton na anak?” Pagkabos ng baw wa japon karim yang sutan kang Ibid.”

The Sultan came and asked them, “Why are you so noisy here?” and all of them answered, “It is because of the Ibid who is swinging in our ceiling.” The next day the Sultan arranged a meeting with the Ibid. “What is your exact motive in disturbing my house?” asked the Sultan. “I want to marry your seventh daughter,” answered the Ibid. At the end of their conversation, the Sultan refused the Ibid’s desire.

Also, the story reflects the religious practices that Kagan still observes today. Their beliefs in deities remain because they believe that these deities have the mystical abilities to trick man and let him learn from his own mistakes. Due to this, the Kagan believe that nature and its creatures are sacred. Even now, Kagans believe in the presence of deities or multiple gods (Yu, 2020).

“Yang Ibid kay isa sang mga taggalng, aw anak yan ng tuhan. Sabap ng karido nan, yaga pangyo ngayo yan sang ama nan, na hinangon yan ng otaw aw hatagan yan ng kakawasan. Aw sini itarima pangayo nan aw yamahinang yan na taw aw barik yan sa bay ng sutan.”

The Ibid is a deity; he is the son of the almighty Taggalang. Amid sorrow and pain, the Ibid prayed to his father to make him a wealthy human. After his prayer, he was transformed into a handsome and rich man; then, he went back to the Sultan’s house.

6. Two Old Kagans (Narrated by VT on September 10, 2009)

The economic practices of the Kagan are in the story. The story retells the scenario of river-fishing; this activity is carried out in any possible way to guarantee survival. The story also narrates living in the highlands by plowing the cornfields. Hence, the Kagan uses all possible natural resources as means of survival. Kagans lived along riverbanks, and their source of living was fishing (Sultio & Gomez, 2022).

“Ningawong kamuna muna awng buyag aw matikadong na magasawa na Kagan na way Anak nilan. Isa ka allaw yaga pangayo ngayo silan sang taggang na a ridskiyan silan ng anak. Pipila ka buwan yalabay, yamanaganak yang buyag ng usog aw ipanganan nilan ng agbasaon. Palangga laban yan ng taganak nan. Di yan piga pa hinang ng mga gawbok sa bay. Aw sabap sini abay gaid yan pakanon ng taganak nan sampay ng yama apila da yan.

Many years ago, there was an old Kagan couple; they were not blessed with a child. One day, they prayed directly to Tagallang for a child. Several months passed, the old woman got pregnant, gave birth to a boy, and named him Agabason. The Kagan couple loved him so much that they did not allow him to do any household chores or plow the cornfields. The Kagan couple just fed Agabason until he became enormous and gigantic.

Si Datu Kahar, yamang isda gamit yang mabaka nan na bingwit. Sang wa tuyoa a putika yang yama kamang nan si Agabason. Di maka panginto si Datu Kahar aw ipanginaw nan yang apila kay basi amakatabang pa yan.”

One day, Datu Kahar was fishing with his huge fishing rod in the river; accidentally, he picked up Agabason. Datu Kahar was shocked about the incident and tried to look for the giant and render him some help.

Kagan's political practice is reciprocated in the story. The role of the datu as the supreme ruler is absolute and indestructible. He imparts wisdom to the people. Today, the datu is still the most influential man in the lives of the Kagan. The Datu is viewed as the most powerful person in the community; he has the utmost authority to instigate direct orders to his people (Yu, 2020).

“Yang datu aw yang Agabason yaga tanam ng pitong ka allaw. Ihubas silan duwa sabap sang tanam nilan, ipangunsip ni Datu kahar si Agabason: “nanga mo ako I suntok dayon”? yatubag si Agabason.” Sabap sang yapangutot kaw aw mabawo inyan, pasabot na patay dakaw.” Aaw ipangunsip yan ni datu Kahar: “nanga na yaga pa anod dakaw gaid sag lawas?” Aw yatubag si agabason: “sabap sang ya otot ako aw mabawo, pasabot patay da ako aw yaga pa anod dagaid ao sang Summog.”

The datu and Agabason fought each other for seven days and seven nights; when the two get exhausted in their back-to-back exchange of blows, they stop. Datu Kahar asks Agabason, “Why did you punch me so quickly?” Agabason answered, “Because you farted, and it is so smelly; therefore, it means that you are dead.” Then datu Kahar asked again, “Then why did you let yourself flow in the river?” Agabason replied, “Because I farted and it is so smelly, therefore, I am dead, so I let myself flow in the Summog River.

The story shows the religious belief of the Kagan in their animistic days. The thought of an Anituan or deity is present in the story. It can dwell with them anytime. Tagallang or god will give anything they ask for if they humbly pray for it. The old Kagan couple wanted to have a child in the narrative, so they asked and prayed for it. The ritual of reincarnation is one of the animistic traditions of the Kagan. Thus, the worthiness of the man performing it is challenging to redeem the dead. Kagan people value the existence of Tagallang as their ultimate god (Sultio & Gomez, 2022).

“Ipangunsip ni datu Kahar, aw maynono nan pagbarik nang arwak ng kanan taganak. Si datu kahar i-nindowan nan dapat malipot yan sa kubor ng taganak nan kapito aw sabap sinyan mabangon da taganak nan. Ya paginsukor si Agabason kang datu Kahar, aw yang taganak nan yamabuwi usab. Sukad sinyan yag bago da si agabason. Maghinang dayan sa pag gugunawon sa bay aw magtabang da yan sa mga gawbok sa maisan.”

He asked datu Kahar how he could bring back the souls of his parents. Datu Kahar instructed him that he should turn seven times in their graves, and they will rise again. Agabason thanked to datu Kahar and did what he said, and the two old Kagan people lived again. Agabason changed his lifestyle and started doing household chores and plowing their cornfields.

Conclusion

Although common Filipinos view folktales as unhistorical, false, and only for entertainment, the Kagan treated these folk stories as a great source of cultural knowledge from their past generations. The mental dynamism in the folktales involves sensory experiences from the natural environment of the ethnic group. It has paved the way toward cultural preservation of social, economic, political, and religious practices, as evaluated in this undertaking. As long as the elders continuously value the exercise of oral tradition, these folktales will flourish through time. It serves as a strong foundation of cultural awareness and identity for the present generation of Kagan.

This paper investigated seven folktales of the Kagan in the field. Five of these folktales are animal

folktales (No.1-5), suggesting that the people have been familiar with animals in their culture. However, some folktales contain Islamic elements (No.1, 4-7), and it means that the Kagan, who were originally animistic, have been strongly influenced by the dominant Muslim culture. The collected folktales of Kagan people are comparable to other ethnic groups. For example, No.3 (Banog: The Courageous Bird) is considered widely distributed among other Muslim groups in Mindanao and further in the Malay world, based on material research (Carrington, 2016; Dimalanta, 1986; Esteban et al., 2011). The Kagan folktales listed in this paper are only the more popular ones, but we can find the cultural history of the Kagan in them. The folktales must have been formed through relationships with other ethnic groups surrounding them, i.e., other related indigenous groups near the Kagan and dominated Muslim rulers, such as the Tausug, under the Sultanate in Mindanao. This paper illustrates seven folktales that Kagan narrates in the present day. They help to understand the cultural history of the Kagan and ethno-relationships among the indigenous and dominated Muslim groups in Mindanao. The Kagan and their culture are not yet researched enough, and this paper will contribute to further study of them.

This study patronizes the concept that the Kagan have cultural stories diffused across their community, as they live in close proximity and a similar environment. The Kagan folktales reflect the culture of rido (family rivalries), use of gong and balao (musical instruments), weddings, use of native baskets, dowry system for courtship, slavery, use of malong (indigenous clothing), farming, fishing, barter trading, Datu and Sultanate system, and animism. It is a strong notion that the Kagan folktales are a significant source of culture, tradition, customs, and folk beliefs. Hence, these folktales are worthy of wide recognition from society.

This paper evaluates only a small portion of the Kagan folktales in Mindanao; hence, there is so much oral folklore waiting to be discovered by avid scholars. Philippine folktale studies must be fueled by highlighting some concepts such as thematic patterns, comparative analysis, and interweaving cultural forms. Even if this study focuses solely on folktales, the scope is deeper than expected, and so many possible areas await further study.

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