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Folklore in Philippine Schools

DAMIANA L. EUGENIO

Filipinos first came to realize the value of folklore as part of our cultural heritage in the nineteenth century, as an offshoot of the growing nationalism of that period. It is clear that in the history of nations, there exists an intimate relation between the rise of nationalism and an interest in its folklore. This is only to be expected, for it is in folk traditions that one finds an authentic expression of the national spirit. The American folklorist, Richard Dorson, in his study of the folklore of many nations, confirms this:

... folklore and folk traditions have formed a large component of emergent nationalism. Frequently the burgeoning interests in a national language and a national folklore reinforce each other. Concern for an estimable national history and national literature also overlap with pride in a distinctive folklore. Circumstances vary from nation to nation, but the promoters of a national self-consciousness, whether in a republic, a monarchy, an empire, or a socialist state, clearly appear to have recognized the value and utility of folklore.¹

The role played by Isabelo de los Reyes and Jose Rizal in this awakening of interest in our folklore has been discussed in detail in folklore conferences/symposia.²

This article was a paper read at the Mindanao National Folklore Conference held in the MSU-General Santos Unit, General Santos, Cotabato, 25-27 October 1985.

1. Bruce Jackson, ed., "The Question of Folklore in a New Nation," *Folklore and Society: Essays in Honor of Benjamin A. Botkin* (Hatboro, Pennsylvania: Folklore Associates, 1966), p. 21.

2. William Henry Scott, "Isabelo de los Reyes, Father of Philippine Folklore," paper read at the 4th National Folklore Congress, 4-6 July 1980. U.P., Quezon City; Patricia M. Cruz, "Jose Rizal at Isabelo de los Reyes, Dalawang Folkloristang Pilipino," paper read at the Folklore Symposium on "The State of Folklore Studies in the Philippines," 19-20 September 1981, College of Arts and Sciences, U.P., Quezon City.

PREWAR FOLKLORE STUDIES

Just when folklore started to be taught in Philippine schools cannot now be determined with any exactness, but it seems quite certain that the early American teachers who collected and studied Philippine folklore also introduced it to our schools. During the first decade of the twentieth century, Fletcher Gardner and Lucetta Kellenbarger (later Mrs. Ratcliff) taught and collected folklore among the Tagalogs while Berton Maxfield and W.H. Millington were teaching and collecting folklore in Panay Island. "The Laguna Sketchbook," by first year pupils of the Laguna High School, collected and edited by Lucetta Kellenbarger, was the first concrete result of the collecting efforts of Ratcliff. This was evidently a class project, since the thirty tales and legends in the collection were in the handwriting of the students.³

On the elementary level, an examination of the Annual Reports of the Director of Education seems to indicate that at first, the folklore materials taught to Filipino children were foreign. The Annual Report for 1902 recorded the arrival of ten thousand copies of *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, Part I, and ten thousand copies of *Fifty Famous Stories*. The 1904 Annual Report contained the announcement that among the textbooks written or especially adapted for use in the Philippines was *Philippine Folklore*, by John Maurice Miller. Washington Irving's *The Alhambra* was among the textbooks ordered during 1904-05. The *Book of Legends*, by Horace E. Scudder (1899) was listed as a supplementary reader in the Annual Report for 1921 and was probably in use before that. Then came *The Philippine Readers* (1920), in seven volumes, by Camilo Osias, the earliest series of readers containing folklore written by a Filipino. This was first listed as supplementary readers in 1920, but by 1923 it had been adopted as a textbook. This durable series continued to be used until the early postwar period. Every volume contains a generous sampling of Philippine folk literature, but Books 5 and 7 contain the greatest number of folklore selections: eleven legends and folktales in Book 5 and eight selections in Book 7 (one myth, one essay on myth and legend, one essay on Christmas customs, three legends.

3. The First Year pupils of the Laguna High School, "The Laguna Sketchbook," collected and edited by Lucetta P. Kellenbarger, (Pagsanjan, Laguna, March 1909).

and two folktales). Indeed, many of us first encountered Philippine folk stories such as "Why the Sky Is High" and "The Legend of the First Bananas" in this series. The tales, moreover, were authentic folklore having been taken from such early collectors as M.C. Cole, Alfred Worm, and some student collectors of Dean S. Fansler and H.O. Byer. One admirable feature of the *Osias* readers was that the Philippine tales were presented side by side with foreign tales e.g., from Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen, etc.

Much richer in folklore content than the *Osias* readers was the three-volume *Philippine National Literature Series* (1921?), coedited by Harriott Ely Fansler and Isidoro Panlasigui, and used as a supplementary reader for Grades 2, 3, and 4. Each volume is a veritable treasure-house of Philippine folk literature, containing folktales, legends, children's poems, riddles, songs, etc. all translated/retold in simple English. The aim of the series was "to train Filipino children to read and appreciate their own literature." In their note "To the Teacher," the editors further said:

. . . the *Philippine National Literature Series* is designed to afford the people of the Philippine Islands access to their own literature in a common tongue [i.e. English] . . . This literature is rich and varied, but is scattered through numerous dialects. The material, as a record of the life of the people, should be enjoyed by all. The purpose of this series, therefore, is to bring together from the many dialects choice pieces that have in them racial thinking — pieces that should be treasured in a national rather than a tribal sense . . . the Philippines is to be congratulated on possessing a rich store, notable in variety, strength, and charm.

Such a store is a national treasure, and should be so understood and preserved. Every Filipino child has a right to this treasure. It is his heritage. He should be born to it in the home, and should come to a sure realization of it in the school, in other words, he should be taught what his ancestors have known and loved.⁴

Other elementary school subjects which made use of folklore materials were music, physical education, and industrial work. For music classes, *The Philippine Progressive Music Series* (1944) was the textbook. The two volumes (one for Primary Grades and one for Intermediate Grades) are a rich treasury of Filipino folk songs. Many ethnic groups are represented—Tagbanua, Ilocano, Tagalog,

4. Harriott Ely Fansler and Isidoro Panlasigui, eds., *Philippine National Literature*, Book One (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1929), p. 97.

Kalinga, Hiligaynon, Sulu, Bicol, Cebuano, Waray, Igorot, Ivatan, Chavacano, Bontoc, Pampango, and like the tales in the Osias readers, the Philippine songs are presented side by side with those of other countries—French, Welsh, English, Spanish, Dutch, Swedish, Canadian, Italian, Norwegian, Tyrolese, Swiss, Silesian, etc. Many of us still remember some songs we learned from these volumes — “Pretty dove, so dainty and small,” “Don’t you go, don’t you go . . . ,” “When I grow to be a lady,” etc. It is heartening to note that the “Course of Study in Music for the Elementary Grades” even as late as 1949 encouraged the singing of our native songs, because they express “the traditions, habits and customs, feelings and sentiments of our forefathers.” Community singing is advised—in the classroom or outdoors. “The whole school may gather in the school ground or a public plaza to render a program of short familiar songs. The audience—parents and townspeople—may be invited to join the singing.” I did not have a chance to see an old Course of Study for Physical Education, but those of my generation or later will remember that folk games and folk dances were part of our P.E. and that mass folk dancing was a favorite culminating activity of the year.

In Industrial Work, boys were taught native handicrafts. The 1925 Course of Study listed handweaving, making of native baskets, and hat making as the activities for Grades 2 and 4. Grade 4 pupils were taught, in addition, advanced basketry, slipper making, carving/woodworking, making of brushes and brooms and pot making.

On the secondary level, there appears to be a reduction of folklore content in the different courses. In literature, for instance, when the *Philippine Prose and Poetry* series for secondary schools started to be used (1927), folklore occupied a distinct section in Volume I, containing four selections: an introductory essay on folklore by H.O. Beyer, a Bicol legend, an Ilocano folktale and a Cebuano folktale — all taken from the “Beyer Collection of Manuscript Sources in Philippine Ethnography.” No folklore selections, however, are contained in subsequent volumes (e.g., Vol. 3).

On the tertiary level, folklore came to be a part of the curriculum in 1910, at least in the U.P. This was the year of founding of the College of Liberal Arts (first called College of Philosophy, Science and Letters). That same year, Dean S. Fansler was ap-

pointed Assistant Professor of English, and one of the first things he did was to institute two courses in folklore, described in the first *Annual Announcement and Catalogue* of the College of Liberal Arts as follows:

English 13ab. Filipino Folklore, a Course in Translation.

A study of the beliefs and customs reflected in traditional literatures of the various dialect groups of the Islands. This course is given in English and includes much practice for the student in putting his native speech into idiomatic English equivalent.

3 hours, throughout the year; 6 units
Assistant Professor D. S. Fansler

These two courses continued to be taught in the Department of English even after Fansler went on leave in 1912. The College of Liberal Arts Catalogue of 1913-14 carries the following description:

English 16. Filipino Folklore; a Senior Course

A comparative study of the beliefs and customs reflected in the traditional literatures of the various dialect groups of the Islands. This course is given in English and includes much practice for the student in putting his native speech into idiomatic English and equivalent.

No. of hours and credits to be arranged.
First Semester. Mr. William Tatum Hilles
Instructor in English
Second Semester, Ralph Leslie Rusk
Acting Chief of Department

Professor Fansler resigned from the U.P. in 1914, after which the folklore courses were no longer offered. Folklore studies at the College continued, however, because in the same year that Fansler resigned (1914), H. Otley Beyer was appointed Instructor in Ethnology and Anthropology. Among the courses in Anthropology that Beyer instituted, some doubtless included folklore.

The interest in ethnology and anthropology may have been stimulated by certain policies and directives that the government at the time promulgated. The first of these was the establishment of the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes on 2 October 1901. The name was later changed to Ethnological Survey. It was made a division under the Bureau of Education in 1905 and placed under the Bureau of Science in 1906. A second directive came out in 1911, when Governor General William Cameron Forbes issued Executive Order No. 2, instructing municipal and provincial

officials to gather documents and local history materials. So when Professor Beyer joined the U.P. in 1914 and introduced courses in anthropology, there must have been already a lively interest in collecting ethnographic data. Through his classes, Beyer was able to collect, copy, and compile all sorts of ethnographic and historic materials and data to compose later his "Philippine Ethnographic Series" of 150 volumes.

In 1921, Fansler's classic collection, *Filipino Popular Tales*, was published in the United States by the American Folklore Society.⁵ It contained a selection of the Philippine tales, legends and myths which his U.P. students collected and translated in their English classes. That same year, Fansler rejoined the U.P. It was during this second stint in the U.P., it seems, that equivalent courses in English and Anthropology were instituted and taught alternately by Fansler and Beyer. The courses were English 116 and Anthropology 116: English 117 and Anthropology 117, described in the 1925-26 Catalogue as follows:

English 116. Filipino Literature.

A study of the literature of the Phil. Islands, both oral and written, mainly devoted to the literature in the native languages. (Identical with Anthro. 116)

3 hours a week (class, 1st sem)

credit 3 units

English 117. Oriental Folklore.

A study of the myths, fables and legends of southern and eastern Asia and the Oceanic Islands. (Identical with Anthro. 117) 2nd sem. 3 units.

Anthropology 116. Philippine Folklore.

A general study of Philippine myths and folktales, and of their significance.

Lectures, reading, and original work.

(Identical with Eng. 116)

3 hours a week (Class), 1st sem

Credit 3 units.

Anthropology 117. Folklore of Eastern Asia and Oceania.

A study of the myths, fables, and legends of Southern & Eastern Asia and the Oceanic Islands, and their bearing on the problems of Oceanic Ethnology. Lectures and outside reading (Identical with English 117) 2nd sem. 3 units.

5. Dean S. Fansler, *Filipino Popular Tales* (Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1921 (MAFLS, v. 12). Reprinted by Folklore Associates, 1965.

Folklore studies at the U.P. were further encouraged when Jorge C. Bocobo became president in 1934. Known for his vibrant nationalism, Bocobo made the "conservation of Filipino customs and traditions" part of his Sixteen-Point Program for the U.P.⁶ To Bocobo, the fostering of patriotism was intimately linked with "reverence for, fostering and preservation of our racial heritage, which includes love of home and family, country, respect for elders, courage in the face of adversity, and the beauty of our folk songs and dances."⁷ Early in his term, he created the President's Advisory Committee on Dances and Folk Songs. As his biographer tells us:

He gave this committee unstinted support in its work of collecting and recording songs, dances, music, customs of the country. From 1934 to 1938 three committee members went out each summer to the remotest provinces to gather their material directly from the old people who used to sing and dance in their youth.⁸

A natural offshoot of Bocobo's cultural activities was the founding of the U.P. Folk Song and Dance Club in 1937 and of the U.P. Folk Song and Dance Troupe. Folk Dancing also became a regular course offering in the U.P. Department of P.E. and a "professional course in Philippine folk dance" was instituted.

Besides folk songs and dances, proverbs greatly interested Bocobo, believing as he did

that proverbs express, in pithy and concise form, the spirit and wisdom of a people. There is no more effective way of transmitting our moral heritage than through Filipino proverbs. The ancestral virtues will, by this method, be perpetuated in the lives of our future citizens.⁹

Bocobo believed that proverbs and customs should be among the principal sources of a Filipino code of ethics. Accordingly, he collected some one thousand proverbs from different language groups and incorporated these into the *Filipino Code of Ethics* that he submitted to President Quezon on 29 December 1940. When he

6. Bonifacio Salamanca, "Bocobo Fosters a Vibrant Nationalism," in *The First Seventy-Five Years*, ed. Oscar M. Alfonso (Quezon City: U.P. Press, 1985), p. 647

7. *Ibid.*, p. 211.

8. Celia Bocobo Olivar, "Jorge C. Bocobo—His Life and Ideas as Educator and Jurist" (Ph.D. dissertation, U.P., 1985), as quoted by Salamanca, p. 214.

9. Vicente I. de Veyra, *Mga Dayhuan han Bisaya* (Palo, Leyte: Sacred Heart Press, 1957), p. iv.

became Secretary of Public Instruction in 1939, Bocobo ordered the revision and enrichment of the Course of Study in Character Education by the inclusion of proverbs as teaching materials. He announced this in a speech he delivered on 29 June 1939 in Baguio. To implement this, Director of Education Celedonio Salvador issued a General Letter to the Division Superintendents of Schools throughout the country, requesting them to "assign at least five teachers in five different widely distributed schools in your division who are teaching in their hometowns . . . to collect proverbs from the old people in the locality." The proverbs are to be translated into English and both dialect versions and English translations were to be submitted to the Department of Education on or before 1 October 1939. A separate letter to the teacher-collectors gave them pointers on field collecting and told them to see to it that the proverbs they collect are native in origin.

The interest in folklore among U.P. students generated by the courses instituted by Fansler and Beyer bore concrete results in the form of master's theses on folklore topics. The earliest seems to have been Carolina Marquez's "Proverbs and Proverbial Sayings Reflecting Tagalog Life and Culture."¹⁰ This was followed by Flora A. Ylagan's "Tagalog Popular and Folk Songs as a Reflection of Tagalog Life and Culture."¹¹ The most substantial of these prewar theses on folklore was that by Emiliano C. Ramirez, "A Study on a Code of Ethics for Filipinos from Proverbs and Sayings,"¹² which contains a rich collection of 3,347 proverbs in 15 Philippine languages.

POSTWAR TEXTBOOKS

The listing of textbooks in the *Annual Report* of the Bureau of Public Schools for 1948-49 shows that the Osias readers had been replaced by such readers as *Pepe and Pilar* and *Pepe and Pilar Visit the City* (Gr. 1; *In and Out of the Barrio* (Gr. 2); *Our Flag & Other Stories* (Gr. 3); *Our Great Men and Other Stories* (Gr. 4).

10. Carolina Marquez, "Proverbs and Proverbial Sayings Reflecting Tagalog Life and Culture" (M.A. thesis in Sociology, U.P., 1933).

11. Flora A. Ylagan, "Tagalog Popular and Folk Songs as a Reflection of Tagalog Life and Culture" (M.A. thesis in Education, U.P., 1934).

12. Emiliano C. Ramirez, "A Study on a Code of Ethics for Filipinos from Proverbs and Sayings" (M.A. thesis in Education, U.P., 1940).

The Phil. Readers, Bk. 5 by C. Osias, remained the textbook for Grade 5. I have not been able to examine the first four titles for folklore content, but *Our Great Men*. . . contains two Filipino folktales and one selection on the origin of the game of *sipa*, and the *Osias Readers*, Bk. 5, we have already described as being rich in tales and legends.

The big boost to folklore in the curriculum came when Director of Public Schools Benito Pangilinan made the following policy statement in his *Annual Report* for Schoolyear 1951-52:

The School Conserves the Filipino Heritage and Promotes its Development.

The Filipino nation has a rich heritage. No government agency is called upon to conserve and develop this inheritance for oncoming generations more readily than the schools. The public schools are aware of this great and necessary task. They have provided in their various curriculums (sic) materials that open this patrimony to the scrutiny and appreciation of Filipino children, youths, and adults. They have provided experiences in both curricular and co-curricular activities in which the young and adult Filipino citizens relive in thoughts and deeds the wisdom and culture of a virile and rugged past

The preservation of wholesome Filipino customs, traditions, folklore, folk songs, folk dances, and legends is being effected with the inclusion of corresponding materials in the readers being prepared in the General Office, in the elementary music textbooks recently approved for use in Philippine public schools, and in the collection of folk songs, and dances being undertaken by the Division of Physical Education under the Department of Education. In our schools, children discover their richest heritage—music—through singing and listening to our own native music and historical songs. Many of the folksongs that embody the cultural background of our people are now sung in all schools throughout the Philippines.

How effectively have textbook writers implemented this policy of including folklore materials in books? An examination of textbooks after the war shows that in general, they contain fewer folklore selections than the prewar Osias readers. Some of the folklore selections included, moreover, seem to be "made up" stories rather than traditional tales. Very rarely does one come across a reader rich in folklore content. One such book is *Pearl of the Orient Seas*, for Grade 5, by Victoria Abelardo, Luz de la Concha, and Alegre Ledesma.¹³ It is rich in Legends, myths, and

13. Victoria Abelardo, Luz de la Concha, and Alegre Ledesma, *Pearl of the Orient Seas* (Manila: Alemars-Phoenix, 1977).

folktales. In addition, under a unit on "Festivals of the Orient," many Filipino festivals are described side by side with those of China, Japan, Java, Cambodia, India, Thailand, Burma, etc. Other textbooks which contain a fair number of folklore selections are *We, the Filipinos*, by C. Cristobal, D. Fresnoza, G. Buco, and S.B. Ramos (A-PPH, *Our Province*), by A.M. Villamin and C.G. Juanzon (A-PPH, 1973, 1977), and *Journeys*, for Grade 6 by Magelende M. Flores and Rosario E. Maminta (APH, 1979).¹⁴

In general, the textbooks for high school English contain few folklore selections and these are found mostly in the first year literature textbook. The excellent *Achievement and Self-Discovery* by Alfredo T. Morales, Vicente M. Hilario, Panalig R. Belmonte, and Carmen Lejano,¹⁵ which for a long time was the approved textbook for First Year Literature, contains a fine selection of seven folk narratives: five folktales from Fansler's *Filipino Popular Tales*, the Mariang Makiling legend by Jose Rizal, and the Indrapatra and Suayman myth from M.C. Cole. It should be noted that one of the authors, Vicente M. Hilario, was a student contributor to Fansler's collection, and he should be commended for adding these five folktales from the Fansler collection to this textbook for first year students to enjoy. Among the "Suggested Additional Activities" for the students are the collecting of Philippine myths and the creating of a myth about some striking natural land feature in the students' town/province; e.g., the Hundred Islands in Pangasinan, Talim Island in Rizal, etc. In the *English Communication Arts and Skills* series of Josephine Serrano and Milagros G. Lapid (A-PPH),¹⁶ Vol. I contains six Filipino folk narratives. The rest of the volumes are devoted to Afro-Asian literature, English and American literature, and World literature. Asuncion D. Maramba's *Integration I* for first year high school, is the only textbook I have come across that has a special section on folklore, "because our country is so rich in folklore that it certainly deserves to call attention to itself."¹⁷ However, she gives only a small sampling of this folklore (seven folk narratives, six riddles, nine proverbs, six folk songs) "since there are numerous collections of

14. (A-PPH); (A-PPH, 1973, 1977), and (APH, 1979).

15. Alfredo T. Morales, Vicente M. Hilario, Panalig R. Belmonte, and Carmen Lejano. *Achievement and Self-Discovery* (Manila: Ginn and Co., 1954).

16. (A-PPH).

17. Asuncion D. Maramba, *Integration I* (Manila: National Book Store, 1975).

folktales, riddles, proverbs, folksongs readily available." Instead she gives a generous excerpt from the Manuvu epic, *The Maiden of the Buhong Sky*. Folklore is also contained in short stories like "My Father Goes to Court," "Wedding Dance," and "The Mats" and in essays like Pedro Chirino's "Of the Civilities, Terms of Courtesy, and Good Breeding of Filipinos," I.V. Mallari's "The Lenten Season," and F. Licsi Espino's "Death and the Filipino."

Postwar textbooks in Pilipino are sadly deficient in folklore content. Even the celebrated series, *Diwang Kayumanggi*, by Juan C. Laya, suffers from this deficiency.¹⁸ Only the first volume of this series contains folklore (thirty-eight proverbs and twenty-three riddles) under its section "Pamana ng Lahi." Other textbooks usually contain a legend or two, or a handful of riddles or proverbs. The exception is a Grade 3 reader entitled *Hiyas ng Lahi*, by Federico Doval Santos and Nenita Impreso,¹⁹ which is essentially a Philippine folk literature reader. Its only defect is that it contains too many legends and no folktales or folk songs. A high school textbook, *Panitikan Para sa Mataas na Paaralan*, Vol. I, by Policarpio Dangalio, Josefina Serion, and Antonio D.G. Mariano,²⁰ also contains a fair amount of folklore: some admirable Filipino customs, five legends, four fables (which however do not seem traditional), and a fairly large number of proverbs.

One other subject which successfully uses folklore as instructional material is Character Education. Proverbs, didactic folktales, and legends are favorite types for inclusion in Character Education textbooks. In the New Elementary School Curriculum, however, this subject has been called "Character Building Activities," which probably will not need a textbook.

THE MECS TEXTBOOKS: 1972 AND AFTER

An important part of the democratic revolution under the New Society was the reform in education and culture. To effect this,

18. Juan C. Laya, ed., *Diwang Kayumanggi* (Manila: Inang Wika Publishing Co., 1948).

19. Federico Doval Santos and Nenita Impreso, ed., *Hiyas ng Lahi, Ikatlong Baitang* (Metro Manila: Era Philippines, 1980).

20. Policarpio Dangalio, Josefina Serion and Antonio D.G. Mariano, eds. *Panitikan Para sa Mataas na Paaralan*, Unang Taon (Quezon City: Bedes Publishing House, Inc., 1968). First Published in 1950.

President Marcos issued Presidential Decree 6-A (1972), which initiated a ten-year educational development program that would undertake the "improvement of the curricular programs and quality facilities, adoption of cost-saving instructional technique, and training and re-training of teachers and administrators." The primary aim of the program was to provide sufficient textbooks for all public elementary and high school students all over the country. To realize this goal, an Educational Development Projects Implementing Task Force (EDPITAF) was created as a unit of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) and this body, through the Textbook Board Secretariat (TBS) was charged with the development and production of new elementary and high school textbooks and other instructional materials. An examination of some of these EDPITAF books shows that folklore has been incorporated in many of them but in varying degrees. One set of textbooks that vary effectively includes folklore is that for Social Sciences, prepared by the Social Science Center of the Department of Education and Culture (1976-80). From the very first grade, pupils are taught about the family as a unit of society, their customs (respect for elders, for the dead, the custom of helping each other, of bringing *pasalubong* when relatives come to visit and of giving *pabaon* when they leave, etc.); their love of their country and all that it stands for—the folk house, folk costumes, native cookery, folk musical instruments, songs, dances, games, etc.

These customs and practices are reiterated in the higher grades. In Grade 3, the child is made aware of Filipinos in different regions of the country (Ifugaos, Ilocanos, Tagalogs, Bicol, etc.) and their peculiar ways. Planting and fishing customs of Ilocanos, Tagalogs, Warays, etc. are pointed out. For homework, pupils are asked to read more books and magazines about Filipino customs, to ask old people, and to list good customs that should be imitated. Some religious folk practices and festivals are described, also the celebration of feasts of saints like San Isidro, San Pedro, and Sta. Marta, the blessing of seeds on Palm Sunday, the carabao festival of Tanza, Cavite, and rain-making customs (novenas, processions, bathing of the saint), praying and dancing, and the Gindauatan ritual of the Jama Mapun.

In Grade 4, the Social Studies course starts with an overview of the indigenous culture of the Philippines—tools and equipment,

houses, art, literature, music, games, etc. This is followed by a unit on Filipino values, customs and beliefs (from birth to death), and respect for the customs and religious belief of other nations.

In Grade 5, the focus is on the role that the government plays in the conservation and propagation of the cultural heritage. Pupils are made aware of both material and nonmaterial culture.

In Grade 6, the textbook emphasizes our inherited folk ways and how these change with contact with new knowledge and foreign influences. Filipino values—moral and spiritual are compared with those of other nations.

The EDPITAF textbooks for English, the *Building English Skills* series, likewise provide enough room for folklore. Some units/lessons deal specifically with folklore. For instance, Unit III of the Grade 3 textbook aims “to develop the pupil’s pride in his cultural heritage, some great Filipinos and their deeds, and some Filipino festivals and holidays.” In the Grade 4 textbook, under Unit II “This Is the Philippines,” Lesson 8 is “Let’s Cherish these Traditions,” under which some desirable Filipino customs are illustrated in story form. The Grade 5 textbook has a lesson on games, in which *sipa* is described. It also has a whole unit, “Stories and Poems to Enjoy,” in which several folk narratives are included, but some of the tales are not familiar and seem to have been “made up.” Book 2 of the Grade 5 textbook lists some Philippine holidays (*Pahiyas*, *Hari Raya Puasa*, etc.) and asks pupils to select one festival, to gather information about it, and to report on it in class. These festivals are studied in relation to those of other countries.

The textbooks in Pilipino are disappointing in their folklore content. The Grade 5 textbook in Reading, for instance, does not contain any folk narratives, riddles, proverbs, or folk songs. Its concession to ethnology is a story about a Tiruray family. The Grade 6 textbook is not any richer in folklore items. In the Language part, a few proverbs are used in Lesson 1, but only as applied to actual situations and some of them are rephrased. The Reading part contains an essay about the *pabasa* (a Lenten custom) and a school play about native games (*sipa*, *sungka*, etc.)

The high school textbooks in Pilipino are equally sparing in their folklore content. *Binhi* (first year) contains “Ang mga Kapuri-puring Kaugalian Natin” and some proverbs; *Punla* (third year) contains a re-telling of the Indarapatra and Sulayman myth;

Ani (fourth year) contains an essay on religious folk practices, "Sa Bayan ng mga Panata," by Fanny A. Garcia.

THE NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

On 29 January 1982, the Ministry of Education Culture and Sports (MECS) issued Order No. 6, s. 1982, announcing the New Elementary School Curriculum (NESC). This NESC strikes me as being folklore-oriented, since it focuses on the development of a sense of humanity and nationhood in all learning areas. One of its objectives is "to strengthen national consciousness and promote desirable cultural values in a changing world." It reiterates the objectives of the 1970 Revised Elementary School program, among them "the inculcation of spiritual and civic values" and "the development of basic understanding about Philippine culture, the desirable traditions and virtues of our people as essential requisites in attaining national consciousness and solidarity." One of the fifteen expectancies of a Grade 6 graduate is "to show appreciation for and pride in indigenous and contemporary Filipino arts and culture by participating/attending cultural activities and to lead games in school and in the community."

In the NESC, Social Studies is offered as "Civics and Culture" in Grades 1 to 3 (this includes Music, Arts, and P.E.) and as "Geography/History/Civics" in Grades 4 to 6. The Minimum Learning Competencies for Civics and Culture provide plenty of room for folklore. In Grade 1, which includes Music, Art, and P.E., folk songs (esp. work songs), folk dances, and folk games can easily be included. In Grade 2, the main units are National Identity/Pride and National Unity. Under the first may be studied the qualities that are uniquely Filipino and the desirable customs that should be perpetuated (kissing the hands, forms of respectful address, etc.). Under National Unity are discussed the traditional customs and feasts that bind people together; e.g., Christmas, All Saint's Day, Lent/Easter, and feasts in honor of saints.

From Grades 4 to 6, pupils study History/Geography/Civics. A Grade 4 textbook entitled *Pilipinas: Bansang Mapalad*, written by Luz de la Cruz, Elena C. Cutiongco, Norma M. Abracia, and Rosella Goloso²¹ is a good example of how folklore can be effec-

21. Luz de la Cruz, Elena C. Cutiongco, Norma M. Abracia, and Rosella Goloso, *Pilipinas: Bansang Mapalad* (Quezon City: Vibal Publishing House, 1985).

tively taught to Grade 4 pupils. In one short chapter, the authors are able to present the culture of the ancient Filipinos—their social organization, customary laws, their religion, their art, musical instruments, and their songs. Very commendable are the assigned projects/homework: e.g., (1) dramatize—a datu trying a case; a wedding; (2) Answer the ff. questions: What parts of the culture of the ancient Filipinos should we preserve? Why? Unit IV focuses on the responsibility of citizens in preserving/safeguarding and developing our culture. In this unit is explained the meaning of national identity and the distinction between material and nonmaterial culture. Very good exercises and projects are suggested, among them, collecting pictures showing Filipino cultures arranged for a school exhibit; staging a play illustrating Filipino customs and values; preparing posters that will encourage people to preserve and develop Filipino culture; participating in a folk dance or in folk games; and collecting folk poems and folk stories from a specific region.

CONCLUSION

The folklore content of books examined for this article is very uneven. The prewar Osias readers are rich in folklore content, both Philippine and foreign, but we cannot say the same of the *Philippine Prose and Poetry series*, of which only Vol. I contains a commendable number of folklore selections. The textbooks being produced at present by the MECS contain a fair amount of folklore. Perhaps we have to accept the fact that not too much folklore can be contained in literature and social studies textbooks, or even in P.E. courses. The important thing is to give our pupils an awareness of the richness of our folklore and to arouse in them an interest to know more about it. This can only be done by stocking our libraries (elementary and high school) with a variety of collections of Philippine folklore—stories, riddles, proverbs, folk songs, games, dances, customs and beliefs, etc.; with exhibits/pictures of our material culture (arts and crafts, costumes, cookery, dwelling, etc.).

Other things that may be noted about the folklore content of our textbooks are (1) that some of the items do not seem to be authentic folklore; i.e., they do not seem traditional but invented/created by the author and (2) that they do not seem represen-

tative or typical enough. It is obvious that a textbook writer/ editor can make judicious choices of items to include only if he has a comprehensive knowledge of Philippine folklore and knows the most reliable collections of different types of folklore. Thus it is understandable why the books co-authored or co-edited by Victoria Abelardo and Vicente M. Hilario, both trained by Fansler, contain a fine selection of folklore items.²²

What then needs to be done to improve the utilization of folklore in Philippine education? It seems to me that the first logical thing to do is to heighten the awareness of educators about the value of folklore as materials of instruction. A second very important task is to make published collections of folklore materials easily available to educators, especially to textbook writers. A sad fact about Philippine folklore scholarship is the scarcity of published collections, whether of tales, riddles, proverbs, customs, beliefs, games, dances, etc. Even the old standard collections such as Fansler's *Filipino Popular Tales* and M.C. Cole's *Philippine Folk Tales* (1916) are not available in the Philippines, and no local publisher has thought of reprinting them. It is clear from an examination of prewar textbooks that folklore will be included in textbooks if it is available to the writer. Many of the tales in the Osias readers were taken from M.C. Cole's collection and from the student collectors of Fansler. Only when the collecting, transcription and translation, editing, and publication of folklore are done simultaneously and continuously can we expect Philippine folklore to occupy a significant place in Philippine education.

22. See for example Victoria Abelardo, Luz de la Concha, and Alegre A. Ledesma, *Pearl of the Orient Seas*, Grade 5 (Quezon City: Alemars-Phoenix, 1977); and Alfredo T. Morales, Vicente M. Hilario, Panalig Reyes-Belmonte, and Carmen Lejano, eds., *Achievement and Self-Discovery* (First Year High School) (Manila: Ginn and Co., 1954).