

# **A Documentation of the Ata-Manobo Dances in Talaingod, Davao del Norte**

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## **Abstract**

*This study is a documentation of the indigenous “lumad” dances among the tribal communities in the Davao Region particularly the Ata – Manobo of Talaingod, Davao del Norte. The researcher immersed herself in the community to document the necessary data and information regarding these tribal dances. There are eight identified indigenous dances namely; Aabaka, Bangkakow, Inamungan, Kalasag, Natarin, Pulutawi, Pungko and Tagudturan. These dances describe various social activities and people’s way of living. It also reveals the incomparable characteristics of the group who are humble, passionate and cheerful being. The fruitful experience to the “subject” is the best result of retrieving and documenting the “lumad” dances before other cultural genres will disrupt these original forms.*

**Keywords:** *Aabaka, Bangkakow, Inamungan, Kalasag, Natarin, Pulutawi, Pungko Tagudturan, Indigenous Dances, Davao Region, Davao del Norte, Ata – Manobo, Talaingod*

## **Introduction**

A tribal society is a social group having distinctive cultural and economic organization ([thefreedictionary.com](http://thefreedictionary.com)). According to the sociologyguide.com, currently, tribal culture is undergoing revolutionary change; this is due to contact with other culture. It was also stated that most of the tribal people are now imitating other culture and leaving their own culture. This has led to deterioration of tribal life and affecting tribal arts such as dance, music and various types of craft (sociologyguide.com).

Dance is performed in many cultures as a form of emotional expression and social interaction, or exercise, in a spiritual or performance setting and usually used to express ideas (wikipedia.org). Dancing justifies different stories and the way of life of a particular group. But, according to De Luna (2006), most of the cultural traditions in the Philippines are undocumented and has been passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth.

The statement of De Luna (2006) encouraged and inspired the researcher to document the indigenous dances particularly the Ata-Manobo *Talaingod*. This documentation will help sustain the “cultural identity and historical continuity of the group”, p.2 (Yamut, 2009).

According to Sobrepena (2010), indigenous people face a lot of challenges; a very devastating one is that of cultural preservation. She also stated that the remaining cultural diversity must be documented.

In fine, this study will only initiate the total retrieval of the Davao Region indigenous dances particularly the Ata-Manobo of Talaingod, Davao del Norte. This will also challenge younger and future generation from the tribe to continuously practice and perform these dances for “cultural identity and historical continuity”, p. 2 (Yamut, 2009).

## **Objectives**

The study generally aims to document the indigenous “*lumad*” dances of the Ata – Manobo of Talaingod, Davao del Norte. It would help them preserve, retrieve and strengthen the different tribal dances.

Specifically, this study aims:

1. To identify the dances of the Ata – Manobo *Talaingod* Tribe,
2. To identify the costumes, accessories and properties used in these dances,
3. To identify the musical instruments played to accompany these dances,
4. To identify the different musical beats of these dances,
5. To identify the different movements of these dances,
6. To categorize the Ata – Manobo *Talaingod* dances,
7. To produce a compact disc (CD). This covers the documented videos of the Ata Manobo *Talaingod* dances.

Then, as an application for better dance retrieval, a dance notation of the *Sawroy* and *Kuglong* is attached at the end of this research study.

## Methodology

This study used the descriptive method of research. The researcher immersed personally in the life of the community of the Ata Manobo Tribe in Talaingod, Davao del Norte. It includes key informants interview, focus group discussions and direct observation (taking pictures, recording videos) were facilitated in order to extensively document the different tribal dances.

The researcher sought the assistance of the following resource persons (see Table 1).

Table 1:  
Resource Persons

Resource Persons	Characteristics	Age	Role
Datu Latawan Bangilon	Older	70	Tribal Chieftain, Brgy. Sto. Nino
Datu Nonoy Dausay	Older	65	Tribal Chieftain, Brgy. Palma Gil Dancer, Instrumentalist
Datu Roni Pandoma	Older	63	Tribal Chieftain, Brgy. Dagohoy Dancer, Instrumentalist
Datu Fernando Apao	Older	60	Tribal Chieftain, Brgy. Dagohoy Dancer, Instrumentalist
Datu Alobog Bogo	Older	60	Tribal Council, Brgy. Palma Gil Dancer, Instrumentalist
Elena Libayao	Older	58	Dancer, Chanter, Instrumentalist
Ginona Damloy	Older	58	Dancer, Chanter, Instrumentalist
Lorena Bangoy	Older	48	Tribal Representative (Department of Tourism)
Manuel Bogo	Younger	35	Dancer, Instrumentalist
Datu Bugok Anggol	Younger	35	Dancer, Instrumentalist
Dante Balaguisid	Younger	33	Dancer, Instrumentalist
Ining Libuan	Younger	30	Dancer, Chanter, Instrumentalist

## Study Site

The study was conducted in Talaingod community in Barangay Sto. Nino, Talaingod, Davao del Norte (see Figure 1).

Figure 1:  
Map of Talaingod, Davao del Norte



## Results and Discussion

As shown in Table 2, Ata- Manobo *Talaingod* Tribe has eight dances. Out of these eight dances, three reflects human activity in the community like harvesting Abaca and rice (*Aabaka*, *Bangkakow* and *Inamungan*), two dances are for social events such as *Kalasag* (war dance) and *Tagudturan* (tribal hip-hop dance), one dance for ceremonial/ritual like *Pungko*. Expression of mourning and sadness (*Natarin*), and *Pulutawi* deal with flirtation or interaction between the male and female members of the tribe. The Ata – Manobo *Talaingod* dances illustrates simplicity yet cheerful type of living.

Table 2:  
Ata – Manobo *Talaingod* Dances

Dances	Description
<i>Aabaka</i>	<i>Abaca</i> is one of the famous plants of the Ata – Manobo. Most of their products are made from <i>Abaca</i> fibers. Aabaka is danced when harvesting an <i>Abaca</i> . Pulling of the trunk is being portrayed in the dance.
<i>Bangkakow</i>	It is usually danced when asking <i>Manama's</i> (Creator) blessing for bountiful harvest. It is also called a log dance. Four female dancers will have a circular dance motion, going back and forth in rhythmic patterns from the " <i>bangkakow</i> " or log and two male dancers will tap the log using pestles rhythmically accompanying the dance movements.
<i>Inamungan</i>	A harvest dance. It is usually performed during (rice) harvest season where the entire members of the " <i>sitio</i> " or community were invited to join the thanksgiving celebration.
<i>Kalasang</i>	It is a " <i>Pangayaw</i> " or war dance. The dance is performed by two male dancers. They will depict a fight with the use of " <i>bangkaw</i> "/ " <i>tabalo</i> " or arrow and " <i>kalasang</i> " or a shield.
<i>Natarin</i>	The dance is accompanied with a song. It is usually performed when there is someone who passed away or when losing something. The song will be facilitated by a chanter/dancer to express an emotion of mourning and sadness.
<i>Pulutawi</i>	A courtship dance. The dance routine is depicting the movements of the birds as they fly and hop and mate each other.
<i>Pungko</i>	" <i>Pungko</i> " means sitting down. The story of the dance depicts the person with disability. Ritual is facilitated, asking " <i>Manama's</i> " (Creator) miraculous healing.
<i>Tagudturan</i>	A tribal "hip-hop" dance. It is performed in a fast beat with one male dancer and one female dancer.



Figure 2:  
Abaka



Figure 3:  
*Bangkakow* (Log Dance)



Figure 4:  
*Kalasang*



Figure 5:  
Natarin



Figure 6:  
Pulutawi (Courtship Dance)



Figure 7:  
Pungko

In Table 3, Bajo, (2004) identified the Ata-Manobo two pieces of costumes, the *Bondera* and *Pinuta* for the male and *Ompak* and *Patadyong* for the female. He also describes the *Bondera* (male dancer's slightly loose shorts), *Ompak* (female dancer's short blouse with horizontal and diagonal colored bias tapes), *Patadyong* (female dancer's skirt which may be all red with a horizontal and vertical lines pattern) and *Pinuta* (male dancer's long sleeve shirt with embroidered designs). According to him, the other sub - groups of the Ata-Manobo, the *Langilan* and the *Kaylawan* usually used the same colors which are blue and red with special yellow and black bias tapes, they only vary to the geometric designs and patterns— these mixtures of colors and geometric patterns reveal the tribal's cheerful character.

Table 3:  
Ata – Manobo *Talaingod* Costumes

Costume	Description
<i>Bondera</i>	“Male dancer's slightly loose shorts”, p.40 (Bajo, 2004).
<i>Ompak</i>	“Female dancer's short blouse with horizontal and diagonal colored bias tapes”, p.41 (Bajo, 2004).
<i>Patadyong</i>	“Female dancer's skirt which may be all red with a horizontal and vertical lines pattern”, p.41 (Bajo, 2004).
<i>Pinuta</i>	“Male dancer's long sleeve shirt with embroidered designs”, p.40 (Bajo, 2004).



Figure 8:  
Male Costumes: *Pinuta* and *Bondera*  
Female Costumes: *Ompak* and *Patadyong*

The Ata-Manobo *Talaingod* accessories, as can be seen from Table 4, have eleven different kinds of accessories. Three of these are for the head such as *Longkos*, *Sugkad* and *Tangkolo*. “*Tangkolo* is worn by the *Datu* and *Longkos* is for an ordinary Ata-Manobo man”, p. 40 (Bajo, 2004). Two are for the neck like the *Baliog* and *Banda*. Two are for the ear like the *Aritos* and *Sungol*. Two are for the ankles which are *Sinibod* and *Tikos*, and *Buday*, a bronze bracelet. The mixtures of attractive colors describe creativity in expressing oneself.

Table 4:

Ata – Manobo *Talaingod* Accessories

Accessory	Description
<i>Aritos</i>	Earrings made of beads. It is simply hooked to the woman's ear.
<i>Baliog</i>	Necklace made of beads with colors: red, white, blue, yellow. It is smaller compared to " <i>Banda</i> " in terms of the strands.
<i>Banda</i>	Necklace made of beads with colors: red, white, blue, yellow. It is specially designed with wide strands.
<i>Buday</i>	Bracelet for female made of bronze.
<i>Longkos</i>	"Head cover usually worn by an ordinary Ata-Manobo man", p.40 (Bajo, 2004).
<i>Palakot</i>	"Red cloth belt tied around the women's waist", p.10 (Yamut, 2009).
<i>Sinibod</i>	Anklets made from " <i>Agsam</i> " or " <i>Uway</i> " seeds.
<i>Sugkad</i>	"Comb which is decorated with a colorful yarn threads balls. It is placed to a woman's hair at the back of her head", p.10 (Yamut, 2009).
<i>Sungol</i>	"Female beaded jewelry hung from ear to ear and falls just below the chin towards the front of the body", p.10 (Yamut, 2009).
<i>Tangkolo</i>	"Head cover which beaded with horse and goat hair at the side. Usually worn by the Tribal Datu", p.40 (Bajo, 2004).
<i>Tikos</i>	Anklets with beads of different colors.



Figure 9:  
Aritos



Figure 10:  
Baliog



Figure 11:  
Banda



Figure 12:  
Buday



Figure 13:  
Longkos



Figure 14:  
Palakot



Figure 15:  
Sinibod



Figure 16:  
Sugkad



Figure 17:  
Sungol



Figure 18:



Figure 19: Tikos

The Ata – Manobo *Talaingod* properties, as can be observed from Table 5, have ten properties. Four of these properties are used for storing foods such as *Ginuboy*, *Liyang*, *Opi*, and *Takudyang*. Two are for self-defense like the *Bangkaw* and *Ilab*, while two others like *Kalasag* and *Lipi* are for self – protection.” *S’ning*, is a beaded bag specially used by the *Datu*”,p. 41(Bajo, 2004). These important properties signify simplicity and contentment of living and dependability to the things that surrounds them.

Table 5:  
Ata – Manobo *Talaingod* Properties

Property	Description
<i>Bangkaw</i> / “ <i>Tabalo</i> ” ( <i>Ata-Manobo</i> Term for “ <i>Bangkaw</i> ”)	A wooden arrow used in hunting.
<i>Ginuboy</i>	Small basket used in keeping accessories.
<i>Ilab</i>	“A short curved knife used for slicing “ <i>Tobacco</i> ” “ <i>Bunga</i> ” or nuts”, p. 41 (Bajo, 2004).
<i>Kalasag</i>	Wooden shield carved, decorated with a goat/horse hair on both sides.
<i>Kali</i>	Engraved wood stick used in harvesting root crops.
<i>Lipi</i>	Made from wood especially designed to cover the “ <i>Ilab</i> ” (knife).
<i>Liyang</i>	A basket bigger than “ <i>Takudyan</i> ”, used in storing harvested root crops.
<i>Opi</i>	Basket bag made from “ <i>Uway</i> ” specially used in keeping captured native chicken.
<i>S’ning</i>	“Small beaded sling bag used by the Tribal datu”, p.41 (Bajo, 2004).
<i>Takudyan</i>	Basket made from “ <i>Bagtok</i> ”, used in storing rice.



Figure 20:  
Bangkaw



Figure 21:  
Ginuboy



Figure 22:  
Ilab



Figure 23:  
Kalasag



Figure 24:  
Kali



Figure 25:  
Lipi



Figure 26:  
Liyang



Figure 27:  
Opi



Figure 28:  
S'ning



Figure 29:  
Takudyán

As shown in Table 6, Ata – Manobo *Talaingod* uses five different kinds of musical instruments. Of the five instruments, three are percussion like the *Agong*, *Bangkakow* and *Gimbal* while two others are string instruments like the *Kuglong* and *Saluroy/ Sawroy*. The instruments used by the Ata – Manobo *Talaingod* represent compassion with nature.

Table 6:

Ata – Manobo *Talaingod* Musical Instruments

Instrument	Description
<i>Agong</i>	“The most common instrument. It is mainly used to accompany other instrument”, p.44 (Bajo, 2004).
<i>Bangkakow</i>	“A hollowed out tree trunk placed upside down and struck by one or two pestle ( <i>ando</i> ) which are about two or two and a half meters long and about two inches thick”, p. 45 (Bajo,2004). According to the Ata-Manobo <i>Talaingod</i> people, they prefer to use the trunk of “ <i>Dangkalan</i> ” tree. This is the only tree that produces solid sound when tapped.
<i>Gimbal</i>	“The native version of the drum”, p. 44 (Bajo, 2004).
<i>Saluroy/ Sawroy</i>	“A two foot long bamboo guitar instrument. This is played by the chanter/ dancer herself”, p.44 (Bajo, 2004).
<i>Kuglong</i>	“Wooden Guitar – like musical instrument with two strings. This is also played by a chanter/ dancer himself”, p. 44 (Bajo, 2004).



Figure 30:  
Agong



Figure 31:  
Bangkakaw



Figure 32:  
Gimbal



Figure 33:  
Kuglong



Figure 34:  
Sawroy/Saluroy

It can be observed in Table 7 that Ata-Manobo *Talaingod* dances differ in their respective musical beats. Five of the eight dances, like *Aabaka*, *Inamungan*, *Kalasang*, *Pungko* and *Tagudturan* employ 2/4 beat. Two dances like *Bangkakaw* and *Pulutawi* applied 3/4 beat while *Natarin* uses 4/4 beat. The musical beats of each dances reflects the meaning of life in the community.

Table 7:  
Musical Beat

Dance	Musical Beat		
	2/4	3/4	4/4
<i>Aabaka</i>	X		
<i>Bangkakaw</i>		X	
<i>Inamungan</i>	X		
<i>Kalasang</i>	X		
<i>Natarin</i>			X
<i>Pulutawi</i>		X	
<i>Pungko</i>	X		
<i>Tagudturan</i>	X		
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

The seven different dance movements of the Ata-Manobo *Talaingod* are reflected in Table 8. “These are head tilted downward, downward eye following arm, body slightly inclined sideward, knee slightly bent, hop and sway side by

side, refined steps and energetic movements”, pp. 17 & 18 (Yamut, 2009). As thoroughly observed, among the seven dance movements, six of these body languages described simplicity and humility. The hop and sway side by side is the only movement that shows certain aggressiveness.

Table 8:  
Ata – Manobo *Talaingod* Dance Movements

Dance	Movement	Downward Eye Following Arm	Body Slightly Incline Sideward	Knee Slightly Bent	Hop and Sway Side by side	Refined Steps	Energetic Movement
<i>Aabaka</i>	X	X	X	X		X	X
<i>Bangkakaw</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Inamungan</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Kalasang</i>			X	X	X		X
<i>Natarin</i>	X	X	X	X		X	X
<i>Pulutawi</i>	X	X	X	X		X	X
<i>Pungko</i>	X	X		X	X		X
<i>Taguduran</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>

As shown in Table 9, Ata – Manobo *Talaingod* dances will be categorized according to the event/occasion, number of dancers, costumes, and musical instruments used.

Table 9:  
Categories of the Ata – Manobo Talaingod Dances

Category Dance	Event / Occasion	Performer/s	Costumes/ Accessories	Musical Accompaniments
<i>Aabaka</i>	Harvesting/ Social Gatherings	1 Male & 1 Female	Male Costumes: <i>Pinuta &amp; Bondera</i> Female Costumes: <i>Ompak &amp; Patadyong</i>	Kuglong & Saluroy / Sawroy
<i>Bangkakow</i>	Planting/ Harvesting/ Social Gatherings	2 Male & 4 Female	Male Costumes: <i>Pinuta &amp; Bondera</i> Female Costumes: <i>Ompak &amp; Patadyong</i>	Bangkakow
<i>Inamungan</i>	Harvesting/ Social Gatherings	All members in the Sitio	Male Costumes: <i>Pinuta &amp; Bondera</i> Female Costumes: <i>Ompak &amp; Patadyong</i>	No Instrument
<i>Kalasag</i>	Festival / Social Gatherings	2 Male	Male Costumes: <i>Pinuta &amp; Bondera</i> Female Costumes: <i>Ompak &amp; Patadyong</i>	No Instrument
<i>Natarin</i>	Death	1 Male & 1 Female	Male Costumes: <i>Pinuta &amp; Bondera</i> Female Costumes: <i>Ompak &amp; Patadyong</i>	Kuglong & Saluroy / Sawroy
<i>Pulutawi</i>	Courtship/ Social Gatherings	1 Male & 1 Female	Male Costumes: <i>Pinuta &amp; Bondera</i> Female Costumes: <i>Ompak &amp; Patadyong</i>	Kuglong & Saluroy / Sawroy
<i>Pungko</i>	Ritual/ Social Gatherings	1 Male	Male Costumes: <i>Pinuta &amp; Bondera</i> Female Costumes: <i>Ompak &amp; Patadyong</i>	No Instrument
<i>Tagudturan</i>	Festival / Social Gatherings	1 Male & 1 Female	Male Costumes: <i>Pinuta &amp; Bondera</i> Female Costumes: <i>Ompak &amp; Patadyong</i>	Kuglong & Saluroy / Sawroy

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

### *Conclusion*

Based on the major findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Indigenous dances are needed to be retrieved and documented before it will be disrupted by other culture.
2. This documentation of the Ata – Manobo *Talaingod* dances is an initiation for the total retrieval and preservation of indigenous dances in the Davao Region.
3. This study will encourage the young and future generation of the tribe to practice, perform and appreciate the incomparable forms they possess in the art of dancing.

### *Recommendation*

Based on the major findings of the study, the following recommendations are drawn:

1. Documenting indigenous dances gradually is the best impression of retrieving and preserving the “cultural identity”, p2 (Yamut, 2009) of a particular group.
2. Documenting the various tribal dances justifies the factual action of strengthening “historical continuity”, p2 (Yamut, 2009).
3. Learning and living to understand tribal culture leads to understand tribal people.

## SAWROY/SALUROY KUDLONG DANCE NOTATION



Figure 35:  
*Banloy*– means  
“swaying of hips”



Figure 37:  
*Kuddol*– proper  
bending of knees



Figure 36:  
*Hag-ot*– act of  
pulling the abaca  
trunk



Figure 38:  
*Pulutawi*– Courtship  
movements in a flirty  
manner.



Figure 39:  
*Sajow*– when a female dancer will pose, sway and stamp her feet and say her chant as she danced.



Figure 41:  
*Pangayaw*– a fighting position



Figure 40:  
*Takurang*– dancers will forcefully stamp their feet as if they are grinding corn and rice.



Figure 42:  
*Pungko*– means “sitting down”

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