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Factors affecting stability/variability of the Ifugao *hudhud**

I am honored to represent here St.Petersburg, Russia, where Ifugao studies in general and Hudhud studies in particular began as early as 1930. First Ifugao Hudhud chants transcribed by a Russian ethnomusicologist Zinaida Evald were collected by Roy Franklin Barton, one of the three most prominent students of Ifugao culture – I refer to Juan Villaverde, Roy Franklyn Barton and Harold Conklin.

The best and the only bibliographic source on early hudhud Ifugao studies is a superb “Ifugao bibliography” by Harold Conklin [Conklin 1968]. However, most of works on hudhud listed by Dr. Conklin still remain unpublished. In late 1970s, when I started my research in Hudhud [Stanyukovich 1981, 1983a, 1983b), only 4 hudhud texts have been published by C.I.C.M. missionary Father Francis Lambrecht in collaboration with Lourdes Dulawan [Lambrecht 1957, 1960, 1961,1967]. The fifth text appeared in publication in 1983 [Daguio 1983]. Even much later, in 1995, when I stayed nearly a year in Ifugao, only few enthusiasts regarded hudhud worth recording, transcribing and studying – apart from Mr. Juan Dait Jr. [Dait 1957], Adriana Saquing [Saquing 1991] and late Mrs. Lourdes Dulawan, who primarily deserves the credit for Hudhud studies [Dulawan 1993, 1993, 1995, 1995, 2005].

Ever since 2001, when it was recognized by UNESCO as a “Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity”, Hudhud is in the center of interest of UNESCO, NCCA, National Museum, National Commission on Tribal Rituals and Practices, as well as Ifugao intellectuals. Hudhud contests are being organized, to a lot of joy of the aged people who partake in singing. The hudhud singers are becoming “stars” of national and even international level: they perform as far as in Manila and even abroad. The first of three “faces” has already been completed by Ifugao School of Living Traditions, headed by Mr. Manuel Dulawan, which implies teaching 5 local “standardized” hudhud varieties together by a munhaw-e - the hudhud soloist and a schoolteacher. Less than a week ago (January 11, 2006) an international colloquium “Hudhud and Noh: A Dialogue of Cultures” took place

in UP Diliman. Ngayaw (Domingo Dulnuan), a munhaw-e from Bangawwan, Duit, Kiangan, a small sitio which I consider my second home since 1995 – was performing with the chorus formed by other Kiangan dwellers. One of the positive results of such an activities is taping the hudhud for “publicizing” it. A publication which was disseminated at “Hudhud and Noh” event contains 2 discs of hudhud sung by the same group, with their photographs (without names or references) inserted in an extract from Lambrecht’s 1957 hudhud publication [Hudhud. NCCA-IHC 2005]. Previously published hudhud texts, mostly the Amador Daguio version, was re-published in several anthologies in Ifugao, English and even in Tagalog translation. Two papers on hudhud appeared in the Philippines due to the efforts of Nicole Revel [Revel, Tourny 2003; Dulawan 2005].

A certain amount of research papers on hudhud, largely unknown inside the Philippines, appeared in the US, France and Russia [Menes 1996; Revel, Stanyukovich 2004; Stanyukovich 1996, 1997a, 1997b, 1998a, 1998b, 1999a, 1999b, 2000, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2004, 2005]. However, no new publications** of hudhud texts was made during these years (apart from 2 pages by Patricia Afable [Afable 2005]). The text and translation of Alim, another Ifugao ritual chant which is of great importance to Hudhud studies, especially in respect to ritual language, is still being prepared for publication by Rosario del Rosario [Rosario 2003].

An alarming result of large-scale activities around hudhud is a very fast formation of “censored” new code of hudhud, which will soon become an unquestionable authority to be quoted by everybody.

General sketch of this view on hudhud is as follows:

1. There is only one kind of hudhud – hudhud of rice, which is sung on different occasions
2. It is a strictly non-ritual tradition used exclusively for entertainment
3. Hudhud consists of 40 episodes and takes one or 2 nights to perform
4. There are regional variations that differ from each other in lexica only

A valuable contribution of Arsenio Manuel that has put hudhud in ritual context of Philippine epics as early as in 1963 [Manuel 1963], as well as other important Philippine works on ritual functions of oral epics (Landa Jocano, Alicia Magos et al) seem to be totally neglected in hudhud studies nowadays.

Surely we can talk about hudhud in general, as much as we can talk about Philippine or Austronesian languages in general. However, XXI th c. requires a more detailed study - that is, of particular hudhud genres, regional, ritual and situational variations of hudhud. Otherwise we shall end up with a new Lennrot’s “Kalevala” or Longfellow’s “ Song of Hiawatha”, which is already on the way.

The most ancient genres of oral literature date back to the time when one ritual specialist performed the functions of epic singer, shaman and priest. The Ifugao *hudhud* oral tradition belongs to the core of Southern and Central Ifugao ritual .

The *hudhud* meets all the standards typical of heroic epic patterns, including the plot structure and formulaic style. In the same time it is a highly archaic combination of heroic epics and shamanistic narratives. The *hudhud* characters are regarded as ancestors and incorporated into the male pantheon as part of *Hulupe* class of benevolent deities.

For research purposes we are to distinguish between *hudhud* proper, that is, the **heroic epic**, a story about ancestors and their exploits, and **hudhud-shaped ritual narratives**, that is, *hudhud di kolot* (*hudhud* of the haircut, a passage rite), *hudhud di nate* (*hudhud* of the dead, funeral wake and *bogwa* –second burial ceremony) and, possibly, wedding *hudhud* (that last one I myself never heard or recorded and therefore can not state positively that it really exists). These ritual narratives use *hudhud* form (melody, way of performing, lexis, including personal names and place-names, poetic structure and rhetorics) but actually treat not about hero-ancestors, but about certain members of Ifugao community, alive or dead, to whom personally the ritual is addressed. Not being epics, these additional genres are of vital importance internally and externally, that is, to the Ifugao traditional community and to ethnolinguistic/ ethno poetic study of Ifugao *hudhud*. For traditional Ifugao community it was primarily these genres, marginal or additional for an epic student, that mattered. For example, it is a performance of the *hudhud di nate* that requires the most skillful *hudhud* singer. Such a singer is knowledgeable in all the forms of *hudhud* and highly respected. In the same time the *munhaw-e* (soloist), who can who only perform heroic epic (*hudhud di 'ani\hudhud di page*), is subordinate. Such a singer might acquire the sacred knowledge that will enable her to sing *hudhud di nate* only if the spirits would choose her. In that case she will be promoted to the highest level of proficiency. If not, she will remain “a professional of a lower qualification”. In other words, the heroic epic singing which is generally considered the treasure outside Ifugao is just a preliminary stage on the way to higher level of knowledge, needed for performing the genres that seem to be marginal, peripheral to an outsider. The truly knowledgeable person dominates the whole picture of which the heroic epic *hudhud* is the least significant part. The highest degree of knowledge is required to perform “*hudhud di nate*” (funeral song/the song of the dead), which I was lucky to find and record in the areas to the South of Kiangan. It a shamanistic chant performed just as epic, “pushing” the soul to the abode of the dead. Before it reaches the underworld, the souls of one or two relatives who participate in the chant are send to catch up with it. They are endowed with *awil* – gifts of souls of rice, pigs and chickens (the underworld being the source of fertility) by the deceased. The moment when they meet is marked by the possession. The chant

uses the epic melody and formulaic language; the deceased is named by appropriate epic hero's name.

Coming back to heroic epic versions of hudhud.

There is hardly such a thing as pure entertainment in traditional culture, as much as there is hardly any kind of art worldwide that is not rooted in traditional pre-Christian beliefs and ritual practices. At closer look any entertainment genre appears to be functional.

In regard to *hudhud di qani*, the heroic epic hudhud, there are at least three functions. One is that of labor song, that keeps all the weeders/ harvesters work in unison, just as they sing in unison. The second is connected with the idea of miraculous increase of rice which is supposed to be triggered by hudhud singing in the rice field. The hudhud characters who are halupe-deities are supposed to listen to hudhud singing in the field and to be pleased by it. Pumbakhayon, one of the hudhud characters who taught the hudhud songs to Ifugao ancestors did it in the rice field for the harvesters. It is much telling that *hudhud di qani* is only performed when dealing with traditional Ifugao varieties of rice. The lowland varieties, very wide-spread nowadays in Ifugao, have no ritual value. Be hudhud just an entertainment or even just a labor song, it would be sung during any activities in the fields, that require team work.

The third function has to do with gender. The female ideology that looks so much out-of-place in the genre of the heroic epic is one of the most striking characteristics of the *hudhud*. It emerges that while male epic concentrates on violence, expressed through a system of head-hunting which is based on rage, enmity and vengeance, female epic concentrates on the problem of peacemaking and represents a tradition of heroic exploits in which no blood is split whatsoever. After a series of battles during which no one is either killed or wounded the principle *hudhud* characters exchange sisters and celebrate a double marriage. That means a total elimination of enmity: the next generation will have no enemies [Stanyukovich 2000]. *Handih wandi*, in the former Ifugao headhunting society, female hudhud epic chants were believed to induce peaceful solutions of everlasting inherited vengeance cases.

We might go here for comparison of the characters of male and female Ifugao narratives and its impact on everyday life of Ifugao. In 1930s R.F.Barton has transcribed and translated a male-performed ritual text which he called "The Virgin birth", by the way, of classical heroic epic plot, but very different from hudhud, with lots of killings [Barton 1955]. The feedback from the Ifugao old people to whom I read the text in 1990s was that it is hagoho, quite a dangerous ritual text, which can cause extremely negative sequences. One informant told me about the case of land dispute between her family and the other one. The text was ritually performed to have solve a case with hagoho. The family of my informant lost the case, because hagoho-deities afflicted it with diseases, and one child even died.

That was an example of using classic male heroic-epic plotted ritual text (though we can not call it proper epics because it is performed as *abuwab*, a ritual myth). Hudhud epic characters – Aliguyun, Guminigin, Daulayan, Bugan, Aginaya and others – are also addressing directly for help in present-day Ifugao, but they never cause harm. They belong to hudhud with its peaceful ideology, they are “Halupe ma’ule”, benevolent deities, that form the main part of pantheon of so-called female religion, *halag*. However, they are addressed as well by male priests on occasions connected to love charms, claiming debts and – a recent but very important function – winning the elections.

Second, we are to distinguish between **stability\variability in tradition and stability\variability in transition.**

The traditional *hudhud*, with its amazingly rigid plot structure and abundance of formulas which form about 70% of the text, belongs among the most codified of the world’s oral epics. Two main factors have provided for its stability: the mode of performing (i.e., participation of a chorus); and requirements on the soloist, based on the ritual nature of *hudhud* singing.

The soloist (*munhaw’e*) leads the song and “commands” the choristers (*munhudhud*) as to when to come in by rising the tone in the initial word of a formula. The role of the chorus, though essential (a soloist can not perform without a chorus), is totally subordinate. The part of the chorus is composed entirely of formulas, the choice of which is made by soloist. The soloist is, therefore, the only creative force in a *hudhud* performance. All the variability lies in the part of the soloist, which is very low in formulas. Traditionally, *hudhud* singers were regarded as bearers of sacred knowledge of the ancestors, and required to transmit “inherited” texts without variation.

In my abstract I pointed out two types of changes caused by modern influences. Firstly, the part of soloist (i.e., the *hudhud* plot), undergoes radical changes: battles that once formed the core of the plot are omitted, with gaps being filled by novel motifs. The part of the chorus, on the other hand, remains much more stable, as the *munhudhud* only use traditional formulas. A considerable number of these formulas are dropped, however, with the abandonment of traditional topics.

I have already pointed out traditional seasonal and situational variations in Hudhud singing.

Regional variations include variation in language (lexica), regulations on repertoire attached to certain occasions and the range of restrictions on performing. The farther South we go, the stronger are the restrictions. For instance, in Asipulo only the representatives of kadangyang families can be honored with *hudhud di nate*,

funeral hudhud, whereas in Amganad any old person who died natural death can be hudhud-ed during the funeral wake. People living on the boundary of Asipulo and Kiangan distinguish between the hudhud versions sung for a man or a woman, younger or older (that is, younger or older *baket\lakay*, old man\woman, as hudhud is never sung for people whose life is interrupted in young or middle age). This choice is different from that made, say, in Ibulaw.

The municipality of Asipulo, which until recently (1995) formed a part of Kiangan, is inhabited by the speakers of Keley-i, a Southern Cordilleran language, closely related to Kallahan, spoken in Kayapa and Santa Fe of Nueva Viscaya. The Keley-i speaking population of this remotest area of Ifugao province is regarded as “wild” and inferior by the rest of Ifugaos, though there is strong evidence that a large portion of the traditional cultural wealth of Ifugaos is of Keley-i origin.

Speaking of stability\variability in transition, I’d like to name three important areas where the changes are towards impoverishment of formerly rich tradition. They are:

1. Loosing battle scenes. The detailed depiction of hudhud battles, always three in number, used to form the major part traditional heroic epic hudhud narrative. Everything associated with a long-abandoned practice of headhunting is still a sensitive point. In “export” versions for “outsiders” primarily, and gradually for internal use as well, headhunting motifs tend to be abandoned.

2. The same considerations are true to all hudhud motifs connected to performance of traditional rituals, as well as magical and shamanistic powers with which the main character is endowed.

3. **Loosing the poetics of combining high and low style, of heroic and farce elements.**

In Kiangan and other areas where not the shamanistic chant but a heroic epic hudhud is sung during funeral wakes, smooth monotony of the hudhud, so much characteristic of heroic epic, is interceded by occasional breaks of aapo singing. Tired munhaw-e and munhudhud can rest a bit while others – anyone from the audience – stands up and starts singing the lyrics, the aapo, usually accompanied by dancing movements. These funny little songs, often improvised, make everybody laugh. Often they rotate around the topics of love and silly mistakes in love. When hudhud is performed for taping or at the concert, these little songs are dropped, so they never appear in publications.

Finally, gender roles are being changed.

Traditional hudhud performances are mostly very informal: just during the working time, both the soloists and the choir being at weeding or harvesting. The more popular hudhud becomes as touristic commodity, the more men step in in performing.

I'd like to finish my paper with some considerations on regard of the influence of researching, teaching and popularizing the Ifugao hudhud on the tradition itself. Four years ago I was honored to give a key-note speech at the conference on Preservation and conservation of culture of Southeast Asia, which took place at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. My paper was about the Hudhud tradition. That was the time when, when the process of "globalization" of Hudhud just began. I shall permit myself to quote from that 4-year-old paper:

"The first question is, what kind of hudhud will be supported? That is more or less clear. It will be hudhud di qani, or hudhud di page – hudhud of the harvest or hudhud of rice. I doubt that there are any chances for other genres of hudhud – say hudhud of the haircut or hudhud of the dead. I can guess that there will be a lot of touristic entertainment things initiated. The recently established school of traditional arts will probably teach the Kiangnan heroic epic versions of Hudhud. One of the results might be the formation of Ifugao literary language on the basis of Kiangnan (Tuwali) dialect. The scenarios of epic performances supported by authorities might be quite different. Possibly 'politically correct' versions of heroic epics without any traces of shamanism and no spirit possessions will be shaped. Another possibility is developing hudhud into a pasyon to be performed in church by the members of Catholic Women organization (the work has already started in early 1990s and some of these Hudhud Pasyon were even sung during Easter). One more possibility is that Hudhud will be staged for tourists, in which case the sensational moments, especially the headhunting will be emphasized. Such things are always expected of Ifugaos and are highly valued in touristic market. I even can not exclude the possibility of introducing killings and beheadings into that new staged Hudhud, which will entirely change the ideology of that unique heroic epic tradition without bloodshed"

As you see, many things happened as was predicted, but fortunately my worse expectations did not come true. Killing scenes are not introduced. Regional variations are preserved. However, the formation of standardized texts for the schoolchildren is alarming. Surely the teaching process needs some standardization and control, but we must keep in mind that it is a step away from improvising, that is, killing the treasure of a living tradition, and it is its oral character that makes hudhud so exceptional.

I am grateful to Ifugao authorities and intellectuals that guard their cultural heritage from being brutally used and sensationalized for the sake of the tourist market. I appreciate greatly the efforts being made for bringing back high respect to the real artists – munhudhud and especially munhaw-e, who are not any more regarded "ignolante" and useless, for teaching the children to be proud of their cultural heritage, for documentation of hudhud tradition. But I take a chance to point out that it is not an easy task, and its fulfillment requires highest level of linguistic and anthropological qualification. Otherwise only a faint shadow of the gorgeous masterpiece called "living oral hudhud" will be left for the future generations.

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**My book on Ifugao hudhud “Female view of male world”, dedicated to the study of ritual connections, plot construction and motif variations in hudhud tradition is currently in press and will come out in a couple of months. I am also working now on 4 hudhud texts transcribed by late Mrs Dulawan in collaboration with Patricia Afable and Nicol Revel; I also work in collaboration with my teacher, Dr. Gennady Rachkov, one of my students, Oleg Smirnov, and a group of Russian ethnomusicologists on hudhud tapes which I recorded in 1995. We hope to submit them for publication in recent future.

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