

HEALING PRACTICES OF THE SPIRITUAL FOLK HEALERS OF  
TANDAG: A CONSTRUCT OF THEIR SOCIAL REALITY AND MYSTICISM

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**Abstract**

*The paper discusses the rituals performed by the diviner or spiritual healer in curing the clients. It involves prayers, chants and elaborate ceremonies addressed to the supreme deity. It combines animistic beliefs with Folk Christian beliefs which had been handed by generations of diviners or healers. A descriptive qualitative method was used aided by the participant and non-participant observations. It can be deduced from the study that Spiritual folk healing practices had been robustly practiced by the healers or diviners with spiritual themes but it is also tented with the mysticism of animism. The diviner or healer is the main officiating person in the curing rituals which is usually assisted by the assistant curer or diviner.*

**Keywords:** *Spiritual, Diviner, Curer, Shaman, Folk, Mananambal, Tambalon, Healer.*

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**I. Introduction**

**Rationale**

Despite the modern health system, spiritual folk healing practices had been practiced in the rural areas of the country. This is so because traditional healing practices had been part of the culture of the rural areas in the Philippines. In almost all the villages in the Philippines, folk healing practices had been a part of the rural way of life. The treatment of the folk healers covers from physical aspects to spiritual. These healing practices co-existed with modern medical practices. The diviner has numerous names called across the Philippines such: as *Mananambal* in the Visayan region, *Tambalon* in the Caraga region, *Albolaryo* in the Tagalog provinces, *Mumbaki* of the Cordillera region, *Sumang* in the Ilocos provinces to name a few. These home-grown healing practices include elements of animistic beliefs and Christian beliefs of what sociologists and anthropologists called folk Christianity. As Hunt, Espiritu, Quisumbing, and Green (1998) write;

*“Animistic beliefs, sometimes combined with the coating of Christianity, are utilized by ordinary people who attribute magical powers to saints as well as a specialist who go into trance to utter prophecies or prescribe for an illness (Hunt, Espiritu, Quisumbing, and Green, 1998)“.*

Gaioni (1996) discussed in his paper that health and diseases are human concerns which lived out according to the culture-bound and behavioral process. He writes:

*“A large number of human organisms constantly sustain injuries in form of sickness, accidents, deformity, and anxiety. All societies have developed a complex system of beliefs and practices dealing with the nature of diseases. Its etiology and treatment and its interplay with other*

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*aspects of patients' socio-biological and ecological environment (Lasker, 1969, Wood, 1979 Gaioni, 1996). In common with communities, worldwide, health preservation and disease management are major concerns of rural Philippine communities as well. The study of health and diseases, behavior, and related needs, values, and attitudes can contribute to the improvement of the healthcare system and the socio-economic conditions of the population (Gaioni, 1996).*

The use of folk healing is embedded in Filipino rural culture the name calling of the folk healers as “mananambal”, “tambalon”, “albularyo”, “gabaon” manifested that folk healing practices are widely practiced in rural Philippines. Not only it has been practiced in the rural but also in cosmopolitan highly urbanized areas and semi-urbanized areas in the Philippines, it has been rooted in Filipino healing experiences that the folk healers or diviners had been part of his life experiences. This is due to the fact that before the colonization of the Spaniards animistic beliefs had been practiced by pre-colonial Filipinos. It is now being combined or merged into his Christian beliefs of what cultural anthropologists call folk Christianity. The study though exploratory provides significant information regarding the spiritual folk healing system in Tandag. And despite the modern medicine, rural folks are still patronized in spiritual-folk healing practices. Studying the ethnobotanical and spiritual healing practices of the healers is an indicator that the old folk wisdom is alive despite the advent of modern medicine. Though it is not the intent of the paper if some of the healers' procedures are scientific, the room for proving its scientific aspect is open for discussion in academic forums take for example the healing practices of a snake bite and for its immediate healing effectively done by the diviner/healer/curer. Traditional medicines are an integral part of the culture (Jocano in Hunt et.al.1998). There is a dearth of studies on folk healing practices. This present study will provide significant information on the folk healing medical system. Thus, its documentation is vital for its preservation. Furthermore, this study enriches the cultural life of the Surigaonons. The findings of this study can give a deeper understanding of folk healing practices. This can be a springboard for more researchers on some waning folk healing practices. It is the intent of this paper to conduct an exploratory study of the Spiritual folk healing practices among the folk healers of Tandag. Hoijer and Beals (1977) write the reality of shamans (folk healers) as “Curing rites were held by the shaman at the request of the patient. The shaman initiated the rites by addressing a familiar spirit in a special language (Beals, Hoijer, and Beals (1977). This is true to the site of the study the diviner/curer /healer used a different language which is called “orasciones” which is read in his booklet called “Librita”.

Tomaquin (2001) described further the responsibilities of the *Tambalon* as “believed to be charmer and herbalist. It is believed that they can cure the person who is a victim of witchcraft or sorcery (*barang*). The *Tambalon* according to Tomaquin is an institution (2001). It provides a solid framework for the spiritual folk healing practices in rural society. The latter, is the protector of folk wisdom, a keeper of tradition, and an herbalist; his knowledge of indigenous traditional medicine is exemplary including the knowledge of treating or curing snakebites. A spiritual religious expert, he is an intermediary between the *Diwatas* and the settlement. A *Tambalon* becomes through his own effort or through visionary dreams. He is an expert on the “oracion”. It is a popular

belief that he possesses supernatural powers; he is also a spirit medium, an intermediary to the world of the living and the spirits. Riguera (1968) note;

*"That at any rate, syncretism has crept in. Otherwise, we would suppose that by invoking the God of Catholicism to heal a patient, the people show that they want God to subdue the other powers which they regard as lower than him. This is likely since animistic beliefs are not monotheistic that still another contention we could be led to would be that the decreed sickness or insanity is believed to be from God, but because of the prevalence of superstitious beliefs before, the divine providence was also confused with superstitious, this s seems very probable ( Riguera, 1968)."*

Eleazar (1980) described the ritual of the "Tambajon/Tambalon" as;

*"Preparatory to the first stage of the papagong", a "T" or a cross resembling the "cruz comissa" was used. This is not surprising because both pagans and Christians use the cross in many forms and ways although the community used one by the Catholics is the Latin cross, the instrument where Jesus Christ and others were hanged. In the paapong today, the uninitiated would feel the eerie atmosphere of subdued flickering candlelight the hushed incantations, the crescendos of chanting, and the native prayers that transported one back into the realm of centuries-old unknown words. Like the modern priest and medicine man. However, while the former does it in a church or a chapel, the latter did in the house of a supplicant who needed spiritual advice for some definite purpose (Eleazar, 1980).*

According to Burton (1985) that;

*"There are certain powerful forces in the natural world that are manipulated by the supernatural, such as the wind, rain, lightning, etc., but they also could exist independently of the supernatural. Thus, total interaction with the adaptation to his biological condition, and maintenance of a harmonious relationship with the supernatural, contribute to the preservation of his health and well-being (Burton, 1985).*

Hunt, Espiritu, Quisumbing, and Green (1998) discussed the dual system of health and medical care in rural Philippines as they note

*"The Barrio has a dual system of medical care consisting of the "herbolario" and: "hilot" on one hand and puericulture centers, physicians, and hospitals on the other. The contrast is between folk and scientific medicine, between a medical system that assures that illness is caused by supernatural forces and one that assumed it is caused by microorganisms. The dual system likewise differs in determining the physical condition which is considered a disease and the appropriate method of preventing the Disease (Hunt, Espiritu, Quisumbing, Green 1998).*

Hammod (1972) writes"

*"In any given belief system, ceremonial observance and ritual actions reinforce the belief itself and provide participants with what they perceived to be a means of controlling, or at least affecting, their relations with other men, with the world, and with the powers ( supernatural or natural ) that they believed the determine destiny of all things ( Hammod 1972 in Burton, 1985).*

Burton (1985) further writes;

*As in Latin American cultures, there is a strong syncretism of the dual beliefs system: the indigenous and the Christian. This may also be true for the lowland Filipinos. As one may observe, the saints are like the Diwatas in the sense that, because they have been given duties*

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*and functions by God in order to help the faithful, they are the intercessor of man and deity (Burton, 1985).*

Riguera (1968) narrated write;

*“The “Sumang “, a folk rite in Ilocos is a superstitious rite believed to have the power to cure ailments, physical or mental. They also believed that the same can prevent the occurrence of such ailments if they are feared to befall a person, the belief in the curing power for example of a diviner, is not only limited to the barrio folks, even those in the “ poblacion “ (Riguera , 1968).*

Hunt, Espiritu, Quisumbing, and Green (2002) further write;

*“Animistic beliefs, sometimes combined with a coating of Christianity, are utilized by ordinary people who attribute magical power powers to saints as well as by specialists who go into trance to utter prophecies or prescribe for an illness (Hunt, Espiritu, Quisumbing and Green, 2002)”.*

Jocano (2000) note that;

*“Religion is also closely related to illness and death. Most spirits are called upon to assist during the occurrence of these events. Of course, maintaining health and good luck is included in rituals having to do with other forms of religious practices. Some healing rites are performed not only to succor the sick and the wounded but also to reinforce the health and the power of healthy persons who are participating (Jocano, 2000). “*

## **II. Statement of the Problem**

It is the intent of this study to answer the following inquiry

What are the rituals performed by the diviners/spiritual healers?

What are the materials needed in the said rituals?

What are the themes of the said rituals?

What are the roles of the diviner /curer as keepers of traditions and the lore of curing rituals?

Why does the ceremony of each ritual revolve around the faith of the image of “Padre Jesus Nazareno” or the suffering Crist?

How are they said rituals performed?

### **Definition of Terms**

Some significant terms are herein operationally defined in order to present a deeper understanding of what is being discussed in this investigation.

#### **Abyan**

The guardian angel of the *Tambalon* or the spirit accompanies the *Tambalon* in his/her healing ritual as a diviner.

#### **Balaanon Tubig sa Garapon**

The water used by the diviner or curer in healing the clients.

#### **Bug-os**

Possessed person by the “engkanto” or bad spirit.

**Buyag**

This refers to both the illness inflicted by an alleged sorcerer and the illness inflicted by the spirits which can be found in the rivers, forests, seas, caves, and others.

**Daot Nan Mamang**

This refers to the illness inflicted by the spirits which can be found in the rivers, forests, seas, caves, and others.

**Daot Nan Tao**

This refers to the illness inflicted by an alleged sorcerer.

**Diwatahan**

This is the ritual performed/done in order for the spirit /creation of the unknown world (*engkanto*) will cure the illness it has given to the sick person.

**Folk Healers**

This refers to the name-calling of the healers such as *Tambalon*, *Mananambal*, *hilot*, *gabaon* and *albolaryo*.

**Gabaon**

This is a folk healer who in some way or another sorcerer. Or the spiritual healer or diviner who practices sorcery.

**Gamud**

The act of pushing the needle of the sorcerer to the doll to inflicts pain on the person to which the act of sorcery is intended.

**Ihunhung sa Itum na Kandila**

To whisper the intention of the client to the black candle, this ritual is to be officiated by the healer/diviner/curer.

**Ihunhung sa Kalabera**

To whisper the intention of the client to the skull, the ritual is to be performed by the diviner./curer.

**Ihunhung sa Toug**

To whispers the intention of the clients to a Toog tree.

**Ihunhung sa Suba**

To whisper the intention of the client to the river, the ritual is to be performed by the diviner /curer.

**Images of Saints**

These are the images of saith for the veneration of the healer/diviner.

**Inpatapnan Nan Ayok**

This refers to the process or phases of becoming a witch, this can be cured by the diviner or curer by s spiritual exercise known as “Panwagtawag para makasuka nan impis”

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(a ceremony conducted by the curer in order for the client to vomit a young bird, which a sign that he no longer become a witch).

**Librita**

A booklet that contains the healer/diviner/curer chant.

**Magkekek**

Before a person becomes a full-blown witch he or she will first make a sound of a “kekek” which is a form of a strange-looking bird.

**May Kinaadman**

This refers to the wisdom of the folk healers which includes knowledge of chants (*orasciones*), knowledge of rituals, and healing practices.

**Orasciones**

The Chant of the healer/diviner/curer and is usually in Latin.

**Pinadamgo**

This refers to an event where the healers get his ability in folk healing from dreams and instruct him to be one.

**Tinambalon**

This refers to the observance of the norms and vows of the healers which they religiously renew every good Friday of the holy week.

**The Research Design**

The study used descriptive–qualitative and field methods as the approaches in the data-gathering procedure process. Cornell, Mendoza, Bolotaolo (2014) writes the relevance of this method as;

*“This type of research method involves describing in detail specific situation using research tools like interviews, surveys, and observations ( Cornell, Mendoza, Bolotaolo, 2014)”.*

Maquiso (1997) discusses the use of the field method as she writes “Field Study entails the observation of human interaction on the natural setting. It is conducted with great care so that the natural flow of social life is not disturbed. Participant observation is widely used by social scientists in getting insights into such aspects as human behavior, dynamics of interaction, culture, etc.” It requires the participation of the researcher in whatever subjects are doing or his immersion in the community being studied (Maquiso (1997)).

The research employed an ethnographic design. The design was employed to have an in-depth look at folk healing practices. Ethnographic research techniques use participant observation studies in an attempt to obtain a holistic picture a possible of the subject of the study (Frankel and Wallen, 1994).

The emphasis in ethnographic research is on documenting or portraying the everyday experience of individuals by observing and interviewing them. The study uses in-depth interviews and continual village immersion using the following techniques as David L. Sills, in Lagdamin writes;

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*“Field notes or field diaries us the major tool to check on the accuracy of the research. It is the investigator’s written report on what he has observed, learned, experienced, and seen. The researcher will also use audiotapes. The data was derived from direct observation. The researcher needs knowledge of the spoken language and employment observation techniques including face-to-face contact participation in the group activities and intensive work with the informants (David L. Sills, in Lagdamin, 1980)”.*

The study is limited to the discussion of the types of rituals done by the folk healers, materials used in the said rituals, description of the rituals and their specific purpose, and the common illness the folk healer profess to cure.

### **The Research Setting**

Tandag is the capital of Surigao del Sur Province, located on the northeastern coast of Mindanao facing the Pacific Ocean. The town is composed of 21 barangays namely: Bongtod, Bag-ong Lung-sod, Telaje, Mabua, Rosario, San Agustin Sur, San Agustin Norte, Bioto, Awasian, Pangi, Salvacion, Buenavista, San Antonio, San Jose, San Isidro, Pandanon, Maitom, Maticdum and Mabuhay. Tandag is basically an agricultural city with rice and copra as dominant crops. As a coastal city fishing is the second main occupation or industry.

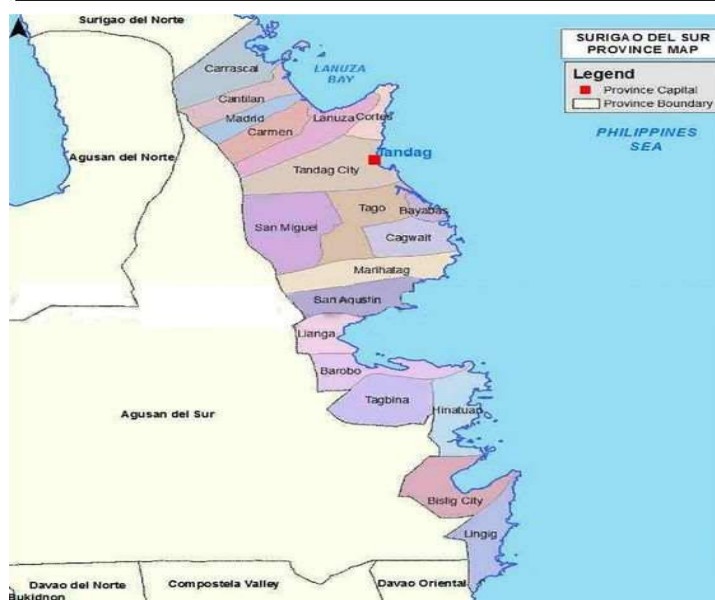


Figure No. 1. The Map of Surigao del Sur Province of the Philippines.  
(Source: <https://www.pinterest.ph/pin/354165958169404665>)

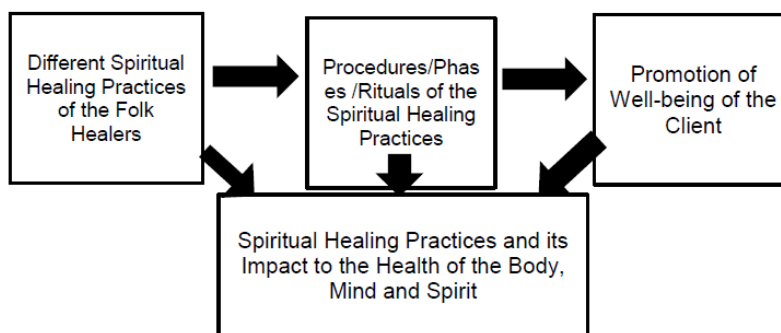
### **III. Theoretical Framework**

The study is anchored on the classical sociological theories of structural functionalism, and Micro theory had been used in this study. Babbie (2002) notes that structural functionalism; sometimes also known as “social system theory” grows out of a notion introduced by Comte and others. A social entity, such as an organization or a whole society, can be viewed as an organism. Like an organism, a social system is made up of

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parts, each of which contributes to the functioning of a whole “Babbie (2002). Babbie (2002) further writes;

*“Micro theory deals with issues of social life at the level of individuals and small groups. Such studies often come close to the realm of psychology, but whereas psychologists typically focus on what goes on inside humans, social scientist study what goes on among them (Babbie, 2002). The study is also anchored on the sociological theory of Social Constructionism. Brym and Lie (2010) discuss the meaning of the theory as “social constructionists urged that when people interact, they typically assume things are naturally or innately what they seem to be. However, apparently natural or innate features of life are often sustained by social processes that vary historically and culturally (Brym and Lie, 2010).*



*Figure No. 2 Schematic Diagram of the Study*

### **IV. Results and Discussion**

#### **Promotion of Well-being of the Client**

The following narration discusses the social reality of the diviner (Spiritual Tambalon) of Tandag with the specific setting with the client.

#### **Case Number 1**

A 48-year-old man client with a cursed (*buyag*) in his skin. A 48-year-old client piously consulted the healer, for his skin disease which turned his skin into red color with ringworm. The diviner first utters his “*orasciones*” or chant before healing the clients. After his chants he asked his assistant, his wife to get the “*tubing as garapon*” water in a small glass with a cover, the red cloth (*tela*), his rosary, the image of Jesus of Nazarene (Padre Hesus Nazareno), and young coconut leaves (*butay*). In this part, he used the young coconut leaves (*butay*) in uttering his “*orasciones*” or his chant this time louder and more intense, after fifteen minutes of intense chanting he rest for a while. And get the glass with cover (*tubig sa garapon*) and bless the client, that in the name of “Jesus of Nazareth” (Padre Jesus Nazareno) “his illness will go. In this time he gets the red cloth and he put the red cloth in his head as a turban or headdress (*tela*) and dances on the floor with continued chanting his “*orasciones*” for another ten minutes. After the dance, the curer, and his wife and the clients prayed “our father” five times. After which he concluded the ritual ceremony. Followed by the offering of rice and some coins to the diviner by the clients. The service has ended in this part.

#### **Case Number 2**



A 62-year-old woman/client with cursed (*buyag*) in her legs that is so swollen. A 62-year-old woman is a next client her complaint is her right leg that so swollen. The diviner informed the woman that it is a curse from the water due to the fact she was able to disturb the spirit (*anito*) in the river when she was bathing the carabao. Thus the ritual of purification is to be conducted. The diviner asks his wife to provide the following materials: black cloth (*tila*), charcoal (*oling*), coconut oil (*lana*), young coconut leaves (*butay*), a booklet for the diviner prayer (*libreta*), and the image of "Jesus of Nazarene (Jesus Nazareno.) The Pre ritual includes the prayer of "Jesus of Nazareth prayer "(Padre *Jesus Nazareno* chant /prayer) which is also sung by the diviner and his wife. After the singing, the curing ritual begins by again chanting the "Jesus Nazareno" prayer seven times, and facing the image of Jesus of Nazarene. Then the diviner order his wife to bring forth the charcoal (*oling*). This time the diviner will mark the sign of the cross on the swollen legs and continue his chant (*orasciones*) in Latin.

### **Case No. 3**

A 36-year-old male complains that he had a bad dream of becoming a witch and that he had this dream for two weeks already. And every night at 9:00, he always heard the bird "kekek" making sounds at the window of his house. In the past three (s) days at exactly 9:00 in the evening, the bird "kekek" appeared to him in a form of a "sigbin", a big wild deer instructing him to sleep for his spirit will join them and practice as a witch. It is for this reason that he consulted the diviner/"*tambalon*" in order to be healed or not to become a witch. After hearing of this the diviner requested his wife to prepare the "lana" (coconut oil), black cloth, young coconut leaves, salt, the blood of a chicken, and his "librita" (prayer book). After all the said materials had been prepared, the diviner will now start praying/chanting his "orasciones" (chant) from the "librita" (prayer book). The chant was in Latin. After ten (10) minutes of chanting, he instructed his wife to anoint the client, with coconut oil (*lana*) on his forehead. After the anointing, the cup of the blood of the chicken was sprinkled on the floor. The diviner continued his supplication and chant;

*"Ispritu sa balbal, pahawa sa ispritu ning bootan na tawo. Pahawa sa ngalan ni Jesus".*

### **Translation:**

*"You bad spirit of a witch, go out from the spirit of this good person. Go away from his spirit in the name of Jesus Nazarene"*

*"Paoli na dunay kalinaw, ang Jesus Nazareno magauban kanimo. Nilayas na ang daot sa tao. Pagpuyo na malinawon sa pagdayig sa dios."*

### **Translation:**

*"Go home in peace; Jesus of Nazareth will always be with you. The witch had gone. Dwell in peace & Praise the Lord always"*

After his supplication, the diviner sing the Jesus Nazareno song seven times. After the singing, the client vomits an "impis" (a young bird or usually a chick or a young chicken). This part is the conclusion of the ritual and the client was healed.

Before going home, the diviner put the black cloth & salt together on the floor. He danced seven times facing the door & continued the chant. After which he hold the young coconut leaves (*butay*) and bless the client and said;

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In this part, the client is thankful to the diviner and offers his offering which includes root crops and 10 kilos of rice and fish.

#### **Case No. 4**

An 18-year-old young man complains to the diviner/curer that he had frequent dreams of a strange voice calling him for eight days already. That this dream had affected him physically & emotionally. Yesterday while on the farm work, he heard again the said voice coming from the forest. Afraid and alarmed by the said voice he went to his house and narrated to his mother the situation or the story. This mother decided to consult the diviner/curer of this incident. Upon hearing these stories, the diviner/curer instructed his assistant his wife to prepare the following: “*lana*” coconut oil, red cloth, white cloth, candle, and salt. Before the ritual, the diviner/curer informed the client and his mother that a “*kapre*” from the forest is calling him to join them. It can be ceased or stopped after performing the ceremony of “*Paghawa sa Kapre*” (sending the “*kapre*” spirit to his place of origin).

The ritual starts with the prayer of the diviner/curer. Then later, he gets the black and white cloth and placed it in the left and right hands of the client. After which he uttered this declaration;

*“Dili singud sa ato na kapre, ayaw hilabti inin olitawo kay kini maalagaron sa Dios.”*

#### **Translation:**

*“Not human “Kapre”, please do not harm this good man” for this person is a servant of God”*

After the prayer/declaration, the “*kapre*” (Spirit of the forest) was not pleased. Thus, the diviner/“*tambalon*” instructed the mother of the client to prepare the “*Pag-anitu*” ritual. This is the ritual of sending out the spirit of the “*kapre*” (A bad spirit who dwells in the forest) away from the spirit of the young man. After the mother agreed on the institution or conduct of the “*Pag-anitu*” ritual. Thus, the “*Pag-anitu*” ritual was conducted. The “*Pag-anitu*” ritual starts with “*panawagtawag*” or calling the spirit of the “*kapre*” (spirit of the forest) to hear the intentions not to harm the young man. It follows by killing a white chicken, keeping the liver of the chicken, and offering the cup blood of the chicken to the “*kapre*” (spirit of the forest) and placed in an altar made of Bamboo. After the offering, the diviner/“*tambalon*” continued his chants for 15 minutes. After 15 minutes of chant, the diviner/curer checked/evaluated if the color of the liver of the chicken used in the offering has changed.

Since the liver used in the offering had not changed. The “*kapre*” (spirit of the forest) was pleased with the offering. In this part, the diviner/“*tambalon*” informed the client and his mother that the “*kapre*” was pleased with the offering and declared that he will not disturb the young man. The client and his mother are very thankful for the diviner/“*tambalon*”. And this, he offered his offering to the latter which consist of a sack of rice and beverages and some cash.

#### **Case No. 5**

A 71-year-old old woman consulted the diviner/curer concerning a strange event in her life. Last week, she vomited all water with small alive “gurame” fish. She wondered why she has vomited such fish when she has not eaten them. She narrated that yesterday she vomited again the “gurame” fish this time in huge quantity. Alarmed by this incident, she decided to consult the diviner/curer. The latter told her that she is a victim of sorcery “Barang” by a person with bad intentions for her. At this moment, the diviner/curer informed her that the ritual of “Pagsubalik sa Barang” (returning the act of sorcery to the person where it originates) will be conducted in order to cure her.

The ritual starts with the “Orascion” of St. Gabriel”, the “Tambalon” chanted the “orasciones” for 20 minutes and the chant is becoming more intense. This time, the diviner/curer enters into a state of trance and states the prayer or chant addressed to ST. Gabriel, the Archangel as translated by the researcher;

*“St. Gabriel, Archangel, Supreme Angel, Guardian of the space and beyond. Free this woman from sorcery, make the spirit of the sorcerer weaken. St. Gabriel Archangel hears your servant prayer.”*

After the chant of the diviner/curer, he asked the “Tubig sa Garapon”, (water in a small glass) and anoints the lady with water. The diviner/curer stated these lines;

*“May this holy water free the spell of sorcery, with the intercession of St. Gabriel, the Archangel.”*

This time the client enters also into a state of trance. After the state of trance of the client, the diviner/curer declared that she had been healed. Then, afterward, the companion of the client offered the offering to the diviner/curer.

#### **Case No. 6**

A 19-year-old old young lady had terrible back pain after she had taken a bath in the river. According to the latter, she had consulted a physician but it had not alleviated or lessened her pain. Her father directed her to see a diviner or a curer and she gladly consulted the diviner/curer on her back pain. Upon hearing the narration of the client, the diviner/curer informed the lady that the pain was caused by the “Mayotok sa Suba” or simply the spirit in the river. The young lady asked the diviner/curer about the treatment. With permission from the father of the latter, the ritual to cure back pain was conducted. The materials in the ritual include the “tubig sa garapon” (glass of water in a small glass), 1 kilo of salt, five (5) candles, a local beverage (*Nipa sap*), and coconut oil or “*lana*”.

The ceremony/ritual started with “Panawagtawag” or calling the “abyan”, the guardian of the spirit to guide the ritual. After the “Panawagtawag” or calling the good spirit, the diviner/curer instructed his assistant which is his wife to place the materials on the altar with the image of “Jesus Nazareno (Jesus of Nazareth). After which the diviner/curer sang five (5) times the song “Padre Jesus Nazareno”. After, the diviner/curer enters into a state of trance. After his state of trance, the diviner/curer directed the client to stand and in this part, the diviner/curer anoint an oil (*lana sa niyog*) to the client and recited his chant (*orasciones*). After that, the diviner used the five (5) candles and the salt was sprinkled on the floor. And shouted;

*“Pahawa daot sa suba sa lawas ning babaye, sa ngalan ni Padre Jesus Nazareno. Ang akong “abyan” naga-ingon, na ikaw mahawa sa ngalan ni Padre Jesus Nazareno.*

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*Kining imahe ni Padre Jesus Nazareno, inubanan sa asin, mapalayas daot sa suba, pahawa, pahawa daot sa suba, sa lawas ning babaye."*

#### **Translation:**

*"Leave at once in the body of this lady. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, my guardian angel had directed you, spirit of the river to leave the body of this woman at once.*

After the declaration of the diviner/curer, the client entered into a state of trance. This manifested that the client is healed. After the trance, the father of the client expressed his gratitude to the diviner/curer for the services conducted & offered her offering.

#### **Case Number 7**

##### **Another Case of Witchcraft Victim**

In other folk healing practices, the researcher observed the following ceremony;

*"When the immediate relative of the client arrived in the house of the person who is believed to be a witch or in the process of becoming one, the healer prepared the following materials: young coconut leaves (butay), charcoal, anointed oil, piece of black cloth, piece of red cloth, piece of white cloth, egg, 1 kilo of pig meat, ash, the stem of kalamanci plant, seven candles, local wine, and cooked rice with red meat.*

The healer prepared all the materials and he is assisted by his wife. The red cloth was used as the turban of the healer, the young coconut leaves were used in driving out the bad spirits of the witch, and the ritual is narrated below;

*"The healer reminded the relatives of whatever they will witness in the ceremony, they will not be afraid so the ceremony will not be disturbed. In this part, the healer will invoke the good spirit or the 'Abyan" that will accompany the ritual. Then he instructed the relatives of the client to hold him tightly then the healer recited his "oracion" in Latin. After the prayer, he sliced the red meat into seven pieces and asked the client if the spirit of the witch is still in his body.*

And the client replied that the spirit of the latter is still in his body, in part the healer instructed his assistant to light the seven candles for another ritual. This time white and black cloth was used. First, he will ask his assistant to cut into seven pieces the white and black cloth and tied in it to the lighted candle. This time he will ask the witch again, if he is in the victim's body, if he is still in the body of the victim, he will ask his assistant to slaughter the white chicken and get the heart and mention prayers in "Latin". This time we can see the patient tremble in a state of trance. The healer jumped seven times and shouted in vernacular "Pahawa, pahawa sa iyang lawas daotan na ispiritu sa ngalan sa Buhi Na si Padre Jesus Nazareno "Using the young coconut leaves the healer continued his prayer. After the ceremony, he will ask his assistant, to prepare the mirror; in front of the mirror the patient will ask "Balbal pahawa sa lawas sa Anak sa Diyos". If the patient will return to the natural state the basin will be prepared. In this part, the healer will instruct the patient to vomit the "pisu" or "chick" to completely heal the patient if the "pisu", or "chick" is vomited, this means the client is healed, if not the patient will become a full-blown witch". After the successful exorcism the healer, the relatives, and the extended family of the client will celebrate. Offering such food, local wine, rice, and root crops are served. In this part, the healer will receive gifts from the community as a token of gratitude. And in this part,

the healer will have his last blessing to the patient by blowing the top of the patient's head. In this part also, the patient and his family will give their testimony of his ordeal as a victim of witchcraft and express gratitude to the healer. This finding of the researcher was backed up by the findings of Eleazar (1985) as Eleazar further commented: "on the breakfast table, it was common to hear from each other stories of what they observed. Observers from the initial part which was the preparation, until the end of the ritual would have their comments. They praised the "Baylanon" for anything because, after all, without this function in the village, no one could summon spirits and ask for their intercession regarding the problem (Eleazar, 1985).

### **Case Number 8**

#### **Treatment for the Demon Possession (*Inyawaan*)**

##### **Materials Needed;**

*Eggs (Bagol) coconut shell*  
*Leaves of young coconut leaves (butay)*  
*Piece of cloth White (Puti na Tila)*  
*Charcoal (uling) piece of cloth*  
*Eggs*

The ritual is done through the prayer of the healer. As follows;

*"Mamang na Bug-os Pahawa sa lawas og ispiritu nan inin na tawo. Pahawa sa ngalan sa grasya sa buhi na dios na, si Padre Jesus Nazareno ". Ania kining dahaon sa butay aron pag-abiabi sa buhing na Dios na si Padre Jesus Nazareno , na moari diri uban sa iyang ihang hiyas arun ikaw pahawaon, pahawa ispiritu sa Bug-os sa ngalan ni Padre Jesus Nazareno. "*

##### **Translation:**

*"Spirit of the "Bug-os "leave the body of this and spirit person at once. Leave at once in the name of the living god, Jesus of Nazareth. This leaves of coconut leaves is a sign that I welcome the living god. Jesus of Nazareth, and brings of his charm so you can leave the spirit of this person in the name of Jesus of Nazareth."*

Then the client accompanied by his relatives approached the healer. The healer this time will get the charcoal placed in a coconut shell and sprinkle the charcoal on the floor at this time the healer continue praying. After the prayer, the healer uttered these words: "Ihunong na Bug-os, kay mangayo na man pasaylo ang nakasala kanimo mamang sa ngalan ni Padre Jesus Nazareno". (Please leave now the body of this person for he is very sorry so of what he has done in the name of the suffering Christ). At this time the eggs were broken, the healer will read the sign of the broken eggs and determine if the spirit had forgiven the client. The healers/diviner declared that the client had been forgiven by the "Bugos". Then he placed the piece of cloth on the window of the diviner's house, so the bad spirit or "Bug-os" will no longer return and disturb the client. And the leaves of the young coconut leaves were placed in the altar where the small image of "Padre Jesus Nazareno" is situated.

### **Case Number 9**

#### **Spell/Curse from the Freshwater (*Buyag sa tabang na tubig*)**

##### **Materials Needed;**

*1 white blanket*  
*3 small stones*

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*Lumot (freshwater algae)*  
*3 glasses of water*  
*Soil (1 glass approximate)*  
*Coconut oil ("Iana")*

The spell/curse from the water is associated with skin illness after taking a bath in the river or falls. This occurs with skin illness usually a form of skin disease or ringworm or fungal skin ailment that occurs in the client's skin. The first healing rite of the diviner will use is the application of coconut oil mixed with "agua oxinada" if no healing occurs he will perform the ceremony or ritual below.

The healer mixed all the ingredients in a basin. Then, the latter instructed the relatives to cover the patient with a blanket and instructed them to sit down for five minutes. The healer narrated his prayers and sprinkled the prepared mixed material on the ground. He declared the following lines in vernacular;

*"Mamang sa Tubig, pasayloa inin ako igsoon, ibalik ko kanimo inin iya taghilbatan. Siya yagbasol gayod na yadistorbo kaw." Sa ngalan ni Padre Jesus Nazareno, psayloa siya".*

#### **Translation:**

*'Spirits of the water please forgive my client for he is very sorry for what he had done. Please forgive him in the name of Jesus of Nazareth'.*

After the ritual, the diviner/healer instructed the client not to take a bath for two days. Further, he coached the client to recite the prayers in the "Librita" or prayer booklet every seven evenings for seven days. And he further directed the client to offer seven candles in the image " Padre Jesus Nazareno" ( image of suffering Christ ) in the church every day for seven days. And the diviner declared that in the event that the client will piously do his instruction he will be completely healed.

#### **Case Number 10**

##### **Barang (Sorcery)**

Sorcery (*Barang*) is done by sorcerers to the person he/she envious of. This can be conducted in many forms like the used of a "Gamud" or a doll of which the latter uses a needle in piercing any part of the body of the "Gamud" and will inflict pain on the person who is the victim of sorcery. Another, form of sorcery is sending an insect to the victim by the sorcerer and the insect will stay in the nose of the victim until he could no longer breathe.

Materials needed;

*Grind Corn Coffee*  
*Small image of "Padre Jesus Nazareno" (image of the suffering Christ)*  
*7 candles*  
*Leaves of bananas cut into smaller pieces*  
*Thorns of Kalamansi plant/tree cut into smaller pieces*  
*One gallon of water*  
*One kilo of salt*  
*White cloth*  
*7 eggs*

The ritual for sorcery started with a prayer from the healer/diviner. He hopes to drive out the evil spirit from the body of the client by driving out the insect in the body (*Mamang na daot*) through the special prayer from his “orasciones” or chant. Before the start of the rituals, the seven candles were used, the leaves of bananas were cut into smaller pieces, the thorns of Kalamansi were cut into small pieces, and one kilo of salt was sprinkled on the floor. This serves as a prelude to the curing ritual.

If the ritual/procedure is successful the insect will come out which is called in vernacular “mamang nan daot”. When the healer notices that the patient is recovering he will let him drink the grind corn mix with coffee. And face the mirror, to see if the “mamang nan daot is still in his/her body “ if the latter is still reflected in the mirror the ceremony will be repeated. If the “mamang nan daot “ is still in the mirror, the last rite will be conducted which is the reading of “orasciones” of “Padre Jesus Nazareno ( the suffering Jesus, the Christ ) from the “Librita” or prayer book of the curer /diviner. This is the last rite, which usually takes two hours or more.

Another manner of treating the person who is a victim of sorcery is the use of counter sorcery using “Gamud” a needle used in piercing. “Gamud” refers to the act of piercing the doll with the needle in order to be cured of the “Barang” (sorcery).

If all this ceremony is performed, but still the patient/victim will not recover the third option that should be instituted is to ask forgiveness from the “Barangon” or sorcerer identified in the egg ceremony of the healer. The victim should ask apology from the latter in order to be cured of the illness.

### **Case Number 11 Snake bite (*Binangaan sa halas*)**

Curing a snake bite, especially of the cobra family is a special gift to the diviner from the supreme deity the “Padre Jesus Nazareno”. Besides its spiritual healing component, it requires special skills from the healer, for treating snake bites, there would be changes that the venom of the cobra will spell over to the eyes of the diviner, Henceforth, the diviner is skilled in this curing ritual.

Materials needed;

*1 empty bottle*

*1 handkerchief*

*1 tablespoon of soil*

*Young guava leaves*

*Knife*

The ritual of snakebite is done through prayer by invoking the power of “orasciones” or chant addressed to the “Padre Jesus Nazareno “ or Jesus, the Christ, But the prayer is done in Latin. This prayer is called “Tayhop”. After the prayer, he will get a knife and slice the bitten area in order for the blood to flow out freely. He will pierce the opening of the bottle to the slice area of the wound which will force the venom to emerge out of the wound. The upper part of the wound usually 12 inches from it will be tied with a handkerchief firmly in order for the venom to spread. After this, the healer will get the 1 tablespoon of soil and will instruct the patient to swallow it. Lastly, the healer will chew young guava leaves and then apply them to the wound of the patient.

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**Gaba (Curse)**

Curse or evil prayer of the sorcerer to the victim is usually done by praying his evil intention using a black candle and the sorcerer whispers his intentions to the “Toog” or “Balete” tree. After his evil prayer, the victim usually feels sick and loses his strength (inlaygay), and could no longer walk. With this, the help of the diviner/healer/curer is sought.

The healer will use the juice of the pandan leaves in treating the patient by anointing the juice accompanied by a prayer. After the prayer, the concerned person/patient should do the ritual of “passing over the Fire” to be completely cured. The passing over the fire ritual requires the client to jump 7 times in a small fire, in front of the fire is the small image of the “ Padre Jesus Nazareno “.

**Case Number 13**

**“In hiloan” (Poisoned victim)**

The poisoned victim can be cured by the healer/diviner through the procedure below. Though the healing of poisoned victims is less spiritual in nature this is one of the lore of the diviner which displays his prowess in healing practices.

The materials needed are:

*1 Teaspoon of sugar*

*“Lawot na walay sagol na asukal og asin” rice porridge with no sugar and salt*

*Papaya seeds*

The healer will instruct the patient to open his mouth and will give him 1 tablespoon of sugar. After administering it he will give the “lawot” and assist the patient in swallowing it. Then, the papaya seeds will be served boiled in one-half cup of water for 30 minutes and administered to the patient then followed by the prayer of the healer addressed to “ Padre Jesus Nazareno “, the image of Jesus, the suffering Christ.

**Case Number 14**

Being haunted by the dead is one of the terrifying experiences the client. With this, the assistance of the healer /diviner/curer to stop this bad omen is sought. Below is the ritual of the client being haunted by dead relatives. *Kinalagkalag* (being haunted by the dead).

The healer will prepare 1 egg and 1 plate. He will allow the egg to stand on the plate, once it stands the patient is haunted by the dead relatives. A prayer of the healer is needed to cure the patient. The prayer /chant is addressed to the supreme deity, the “Padre Jesus Nazareno”, or the image of suffering Jesus, the Christ. After his prayer, the diviner will have his prayer dance using the young coconut and with continued supplication with his “orasciones” or chant. After his chant and ritual dance, he will ask the client to face the small image of the “ Padre Jesus Nazareno “ and enjoins the client to sing with him, the “ Padre Jesus Nazareno “ worship song. After, the singing the healer/diviner declares that the client had been healed. After this, the companion of the client gives an offering to the diviner consisting of one sack of rice and some coins.

**Case Number 15**



The healer can heal the veins with spasm using the materials below. This healing ritual is accompanied by massage/rubbing in the area with pain by the diviner/healer.

### **Pasmo sa Ugat**

Materials needed:

*"Lana" (coconut oil with a Mixture of Botanical herbs)*

*White cloth*

The healer will instruct the client to identify which part of his body has pain, and then he will massage the patient with the prepared herbs with coconut oil. After which he will cover the patient with a white cloth. This time he will instruct the patient to sing with him the worship song "Padre Jesus Nazareno" seven times. After which he declared that the patient is healed or cured. After, declaring the client is healed, the companion of the client will offer their offering consisting of root crops, some groceries, and a few coins.

### **V. Summary and Concluding Remarks**

The central deity of the curing rituals of the curer/diviner is the belief of the "Padre Jesus Nazareno" or the suffering Jesus, the Crist. All the prayers, chants, rituals, and prayer dances were addressed to him as a supreme deity. Moreover, it has been mixed with animistic beliefs of what cultural anthropologists called "Folk Christian healing beliefs". On the other hand, the following themes had been observed in the different curing rituals: respect for nature as part of the sacred element of creation, for it, is believed to be endowed with spirits, respect for the endemic materials of nature, which some of these materials were used in the curing rituals of the diviner/healer. The lore of the diviner/healer is part of the oral lore or folk knowledge system which has been transmitted orally by generations of diviners/curers. It can be deduced from the findings that the diviner/curer is a specialist in traditional and transcendent healing practices which is more spiritual than physiological. One can be a diviner/curer by inheritance, meaning he belongs to the family of diviner/healer/curer or trained by a diviner under specialized apprenticeship, or by dream or good premonition or omen, or through a decision of the latter to become one. The lore of the diviner/curer /healer is called "May Kinaadman" which simply means a person who had knowledge in the lore of the diviner/healer/curer which is again, more spiritual in nature than physiological. The fact that the latter renews his vow every good Friday only, means that his lore is more spiritual and addressed to the "Padre Jesus Nazareno" (The suffering Jesus, the Christ ) as the supreme deity or God in the Christian beliefs.

Why do the rural folks patronize the services of the diviner/healer/curer? It can be inferred from the findings that the rural folks even in rural-urban communities such as the site of the study patronize the services of the diviner/curer/healer due to the fact this has been a part of the oral lore and rural folks' knowledge system besides of its spiritual and mysticism aspects. This has served as complementary to modern medical treatment which is more spiritual in nature. Thus healing the spirit, in a way, the body will gradually heal.

In this paper, the researcher discussed the treatment of the following sorcery, witchcraft, snake bite, demon-possessed, poisoned person, *buyag sa tubig*, *pasmo sa ugat*, *kinalagkalah*. In treating the illness medico-religious treatments were employed. It is believed that the illness is caused by personality reason or being. A healer is an expert

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person in treating the said illness. He is both a charmer and an herbalist. It is believed that he is endowed with the power of “hisgot” that cures the illness mentioned. He is a medico-religious expert, an expert “orasyon”. He is a spirit medium, an intermediary to the world of the living and the spirits. Ethnobotanical strategies were used in treating some illnesses like pinaakan sa halas, pasmo sa ugat.

Other illness like demon possession, witchcraft, buyag sa tubig, gabagaba, kinalagkalag, and the prayers of the healer as a diviner is indispensable in treatment. The mentioned prime cause is personality in the nature of the natural occurrence. It is believed the said illness could not be treated by the physician, that it has been a part of traditional healing from one generation to the other passed down orally by the generations of diviners. A diviner or healer can become one either by a dream or by apprenticeship of the old or aged healer. It is believed that the healers possess their own “Tolemanon” in order to preserve the power as divine.

Why the client does believe that they have been healed? The clients believed that they had been healed because it is more spiritual healing than physiological. It is more on healing by faith, as what the Christian bible said (“Your faith has made you well or healed you” is found in Matthew 9:22 “).

This is illustrated in their deep faith in “ Padre Jesus Nazareno” or the image of the suffering Jesus, the Christ. The latter, which is the supreme deity in the healing practices of the diviner/curer, illustrated further, that the curer /healer is a spiritual person which renews his vow piously and observed some mystic ritual concerning his beliefs and practices as a diviner/healer/curer. Thus, the diviner /curer/healer is more a spiritual healer and his curing rites are more addressed to the supernatural being and his mysticism is attributed to his spiritual prowess and wisdom with denotes respect and reverence to his clients.

### **What is the Mysticism of the Personal of the Diviner/Healer/Curer?**

The diviner/healer/curer is a respected person in the village for he is not only a spiritual healer but also a cultural master of the healing culture or the keeper of tradition in the healing panorama or milieu. The mysticism or the mystic of being a healer is due to the fact that it is itself a spiritual call, a vow to be fulfilled, an obligation to continue the oral lore of the healer or what is called in vernacular “Tinambalon na Tolimanon”. Its mysticism is due to the fact, that it is more a spiritual healing, not a physiological one. It is more of healing the spirit than the body because it is believed if the spirit is healed the body can function properly to be in its natural state. Thus, there is a symbiosis of healing the spirit of having a healthy mind and body.

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## **VII. Recommendation**

For Futuristic study the following topics are recommended;

The efficacy of the Botanical herds used by the healers/diviners.

A construct of the Chants of the diviners /healers.

The Psychological effect of the Healing practices of the Healers/diviners on the clients.

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