OF TIMELESS TUNE AND EVERGREEN COLOR

by:
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While the metropolis is busy coping up with the fast revolving modernization, our brothers and sisters in the upland stayed behind the facade of their evergreen culture; keeping their colors and music timeless.

Because of several historical events that forged the province of Bataan to be the stronghold of courageous and heroic souls, its historical significance will always be attested even generations have already metamorphosed the province. However, the Peninsula is not only a fortress of vast memories of bravery and victory, it is also a home; a warm haven that shelters its indigenous people.

Up in the mountains of Barangay Bangkal, Abucay Bataan is a community of Aeta Magbukun. A typical community of native people at first sight, but when you dedicate your time in knowing them, you will eventually be a part of their family and understand how they consider their homeland as their cosmos. Moreover, behind their tanned skin tone, is a myriad of cultural stories and significance that has been passed by their ancestors through eons.

The Aeta Magbukun has immortalized the richness of their music by practicing their rituals and songs even on these days. One of the symphonies that kept their culture alive is the song “Ayta Ha Bataan” that narrates the tribe’s daily in the Peninsula. The song dwells to the souls of the listeners to serenade them and tell the everyday story of every Aeta Magbukun and how they strive to always be united in spite of the challenges in life.

Meanwhile, the tribe also has their own version of classic serenading to show how they will reach stars and pick thorny roses for the person that their kept their hearts warm and it is
called “Huhuyuin” and “Panaynup”. Independence can also be reverberated through “Alika pun na Indu” one of the tribe’s native song.

If the tribe sings their souls out with the symphonies of their culture, they also grooves in interpretation of different events or things that are of significance. The Magbukun mimics the movements of a shrimp in their dance called “Yaham” which means “Hipon” in Filipino. The tribe also performs ritual dedicated in the harvesting of honey, and the ritual is called “Panilan”.

Another cultural heritage containing the legacy of the tribe is their instruments resonating sounds that convey various messages. One if it is “Pangagun” which means healing. It is being played in rhythm with the healer’s ritual of curing a patient. The healing ceremony is usually practiced on a family consumed in fear that the sick of their loved ones might not be cured.

All the aforementioned cultural treasures of the Aeta Magbukun are just the prelude of a great story passed through the passage of time. Their ancestors might have left the corporeal world, but their souls have always been alive and it perpetually conflates to the rituals, spoken language and traditions of their heirs.

From the Second World War’s historical battle for freedom up to the unsung stories of the Aeta Magbukun’s culture, the Peninsula has witnessed all these events. And that completes the identity of the province as a silent listener and witness of timeless and tune and evergreen colors.

References:

The Guilds Magazine 2017-2018 Issue
Interview with an Aeta Magbukun