

The Story of the Image of the Sto. Niño de Tacloban: Challenges and Concerns¹

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Abstract

Two narratives have now become the major activities of present-day celebration of the Sto. Niño de Leyte Fiesta. The first narrative refers to the “Balyuan Rites” and the second, the narrative behind the June 30 Fiesta. Amid the conflating narratives of the Sto. Niño de Tacloban --the image that is presently enshrined at the Archdiocesan Shrine of Sto. Niño, Tacloban City-- this paper asserts the distinction between two narratives, one that still borders on the legend and folktale, and the other a purportedly historical one.

But more than just drawing a line distinguishing the folktales from facts, or tradition from history, the paper’s thesis is that these Sto. Niño narratives stand further elaboration and inquiry. This paper opens up to a more engaging exchange of ideas and facts that will identify the sources which can usefully contribute to the production of more accurate accounts surrounding these lores about the Sto. Niño image. The challenge is more on scholarship and research -- to collect with care the popular traditional stories, to compare these stories about the Sto. Nino with one another, and determine their value in the light of other information scientifically acquired.

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<https://www.facebook.com/134072443288017/videos/1144700892706914>

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Introduction: History or Tradition? Folklore or Fact?

The organizers of this webinar have asked me to present a historical account of the Sto. Niño de Tacloban. I am limiting it on the events surrounding the change of feast day from the third Sunday of January to every 30th day of June. What we have in our hands are folktales and legends that have been spun through the decades, even as there are historical gaps that need filling up.

I am using the words, “history” and “tradition”, in the loose sense of the term, even as I say that the event, which is the return of the image to Tacloban, verges on both.

It is a *tradition* because the story has been handed down orally, presumably from 1889 till the present. It is an information that has been brought into the present from the past. Arguably, it is a datum that still borders both on the folklore and fact. I have yet to see, for instance, those extant documents that will give credence to 1889 as the year the image was supposed to have reached Tacloban shores and, so the accounts go, caused the miraculous healing of the people afflicted with cholera.

Balyuan Rites and June 30 Fiesta

Present-day celebrations of the Sto. Niño de Tacloban are hinged on these two activities: *Balyuan* and the celebration of the fiesta proper every 30th of June, a celebration that has had through these decades activities like the pontifical mass, the fluvial parade and the land procession. I would like to state that the “Balyuan Rites” and the “Commemoration of the Miraculous Return of the

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Image” are two distinct narratives, which, in the course of time, have coalesced, as it were, giving many the impression that they form one and the same event. So, we shall treat them separately in this paper.

A. *Balyuan Rites*

The story

Prior to the account of the miraculous return of the image is a story behind what is now known as the *Balyuan Rites*. The 1989 article² has as a reference the *Leyte-Samar Studies*, Volume 1, Number 1 of the defunct Divine Word University. The story goes:

“There was a barrio in Basey called Buscada which also had a small image of the Sto. Niño not unlike the one in Kankabatok which they also venerated. This small image was replaced by a bigger, more beautiful one by a certain Tagalog who had prospered in the barrio and vowed to donate a bigger image of the Sto. Niño.

Since Kankabatok was also under the parochial jurisdiction of the parish priest of Basey³ and was a much more populous barrio than Buscada, the parish priest arranged the exchange of the two images of the

² Cfr. *Sto. Nino de Tacloban Centennial Commemorative Album*, 1989 edition; also, Lorenzo Ga. Cesar, “The Sto. Nino of Tacloban,” in *Sto. Nino de Leyte Patron han Tacloban, 30 Junio 1969*, pp. 26-28. The article is taken as excerpts from the one published in the maiden issue of the *Leyte-Samar Studies*, Vol I, No. 1, 1967 issued by the Divine Word University Graduate School, Tacloban City.

³ Another article also mentions Tacloban as under the spiritual jurisdiction of the parish of Basey, Samar, in Bayani P. Aparis, “Tacloban: through the years,” in *Sto. Nino de Leyte Patron han Tacloban, 30 Junio 1969*, p. 29. Its reference is “Some Facts About Tacloban” in the first printed souvenir program in 1937 with Justice Norberto Romualdez as Hermano Mayor.

Sto. Niño, giving the bigger, more beautiful one to Kankabatok. This exchange of images is now celebrated as the ‘Balyuan’ rites during the fiesta.

This bigger, more beautiful image of the Sto. Niño from Buscada which was made of ivory and clothed in silver-plated metal was given the name of El CAPITAN. This name must have been derived from one of the many affectionate appellations given to the Sto. Niño of Cebu around whom so many miraculous legends had been woven by His devotees.”⁴

Inquiry and Commentary

Wanted to be ascertained as to when these *Balyuan* Rites⁵ started to be practiced, I asked many Taclobanons of the older vintage, but no one could identify the year or at least a period in the long past. Neither could they recall it as an annual event. Three persons⁶ I asked pointed the mid ‘70s, and during the time of the Regional Directorship of Mrs. Encarnacion Benedicto of the Department of Tourism as the start of such ritual at the seafront of the Kanhuraw area to memorialize the supposed ancient event. An article in the internet written by a Samaranon, Chito de la Torre, confirms this, declaring that the Balyuan rite “was reintroduced and revived by then First Lady Imelda Romualdez-Marcos in 1975. It serves to remind the people of Tacloban that their city was once only a sitio of barrio Buscada of Basey, Samar, and that the sitio [was] then known as Kankabatok...”⁷

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ For some years, the Balyuan Rites were held on June 29, the day before the Sto. Nino fiesta. Later, this was moved to an earlier date, this time on June 20. The day happens to be the first day of the novena (or the nine-day prayers) in to the Sto. Niño.

⁶ Antonio Cinco, Karen Tiopes, Carolina Montilla, personal communication, June 21, 2009.

⁷ Chito de la Torre, “The Internet reaction on the wrath of Sto Nino,” June 27, 2008, in <https://samarnews.com/Insight/insight36.htm>

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Does this mean that such was a practice in the olden days, it faded away midpoint, only to be *reintroduced* and *revived* by a person of great influence, the former First Lady of the Philippines and favorite daughter of Leyte? There are two possibilities: there really wasn't a rite at all, and if indeed there was, it was simple and unobtrusive, organized and witnessed by a measly number of people, and less of the fanfare and flourish that it characterized beginning mid-70s. But again, *was there a practice?*

These claims and speculations still stand further elaboration and inquiry. I hope that this webinar becomes a launching pad towards addressing these questions, even as I look forward to more engaging *balyuay* of ideas and facts that will identify the sources which can usefully contribute to the production of more accurate accounts surrounding this lore.

B. The Story behind the 1889 Celebration

The Hermandad; Project “Retouch”

The story behind the 1889 event starts with organization of the *Hermandad del Sto. Niño* in 1888, along with the plans “to have the image of the Sto. Niño sent to Manila for restoration of the original beauty of its face which showed some cracks, and for a new change of vestments.”

There is a series of names that show the supposed members of this confraternity but for lack of time, I am foregoing to mention them.⁸

⁸ The names are: Emeterio Enage, Felix de Veyra, Ludovico Salazar, Jose Maté, Agustin Bañez, Catalino Tarcela, Dionisio Esperas, Alipio Ragarit, Tito Madlonito, Estanislao de los Reyes, Ciriaco Lucente, Felix Portillo, Pascual Madlonito, Alejandro de los Reyes, Mariano Yerro, Cirilo Baltazar, Victoriano Montezon,

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I am told by Butch Capucion⁹, a descendant of Juan Agujar, the *hermano mayor* of the 1911 fiesta celebration, that the founding members of the *hermandad* framed a constitution which they termed in the vernacular as *Sariganan*. In that constitution was a provision that no female was allowed to be a principal sponsor (or *hermana mayor*). That explains why the “hermano-mayorship” was limited to the gentlemen alone.

The story further reads:

“The *Hermandad* then had the image sent to Manila for retouching of the face and for new vestments. The elected *Hermano Mayor* agreed to shoulder all the expenses. The image was brought by a group to Manila early enough to have it back on time for the fiesta celebration in January 1889.¹⁰ They were assured by the sculptor whose services they sought that the new vestments would be made.”¹¹

Lost at Sea; Miraculous Find

The image was shipped back to Tacloban early in January of 1889 on board *SS Luzon*. However, unfortunate things happened while the ship was mid-ocean. Cruising between the Romblon and Maripipi waters, the vessel caught fire, and this forced the men to

Benito de la Cruz, Florentino Mondragon, Ciriaco de Oarra, Gregorio Basilio, and Arcadio Zialcita. Arcadio Zialcita was said to have been elected as the Hermano Mayor for the fiesta of January 1889.

⁹ Butch Capucion, personal communicaton, June 20, 2009.

¹⁰ Also cfr. Ramon Esperas, “The Universality of the Sto. Niño” in *Sto. Nino de Leyte Patron han Tacloban*, 30 Junio 1969, p. 23-24.

¹¹This article specifically mentions that the sculptor did not do a retouching on the image’s cracks for fear that he might worsen instead of improving its appearance. It was believed that the sculptor did not have the capacity to work on the Sto. Niño’s face which was made of ivory.

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jettison some cargo, among them the crate containing the image of Sr. Sto. Niño de Tacloban.

With the date of the January 1889 fiesta drawing near and there was no image of the Divine Child in their hands, the confraternity borrowed an image of the Sto. Niño for the procession held on January 21, 1889. Months passed and there was no news about the lost image *El Capitan*. So the *hermandad* decided to buy a new image of the Sto. Niño. Clothed in velvet vestments, the new image was given the name *El Teniente*, “in the hope that the image of the *Sto. Niño El Capitan* would still be found.”

The date January 21, 1889 somehow triggered my curiosity. With information technology, we can resort to a perpetual calendar formula for finding the day of the week for any given year. I checked on the day this procession was supposed to have been held. It was on a *Monday* and *not* a *Sunday*. I offer two versions as a conclusion: One, January 21 had long been fixed as the date in celebrating the Feast of the Sto. Niño, regardless whether it was a Sunday or a weekday. Two, if we insist on the tradition that the celebration was held every third Sunday of January, the date mentioned there was therefore incorrect.

There is no mention where this new image was bought. In Manila? In Cebu? Or was crafted by a local artisan?

Here is where the story makes its turning point:

“Then in May 1889... a letter [was] received by Don Jose de Avalle, military governor of Leyte, from the military governor of Mindoro saying that a box labeled ‘Sto. Niño Patron de Tacloban’ was found floating in the sea by two fishermen just off the coast of Semirara in Mindoro. Jubilant over the news, the *Hermandad* sent a nine-man group to Semirara, chartering for their use a motor launch ‘Consuelo’

owned by a rich Chinese merchant of Palo called Don Emilio Yu Biao.”

The information from the magazine, *Balik-Leyte*, printed the following version:

“They first saw the floating box at a distance, with the Child standing on top, but when they came near, the Child disappeared. They fished the box and the Semirara folks were surprised to find that it did not sink in spite of the heavy bronze *candeleros* still intact in the crate.”¹²

Of significant detail, too, was the mention of a motor launch, *Consuelo*, said to be owned by a person with a Chinese-sounding name, Don Emilio Yu Biao of Palo, and was chartered by the nine-man team for their retrieval operation. I inquired from among my parishioners in the Cathedral parish, and they told me that Chinese families used to be a significant lot in this historic town. They owned the large business enterprises in the market area. However, a number of Chinese families can be sparsely counted in present-day Palo, since most of them, merchants and traders, have migrated to Tacloban and other cities for better prospects in their business ventures.

The late Dr. Lourdes Peñero Blas¹³ once told me that the now-demolished house across theirs in Palo was owned by Emilio Yu Biao, a merchant who owned properties and engaged business in Samar. He was better known in Palo as “Intsik Biao”. She couldn’t, however, ascertain how old was this Chinese merchant in 1889, nor could she indicate the year he died.¹⁴

¹² The magazine (now out of sight, and therefore unretrievable) cites Manila Times as its source on June 29, 1957:

¹³ Lourdes Peneiro-Blas, personal communication, June 20, 2009.

¹⁴ Records have it that Chinese traders were known to be trading with Mindoro merchants, and that geographic proximity of the island to China Sea had made possible the establishment of such relations with Chinese merchantmen long

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These are mere sidelights to the whole story, though. Nothing historically definite; just creating some stirrups, imaginary or otherwise, for future considerations.

A nine-man team that went to Semirara to retrieve the lost image: The story in the 1988 album specifically sets the date of their departure for Semirara on June 6 [1889].¹⁵

The “Agtas”

The story about the Sto. Niño goes that the image, when found in the island of Semirara, was enshrined in an improvised altar and was “surrounded by natives of Semirara many of them belonging to the Mangyan tribe.” The team was said to have feared that the natives, who “believed that the image was a gift from heaven”, would not willingly give up their “find”. The story continues:

“How they were able to convince the aggressive and determined natives they could not explain. The Tacloban missionaries took the image from the...improvised altar at midnight when nobody was looking and immediately proceeded to the other side of the hill where their boat was at anchor by taking a

before the first Europeans came to the Philippines. I am tempted theorize that this Emilio Yu Biao was familiar with the Leyte-Mindoro sea route and had trading connections with this island. These trading connections could have facilitated the nine-man team to charter his motor launch for that adventure that was akin to the search for the Holy Grail. I am told that the Chinese communities of present-day Mindoro are more flourishing in the western side of the island, or Mindoro Occidental, an observation that is plausible, since that side of the island is the one near the China Sea.

¹⁵ The names of the nine men that departed for Semirara on June 6, 1889 were the following: Agustin Bañez, Eduardo Quintero, Valerio Salazar, Laurencio Alba, Pedro Tarcela, Leon Mondragon, Isidro Rubillos, Marcelo Duray and a certain Ambrosio from Hindang

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new route to avoid being intercepted by angry natives. While traveling in the dark and could not almost find their way, all of a sudden, two men, unknown to them, with lighted torches met them and guided them to their boat.”

Forming part of the pageant during my childhood were the *agtas* who participated in the Sto. Niño fiesta processions. I was later told that this was a reenactment of the natives in Mindoro that guided the group of Taclobanons to where the Sto. Niño image was located¹⁶. There is also no mention if the natives mentioned above as venerating their newly-found icon was also of the same ethnic stock as these boys and men.

The Harbor Pilot

Here’s a quote from Butch Capucion, a descendant of Juan Agujar, the latter being Butch’s great-grandfather:

“My Lola the late Juana Agujar Juble told me that her father [Juan Agujar], being a harbor pilot commanded the boat SS Consuelo that retrieved the image from Semirara.”¹⁷

I was told by Mr. Capucion that Agujar was 80 years old when he died in 1948. This means, he was 43 at the time he stood as the *hermano mayor* in 1911, and was a very young man at 21 when in 1889 he navigated the motorized vessel upon entering *Canaway*,

¹⁶ Cesar, *op. cit.*, p.28, “An interesting feature of this procession is a group of children whose entire bodies are blackened with charcoal and who are made up to represent the Negritoes...These negritoes dance joyfully before the image to show that the primitives in the early days recognized and acknowledged the Patron.” Also, from Antonio Cinco, personal communication, June 20, 2009.

¹⁷ Butch Capucion, personal communication, June 20, 2009.

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an island off the coast of Babatngon, at the mouth of the San Juanico Strait. His year of birth by computation is in 1868.¹⁸

Return from Semirara; Miraculous Healing

We now read the final part that narrates the return of the team from Semirara and the miracles that purportedly took place:

“Meanwhile in Tacloban, a severe cholera epidemic was raging. Old folks’ stories described the dead as being carried away in *carromatas* (horse-drawn carts) and buried in common graves. Others were dying by the hundreds. As the people waited for the return of the Sto. Nino, they decided to hold a procession of the image of the Señor San Roque, protector and patron of the sick. A *carroto* hold his image was being prepared.

In the midst of their preparation for the procession, at about three o’clock on the afternoon of June 30, 1889, quite suddenly the people saw the *Consuelo* approaching to dock at the pier. In no time at all, hundreds had thronged to gather at Panalaron to kiss the Holy Child’s feet and garments, or even just get a piece of the wooden crate which had held the Sto. Niño. Hundreds of sick, limping, disabled devotees gathered around the sacred image and it is still told

¹⁸ If Juan Aguilar was an original member of the confraternity and that he was the harbor pilot of the vessel SS Consuelo, why is he not included in the list of the nine-man team? Could it be that at 21, Juan Aguilar was still too young to be included in the more senior official group? Besides, as a harbor pilot, his duty was to remain in the local area and, applying his local knowledge, he was to safely bring the incoming vessel into port. Another possibility, though, was he joined the team in its entire operations *ida y vuelta*, and when the motor launch reached the pilot station in Canaway, one of the islets along the San Juanico Strait, it then became his duty to guide the vessel through the narrow waterway back to the Tacloban wharf.

that the sick were ‘cured of their ailment, the crippled dropped their crutches and walked, and the blind who had groped or been led to the place were able to see.’

With great rejoicing, the people held a procession to the church and there placed the image of the Sto. Niño in His own niche. The cholera epidemic suddenly stopped from that moment when the Sto. Niño returned to Tacloban that afternoon of June 30, 1889.”

Such has been the story behind the image. Since then, the Feast of the Sto. Niño de Tacloban has been celebrated every 30th of June. A fluvial parade is held in the afternoon, usually commencing at two or three o’clock to commemorate the triumphal return of the ship *Consuelo* to Tacloban. The parade is a colorful one, as boat owners sail their decorated boats on the harbor. The image of the Sto. Niño sails on a big vessel gaily decorated with buntings up to the top of the mast head.

Upon docking at the Tacloban wharf, a land procession begins. It ends at the Sto. Niño Church amidst great rejoicing, choirs singing, and the tolling of the church’s bells. I continue the narrative of Butch Capucion regarding his great-grandfather Juan Aguilar whose narrations to the daughter Juana Aguilar Juble, Butch’s maternal grandmother, he remembers. Juana’s father Juan and her stepmother (Juan’s second wife) Regina de la Cruz was said to have affirmed that there was an outbreak of *cholera* and *el tor*. A good number of sick people were healed when the image of the Senor Sto. Niño arrived Tacloban. Capucion shares another story, this time when Aguilar became the hermano mayor:

“When the image of the Sto. Niño was brought to their house after the 1910 fiesta, they found one big sack of cacao in their balcony. Nobody claimed ownership of it. So they decided to make it into a

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tableya.¹⁹ A *tsokolate*²⁰ was served to the guests at breakfast during the monthly *novenario*. They never ran out of *tableya* until they brought the image of the Sto. Niño to the incoming *hermano mayor* of 1912.”²¹

Concerns

I am winding up with more open-ended remarks, with questions still needing answers, with historical gaps still awaiting solution. We need to distinguish the true from the false with regards to the story behind this sacred image.

1. I suggest that we revisit ancient accounts of historians like Felix de Huerta, Manuel Artigas and Felipe Redondo. These are valuable sources that will give us the right historical perspective to the local history that we are trying to reconstruct.
2. There is a need to investigate if a *Balyuan* indeed took place, or if it is just a concoction of modern-day *culturati*, tourism experts and pedagogues. Was there indeed a reenactment of the *Balyuan* in the 50s or 60s, or was it not already in 70s or 80s that the rite assumed the pomp and pageantry that it presently characterizes? Let us look into past yearbooks and programs of the Sto. Niño celebrations. If, as some Taclobanons claim, these rites started in the mid ‘70s already, nothing is mentioned at all about this practice of

¹⁹ *Tableya* is a traditional Filipino hot chocolate beverage made from pure, roasted cocoa beans that are pressed into coin-shaped tablets.

²⁰ *Tsokolate* is a Filipino version of hot chocolate typically served during breakfast with bread.

²¹ Butch Capucion, personal communication, June 20, 2009.

commemorating the event in souvenir programs from 1974 to earlier dates, then we have an answer, or at least a probability about its non-existence.

3. And speaking of these yearbooks, common to many is the citation from the poet Iluminado Lucente who put in his writings that the history of the beginning of the Sto. Niño fiesta dates to the year 1739²². This has to be established and validated in the light of scientifically acquired historical data.
4. I also hope that our audience in this webinar here, mostly millenials, would inquire from their elders who could offer us accounts about the *Hermandad de Sto. Niño de Tacloban*. If, indeed, this confraternity drafted a constitution and by-laws, where can we retrieve an extant document? Does this brotherhood have its own chronicles on which we can base our accounts about the original members?
5. Assuming that the box discovered as floating at sea and containing the image of the Sto. Nino was already in the hands of the political authorities in Mindoro, why is there a narrative about the image being under the watchful care of the Mangyans and were unwilling to give up their find? If already in the possession of the Alcalde Militar, wouldn't the retrieval operation be hassle-free?
6. I reiterate my suggestion for a critical review of the "Agta tradition" in our Sto. Niño celebration. Does the practice of boys and young men covering themselves with charcoal and soot have to do with

²² Cesar, *op. cit.*, p. 26

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the young men who purportedly guided that nine-
men team back to the ship?

7. With regards to the miraculous healings, we need a reliable document that recorded such event. Reading about the history of cholera, I gathered that its first long distance spread to Europe and the Americas began in 1817.²³ It was on August 21, 1882 when the Spanish government declared the outbreak of cholera. More than 15k to 20k lives were lost. Only in 1885 did the death rate return to pre-1882 cholera levels.²⁴ The report came from the Philippine National Archives which still keeps a burial record of bodies buried ten days after the outbreak of cholera in Manila. Our question: did this smolder in that same endemic fashion in Leyte seven years after 1882?
8. Another item that needs further investigation is concerning the feast traditionally held “every third Sunday of January”²⁵. Was it truly a regular Third Sunday of January devotion, or was it

²³ Wikipedia has an article on cholera outbreaks and pandemics and has a specific section on the fifth pandemic from 1881 to 1896. See link, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cholera_outbreaks_and_pandemics#cite_note-48

²⁴“...when the Spanish government in the Philippines officially declared the outbreak of cholera in Sampaloc, Manila. By the time it ended in December 1882, more than 15,000 to 20,000 lives were claimed, although it was not clear whether most if not all of these deaths were attributed to cholera. This epidemic tested the capabilities of the Spanish medical, health, and sanitary capabilities such that a number of the dead remained unburied for days. It was one of the most devastating cholera epidemic outbreak during the Spanish colonial period. Death rate was still high at 10% in 1883. Only in 1885 did the death rate return to pre-1882 cholera levels.” Cfr: <https://curatormuseo.wordpress.com/2006/08/15/sampaloc-during-the-1882-cholera-epidemic/>

²⁵ Cesar, *op.cit.*, p. 26.

permanently fixed every January 21, the date that appears in the narrative. According to the perpetual calendar, the date January 21, 1889 does not fall on a Sunday, but on a Monday. However, given that the church has already set the celebration of the Sto. Niño every third Sunday of January, is it safe to say that the date January 21, 1889, the supposed originally date of the Sto. Niño fiesta, needs to be changed to January 20, 1889?

Conclusion: Challenges and Must-do's

Yet, are we to rely mainly on tradition and on folklore? I am not implying, though, that I mistrust these stories about the sacred image. Under normal circumstances, these stories would have easily suffered the fate of obscurity. But the Sto. Niño story has been repeated, often with details, and is ritualized during the annual celebration. It has been in full publicity in many a commemorative album, and is now seemingly accepted as incontrovertible. However, in reading about all these tales, folklores and facts, we have encountered an admixture of true and false. We have seen some historical gaps.

We ask common folk Taclobanons, historians, or scholars of note to offer more credible evidence of the trustworthiness of this narrative.

The originators of the story about the Sto. Niño have long been gone, and many are already quite unknown to most of us. Besides, the span of time since it occurred has given rise to many intermediaries who have passed the story down to our time. Records that could have supported these facts could have been destroyed by typhoon, fire and other natural elements. There was a time when I felt uncomfortable to consider souvenir or commemorative

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programs as official sources of the historical data, and that, they cannot be considered primary sources, not even secondary sources. On the second thought, it would be rash on our part if we reject this tradition as recorded in these yearbooks and place our faith only in legitimately and academically recognized written testimony or contemporary monuments. On the other hand it is just as disturbing to accord to such tradition an implicit confidence merely because it has not so far been formally contradicted by other historical data nor has it received from them confirmation.

Our task as historians, sociologists, academicians, cultural studies experts, scholars and religious leaders might be to collect with care the popular traditional stories about our beloved Sto. Niño. We compare these stories about Him with one another, and determine their value in the light of other information scientifically acquired. Should this light, too, eventually fail us, we must wait patiently until fresh discoveries renew it, content in the meantime with such measure of probability as tradition affords.

We also work by publishing scholarly papers, identifying other sources which can usefully contribute to the production of accurate accounts of the past 100 years and more: stories handed down to us by our forefathers, manuscripts, history of Dioceses (like Cebu and Calbayog), newspapers, articles in journals, church documents, chronicles by religious congregations and order, and books, academic papers that deal on the subject, etc. We keep this precious tradition of the Sto. Niño, value the cultural and spiritual wealth that it offers in the hope that after further studies and investigations, we shall be able to produce a historical narrative.²⁶

We record all events of our beloved Sto. Niño, remember them and preserve them in an authentic form so that these will in the

²⁶ Another short paper in digital form can be an initial source for further research, that of Manuelito Uy. The link may be accessed in https://www.academia.edu/40536694/Tacloban_City_and_the_Santo_Ni%C3%B1o_de_Leyte

end constitute a historical record and represent a “true and genuine past”.

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