

“Bontoc” is derived from the two morphemes “bun” (heap) and “tuk” (top), which, taken together, means “mountains.” The term “Bontoc” now refers to the people of the present Mountain Province, its capital, the people’s culture, and their principal language. Mountain Province used to consist of five subprovinces created during the Spanish period: Benguet, Ifugao, Bontoc, Apayao, and Kalinga. In 1966, four new provinces were created out of the original Mountain Province: Benguet, Ifugao, Mountain Province (formerly the subprovince of Bontoc), and Kalinga-Apayao. Hence, people may still erroneously refer to the four new provinces as the Mountain Province.

The Mountain Province sits on the Cordillera mountain range, which runs from north to south. It is bounded on the west by Ilocos Sur province, on the east by Isabela and Ifugao provinces, on the north by Kalinga-Apayao Province, and on the south by Ifugao and Benguet Provinces. Part of its western territory has been carved out to the jurisdiction of Ilocos Sur. It is drained by the Chico River, a tributary of the mighty Cagayan River. Its capital is Bontoc town, which was also the capital of the former Mountain Province. It has a total of 10 municipalities and 137 barrios. The villages at the southern end of the Mountain Province are northern Kankanay. Although there is a common language, also called Bontoc, each village may have its own dialect and phonetic peculiarities (NCCP-PACT). Population estimate in 1988 was 148,000. Physical types are characteristically Philippine, with ancient Ainu and short Mongol types.

History

Very warlike, the Bontoc are the only group known to have laws on warfare, although, like practically all ethnic groups of northern Luzon, they practice the peace pact. This proclivity to fighting and warfare successfully discouraged Spanish missionary work and military penetration until about the middle of the 19th century. Spanish influence was nil, and the Americans, although seeming to have minimized the warlike tendencies, did not really change Bontoc culture except in Sagada and Bontoc towns. At present, although the Mountain Province is rich in mineral resources, the Bontoc offer fierce resistance to the construction of mines and dams on their territory.

Spanish attempts from 1663 to 1665 to penetrate the area failed because of the rugged terrain and Igorot resistance. However, the abundance of gold in these mountains renewed these efforts in the mid-19th century. Lepanto was the first Igorot area on which garrisons were built. These were abandoned soon after, however, because of frequent Igorot attacks. Attempts to control the tribes of the Bontoc-Lepanto under one politico-military comandancia did not last long, despite a royal decree in 1881 that all Igorot in the comandancia were to reside in the town proper and to dress modestly by Spanish standards.

The Bontoc took part in the Philippine Revolution against Spain in 1898. However, the Americans invaded the Philippines immediately after it had declared its independence

from Spain. About 300 Bontoc joined General Gregorio H. del Pilar in the battle at Tirad Pass to enable General Emilio Aguinaldo to escape through Bontoc. When the Americans established a civil government in 1901, they appointed a member of each village council of elders to be “el presidente” of each village. Public schools, Protestant missions, and Baguio and Bontoc roads were built. Several Bontoc were offered scholarships in America. These proved to be more effective ways of controlling the natives than the military means used by the Spaniards.

During World War II, Japanese troops occupied Bontoc in 1942. Because it was General Yamashita’s escape route, it suffered heavily from American bombardment even as the rest of the country was already rejoicing over the end of the war.

Postwar rehabilitation caused the urban development of the capital town of Bontoc, which had two sections: Poblacion and Ili. Business establishments, such as hotels, restaurants, and stores, flourished. Bontoc Poblacion became the commercial and cosmopolitan section of Bontoc town, which had a population of educated Bontoc, Ilocano, and Chinese migrants. The Bontoc Ili, in contrast, is inhabited by the traditional Bontoc.

Economy

Each village, because of strong internal cooperation, is economically self-sufficient. The main agricultural product of the Bontoc is rice, of which there are two kinds: the *chinacon*, which is the superior variety, and the *pak-ang*. A supplementary crop is sweet potato. Other crops, vegetables, and fruit are also produced such as: coffee, millet, beans, bananas, persimmon, tangerines, cabbages, carrots, and cauliflowers. Because of access to modern vehicular transportation and the availability of markets outside the province, these agricultural products are now produced in very profitable commercial quantities. Pottery and weaving on a small scale are done in Samoki and Bontoc Ili. The *kalileng* (nose flute) and weapons such as the *tufay* (spear), *pinnang* (head ax), *kipan* (knife), and bolo are manufactured in Tocucan. Fishing, largely for subsistence, is done at the Chico River.

In pre-Spanish times, the Bontoc traded gold for jars, plates, beads, and brass gongs from the Asian mainland. Since then, the agricultural system has been wet rice terracing, which became the basis for the Bontoc system of property ownership and inheritance. Four concepts of land ownership are the following: *gakay/lakon*, the tribal territory into which incursion by an outsider may lead to tribal war; *lamoram*, communal property which is for common village use; *tayan*, corporate property which is for the exclusive use of a clan; and *fukhod*, private property which an individual can claim by inheritance or because of the labor and permanent constructions he has done on the land.

Political System

The *ato* is a social, political, and religious institution at the heart of the *ili* (village). It is also the council house where the elders hold various ceremonies and meetings which may be religious, social, or political. As the basic means of social control, it is where the members learn the customs, laws, taboos, history, and oral traditions. Rules are determined and enforced by the *ato*, each member of which represents his family. Therefore, village solidarity starts with one's loyalty to his *ato*, which provides assistance to member families. Each *ato* has the *intugtukan*, a council of male elders, which allows the *ato* members to discuss community issues before decisions are made.

Intervillage relations are determined by the *pechen* (peace pact), which requires mutual cooperation and protection between the villages concerned, especially when one village confronts an enemy. Members of one village must be protected by the other village whenever they are within the territory of that other village. Intermarriages are encouraged. A *pechen* is forged through a ritual conducted by the two villages' councils of elders, who recite the myth of the first *pechen*, exchange gifts, eat and drink from a common plate and cup, and smoke a peace pipe. With long-distance travel now possible, the areas of responsibility covered by Bontoc peace pacts have reached as far as Baguio City, the Benguet mines, and Manila.

The Bontoc believe that their laws were given to them by Lumawig, their culture hero, when he came to live as one of them. These laws stressed solidarity, honesty, and respect for property. Punishments for transgressions were ostracism, confiscation of property, and execution. The incest taboo is strictly followed, so that males strictly avoid visiting the *ulog* where their immediate female relatives sleep. Some villages used to be endogamous.

The concept of justice is based on retribution, which in the past centered on headtaking. Male relatives of a murder victim were morally obligated to avenge his death, either by killing the culprit himself or any member of his village. They were subjected to ridicule and contempt if they failed to do so. Headtaking also had a religious dimension. A beheaded man's spirit became a *pinteg*, a deity to whom the people prayed for a good harvest, good health, the identification of thieves, and the recovery of stolen objects. Headtaking incidents, though now few and far between, still occur.

Law violations are now increasingly being brought before the municipal courts instead of the council of elders, although the court decisions are still largely based on custom law. Fines rather than revenge are becoming acceptable as indemnification.

Although the national government is represented in the Mountain Province by a governor, mayors, councilors, and other such government officials, the *ato* system remains a strong force in the village. The *barangay* captain and councilors must still turn to the council of elders for help in implementing government decisions.

Social Organization and Customs

There are three social classes in the Bontoc community: the *kadangyan/kachangyan* (the traditional rich), the *wad-ay ngachanna* (the middle class), and the *pusillawa* (the poor). The *kadangyan*'s wealth and prestige is defined by the rice fields they have inherited, the possession of *akon* (ceremonial jewelry), their sponsorship of the *cañao* or feast, and an inherited position of authority. A recent development is the *nouveau riche* class, called the *baknang* (the Ilocano term for "rich"), consisting of wage earners and entrepreneurs.

Important stages in the Bontoc life cycle are marked by feasts which involve the butchering of pigs, chickens, and water buffaloes. Large feasts called *cañao* differ according to purpose and occasion. Besides being social gatherings, however, all *cañao* are, first and foremost, religious ceremonies. The *cañao* is also an economic leveler, for it reminds the *kadangyan* that it is their duty to share their wealth with the poor. Departing guests are always given the *watwat*, a chunk of meat to take home.

The *mangmang* is a village *cañao*, whereas a feast of humbler proportions is the *manmanok*. In each instance, the chicken is slaughtered in a special way, i.e., *pinikpikan* (beaten all over the body until it dies). Before the food is distributed to the guests, an elder prays over some food set aside for the *anito* or ancestral spirits, who are invited to the feast.

Childbearing is a very important function of a Bontoc wife. Whether the man or woman is the cause, childlessness gives the man ground for adultery or divorce. If the marriage is childless after two years, the *insupok* (male or female shaman) is called to offer prayers and sacrifices. When conception does occur, taboos are strictly obeyed so as to ensure an easy delivery and a healthy life for the coming infant. Neither the expectant father nor mother should travel outside the village, for the *luta* (environmental spirits) or *anito* may become envious of the infant and cause either a miscarriage or deformity. Hot or cold springs are taboo, for these are dwellings of spirits. If the pregnant woman is touched by the sun's rays at sunrise while she takes a bath, her child will become an albino. Eating chicken gizzard will cause her child to produce nothing bigger than the size of a gizzard in its lifetime. Sleeping near any opening of the house will make the infant accessible to an invisible bird that sucks out the hearts of unborn or newly born infants. If she opens the *luchen* (gourd where *langob*, salted pork, is preserved) an accident will befall a family member. Looking at or desiring the fruits of a tree will cause it to either die or stop bearing fruit.

The woman normally delivers her baby herself, with minimal assistance from her husband, who merely heats the water to bathe the newborn. Immediately after delivery, the mother eats pieces of salted pork boiled with peas. The pork affirms to the *anito* her right over the baby, and the peas aid in lactation. If the labor is abnormally long, the *insupok* is called in to invoke the aid of the *anito*. Evil spirits in the house who may be causing the difficulty are driven away by the smoke of burning rags and rice husk. The *inchawat* (midwife) is called in cases of difficult childbirth. A girl's placenta is buried at the left side of the doorway facing outside, and a boy's is buried at the right side.

The house is taboo for visitors until the infant's umbilical cord drops. The taboo sign is the *karuchakid*, which consists of two long soot-blackened sticks stuck on the ground and arching over the doorway. At present, however, grandparents stand guard outside the door in place of the *karuchakid*. The family is also forbidden to work in the fields or eat fresh food during this period. The dropping of the cord is celebrated with a *manmanok*. The cord is buried in the same site as the placenta to ensure the child's loyalty to both its family and community. The child may be named after an ancestor, its midwife, or its birthplace. The *anito* must be familiar with the child's name so that they would look kindly on the child.

Sa-eb is the Bontoc equivalent of the Christian baptism and is in fact sometimes called *funyag*, from the Ilocano word "bunyag" or baptism. Only men are invited, with three *kachangyan* elders leading the ritual. Early in the morning, the oldest man prays the *khaeb*, which is done in front of a basket containing three bundles of palay, symbolizing prosperity. The men do the *ayyeng* (group chant) specifically for the sa-eb. A pig and piglet are butchered, and chickens are prepared for slaughter when the *kapya* (prayers) are said. To the rhythmic beating of the *gangsa* (gongs), the old man dips his fingers into a basin of the pig's blood and touches the child's forehead with it while shouting its name in prayer for the *anito* to hear. The mother, with the child in her arms, is then allowed to join the men as they dance. At midmorning, male relatives serve the rice placed on *khyag* (basket tray) and pieces of cooked meat. The guests take home some of this food afterward; hence, they place it in their *tupil* (lunch basket) or *sukrob/suklang* (basket cap). *Ayyeng* and storytelling alternate until the second meal, which follows after an hour. The final prayers are said and the men disperse. Only then will the women and children of the family take their meal.

Boys at about age four are sent to live in the *ato*, the male dormitory, where they learn village customs and traditions from the village elders through storytelling sessions done around the fire at night. At about age seven, the girls sleep in the *ulog*, the female dormitory. However, unlike the boys, the girls spend the day in the family home.

There are no specific rituals at the onset of puberty. However, preadolescent boys are circumcised. When the children reach adolescence, betrothal may be arranged between *kachangyan* parents to preserve their wealth. Parental arrangement is sealed by the families each butchering a *carabao* and exchanging one half of each. When the children reach marriageable age, the boy who refuses to honor the betrothal must pay the girl an indemnity of one rice field, which is returned when the girl marries. However, the girl who breaks the agreement is not fined.

Courtship takes place in the *ulog*, where the man visits the woman. Although the woman may invite the man to spend the night at the *ulog*, there is no sexual relationship unless they are officially betrothed. Courtship, which may be initiated by either man or woman, begins when the suitor sends the love interest a *ganta* of *faratong* (black beans) through an elderly woman. A woman wishing to court a man who is absent from the village may send an elderly woman as her emissary to the man's parents. With their permission, she then pays the man a visit, wherever he may be. Should he accept her,

they can live together and have the wedding rites when they return home. If he rejects her, he is expected to see that she returns home safely.

The courtship process lasts a week, with the two families exchanging food items, beginning with the black beans, then pieces of meat, rice, and chicken. All items received by the families are distributed to relatives. The wedding rite is the *karang*, literally, a small basket, into which are stuck the feathers of the biggest chicken that has been pinikpikan for the occasion. Prayers are offered in front of this basket. Later, a piece of salted meat is placed in it and set aside for the anito. As in all celebrations, the male elders perform the ayyeng in a semicircle in front of the house, while the women and children stay outside this circle. This time, however, food is served first from the outer circle, so that the old men are served last.

The celebrations taper off within three days, after which the couple may live, but not sleep together for another five days while omens are observed. The groom sleeps in the ato during this period. He is sent on the atufang, i. e., to take a bath in the nearby spring, enroute to which no accidents, which are bad omens, should occur. A second test is for him to gather wood in the mountains and his bride to work in the fields while omens are observed. The final test is for the fire to be kept burning in the hearth all night. If the fire dies, it is a bad omen.

Ordinarily, the *lopis*, a grand marriage feast, is held about five years later, unless a kachangyan family can afford to hold it immediately after the karang. The whole village is involved, since several married couples agree to hold it simultaneously. The mother of either the bride or groom places food offerings in a basket which she takes to the *papattay*, the sacred pine tree where sacrificial offerings are made to the anito. The animals to be cooked are ceremoniously butchered in all the houses of families sponsoring the feast, and the male members of the ato donate some meat and offer their services. While the old men chant the ayyeng, the women perform the *suwaay* (singing while pounding rice). The feasting lasts for as long as the food lasts. In one of the last days of the lopis, the bride places food offerings in a basket covered with a *kalasag* (shield) and performs ritual prayers at four points along the village perimeter, where stone stoves serve as altars. She prays for the two factors that make for a successful marriage: children and economic prosperity. Her last stop is the papattay, where she arranges her food offerings on the shield before praying, and finally sticks a meat offering into the sacred trunk.

The grandest cañao is the *chono*, which must be approved by the village elders because it requires the participation of all kachangyan, and neighboring villages are invited. It is the kachangyan's thanksgiving feast and an opportunity for the lawa to share the kachangyan's bounty. Each family butchers from 4 to 12 animals, with the *mangisegfat* (the richest family who leads the chono) butchering the greatest number. The animals' heads are hung for display on a makeshift platform, where boys can clamber up to sing improvised songs. In the chono are heard different kinds of *salidum-ay* (songs), sung to the rhythm of the gangsa. On the last day of feasting, each guest is given the watwat.

The closing rite for each kind of cañao is the *paopao*, which is done the morning after all the guests have left. The mother of the sponsoring family rhythmically beats the shield as a signal for the village children that she is distributing rice and meat. She does this at the *sasaar*, the nearest point of entry into the village. The children eat some of the food for breakfast, but they are expected to take most of their share home.

Death rites differ according to age and the cause of death. For adults, there are two kinds of wakes: one, the *inanitu* (caused by the anito), which is either a natural or accidental death; and another, the *finosor* (caused by a *fosor*, enemy). The clothes of the deceased determine its social status, the *kadangyan* wearing a more elaborately designed G-string or blouse-and-skirt. In all cases, the corpse is propped up on the *sangachil* (death chair) and placed in the house if it is *inanitu*, or outside if it is *finosor*.

Each adult offspring prepares *pinikpikan* chicken and contributes the pigs to be butchered for the *utong* or food taken by the spirit on its journey to the afterworld. The immediate family is forbidden to partake of the meat, although it is distributed to the guests for their breakfast and lunch. In a two-day wake, a pig is butchered every two hours starting at 8 A.M. until the burial, which is done in the afternoon before sunset. The gallbladders of *pinikpikan* chickens are examined for omens.

The degree of mourning is determined by the age of the deceased person. Old people who have lived full lives have happy wakes, whereas young people are mourned. For a grandparent's wake, there are three different kinds of songs, one of which has a happy tune. The guests engage in a chanted address to the dead, recalling his/her life, or indirectly criticizing or praising the offspring's behavior toward their deceased parent. For a dead child, only the dirge is sung.

At the wake of a young person, the mourners wear their oldest, frayed clothes. The other women in the *ulog* of a deceased member wear strings of *fitug* (black beads) and leave their hair undone. They provide the corpse with a *kalaleng* (nose flute) or an *afil-lao* (bamboo mouth organ) and pork fat in a bamboo container. The latter is to be used as hair oil in the afterworld. The other men in the *ato* of a deceased member wear their *sukrob/suklang* unadorned, i.e., without its characteristic feathers and beads. They provide the corpse with tobacco leaves, a shield, and a spear.

No coffins were used in olden times. However, the Bontoc now prepare their coffin, made of a pine trunk cut in half lengthwise and hollowed out, and store this in the vicinity of their house for its eventual use. A deceased adult is buried in a pit in the yard, a graveyard, or the *paryong*, a burial cave. The corpse is lifted from the *sangachil*, and its legs are bent with its knees up to the breast. It is thus wrapped with a *fachala* (death blanket or shroud) and carried head first to the grave. Pieces are cut from the *fachala* and distributed to the grandchildren to make them strong. At the moment of burial, immediate relatives must turn their backs so as not to be possessed by the spirit of the deceased. A child is buried in the front yard, in the same spot where its umbilical cord and placenta were buried when it was born.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

Although the Bontoc believe in the anito or spirits of their ancestors and in spirits dwelling in nature, they are essentially monotheistic. Their god is Kafunian/Kabunian, father of Lumawig, their culture hero. But sometimes the two are also perceived as one and the same. Religious practices, rituals, and cañaos attend their cycles of life, death, and agricultural activities. There are many kinds of cañaos. The *chao-es* is the feast for the *manerwap*, which is the ritual imploring Lumawig for rain. A *chao-es* is also held when a person's name needs to be changed because of an incurable ailment that is believed to be caused by an ancestral spirit. The *fosog* is the feast for fertility rites. There are sacred days called *tengao/teer*, which are some 46 days scattered in a year. On such occasions, work in the fields is taboo. The *tengao* are generally associated with crops, climate and weather, and sickness. During this period, *kapya* or prayers are addressed to the spirits for favors and blessings. The *manayeng* is a group prayer asking Lumawig for rain.

Architecture and Community Planning

The ili or village has certain indigenous structures that make it distinct from the poblacion, where most of the immigrants live. The ili has three basic residential structures: the *ato*, which is the council house and dormitory of the young and old unmarried males; the *ulog/olog*, which is the female dormitory; and the *afong*, which is the family residence. Economic structures are the *al-lang*, where food supplies, jewelry, and wine jars are stored; the *akhamang*, the rice granaries; and the *falinto-og*, the pigpens. Instead of a lock, thieves are warned away with the *pachipad*, twigs and leaves knotted together to represent the owner's curse on trespassers.

Each *ato* has about 15 to 30 *afong*, pigpens, and rice granaries, a low stone wall, and footwalks connecting the various houses to one another. A typical ili has about 600 to 3,000 inhabitants, living in different *ato*. The strength of community feeling in the ili is based on kinship ties, *ato* loyalties, communal rituals, and a shared history of defending themselves against enemies.

Besides being the term for the social institution, the *ato* is also a physical structure consisting of a large hut, called the *pabafunan*, and an open court where people gather to perform their rituals. The *pabafunan* is shared by about 6 to 18 males. With a thatched roof and walls consisting of stones cemented together by mud, the rectangular *pabafunan* has only one small opening, 75 centimeters high and 25 centimeters wide, through which one enters sideways.

Adjacent to the *pabafunan* is the open court which is a stone platform with a fireplace in the center, around which the men sit or move when ceremonies are performed. The seats consist of flat, elevated stones, worn smooth by the generations that have sat on them. The court is shaded by a tree; there are posts, either carved to represent human skulls or holding stones atop them that resemble skulls. In the past, when headtaking was still practiced, these posts held the enemies' heads which were brought home by warriors.

The council of elders meets at the *fawi*, a structure identical to the *pabafunan*, or at the *ato*'s open court, to deliberate on matters concerning its *ato*. The *fawi* is also where the human skulls used to be stored. Also called by the same term are the simple structures scattered along some trails; these are shelters where feasts are held when the Bontoc go on ceremonial journeys.

Nearby would be the *ulog*, where girls sleep from about age seven. Like the *ato*, it is a stone structure with a thatched roof. The single doorway is about 75 centimeters high and 25 centimeters wide. Inside, boards are placed side by side for the girls to sleep on. These are usually built over the *pigpen*. Unlike the *ato*, it is not an institution; hence, there is no ceremonial stone platform or open court. The males conduct their courtship here, and couples may engage in premarital sex here after they are betrothed.

The rich and the poor classes have different kinds of *afong* or family dwellings. A rich family lives in the *fayu*, which is open and relatively large, 3.6 x 4.5 square meters with walls 1.04 meters high, and with a tall grass roof. A poor family lives in the *katyufong*, which is smaller, enclosed, and mud walled. The residence of widows or unmarried old women is the *kol-lob*, also called *katyufong*.

The interior of the *afong* is divided into sections based on traditional household functions. The dining area is the most spacious, and holds the *patyay* (an elevated stick rack) or the *fe-ey* (a loft) and the *panannom* (water jar), standing in a corner. Stored on the *patyay* or *fe-ey* are kitchen utensils: the *khyag*, *palato* (enamel or china plates), *ungot* (coconut shell or wooden bowls), *tasa* (enamel or china cups), *mal-lakong* (enamel or china bowls), *fanilag* (rattan trays), and *fanga* (pots). However, there are no furniture.

The Bontoc, like other Cordillera groups, are famous for their engineering skills in building rice terraces. Because they raise rice on mountainous terrain, they have devised an indigenous and scenic method of irrigation. The terrace walls consist of stones fitted together. These walls are from 1 to 9 meters high, 30 to 45 centimeters wide. The top layer of stones is used as the path among the terraces. Stones deliberately made to jut out of the terrace serve as steps. After the rice harvest, the terrace is used as a *camote* bed. These beds are constructed in parallel or continuous spiral arrangements on each terrace.

Visual Arts and Crafts

Traditional clothing leave both males and females bare above the waist. However, even in early times women in the Lepanto area had short blouses, once made of bark with a warp sewed or quilted. It had no fastening in front and had short sleeves. The men sometimes wear the American coat above their G-string, and the women wear simple white blouses. Today the younger Bontoc wear the trousers, shirts, dresses, and shoes of lowland Filipinos for everyday wear, especially when staying or travelling outside

the province.

The Bontoc have a tradition of cloth weaving. The background colors are dark, the favorite being blue. Geometric designs are diamonds, triangles, hexagons, and zigzags. Representational designs are the dancing man or woman, stars, leaves, and rice paddies. These are inwoven in yellow, green, white, and red threads. These designs are used in garments and blankets.

The men's traditional attire is the G-string called *wanes*. Wealthy males, however, have the *lagteb*, which is a G-string of pure white thread woven and designed more elaborately than the ordinary ones. A 17.5-centimeter disk made of mother-of-pearl shell called *fikum* may decorate the G-string. Old men may wear the *pitay* or *ewes ay pinagpakan*, a thick blanket, although the younger ones claim it is women's wear. On the head is the *suklang/suklung*, a small cap of basketwork, which comes in various shapes: fezl-like, hemispherical, or low and flat. The *fal-laka* is the bachelors' cap colorfully adorned with beads, boars' teeth, and red feathers. This cap is also used to hold the things that men carry about, such as pipes and matches.

The women's skirt is called the *lufid*, short and narrow, extending from the navel to the knees, and with a side opening. The rich woman's skirt is the *khinawaan*, which has white stripes in the middle. The poor has the *kinayan*, a red and white skirt of plain weave. The workday skirt, made of two strips colored white and red is called the *kinarchago*. The skirt woven in many colors is the *inorma*. The *wakis*, a belt 10 centimeters wide, is wound twice around the waist. Sometimes it has a white background to set off the yellow, green, black, and red designs. The blanket is worn over the shoulders only in dancing.

Although the women wear no necklaces, their hair is tied elaborately together with the *apong* (strings of black seeds, brass-wire rings, white stone beads either pear shaped or many sided, reddish agate beads, and dog's teeth). The *apong* is an heirloom and usually not for sale. An heirloom belt, the *akosan/akkos*, made of cloth covered with shells and brass wire, conceals a narrow wallet where the *apong* is kept.

Today some males still wear the *abkil* (armlets of boar-tusk). This used to be adorned with a tuft of human hair from a captured head. At the *ato's* head-taking ceremony, the male dancers wore the *fuyaya*, a necklace of boar's teeth.

Some unmarried men and women still wear ear stretchers or earplugs to create very long slits on the earlobes. The stretcher is made of two pieces of bamboo held apart by shorter pieces between them. It may be decorated with straight incised lines. The earplugs are of wood, shaped like a bottle cork stopper and decorated with straight incised lines, red seeds, or pieces of glass. The *al-ling/senseng* are gold handcrafted earrings with varied designs. The *lingling-o* is worn by the Cordillera groups either as an earring or a necklace pendant. It is circular with a cut on the bottom, so that it is "an almost closed C" (Casal et al. 1981:242). A favorite variation among the Bontoc is that shaped like a horned bull, with the cut representing the muzzle. The *lingling-o* are

usually worn by the Bontoc women as earrings, to which beads and shells are sometimes attached. These pieces of jewelry, all heirloom pieces, comprise the wealth of a family, along with the gangsa china jars, and plates.

The tattoo used to be a prestige symbol, worn only by the head taker. However, it is now purely ornamental. There are three types of tattoos: the *chaklag*, the breast tattoo of the headhunter; the *pongo*, the arm tattoo of both sexes or the woman's tattoo; and the *fatek* which is used as the generic term and refers to all the other tattoos.

The *chaklag* consists of geometric lines curving from each nipple to each shoulder and ending on each upper arm. Horizontal lines are made on the biceps to supplement the breast tattoo. The woman's tattoo is on the back of the hands and encircles the arms beginning from the wrists to the upper part of the elbows. On the upper arm, the figure of a man with extended arms and legs may be etched. The man's tattoo has a simpler pattern and uses longer lines; the woman's tattoo uses cross-hatched lines and patchwork designs. Disfigurements, such as swellings, are deliberately used as part of the tattoo design.

Baskets, which are either of rattan or bamboo or a combination of both, are important implements for trade, transport and storage, in the field and at home. A traditional shape, i.e., the gradual tapering of the baskets from a four-sided base to a rounded top, is achieved through certain weaving patterns. A typical example is the *akob*, a storage basket consisting of two bowl-shaped baskets of equal size. One serves as a cover when it is fitted over the other. When either half is laid with the circular opening on top, it rests on a square base of split bamboo or wood, which is attached to the body with rattan twine.

The *kolug*, a shellfish basket, is attached to the woman's waist. It is bottle shaped, with a square base and body but a rounded neck and opening. A break in the weave at the base of the neck makes this transition possible, provides ventilation for the shellfish, and lends an aesthetic feature to the basket. The bottom has open weave holes through which water is drained.

An egg-shaped basket for beans is the *agairin*. Large crisscrossing rattan splints just beneath the top rim provide decoration and effect the tapering from the wide middle to the smaller top. The body is woven in wickerwork design. A touch of color is provided by two strips of yellow orchid stems woven horizontally across the upper half of the basket. It stands 8.25 centimeters high, has a 5-centimeter square base, a 10.7-centimeter circular top, and is 17.7 centimeters at the middle.

The man's lunch basket is the *topil*, a covered basket which can carry three quarts of food. It consists of two rectangular pieces, one serving as the cover which is fitted over the body. The pieces are loosely attached to each other with a fibrous string or rattan twine. The cover has rounded corners and the sides have a herringbone design. It measures 10 centimeters wide, 14 centimeters long, and 12.7 centimeters high.

The man's most important basket is the *pasiking/khimata*, either square or trapezoidal, made of bamboo and attached to a light wooden crossbar. It is worn like a knapsack. The *tal-lak* is a square open rattan basket, relatively shallow, with the top wider than the bottom. The *lavfa* is another open basket, either square or round, slimmer and deeper than the *tal-lak*. The woman has the *tayaan*, a large basket for transporting goods, or a smaller basket worn on the rump, the *agkawin*, in which she carries her lunch when she works in the field. Worn over her head when it rains is the *tugwi*, about 1.2 meters long, having two layers between which is a large palm leaf. Man's rain hat is the *segfi*, cone shaped, and waterproofed with beeswax. A household basket is the *faloko*, used to contain vegetables, camote, and rice. Other household baskets are the *iwus*, large and bottle shaped; the *kolug*, also bottle shaped and a container for rice; the *akaug*, a rice sieve; and the *khyag/kiug*, a food tray used only for ceremonial purposes. The gangsa and water jars are kept in baskets shaped for a snug fit.

From the wall near the hearth hang three small baskets called pagitaken. Whenever a pinikpikan ritual is held in the house, a piece of the sacrificed chicken and a handful of rice is placed in each basket as an offering for the anito. These baskets are not moved from the house, even when the family transfers residence.

A fine piece of woven sculpture is a human figure whose arms are wrapped around a bowl basket. Made by coiling split rattan peel, the figure has well-defined limbs and facial features. A tuft of human hair is stuck into the crown of the figure to serve as a wig.

Tools and implements are incised with the same geometric designs found on the woven cloths.

Weapons, harking back to times of tribal wars and head-taking forays, are part of the family heirloom. The shield is made of a single sheet of wood but is cut so that three points project above, and two points, below. Rattan strips are laced across the shield, serving as both ornament and reinforcement. For ornamentation, some shields are incised with geometric lines or crude drawings of snakes, frogs, or humans. Otherwise, the shield is simply soot-black. The spear is a wooden weapon with either a bamboo or metal blade. Other weapons are the battle ax and knives.

Smoking pipes are made of wood, clay, or metal. Pipe makers may place a design on the bowl of the pipe by first making a beeswax model. One example of a design is the figure of a sitting man: his knees folded, his elbows resting on his knees, and his chin resting on his hands. His facial features are clearly etched.

An example of Bontoc figurative wood carving are the heads sculpted on the tops of tree fern trunks or poles to represent heads of slain enemies. Stones resembling human skulls are also placed atop poles. Bontoc war trails had ceremonial structures called *komis*, in which omens were observed before a head-taking trip. A *komis* consisted of vertical posts whose tops were also carved to represent heads. Stones represented eyes and teeth. Baskets and racks used for the sacrificial animals hung from posts lying

across the vertical poles.

Another example of Bontoc wood carving is the house deity *tinagtagoa*, a seated figure with hands crossed on its breast. The tinagtagoa possesses neither the aesthetic finish nor the religious significance of the Ifugao *bulul*, a pair of figures of a man and a woman used in Cordillera societies in various social and religious rituals. Other examples of wood carving include the ceremonial containers used together with the bulul during rituals. These containers usually have sculpted animal heads protruding from their bodies, which are in turn decorated with waves following the contour of the piece. Household items like food bowls with a reptile's head as handle, scabbards with a carved human figure, meat slicers sculpted in the form of a human figure with a piece of sharpened iron protruding from the chest, and various spoons and ladles with animal figures at the handle's tip, are also part of Bontoc wood-carving art (*Monpaot* 1991: 11-39). **Literary Arts**

The Bontoc use language to address two classes of beings: their living fellow human beings and the invisible beings consisting of deities and anito.

Bontoc social literature is that body of oral composition, sung or recited, whose purpose is to communicate ideas or attitudes to others at certain social occasions. Of great significance is the body of Bontoc literature which expresses the Bontoc world view and reflects their collective history. This consists of their riddles, proverbs, aphorisms, songs, tales, legends, and myths.

Some examples of riddles are the following:

Wada san duay sing-anag-i menkasid kugda.

There are two brothers,
they turn their backs on one another. (Ears)

*Mo madsem maannaannawa
mo pay mapat-a ngumadan si tubong. (Abek)*

A bamboo tube by day, by night a sea. (Mat)

*Mo bumala mengagabey,
mo masiken iwwakna san gabeyna.*

When a child, she wore a skirt;
when grown up she was stripped naked
to the waist. (Bamboo)

Ritual literature is that body of literature addressed or chanted to the deities or the anito during ceremonies. Examples of ritual literature are the ayyeng, *annako*, *kapya*, *manayeng/ manaing*, *orakyo*, and *achog*.

One folktale tells of a stepson who, unable to bear a cruel stepmother, mutilates himself

and is transformed into a *kuling* (a large bird) to teach her a lesson. She repents and becomes a loving mother to her remaining stepson while the *kuling* keeps a watchful eye over them. Carrying a similar theme is another tale of a mother who, becoming so absorbed in the pursuit of livelihood, neglects to feed and care for her child. The angry child becomes a *tilin* (a grain-eating bird) and yearly returns at harvest time to eat the harvest to punish the selfish parent.

Another story revolves around a nameless man, practically an outcast, who finds the opportunity to kill a monster snake that has been plaguing the village. Having done a great deed for the people, he obtains a name. His grateful townsfolk name him *Kawis*, meaning “Good.”

A legend tells of a rich man’s son who falls in love with a poor girl. His father tries to put an end to the affair. Catching them by the stream of the *Kadchog* one night, he beats them up. They are transformed into two great white stones which one can still see there today. Since that tragic event, the *Bontoc* say, the *kadangyan* no longer force their children to marry against their wishes.

A myth claims that the three stars in the Belt of Orion are the three daughters of a *Bontoc* rich man and the Star Maiden. The maiden had descended to earth with her sisters one night to cut sugarcane and to bathe in the river. The owner of the sugarcane field, coming upon them, hid the clothes of one of them. When the maidens left for the sky, one could not fly away because her white robes were missing. The man took her as his wife and they had three daughters. But the woman spent her nights weaving white robes for herself and her three daughters. One night, while the man was sleeping, the woman and her daughters donned their white robes and flew back to the sky. Today, they say, the three stars and one big bright star in Orion are the Star Maiden and her three daughters.

The most important of the forms of mythology are the *oggood*, the narratives concerning *Lumawig*, the *Bontoc* god and culture hero. *Lumawig* came from Mount *Kalawitan* to the land of the *Bontoc* searching for adventure. He chose to marry the beautiful and industrious lady *Fukan* after rejecting one lady whose hair was too short, another who lived in a village that was too small, and a third who “tittered like a bird.” To *Lumawig* are attributed the beginnings of many *Bontoc* sacred traditions which survive to the present. He rewards good and punishes evil. He wants peace and prosperity. He established the institution of the *ato*. He established the rituals. He performed wonders to teach ethical norms. He changed his own selfish father-in-law into a rock with water gushing forth from its anus, because the older man refused to stand in line for a drink of water that *Lumawig* had caused to spring from a rock. He established the *chom-no* ritual to forge peace among neighboring communities. In *Bontoc* town is a tiny garden patch that is tended by a special priest and irrigated by a constant spring; this is where *Lumawig* first taught agriculture to the *Bontoc*.

On Mount *Kal-lat* is a huge stone said to have been set down there by *Lumawig*. When bad weather threatened the people, the men gathered around this stone and performed

kapya. Women are tabooed, but one curious woman came one day to see the stone. Lightning struck the rock and broke it in two. Today it still lies in that condition. It was Lumawig who decreed the tengao, which he began when he gave his wife to the widower leader of the Tinglayan in order to establish some peace between those people and the Bontoc. This new marriage brought two lovely daughters who, on a trip to see their Bontoc grandmother, lost their way because of bad weather and were killed by the Kanew. The bodies of the girls were buried on Mount Papattay, which is now held sacred. It is believed that the Great Spirit resides in this mountain; hence, a shaman offers prayers and sacrifices there. It is forbidden to cut the trees on this mountain or to pick their leaves.

The myths are also an integral part of ritual. In the traditional wedding ceremony, the narrative of Lumawig's wedding is recited. Part of the planting rites for an abundant harvest is the recitation of the myth about how the gods multiplied and increased the size of the crops.

Although the tales recounting the adventures of Lumawig are not in epic form, they bear similar narrative and thematic characteristics and may be fragments of a long narrative chant, like the epics of the Ifugao and Kankanay. These myths are the literary basis of tribal mores, social and political institutions, social history, and religious practices.

Performing Arts

An important ensemble of the Bontocis the *gangsa pattung*, consisting of five or more flat gongs struck with padded sticks. Depending upon the type of dance and the village where the performers come from, there are variations in the style of playing the flat gongs. In the central town of Bontoc, gangsa pattung has three categories of flat gongs with specific musical functions: *mangokngok*, *maerwas*, and *matayoktok*.

The mangokngok is the largest and lowest-pitched gong playing ringing and dampened sounds alternately, and providing the regular steady beat of the music. The maerwas plays patterns combining the ringing and dampened sounds. The matayoktok is characterized by the prominent use of dampened sounds.

Bontoc flat-gong ensembles are used on festive occasions like victory celebrations for a successful tumo (head-taking trip), sa-eb (initiation rites for young men), chono, peace-pact gatherings, and thanksgiving rites. In Sadanga, the playing of flat gongs in religious rituals is called *feyar*, and this is performed with the *paliwat* (recitation of challenges) and *iyag* (group chanting).

The musical instruments that often simulate flat-gong music are the bamboo tube zither called *kullitong* and the jew's harps called *abil-law* and *awideng*. The kullitong has five strings of metal. These strings are raised by small stones that serve as movable bridges at both ends of each string. Jew's harps are the *abil-law*, made of bamboo, and the *awideng*, made of metal with a pulling string attached to its pointed tip. These harps

are played by young men for entertainment and courtship at the ulog. Also associated with courtship is the nose flute *karraring/kal-leleng/ kalaleng*, which has three fingerholes and a thumbhole. Musical instruments, particularly for the young, are the *sapsap-ok* or pipes in a row, *teptepew* or short whistle flute made of bamboo or used gun bullet casings, *arsip* and *patpatfag* or reed aerophones made from rice stalks. When a person has died violently, the *sinongyup*, a notched mouth flute, and the reed aerophones are sounded together with the *wedwed* (bullroarer) in order to disturb the killer's soul.

Bontoc accompanies the daily affairs of the people. Parents who work in the fields hand over their children to the old women in the *kol-lob*, where lullabies, folk songs, and the og-good (epic) are sung to the children.

The *fal-lukay/fal-lugay* is sung during ablution rites of headtaking victory celebrations. Young men courting ladies at the ulog sing the *ayegka*, love songs, which have traditional tunes but improvised lyrics. Many such songs are never sung again. Rice-pounding songs *chay-assa* and *kwel-la/kudya* are also sung to communicate mentally with a loved one who is far away. The *ayoweng/mangayuweng*, the laborer's song, is sung when doing farm work, pounding rice, or walking on the trail toward the field.

Song forms used at social gatherings, such as peace pacts, weddings, and thanksgiving rites, include the ayyeng, salidum-ay, *chag-ay*, *chamgek*, *surwe-ey*, and *wigwigan*. The *papaguy* is a salidum-ay sung in groups during the wake of a deceased grandparent. It has a happy tune because it is believed that grandparents have lived their lives fully. Singing accompanies the dance in the *sukaidan* ritual, which is performed exclusively by men of the upper class in order to implore the god Kabunian and other nature spirits for rain. The *bagbagto/fagfagto* refers to both the song and the stone-throwing game that the men of Bontoc and Samoki town engage in to begin the camote-planting season.

Different types of salidum-ay are heard at the chono. The small boys sing the *aygaen*, an improvised song consisting of one line repeatedly sung to a simple tune. All through the night, in front of all the houses of the sponsoring families, men stand in a semicircle with their arms around one another's shoulders and sing the *maiwag* to the staccato rhythm of the gangsa. The next evening, the old men sing the *al-layo*, which is an improvised song about the history of the sponsoring families. The ayyeng, also sung by the elders, is a cañao song imploring Lumawig to bless the singers and the cañao host with strength.

Funeral songs are drama, for these are chanted addresses with the deceased. The *annako* is a mourning song by old women keeping vigil beside the dead, which sits on the death throne. If the dead was killed by an enemy, the *annako* challenges the spirit of the dead to take revenge and restore his honor. Here is an excerpt:

Intoy nabay gatanam
Inkay tay mid alam
Palalo kay kaseseg-ang

*No inka et maeasang
Inka et ta alam nan
Ta wad-ay et en kaduam
Ta adi ka et maeasang
Inka et ta alam nan.*

Look where you have gone
Because you have not taken any
You are very pitiful [you are]
For look, you are alone
So, go get [him] now
So you will have some company
So you will not be alone
So, go get [him] now.

The achog tells about the life of a dead person and is sung by two or three groups of people during the night vigil for the dead. Here are the first three stanzas of a 19-stanza funeral dirge:

*Id cano sangasangadom, wada's Inan Talangey
Ay bayaw ay nasakit, ay isnan nadnenadney
San bebsat Inan Talangey, maid egay da iyey
Bayaw issan masakit, ay si Inan Talangey
Sa't ikokodana dapay anocan nakingey
Wada pay omanono ay daet obpay matey.*

*San Nakwas ay nadiko, ay ba'w si Inan Talangey
Dadaet isangadil, issan sag-en san tetey
Da't san ab-abiik na napika et ay omey
Bayawan ay manateng ab-abiik di natey
Adyaet mailokoy si'n anito'y sinkaweywey
Nan danen daet mattao bayaw ya nabaginey.*

*Da't cano menligos, ay san deey nal-ayan
Ay dan't cano ilan, ay nan enda dinaan
Ay daet maid wan-ey, bayaw ya's nadapisan
Dapay adoadoda san ena nilokoyan
Da't si Inan Talangey, wada ay masidingan
Ulay ikakamo na dapay kayet matayna.*

A long time ago, it is said,
 there was Inan Talangey
Who had been sick for a long time
The brothers and sisters of Inan Talangey,
 they did not bring
To the sick who was Inan Talangey
But she was lying in bed
 and yet was very fussy
And at length she finally died.

After she was dead she Inan Talangey
They tied her to the death chair
 near the ladder

Then her soul started to go
To join the souls of the dead.
She went with a long line of anito
Their path was grassy and among the
thorny plants.

Then back she who was dead looked
Then she saw the path from whence
they came
There were no *wan-ey* and no signs
of trodden plants
And yet they were many, they with
whom she was going
Then she Inan Talangey, she was
giving out strength
Faster she went and yet could be left behind.

Orakyo is the song of children in connection with the chom-no ritual, in which carabaos are sacrificed, an occasion when the ato elders try to strengthen pacts with neighboring tribes, and guests come bearing gifts for the chom-no host. The singing is done by the children while standing on a platform called *patongan*, and the song narrates how the sacrificial carabaos are caught and killed by being made to fall down the cliff. The orakyo may also be any improvised song. For example:

Kinchag chas fakintot
Rakyo-o orakyo-rakyo-orakyo
Chinachapan chas kipan
Iga-an-gan-oga-an-igan
Kinchag chas ad falakyo
Rakyo-o orakyo-rakyo-o orakyo
Insagfot cha nan olo
Rakyo-o rakyo-rakyo-o rakyo
Sapalit si kawitan
ig-an-igan-iga-an-igan

They have felled fakintot
Rakyo-o orakyo-rakyo-orakyo
They have cut him up with a knife
Iga-an-gan-oga-an-igan
They have felled it Falakyo
Rakyo-o orakyo-rakyo-o orakyo
They have hanged their heads
Rakyo-o orakyo-rakyo-o rakyo
See the crown of the rooster
Ig-an igan-iga-an igan

The distinctive features of Bontoc music are the predominant use of vocal ornamentation, the rendering of various types of songs in leader-chorus style, and the playing of the gangsa with padded stick. Vocal coloring in music is rendered through heavy tremolos, hissing, and loud rhythmic breathing. In addition, the choruses sing in harmony often in parallel thirds. Bontoc musical genres are closely correlated with

sociopolitical activities, such as the *pedin/pechen* (peace pact), *kayaw* (head-taking rites), and *fegnas* (thanksgiving rites).

Among the Bontoc dances, the most spectacular are the war dances. The *balangbang*, a term derived from the sound of the gangsa, is a victorious dance performed by old men and women when warriors return with an enemy's head. The *faluknit*, another victory dance, is initiated by a returning warrior recounting his head-taking feats and inviting his beloved to share in his triumph in the fal-lukay. He is followed by the other warriors and the rest of the community. In the past, the captured heads were placed in the center of the dancing circle as the women took turns kicking the heads to show their scorn for the enemy, and the men beat the gongs. At present, these dances are performed only for ceremonial or entertainment purposes.

The *fal-liwes* is a war dance done in a circle with varying steps of shuffling, hopping, the lifting of feet, and bending of knees. The women usually dance outside of the circle in mincing steps. Occasionally a woman forces her way to the center of the circle. The women throw their blankets around themselves and extend their arms while clutching the implements or products of their labor, like tobacco leaves or a ball of thread.

The *pattong* is a display of combat skills with one or two warriors holding a shield and spear, a head ax, or a bolo. The dancing warriors move in and out of the circling movement of other dancers beating the gangsa. Occasionally the shields clash, the head ax is brandished, the two warriors charge and retreat, shadow-fight, and engage each other in a mock duel. If the warrior is dancing solo, he mimes the fight.

Marriage celebrations are occasions for courtship dances. *Takik* is a flirtation, love, or courtship dance performed by five or more couples. The dancers move in circular and spiral formations. *Pinanyowan* is a courtship dance in which female performers hold stretched-out handkerchiefs or headscarves. The man tries to chase the woman, and the dance ends when the woman yields her kerchief to him. A variation of this dance is the *inot-inot*, which ends when the women allow themselves to be caught by the men.

There are mimetic dances centering on animals. *Ballatan* (rooster) is a courtship dance with scratching steps called *kalahig*, depicting the movements of a rooster around a hen. *Turayan*, a high-flying bird, is a ceremonial dance performed by a tribal elder who leads a *datum* (young man) in the dance. This is a ritual introducing the young man to the gathering of brave men. The *pallakis* is a courtship dance featuring a blanket held in various ways by male and female. In bigger celebrations like the cañao, the dance becomes the community dance. • R.C. Lucero with H. Tejero, F. Prudente, F. Hornedo, and E.A. Manuel/ Reviewed by F. Hornedo.

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