

The word “Ibanag” derives from the prefix “i” meaning “native, resident, people of” and “bannag” meaning “river,” and means “people of the river,” an apt name for the people who settled along the banks of the Cagayan River and the northern coasts of Luzon. The Ibanag are found principally in Tuguegarao, Solana, Aparri, Peñablanca, Lal-lo, Camalaniugan, Abulug, Buguey and Amulung in Cagayan, and in Cabagan, Ilagan, Tumauni, San Pablo, Santa Maria, Santo Tomas, San Mariano, Angadanan, Reina Mercedes in Isabela. In 1960, the total population of the Ibanag—who are also called Ibanac, Ybanag, Ybanac, Cagayan and Cagayanes—was placed at 178,954. By 1970, the Census reported that there were 196,319 mother-tongue speakers (Llamzon 1978:41). Ibanag as a language gained prominence over the years as a lingua franca among the Ibanag, the Gaddang, the Yogad, and a few Aeta, because the Dominican order made it their language of evangelization in the area. All these groups inhabit the central part of Cagayan Valley.

## History

The proto-historic Ibanag lived along the Cagayan River in what is now Cagayan and Isabela provinces. Their main economic activity was planting rice, the staple food. Vegetables and legumes grew abundantly in their fertile lands. Much of the protein requirement came from hunting and from domesticated animals. The rivers along the settlements provided the Ibanag with a variety of fish, especially the *lurung* and *aguag* (Llamzon 1978:41). Aside from these domestic activities, the natives traded with the Chinese, the Indians, and the Japanese.

The early Cagayanes lived in villages which maintained trade and security relations with one another. The village was governed by an *urayan* who had executive powers, an *ukom* or judge, and a *kammaranan* who made policies and regulations for the community (Mallo Peñaflor 1983). A *mengal* (chief warrior) led the *vuggayawan* (army) when the tribe went to war; while a *kagun* acted as ambassador for missions of conciliation and appeasement.

The *Boxer Codex* reports that in the 16th century, the people of the Cagayan Valley were engaged in unending wars with each other, the objective of which was to obtain the heads of members of other groups, including women and children. In these headhunting confrontations, the Cagayan warriors used buffalo-hide corselets, helmets, and long, broad lances. Victory in these adventures was celebrated with a feast characterized by drinking, dancing, the ringing of bells, and the crowning of warriors with a headdress with golden feathers (Quirino and Garcia 1958).

The first Spanish conquistador to arrive in Cagayan was Juan de Salcedo who landed at the mouth of the Pamplona River in 1572. However, Spanish occupation of Cagayan took place only in 1581, when Governor Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñaloza, upon learning of the presence of a Japanese fleet under the command of Taifusa at the mouth of the Cagayan River, sent Juan Pablo Carreon to the north to drive away the Japanese (Mallo Peñaflor 1983). The Spanish expedition was successful, and in 1583, Cagayan became a

Spanish province. Capitan Carreon established his garrison in the village of Lal-lo which he renamed Nueva Segovia. The garrison was only a military outpost, however, not a mission center, since the Augustinians and the Dominicans who came with the troops came either as chaplains of the expedition or as observers representing the Bishop of Manila. It was not until 1591 that Governor Perez Dasmariñas, in his capacity as Vice Royal Patron, assigned the mission field of Cagayan Valley to the Dominicans.

In 1595, Cagayan became part of a new ecclesiastical jurisdiction, namely, the diocese of Nueva Segovia, which together with Cebu and Nueva Caceres, were suffragans to the Archdiocese of Manila (Mallo Peñaflor 1983). The new diocese, which covered the whole of northern Luzon, had its seat in Lal-lo, Cagayan. This seat was later transferred to Vigan. Cagayan itself would become a diocese again only in 1910, and an archdiocese in 1975.

The Spaniards brought with them new agricultural techniques. The production of tobacco, corn, rice, vegetables, fruits, and tubers increased. In some parts of the province, wine was produced from nipa palm juice, as it had been before 1647 by the people of Bagumbayan, a barrio of Lal-lo (Castillet 1960:xi). Many of these weaving looms were still operating in 1877 in Camalaniugan. In Pamplona, Fray Francisco Borja introduced the silk industry.

The Spanish built many structures in the first two centuries of occupation. In Tuguegarao, parochial schools were established. Roads and bridges were built primarily to facilitate the Ilocano immigration. The road to Manila was completed in November 1738 while the road from Cagayan to the Ilocos was opened in February 1880. The church, now Cathedral of Tuguegarao, was built in 1767.

The establishment of a Spanish settlement in Cagayan was met with resistance from the local chiefs like Guiyab of Camalaniugan, the Tuliao brothers of Tular, and Sibiran of Pata, who rallied their fellows to confront the Spaniards with their native weapons—the *duppil*, the *suturing*, the *uutug*, and the *dukkial* (Mallo Peñaflor 1983). However, the superior weapons of the Spaniards ensured their victory. With the help of the friars, the Spanish crown eventually prevailed over the hostility and indifference of the natives.

Like any other colonized people, the Ibanag came under the dehumanizing effects of Spanish impositions which caused further resistance. In Iguig, Magalad and a younger brother led the people in protesting against the imposition of tribute and forced labor (Mallo Peñaflor 1983). The Magalads established linkages with neighboring villages for a concerted resistance against the Spaniards who were already advancing towards the upstream communities. The Spaniards captured the Magalads and deported them to Manila. The Dominicans, however, had them brought back to Cagayan to serve as models for their policy of attraction. Back in Cagayan, Magalad continued to protest against the tribute and forced labor, prompting the Manila authorities to send a reinforcement led by Captain Chavez to kill Magalad.

In 1718, the abuses of the encomenderos, of Juan Clavijo and the other alcaldes of Cagayan before him as well as of the soldiers in the fort of Tuao pushed the Ibanag to stage a rebellion on the feast of the Virgin of the Rosary. Led by Matatangan, chief of Malaueg, and his deputy Sinanguinga, chief of Tuao, the natives, aided by the Kalinga, Itawes, and Iraya, were joined in Tuguegarao by one member of the *principalia*, a certain Rivera, who proclaimed himself Papa Rey and instructed all his followers to return all their rosaries, scapulars, and other religious objects of the friars. In Lal-lo, the alcalde surrendered to the rebels, although Rivera assaulted but could not take the fort. The uprising was ended by Captain Pablo Orduña who advanced for Vigan to Cagayan with 300 soldiers. Matatangan and many of his followers fled to the forests of Cabagan and Tuguegarao to elude arrest. Later, in 1724, chapels were built in principal barrios of Cagayan and given their corresponding patron saints (mostly Dominicans) in order to establish better politico-religious control over the natives (Malumbres, *Cagayan* 1918:55-57).

In 1763, Diego Silang's proclamation of revolt against the Spanish was brought by a boatman Baltasar Magalona to Juan Damay of Piat, who then spread the message of revolt to other parts of the valley up to Ilagan. The insurrection spread from Ilagan to Aparri. But the Itawes of Tuao and the Kalinga of Pinapo opposed it, and soon Ignacio de Arza of Urrutia, captain general of the rebel areas, tried 33 Cagayanes, 1 Ilocano, and 1 Pangasinan in Lal-lo, and deported them to distant towns. In 1764, the *alcalde mayor* Jose de Arteaga had Damay flogged 200 times on the back as he rode "a knight on a beast of burden" through the streets of Lal-lo (Malumbres, *Cagayan* 1918:79).

There were attempts on the part of the Spanish officials to correct the abuses of other Spanish authorities. In 1739, Don Jose Ignacio Urzudum de Rebolledo, a member of the Royal Audiencia of Manila came to Cagayan as a *visitador* (Mallo Peñaflor 1983). He instituted 40 statutes of reform which included a definition of the powers of the native *gobernadorcillo* or town mayor and the town missionaries, the election of native officers, the prohibition of banquets, the manner of dressing, and the use of currency.

One of the principal objects of protest from the natives was the imposition of the tobacco monopoly. From the year 1782, the Ibanag were forced to cultivate tobacco. Because of this, the natives had to switch from rice to corn as staple, since corn did not require as much attention to grow as rice. Also the agricultural season of corn did not conflict with tobacco but alternated with it. The abuses brought into this monopoly by the agents of the treasury became so glaring that in 1882, Governor General Moriones forced the hand of the Canovas and the royal family to sell the monopoly (Sawyer 1900:252). Soon, the Compania Tabacalera de Filipinas established the haciendas of San Antonio, San Rafael, and Santa Isabel in the province of Isabela.

Private enterprise introduced into Cagayan the finest seeds along with novel ways of cultivating tobacco. However, there seemed to be little improvement in the lot of the Ibanag themselves who cultivated the tobacco. A marked distinction between social classes rose as a result of the monopoly. The avarice of the upper class, who were

usurers, led to many bloody outbreaks of the oppressed and enslaved debtors.

There were additional pressures created by Spanish officials. To maximize the benefits obtained from cultivating tobacco, the government encouraged outsiders to settle in Cagayan and plant tobacco. They gave free passes and money advances to other people, among them the Ilocano. These Ilocano replaced the Ibanag who migrated to other places because of abuses they suffered under the Spanish.

Up to 1839, the valley had been divided into two, for administrative and Christianization purposes. The north, from Gamu to Aparri, constituted the province of Cagayan; and the south, from Calaniugan to Cruz of Caraballo Sin, made up the Territorio de los Misiones. In 1839, Governor General Lardizabal established the province of Nueva Vizcaya, with its capital in Camarag and covering the areas from Aritao to Ilagan and Palanan inclusively. Cagayan's borders were also redefined and now went from Tumauni to Aparri, with its capital in Tuguegarao. In 1856, the province of Isabela was created, covering the areas from Cabagan to Cruz, with its capital in Ilagan. Because of this, Cagayan's borders were once more reset. A line was drawn between Tuguegarao and San Pablo (Malumbres, *Cagayan* 1918:14-15).

During the Philippine Revolution, many people from Cagayan and Isabela enlisted themselves as members of the new army under the command of General Daniel Tirona, head of a revolutionary force from Manila. The army list was headed by Ricardo Tuyuan, Emilio Gannaban, and Tomas Dichoso.

This army was organized on orders of Aguinaldo who felt that an organization of an adequate army was needed for Cagayan and Isabela. The brigade had for its officers names like Romillo, Macanaya, Alvarado, De Rivera, Villaflor, Fonacier, Guibani, Paguirigan, Claravall, and Padilla. The civil government was administered by Vicente Nepomuceno as governor of Cagayan and Dimas Guzman as governor of Isabela.

As in most Philippine provinces, the American period introduced elementary and high school buildings, as well as more government structures into Cagayan. This period saw the rise of local leaders like Engracio Gonzaga, Pablo Guzman, Antonio Carag, Vicente Masigan, Honorio Lasam, Macanaya, Esteban Quinto, Vicente Formoso, Proceso Sebastian, Nicanor Carag, Nicanor P. Carag, and Marcelo Adduru (Castillet 1960:xii).

In the fight for liberation from the Japanese, the two main groups in which the Cagayanes were involved were: the USAFIP (United States Armed Forces in the Philippines) which had such men as Cepeda, Balo, Tumaliuan, Casibang; and the guerilla forces which were led by Peñaflor, Pagalilauan, Gaza, and Balleva. After the "liberation," reconstruction of Cagayan was pioneered by Baldomero Perez, Peregrino Quinto, and Nicanor Arranz. In Manila, Adduru, Singson, Alonzo, and Siagon contributed to the rebuilding of the nation (Mallo Peñaflor 1983).

Today, the Ibanag who stayed in their homeland are primarily tobacco farmers. Only a small portion of the farmlands are devoted to rice and corn, although immigrant

settlers like the Ilocano, the Tagalog, and the Pampango are beginning to influence the Ibanag into producing rice in commercial quantities (Llamzon 1978:41). Many logging firms now operate in Cagayan, for which the province has the largest volume of standing timber in the region. The manufacturing industry is limited to small food industries, such as *bagoong* (fish paste) and *patis* (fish sauce) making, rice milling, coconut dessication, and soap making.

## **Economy**

The Ibanag's chief product is rice followed by tobacco. Rice production is done by mutual assistance among the villagers, from plowing to harvesting. Assistance is in lending a plow or animal or in sharing of the harvest: 1/3 of the harvest goes to the landowner, 2/3 to the tenant or principal tiller. One half of the share of the tenant is distributed to the volunteers who each get one basket of rice for every 10 baskets they reap while assisting in harvesting.

Sharing the produce is observed in fishing and piggery. In fishing, the owner of the banca and net gets half of the catch while the other half is equally shared by other fishers; the owner gets another share from this partition. In pig raising, the sow is given to a caretaker who agrees to give the owner one piglet for every litter of four. If the available number of piglets is less than four, the caretaker gets all; when there are seven, the owner gets two.

Borrowing money is resorted to in time of need. The practice is to give a cavan of corn every harvest for every 100 pesos borrowed. This mode of payment continues until the loan is paid. Sometimes, farmers pay as much as a third of the harvest for only the interest on the money borrowed.

Aside from agriculture, other gainful occupations in the area include animal husbandry, forestry, fishing, and hunting (Census 1980:xxix). Some Ibanag are production workers, transport equipment operators and laborers, while others are professional, technical, and service workers. People in administrative, executive, and/or managerial positions in private or public organizations comprise the smallest percentage of the work force.

## **Political System**

The head of the traditional Ibanag community was called the *dakal na barangay*. Among the early Ibanag, this leader was not someone whose authority was imposed on the people (Gatan 1981:16). Rather, the leader must be one of them, someone from their stock. There were times when the central government would appoint a head of the barangay who would be given all the rights and privileges of the office. Simultaneously, the people themselves would acknowledge a leader of their own. To the Ibanag, a leader should have charisma and honesty; the ability to control or placate the people; and the intelligence to discover solutions to the problems of the

community. Above all, the leader must be a kin or *karaga*, as in the old *datu* (chieftain) system (Gatan 1981:17).

Today, under the presidential form of government of the 1986 Constitution, the province of Cagayan is governed through the Department of Interior and Local Government which oversees the local government units: the barangay, the municipality, and the province (*Philippine Yearbook* 1989:70-73). In 1990, Cagayan Province had 29 municipalities, which had a total of 158,948 households. Of these households, 19,492 were Ibanag speakers. In the same year, Isabela province had 34 municipalities, which had a total of 204,409 households. Of these households, 28,060 were Ibanag speakers (*1990 Census of Population and Housing, Report No. 3-21B, Cagayan and Report-45B, Isabela*).

### Social Beliefs and Customs

Traditional Ibanag couples place a great value on the child, which they consider as a gift from God. There are several reasons for this: children are the source of luck for the family; they are a proof of the father's masculinity; they are manifestations of riches; they are a form of investment or security. Couples without children are considered unlucky and are believed to be punished. Many childless couples resort to prayers and novenas to special saints. Others use prescriptions by older members of the community (Gatan 1981:43). One such formula is called *illug na tanggalawa* (the eggs of a house insect called tanggalawa). The *illug* is toasted and mixed with coffee. The *lupo* (the sterile one) says a prayer and drinks the concoction (Gatan 1981:42).

*Mangagug* or *magalluaring* is the Ibanag term for conception. There are many beliefs associated with magalluaring. One such belief is that characteristics of children result from the food the expectant mother takes. A woman who craves for *lubbang* (orange) will bear a round-faced baby. And a woman who craves for *lumboy* (a violet fruit) will deliver a dark-skinned infant. Another popular belief is that symptoms of conceiving, like restlessness and irritability, may be transferred to the husband if the wife, on waking up in the morning, bends over the husband (Gatan 1981:44).

To ensure the health of the expectant mother, couples go through a ritual involving the use of a *lutung* or container used for feeding pigs. *Lutung* is made from a piece of a tree trunk hollowed out in the middle to contain liquids. A small piece is taken from the *lutung*, pulverized and burned, and mixed with coffee. This will be served to the conceiving woman on a full moon with the appropriate chanting of prayers. This ritual is performed to free the expectant mother from sickness.

Another ritual is made to eliminate pains associated with pregnancy. This ritual, called *mamattang*, involves the eating of a native cake called *pinataro*, prepared by a member of the household. Aside from the *pinataro*, *wari* (food offering) for the nature deities is prepared. These offerings are placed on top of the *baul* (chest). The couple bends over the *baul*, face each other, and eat the *pinataro*, while they are surrounded by relatives

and friends. After this, the mother of the husband and the mother of the wife put coins in a container filled with water. Then the relatives and other guests partake of the pinataro. After eating, the coins are joined and sealed with wax which symbolically dispels the anxiety of a possible abortion, while the pinataro suggests that the baby stick to the womb until it is ready for delivery.

The newly born is called *kalubi*; after several days it is referred to as *assitay* (Gatan 1981:51). If the *assitay* is a first born, it is called *palutarag*, a term also used to refer to the mother giving birth for the first time.

During the first few days of the *kalubi*, the *partera* or *hilot* (midwife) performs the *magassu* ceremony which employs fumigation as a way of purification. Black clothes are burned near the mother and child. Both of them are instructed to inhale the smoke. This ceremony is done to drive away insects and to relieve the *kalubi* of stomachache. When the soft part of the head of the *kalubi* is deflated, the remnants of the umbilical cord is burned together with the black clothes.

After a few weeks, the Ibanag child undergoes the *pacristian* or baptism (Gatan 1981:55). Ibanag see this ritual as a means to cure a sick child or to protect the child from illness. During baptism, the godparent pinches the child in order to keep it awake. A *kalubi* who cries during the ceremony is expected to be alert and watchful, therefore industrious.

The society recognizes the transition of the *assitay* from infancy to childhood when he is referred to as *abbing* (Gatan 1981:58). At this stage, parents are watchful of their children's growth. When parents notice physical or mental defects in their child, certain rituals and practices may remedy the situation. One such practice is to change the child's name which signifies a desire to start everything again. The new name is usually given by the parents or a *karaga*. It is customary for Ibanag children to have more than one given name.

Speech defects are treated with *mannusian*, also called *makipenpenga*, a ritual performed by a relative who inserts a large key, usually a cabinet key, in the mouth of the child and turns it as in opening a cabinet door.

When a child refuses to wear clothes, their godparents make panties or pants out of old clothes which are considered sacred. Godparents are requested to put these on the child who would then be expected to learn to use these garments. The ritual is called *makisinnung*.

When the child suffers from hearing impairment, the *matulipattan* is performed. Here the hole of the ear is covered with a small coin.

The *mangagagakao* is a ritual to bring back the *kararua* or soul of a child who is shocked or scared. The Ibanag believe that shock or trauma is caused by the temporary separation of the soul from the body.

*Mangayaya* is the native term for courtship which usually starts at age 16 (Gatan 1981:69). Dating is not easily permissible. The *maginganay* (young girl) is always accompanied to social gatherings. This practice does not only protect the virginity of the girl but also prevents her from being the object of gossip. The strong kinship system can make private affairs public.

As in any other Christianized community, the formation of an Ibanag family begins with marriage (Gatan 1981:71). There are two ways of getting a mate. The first is through parental arrangement, where the man is required to present the usual bridewealth consisting of two carabaos, a parcel of farmland, five cows, a trunk, a bolo, complete kitchen ware, bedclings, and the *aggo*, a piece of cloth which is wound around a woman's waist after giving birth. Child marriage was practiced by parents on both sides, although it was abandoned in the 1920s. The second way is through courtship, which has become a popular alternative among the educated. When there is parental disapproval, couples resort to elopement.

Marriage marks the end of courtship and is intertwined with the concept of adulthood. The Ibanag's high regard for the institutions of marriage is manifested in its meticulous traditional rituals for the different stages leading to a wedding. Before marriage, the *bagitolay* (young man) must first go through several stages to secure the permission of the girl's parents. In all these stages, he must be accompanied by his parents and a *gumakagi* (spokesperson), proof that marriage is a union not only of husband and wife, but also of their families.

The marriage process starts with the *dalibasa* (information). A *gumakagi* is chosen by the *bagitolay*'s family and is sent to the house of the girl to inform her parents about the love of the young man for their daughter. Next comes the *mangidulo maptritindi*, where the man's parents together with the spokesperson go to the house of the woman. Here, the spokesperson of the *bagitolay* and spokesperson of the *maginganay* perform the *mabersu* or talking in verse impromptu. During this ritual, refreshments are served by the young man's family, usually liquor or soft drinks, biscuits or *pancit*. Then, the *manubag* follows. Here, a whole entourage of the man's relatives pays another visit to the woman's house to get the final decision of the girl's family. A week after the *manubag*, the parents of the couple gather together for the *mamakurung* to talk about the wedding preparations. Here the role of the spokesperson is dispensed with. The kind of wedding is usually determined according to the financial status of the groom, but the *dote* (bridewealth), consisting of cash, carabao, trunk, beddings, bolo, and jewelry, is expected of all grooms. After these talks, the *massulisitud* or acquiring of a marriage license follows, and then the *mappasingan*, where the priest advises the couple on the Christian teachings on marriage. In the *manulug*, the provisions agreed upon during the *mamakurung* are brought to the woman's house on the eve of the wedding day. Three days are allotted for the wedding festivities. The first is called the *pasingan*, the last, the *aggud*. On the day of the *pasingan*, the couple, accompanied by their parents, sponsors, relatives, and friends, go to the town to hear mass and to get the priest's blessings and return for the festivities in the bride's residence.



There are several rituals observed during the wedding proper. The *pamottagan*, which means “going down the house,” is a ritual exchange of coins between families. These coins symbolize prosperity and act as charms for good fortune. Some of these coins are showered on the couple after the wedding ceremonies. The *pagunekkan*, which means “going up the house,” is the ritual where the parents of the couple give coins to their children, this time before the couple go up to the bride’s house.

The couple’s first destination inside the bride’s house is the altar where they offer prayers to their dead relatives. Then, they proceed to the *ballang* where their first dance is performed. After lunch, the *mappagala* follows. For this ceremony, two big handkerchiefs are laid out on the ground for the money that relatives will present to the couple. Relatives of the groom deposit their gifts on the handkerchief near the bride, while relatives of the bride put their gifts on the one near the groom. Throughout the ceremony, a wedding dance called *maskota* is performed by any of the couple’s relatives.

There are rules on marriage that are strictly followed. Marriage between relatives down to the third degree of consanguinity is forbidden. The married couple should stay with the bride’s family. The older sister must wait for the younger sisters to marry before she does.

Separation is permitted on grounds of infidelity, maltreatment of the wife, negligence of duties and obligations as spouse or as parents, and barenness which only applies to women, as men are always presumed to be fertile. The separation is done before the *barrio dakal* (big man) who performed the marriage ceremony.

When a couple separates, settlement is reached with the guilty party giving up his/her rights for the custody of the children and the property. In the distribution of properties among the children, the sons are given three times the share of daughters. This unequal treatment based on sex has prompted the educated daughters to assert their rights based on national laws and to bring their cases to court when necessary.

In most cases, death comes as a result of sickness or disease. Although the Ibanag accept that sickness has natural causes, many illnesses are still attributed to preternatural reasons (Gatan 1981:76). Faded or destroyed statues or paintings of *santo*, for example, which manifest neglect by the owners are believed to cause sickness. As atonement, these images are repainted and brought to the church. Food and prayers are offered for the recovery of the patient.

Another cause of illness may be the neglect of the *kararua* of dead relatives. Illnesses caused by them usually happen during the *pagamiento* or when the farmers receive the payment for their crops, and serve as a reminder to the living relatives that the dead are still part of the *pattataman*.

Many illnesses are attributed to the *agguiriguira* (also called *arimasingan*) or spirits

that cannot be seen. When someone is *natukkal*, i.e., touched by these beings, he/she must offer a wari, an offering consisting of food, cigars with red ribbon, and wine, to appease the spirits.

These illnesses and their causes are determined by the *mangilu*, the medium who utilizes various traditional methods to diagnose the patient. The *mangilu* and his methods become a popular alternative when all prescriptions from the doctor prove ineffective. Should the physician and if the *mangilu* fail and the patient dies, the Ibanag accept this as the will of God. Before the patient expires, a priest is called to anoint the sick and administer the viaticum.

The death of an Ibanag is one occasion when the Ibanag kinship system is clearly manifested. When the news of the death of a *karaga* spreads, people come into the house and extend all forms of assistance to the bereaved family: some prepare the dead for the *tarag* (literally, “lying down”) or wake; some build an improvised altar; some construct *lungun* or coffin while others cook food for the visitors during the wake.

During the *tarag*, members of the immediate family may not sweep in and around the house, help in the preparation of the *lungun*, touch candles or salt, take a bath in the same house where the *tarag* is being held, comb one’s hair, and break a dish. Efforts are made to follow these orders as disobedience may cause the death of other family members. Close family members also prepare the *balung*— the things which the dead must take along with him/her.

During the night of the *tarag*, the *pasion* is chanted by a male and a female volunteer. At times, a *mabbersu* (one who sings in impromptu verses) takes over as intermission.

Black clothes are customarily worn, not during the wake but for the funeral. Women also put on black veils called *mantu*.

There are rituals observed after the burial. After relatives have left the cemetery, a family member, usually the one closest to the deceased stay behind for the *mangagacao* ritual. This ritual is actually an invitation for the *kararua* of the dead to stay with the family temporarily.

The day after the burial, the *mawwagga* ritual is performed. This ritual, which represents the purification of the family from the misfortunes that brought about the death in the family, involves bathing in the river and disposal of the rags used during the illness and death.

The nine-day prayers are said, and the novena culminates in a big celebration to thank all those who condoled and extended help to the family.

## **Religious Beliefs and Practices**

The Ibanag believe in spirits which inhabit the world. There are unseen spirits they call *i ari nga masingan* or “those who cannot be seen” (Llamzon 1978:43). To appease these spirits and allay their own fears, they make offerings. Sometimes, the *minangilu* or *minannanad* (or mangilu), folk medics who claim to have contact with the other world, are asked to be mediators and maintain harmony between the material and the spiritual world.

Sickness and diseases are believed to be caused by offended spirits, who have to be appeased. There are two methods employed by the *minangilu* or *minannanad* to diagnose the infirm (Llamzon 1978:43). In the first method, the *minannanad* moistens the palm with coconut oil called *denu* and lemon juice. The *minannanad* then massages the sick and declares that the *tu naponna ira* (dead relatives) need something and are asking for prayers. A makeshift altar is set up in the living room and a *padasal* is called. Relatives, neighbors, and friends are invited to offer prayers. Food, such as choice morsels, a tiny cup of *sikulate* (chocolate) and rice cakes, are likewise prepared and offered to the soul. This ritual is called *mattunnak*.

The second method involves smoking or fumigation and is called *assub*. The *minangilu* uses charcoal, chicken feathers, coconut frond blessed by the priest on Palm Sunday, salt and a piece of *alum* or *pedralumbre*. Heated bunch charcoal is placed in a container, over which the patient stands. The *minangilu* prays and burns the materials one at a time, seeing to it that the fumes envelop the patient. The *pedralumbre* is extracted from the embers and allowed to melt, changing into shapes which may suggest the cause of the ailment.

Animal sacrifice has figured prominently in many Ibanag rituals. An example is the *netabba* (sacrificial pig) offered to a patron saint. The *netabba* may be offered during town fiestas or during the wake of a deceased member of a family. When offered during fiestas, the animal offering is accompanied by the *sambali* and the *parosa*— a song and dance dramatization of the life of Santo Domingo, the patron saint of Casibarang.

There are many other beliefs which have been classified as situational. The *tabba* (literally, “opposite”) refers to the rule in life by which one may find oneself in a situation which is the reverse of one’s present state. This belief has developed among the Ibanag a sense of temperance and prudence. The concept of *tabba* is not limited to human activities alone but also to the movements of nature. Thus, a bountiful harvest will have its *tabba* in the form of a drought or sickness and death of children.

The concept of *matulao* sets in when an endeavor or enterprise suddenly fizzles out. The term is derived from the root word “tulao” which implies that the charm of success has been neutralized. This concept assumes a belief in objects of *galing-galing* or charms which give power to humans, such as *ilug na lalung* (egg of a rooster), *batu ta unag na niog* (stone inside a coconut), and *inki na palutarag* (forefinger of a first-born boy) stolen from the cemetery on a Holy Friday. There are objects and activities, however, which can neutralize the power of these charms. For example, salt placed beside a gambler dispels the luck provided by the charms of the gambler. Roasting of a

*lappang* (owl) and praising the productivity of the farmland are said to cause bad luck.

*Mangibariao*, on the other hand, is a curse or bad wish. The person who performs mangibariao can cause harm or injury to another person. A person would need matulao to neutralize the mangibariao.

Amid the incursions of the Catholic doctrines and practices which appropriated native cultural elements, the Ibanag belief system has survived through the years. The smooth and spontaneous transmission of community values and beliefs was made possible through the family which has served as a reinforcer of these beliefs.

### **Architecture and Community Planning**

The traditional Ibanag settlement pattern consists of an outer and an inner group of houses, and an outer and an inner circle of houses (Gatan 1981:13). Such is Barrio Casibarang Sur which is made up of eight blocks, each one showing this outer-inner pattern. This settlement pattern manifests a strong kinship system. Furthermore, houses located in the inner circle are occupied by the older people, while those at the outer circle belong to the young, which indicates that the construction of these houses went from the inner to the outer.

Ibanag houses come in three types: the traditional, the transitional, and the modern (Gatan 1981:13). The traditional house is a multiroom house, raised 1 meter or more above the ground with two *batalag* porches—one in front where the family can relax at night or where one can wash the mud off one's feet especially during the rainy season; and another at the back which serves as an open-air bathroom and an area for washing pots, dishes, and clothes. The rear *batalag* also holds the *gapa*, the jar for drinking water. This feature of having two *batalag* distinguishes the Ibanag dwelling from other indigenous houses. In general, these *batalag* are unroofed and have ladders which can be drawn up anytime to prevent animals from coming up the house. The walls of these dwellings are made of split bamboo, while the roofs are of cogon or nipa. The house is loosely divided into: the living room which also doubles as family bedroom; two small rooms, one for the altar and one for storing rice and corn or tobacco; a dining room which is also the kitchen; and the two *batalag* porches.

The transitional house is a bigger version of the traditional. Galvanized sheets are used for roofing instead of cogon or nipa. The walls are still of split bamboos but the floor is made of wood. In this house, the front *batalag* becomes dispensable or nonfunctional. The house has two stories but only the top floor is used for household activities. The ground floor, on the other hand, serves as an area for drying tobacco leaves and as a working place.

The modern house, which employs contemporary architectural design taken from the lowlands (e.g., the *bungalow*), is constructed with more permanent materials, like hollow blocks and wood for floors and walls, and glass and steel for windows. **Literary Arts**

Ibanag folk literature consists of the folk speech, namely, proverbs and riddles, and the folk narratives, composed of myths and legends. All are transmitted orally.

Riddles which are called *palavvuh* can be classified as a form of social literature, as riddling often becomes a favorite pastime during work or leisure and provides entertainment at most social gatherings. Most of the riddles take the form of monorhyming couplets (Eugenio 1982:379, 388):

*Egga y tadday nga ulapa  
Funnuan na kanan y bagui na. (Kandela)*

There is a certain fool  
That eats up its own body. (Candle)

*Egga y babui ta Manila  
Maguinna toye y guni na. (Arugok)*

My pig in Manila  
Its squeal can be heard here. (Thunder)

There are numerous proverbs known as *unoni* which reflect the life and the world of the Ibanag. These proverbs contain many of the basic tenets about life and human nature upheld by the people. Like the riddles, these proverbs are often expressed in monorhyming couplets of 5 to 12 syllables per line. Here are some examples (Eugenio 1982:353-354, 357):

*Y baruasi nga inikkaw,  
Nu ari atazzi, alawa nikao.*

One who wears something borrowed,  
Even in the street, will be stripped.

*Ariammu ibilang tu kukuwan  
Nu ari paga nakadde ta limam.*

Do not consider as certain that  
which you do not actually hold,  
For even the rice you carry to your mouth  
may still fall.

*Kitu nga nepallo y uvug na  
Awan tu makaga na.*

Barking dogs  
Seldom bite.

The myths are prose narratives that explain the origin of the world, people, animals, places, and other natural phenomena. Its characters are either humans or animals and deities with human attributes. The actions and adventures of these characters are set

in the remote past and in another world, such as the sky or the underworld.

Most of the recorded Ibanag myths deal with the origin of natural phenomena (Eugenio 1994:259-260). One such myth, “Y Naggafuanan na Aruguk, Kilakila, Kunam Anna Uran” (The Origin of Thunder, Lightning, Clouds, and Rain) attributes the cause of thunder, lightning, earthquake, and rain to the giant who is imprisoned by an enemy in a big cave under the world. Smoke from his pipe forms the clouds. When he lights his long pipe, lightning flashes across the sky. When he shouts at his enemy, thunder rolls. When he kicks the wall of his cave, the earth shakes. When he blows, he brings the clouds together and the rain falls.

Still another myth, “Y Paggafuanan na Lunig” (What Causes Earthquakes) attributes the origin of earthquakes to the legendary Bernardo Carpio, who, as a child, already exhibits extraordinary strength. Bernardo Carpio is the only son of a very poor couple. Whenever the couple go out to work, they leave the baby in the house. Upon returning home, they find all the baby’s toys broken into pieces. When there are no more toys to break, the child breaks the walls and studs of the house. As he grows up, Bernardo Carpio is recognized as the strongest man not only in the village but in the whole country. This popularity makes him so proud that he challenges God himself. God gives him several trials, the last of which is for him to stop the quarrel between two big mountains. To prove his strength, he goes between the warring mountains, extends his arms to part them but gets crushed by them. He is buried alive and only his head is left sticking out of the mountains. Whenever Bernardo Carpio attempts to free himself from the two mountains, the earth shakes (Eugenio 1994:264-265).

Compared to the myths, legends are generally set in a period considered less remote. A popular Ilocano legend entitled “The Legend of Lakay-Lakay” is actually Ibanag co-opted by the Ilocano who inhabit the northeastern part of Cagayan (*Cagayan Almanac* 1970). About 3 kilometers from the town proper of Claveria, there are two rocks which take the features of a man and a woman. These rocks are called Lakay-lakay and Baket-baket, which in Ilocano means “old man” and “old woman” respectively.

There is a legend behind these stones. Lakay-lakay together with Baket-baket and their child, Ubing-ubing, lived near the sea. They are fisherfolk. Everytime Lakay-lakay has a good catch, his wife offers fish to the gods. In return, the gods always give them a bountiful catch. Ironically, as they became more prosperous, they also became more proud. One morning, on his way home, Lakay-lakay meets a very old and sickly man. The old man asks for some fish but Lakay-lakay turns him down and walks on. In the afternoon, while the wife is pounding rice, a beggar comes and asks for some rice. The woman hastily turns her down and continues pounding. The next day, the man goes out very early to fish as usual. The woman is left to put the house in order and prepare breakfast in time for her husband’s arrival. When the man does not arrive at the usual time, the worried wife takes her child with her to look for him. They proceed to the favorite fishing ground of the fisher. But there is no trace of him. As they are looking out into the sea, a rock resembling the features of a man slowly emerges from the sea. The mother, together with her child, takes a raft and rows towards the stone, only to

discover that it bears a strong resemblance to her husband. She finds close to it the man's raft, fishing net, and fish basket. The woman clings to the stone figure and cries vehemently. The gods hear her sobs and also changes her to a rock. The child who is left on the raft drifts away and he too is changed to a stone. The gods feel sorry for the family so they give the man power over the sea and the winds in that area. Stories relate that during the Spanish period, a vessel sailed near the rocks. The sailors were alarmed at the sight of the figures. The captain, laughing at the sailor's fears, ordered that a cannon be fired at Lakay-lakay. As the bullet struck the brim of Lakay-lakay's hat, a strong storm came. The violent waves broke the vessel into pieces and drowned the Spanish captain and the sailors. Since then, people have believed that Lakay-lakay really has power over the sea and winds. For this reason, he and his family are feared by the fisherfolk. Those who pass the stone figure offer gifts in the form of money, food, cigars, and fruits.

## Performing Arts

The songs of the Ibanag gathered from Tuguegarao, Abulug, Dana-Ili, and Pamplona are called *canta* or *cansion*. Some of these songs are *versu*, *pagirau*, *kinantaran*, *harana*, anthem, *aguinaldo*, *salubong*, and medley, all of which suggest Tagalog, Spanish, and English influences on Ibanag music (Wein 1987:13).

Versu is a term derived from psalm verses sung in church. An example is the Ibanag version of the "Our Father," entitled "Ama Mi" (Wein 1987:240).

Songs accompanied by action are called *pagirau* or dance songs (also called *sarswela*). Here is an example of a *pagirau* about the "delicious fish" (Wein 1987:40):

*Si presyon si dalag*  
*Si Afer ari makadeddag.*  
*Si ifun kawadittan,*  
*Si munamun ya kakastan.*

*Si tangi karalletan,*  
*Si bangus ya kasingngattan.*  
*Ilutu ngana sangau. (2x)*  
*Masingngo sangau ikan.*

Pressured is "dalag".  
Afer cannot wait [to eat it].  
"Ifun" is the smallest,  
"Munamun" the most beautiful.

"Tangi" is the biggest,  
"Bangus" the most delicious.  
I am going to cook now. (2x)  
Then the fish will be very tasty.

The *kinantaran* is characterized by singing and an enactment in the form of a dialogue.

An example is this one entitled “Lizard” (Wein 1987:33):

*Itte, dua, tallu, appa, lima,  
Annam, pitu, walu, siam, mafulu.*

*Alifa, ta alifa,  
Taddanak ku ta issi.  
Poppo, ta poppo.  
Taddanak ku ta dufo.  
Azzo lappaga ta zizzing,  
Ari faga naguzzin.  
Azzo lappaga ta daddal,  
Ari faga nagatang.*

One, two, three, four, five,  
Six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

Lizard, oh Lizard,  
I'll pay [you] with sugar.  
Clap, oh clap.  
I'll pay [you] with a banana.

It's still at the wall,  
Not yet reddish.  
It's still with the Chinese,  
Not yet bought.

In Sanchez Mira, Cagayan, the kinantaran, a song debate, features a boy named Pepe and a girl named Neneng, dancing as they sing verses to each other. In a typical exchange, Pepe may tell Neneng “I love you so much. Please take pity on me,” to which Neneng may reply, “Go away. I do not care to hear your pleas. Wait for another day.” Today, young men and women shy away from the kinantaran. Attempts to keep the form alive have brought in boys and girls to perform the debate mainly at social gatherings.

Harana is the term used to refer to love songs performed for serenades. Here the men beg the girl to get up from her bed to show her face at the window, begging forgiveness for the disturbance and their poverty.

The anthem refers to patriotic songs dedicated to the province or to certain towns. Performed during official days or functions, these include “Cagayan Anthem,” “Cagayan Geography,” “Cagayan Day,” and “The Town of Pamplona.”

The aguinaldo are carols sung by children, as they go from house to house asking for “aguinaldo” (gift) during the Christmas season. These may be songs in Ibanag or contemporary carols in English or Tagalog.

The salubong is a song specifically sung by little children dressed as angels at the rite of the salubong or *padafung* on Easter Sunday. It tells the Virgin, who suffered so much



for her son, to do “away with crying and her mourning dress,” because Christ is risen from the dead. It also exhorts the Christian to “imitate the obedience of Mary... for by this you can obtain later the holy glory, where you long to be.”

The medley is a series of songs which could consist of responses between a male and a female as they court each other, or it could be a sequence of songs which may not necessarily be connected in theme to each other.

Aside from these songs, there are also lullabies called *cansiones para ammakaturug*, nursery songs called *cansiones para abbing*, and vendors’ songs called *cansiones para allaku* (Wein 1987:15).

Ibanag dances play an important part in many social gatherings. A popular wedding dance in the province of Cagayan and Isabela is the *maskota*. The dance is named after the formal skirt worn by women at weddings and other social gatherings, which is a full, tailless skirt usually with large floral designs (Reyes 1953:71-74). Performance of this dance during wedding festivities follows a certain sequence. The bride and groom do the dance first. Then, the other pairs follow. While the couple dances, two plates or handkerchiefs are placed on the floor. On these, the relatives and friends place money and other gifts to the couple. After the dance, the groom takes the two plates, or bundles everything in the handkerchiefs and hands these to the bride. While the couple is dancing, a singer stands beside them and sings original verses to describe the pair. An example of the song which accompanies the dancing follows (Reyes-Urtula 1981:71-74):

*Mapia nga magugammay,  
Yoye immacasta nga babay,  
Ariakku nga ipacacaturuc  
Ibilang cu lappao nga mabangug.  
Lappao na sampaguita,  
Maguemmemmi auan tu caquita.*

How well she dances and plays,  
This beautiful and graceful lass;  
At night I cannot sleep,  
Because of you my sweet girl.  
Like the sweet sampaguita flower,  
To no one can you be compared.

The *pinatalatto cu ta futu cao* is another Ibanag song and dance which literally means “pondering within my heart” (Reyes-Aquino 1953:83-84). This love song, popular in Iguig and several other towns of Cagayan, narrates the refusal of a girl to accept a suitor who suddenly left her and now wants to come back.

The dance performance is accompanied by the singing of the girl or any girl in the audience. The song goes:

*Pinatalatto cu ta futu cao  
Y adde na pinalappa mu sangao*

*Ta ya nga na y panoli na aya mu nie  
Ngem ariac cu nga na manonono.*

*Refrain:*

*Ta sinni la-lagu y cunne nicao  
Nga mangipipitta ca ta aghao  
Ta ariam-mu la nga zinaddaddaddam  
Ta ari ca mecunne niacam.*

*Nu egga y maya nio ta tanacuan  
Ay ariam mu awaya cafugaddan  
ta ya nga na nge, ta ari ca sohetowan  
Ay conforms y eccu nga cuan.*

I tried to ponder within my heart  
All that you have said since the start  
That again, your love you wish to return to me  
But to welcome it, that can never be.

*Refrain:*

For why did you ever think  
To make your decision in a wink,  
And you did not even remember  
That you're not worthy to be my partner.

If another suitor comes to court me,  
Pray, no hard feelings if I agree,  
Since you could not be guided your way,  
So let me be free, happy and gay.

There is also the *parosa* which is a song and dance narration of the life of Santo Domingo, the patron saint of Casibarang (Roces 1988:16). In this presentation, a chorus of about 20 girls, sometimes accompanied by male singers in duets, chant the *gozos* or quatrains exalting the Virgin or the saints. The hymn starts with:

The day Saint Dominic was baptized  
On his forehead, there appeared  
A luminiscent star  
Far more brilliant than the sun.

The following refrain punctuates each of the six quatrains:

Our guardian Saint Dominic de Guzman  
We beseech you not to forsake us  
For you're the patron saint we chose  
To be the intercessor of our barrio.

The *parosa* is performed in August on the eve of the "double eight" (i.e. August 8) feast of Santo Domingo.

The Ibanag have their own version of the very popular jota called *la jota Cagayana*

(Reyes-Aquino 1953: 38-39). For this dance, women wear the maskota skirt, camisa (traditional blouse with wide long sleeves), and stiff pañuelo (a kerchief folded on the diagonal and worn over the shoulders), or any typical Ilocano costume.

The Ibanag's known dramatic forms are closely tied with their religious practices. Like many groups in Catholic Philippines, the Ibanag reenact the meeting of the Virgin Mary and the Risen Christ on Easter Sunday. Called padafung or salubong, this early morning playlet features an angel coming down to remove the Virgin's mourning veil.

The *infante* is the Ibanag version of the *pastores*. Participants in this playlet are a choir of 15 to 20 males and females in *maria clara* and barong tagalog costumes. They sing christmas carols in Ibanag and are accompanied by two harpists and guitarists. Chosen to play the part of the shepherds called infantes are girls, aged 9 to 12 years old, who are attired in red dresses and decorated hats. Together with the choir, they sing Ibanag christmas carols from house to house.

Since 15 years ago, the infantes included in its performance a 3-meter-tall giant manipulated by men inside. Making sharp movements of its head, the giant wears a crown and holds a scepter. Its role is to play around and chase the infantes. The audience, in turn, gives him money to make him stop chasing the children. In the past, there were two giants but now, only one is employed for the presentation. The person inside the giant also plays a flute which is accompanied by a bamboo orchestra and by the *tinubong*, a bamboo instrument played by a man with cape and sash.

The main event in the town fiesta of Cabagan is the *sambali* which seems to be a prehispanic war dance developed into a "Christian-pagan" mock war dance (Roces 1988:17). Here, the Christians are represented by the Ibanag, the non-Christians by the Kalinga, who opposed the reduction efforts of the Spanish missionaries. ("Kalinga," in Ibanag vocabulary, means "enemy.") Like the theatrical production of the Spanish period *komedya*, the sambali performers use costumes to identify each side. The Ibanag are in white *baag*, white being the catechumenical color for baptism, while the Kalinga are in red *baag*, the color associated with insurrections. As warriors, the performers are armed with spears and shields. To symbolize bravery, they wear headdresses decorated with feathers, similar to the Kalinga *lawi*.

The sambali starts with an Aeta warning the two groups of an imminent attack. The warning is ignored by the warring camps. However, they proceed anyway and march to battle. They meet face to face; the battle starts. Similar to the battles between the Christians and the Moros in the komedya and the *moros y cristianos*, the ritual culminates in the defeat of the non-Christians at the hands of the Christians. • G. Zafra with notes from E.A. Manuel, N.G. Tiongson and R. Obusan/Reviewed by F.H. Hornedo

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